# THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

MAR|APR
2023

## Charismatic Megaflora

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MAR|APR
2023

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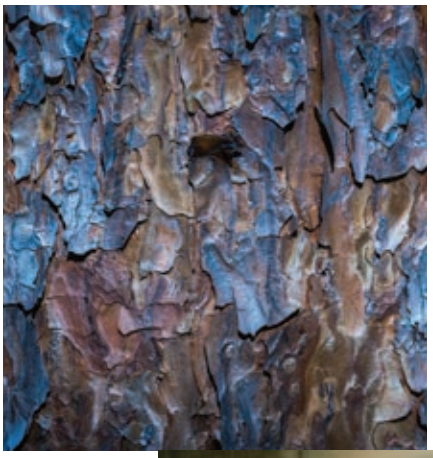

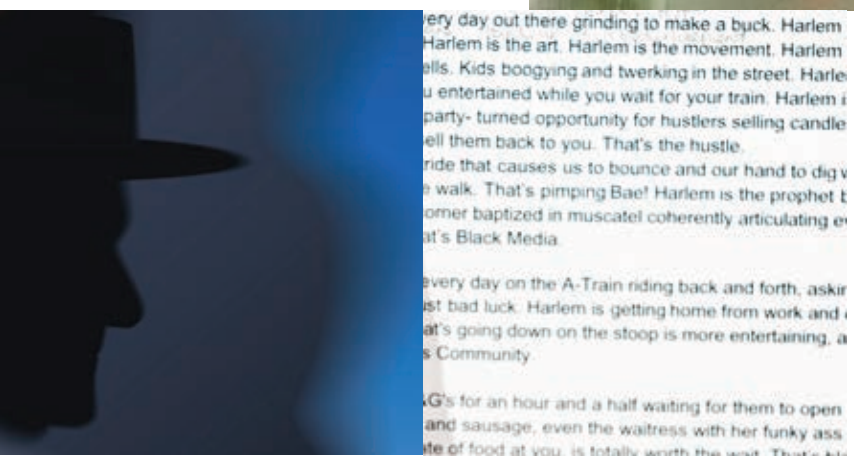


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# THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

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# Living History

To start at the end, our back-page feature, "Old Penn," offers a striking photograph by Candace diCarlo of a slab from a 4,000-year-old pine tree held by the Penn Museum. It was among a number of long-lived species whose tree rings were instrumental in refining the technique of radiocarbon dating, making it possible to create an accurate timeline of human civilizations back to 7,400 BCE, as explained in senior editor Trey Popp's accompanying text.

The item relates back to Trey's cover story, "The Olden Bough," on Annenberg Professor of History Jared Farmer and his recent book *Elderflora: A Modern History of Ancient Trees*. (Candace also took the photo of Farmer, sitting beside the oldest ginkgo tree in North America, that opens the story.) *Elderflora*, which Trey calls "a compendium of wonderful facts" and a reviewer deemed a "fascinating farrago of a book," has a lot to say about trees' relative immortality, humanity's complex and shifting attitudes toward them (combining rampant destruction and belated veneration), and their current fragility due to climate change.

Trey also interviewed Farmer while they strolled last fall in The Woodlands Cemetery in West Philadelphia, where they touched on how the Utah-bred historian's arboreal attraction first took hold when he arrived on Stanford's campus for graduate school, which led to his earlier book *Trees in Paradise: The Botanical Conquest of California*.

Aside from working out the kinks in carbon-14, a familiar use that humans have made of ancient trees (after cutting them down) is to mark significant events on their rings. Which events, and how they are memorialized, often change over time. In one such display that Farmer references, Columbus goes from discoverer of the New World to a mere passerby from the 1930s to 2000s.

One of the more contested dates in our culture during the last few years has been 1619—as in the *1619 Project* created by Nikole Hannah-Jones, who was this year's guest speaker at the 22nd annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture in Social Justice. Associate editor Dave Zeitlin C'03 reports on her conversation with Annenberg Presidential Associate Professor Sarah Jackson in "Gazetteer." Two threads in the talk—on the economic side of King's advocacy and the continuing struggle to create space for Black stories in the culture—link to feature articles in this issue.

In "A Life's Calling," Samantha Drake CGS'06 profiles Rev. Liz Theoharis C'98, who in collaboration with Rev. William J. Barber II has revived the Poor People's Campaign planned by King in the months before his assassination in 1968. The article also covers Theoharis's upbringing in a household where religious faith and activism were intertwined, her time at Penn (which included the first of an estimated 20 arrests for protest activities), and her efforts as a biblical scholar to reframe the interpretation of the Gospel passage "The poor you will always have with you."

**Trey interviewed Farmer while they strolled in The Woodlands Cemetery in West Philadelphia.**

University Chaplain and VP Chaz Howard C'00—who didn't know Theoharis when they overlapped at Penn but considers her a friend now—calls her among the "most impactful" ministers in the country and points to the significance of her and Barber's partnership, as a white woman and a Black man, in leading the campaign.

And in "Rich History, New Visions," Julia M. Klein reports on the year-long residency at Penn Live Arts of the Negro Ensemble Company, which culminated in the world premiere of *Mecca is Burning* on February 15 (racing our deadline to go to press). Perhaps best known for *A Soldier's Play* (later filmed as *A Soldier's Story*), the NEC has a long history of presenting challenging yet accessible work on Black lives. The new play is a collaboration among five playwrights, some of whom also contributed to a program of one-acts presented last fall, in which four Black families in Harlem must confront a nationwide outbreak of white supremacist violence.

Finally, both a willfully cut-down tree and some racist assumptions figure in "Sir Henry Thornton, On and Off the Rails." But the bulk of Dennis Drabelle G'66 L'69's latest historical profile concerns the Penn alumnus's exploits as the Allies' World War I railroad chief (for which he was knighted in Britain) and head of Canadian National Railways, and the pride, illness, and scandal that caused the downfall of the one-time "Superman" of the railroading world.

# Band stans, disappearing doctors get attention, "fabulous" Franklin course, and more.

## We Welcome Letters

Please email us at gazette@ben.dev.upenn.edu. Letters should refer to material published in the magazine and may be edited for clarity, civility, and length.

### No One Seemed to Care—Except the Band

"And the Band Played On" [Jan|Feb 2023] brought back one of my fondest memories as a basketball player at Penn. We were playing Yale at their gym on a Saturday night during a time when school was not in session. In my memory it was frigidly cold with what seemed like five feet of snow covering every inch of New Haven. The streets were empty on our bus ride to the game and so was Yale's musty old gym, which always seemed like a converted church basement to me. The stands were virtually empty and there was zero energy in the building and amongst us players. Warming up was drudgery, as was the thought of the hours long bus ride we'd be taking to get home afterwards.

I can feel in my chest even now, 30 years later, the low *thump-thump-thump* of a big drum being pounded, first almost imperceptibly, then growing steadily louder and louder until its source boomed its way through the gym doors. I don't know how many band members were actually there but the sound of their music overwhelmed the space as the band marched into the stands, playing their hearts out all the way and never stopping throughout the game. School was on break, we were in Connecticut on a dreary, snow-laden Saturday night, and no one in the world beyond our coaches and parents seemed to care we were even playing the game. Except the band. I get goosebumps even to this day thinking about it.

I don't know if we ever really thanked the band for showing up like they did that night and every night we played, but it was always deeply appreciated.

*Andy Baratta C'94, Phoenixville, PA*


**"I can feel in my chest even now, 30 years later, the low *thump-thump-thump* of a big drum being pounded."**

### Familiar Face, Fond Memories

We read "And the Band Played On" with great interest, as we had a family connection to the Penn Band. We recognized our father/father-in-law, Leonard Friend W'41, in the photo on page 31. He is the clarinet player (on the right, the one not wearing eyeglasses) in the middle of the group.

Dad spoke often and with fondness and pride about Penn, the Penn Band, and the national powerhouse that the Quaker football team was in those days. The Michigan game noted in the photo was not a happy one for the previously unbeaten Quakers, who lost to the Wolverines and the great Tom Harmon 14–0.

But for at least one band member, any chance to play for Penn was a good day.

*Mark Friend C'71, Burke, VA*
*Carol Friend Feder CW '73 and*
*Jack Feder C'71 L'74, Potomac, MD*

### The Band's First "Scramble"

I had the pleasure and privilege of playing and marching with the Penn Band from 1960 to 1964, and served as its vice president and principal alto sax my senior year. I swelled with pride and delight to see the *The Penn Band Is Still "Scrambling" at 125* on the cover of the *Gazette*. You see, though I'm guessing it's not documented, I can take credit (or blame) for what I'm quite sure was the very first scramble we "performed."

At the time, at least two of the Ivy bands, Harvard and Princeton, had already become scramble bands. The Penn Band, which presented itself as the "Marching 101," on the other hand, although musically excellent despite the lack of music majors, usually got a lot of laughs from the stands for our efforts to march in a straight line. When Harvard was scheduled to bring its band to the game at Franklin Field in 1964, I presented my case to our director, Joseph Colantonio, to let us make some good-natured fun of our Crimson counterparts.

Their routine at halftime was to blow a really loud whistle and scramble quickly to their first, very organized, formation.

We, as usual, had lined up on the goal line. When they were finished, our PA announcer introduced us with "And now, the Penn Marching 101, in a tribute to our friends at *Haahvaahd*, forms an amoeba." One of our cheerleaders dusted off our then pitifully underutilized touchdown cannon, and literally with a bang, kicked off what must have seemed to be an endless scramble, playing "I Ain't Got No Body," and eventually ending up in an amorphous shape at midfield. We got what may have been our very first standing ovation. I can't get the smile off my face having read the terrific article by Molly Petrilla. Thanks, Molly, thanks Greer, and "Drink a Highball."

*Joel Brotman W'64, Boise, ID*

### US Healthcare Has Bigger Problems

The decline of primary care physicians in America—as described in Gregg Coodley's essay "The Disappearing Family Doctor" ["Expert Opinion," Jan|Feb 2023]—is but one aspect of much bigger problems. Healthcare in America costs roughly twice what it does in other developed countries, but our results place us at or near the bottom. Our administrative costs about equal all the money paid physicians, both primary care and specialists. Dr. Coodley spends hours over an electronic medical record that is designed for billing before patient care. The growth of administrators in healthcare far outpaces that of physicians and nurses. Hospital systems have an increasing number of multimillion dollar-compensated administrators. Medicare Advantage plans have been great profit centers for insurers, as you might guess from all the (sometimes deceptive) advertising, while studies show they are cheating Medicare out of about $1,000 per patient per year.

Health insurers and hospitals have a lot of money and influence in Washington. Doctors are separated into many small specialty groups with little to no money. Sadly, both nurses and doctors are voting with their feet. At a time when science is bringing exciting new treatments, we are stuck with a system that is frustrating the very people who care most about your health—doctors and nurses.

Dr. Coodley is right. Primary care physicians need to be paid more. But that is a long way from a solution.

*James R. Patterson M'64, Vancouver, WA*

### Specialists and Generalists Have a Lot in Common

As a recent retiree from a career in gastroenterology, and as the son of a family practitioner, I have seen the merits, joys, and frustrations that lead one to choose between a life in primary care versus a specialty.

Many of the factors cited for the reluctance of new doctors to enter primary care are shared by specialists as well. The unhappy task of medical documentation is universal and is ever-increasing in this age of electronic records with the pressures exerted by insurance carriers and oversight entities. The same bureaucratic grind in requesting approval of diagnostic testing, surgery, and medications is experienced by specialists as well. The hope for a more "livable" lifestyle with a more manageable schedule is a quest that anyone involved in direct patient care wrestles with. There are very few areas of practice that are amenable to "shift work." While many primary providers have tried to shed the burden of managing the business aspects of practice by joining corporate entities, many specialists have tried this as well, with a similar sacrifice of independence.

While I agree that there should be increased financial incentives for the hard work that primary care physicians do, I disagree with other suggested remediations. The idea that medical school and postgraduate residencies be shortened is, well, short-sighted. Although this might allow new physicians to enter the workforce sooner, it would deprive them of the time to mature into capable physicians. Several schools attempted to shorten the time to an MD degree to three years in the 1970s and most abandoned

it. Similarly, residency is a time to accrue experience in a multitude of encounters that cannot be hastened. Many elements of Family Practice training include time spent in Obstetrics, Surgery, and Psychiatry. How seasoned can one expect to become in so short a time? Indeed, recent reliance on "mid-levels" such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants has provided lots of extra staff, but both entities rely on the collaboration of a physician, because of the latter's greater training, experience, and, hence, insight.

*Stan Weiselberg C'72, Utica, NY*

### Time for a Paradigm Shift!

If any of your readers have ever been cared for by an advanced nurse practitioner (that would be an adult NP, pediatric NP, nurse anesthetist, nurse midwife) they would tell you that the care was thorough, safe, personalized, and accurate.

I am sure you will be hearing from your Nursing School colleagues at Penn who graduate students from these programs. Advanced practice nurses provide care across the healthcare spectrum, usually in places where physicians don't want to work. Researched outcomes show fewer malpractice claims, the need to prescribe few medications, increased patient satisfaction, and equal or superior healthcare outcomes.

So, I think it is time that we have a paradigm shift! Prepare physicians to care for complex, specialty needs and have advance practice nurses assume the role of the "family doctor," for which they are well prepared.

Unfortunately, barriers to practice come from the American Medical Association and state medical associations. The strongest opposition occurs in states with the largest quantity of physicians. These groups don't want the nurses to encroach on their territory. But it is time that barriers to advanced practice nursing start to come down.

In states where advanced practice nurses have expanded licensure (which came about due to physician shortages), they have been well accepted providers and they are providing excellent care.

*Debra Browne GNu'80, Torrance, CA*

### A Deeper Spiritual Message

"Franklin's World" ["Gazetteer," Jan|Feb 2023] was just a fabulous article. Congrats to Ezekiel Emanuel for creating his online course. His comments on Benjamin Franklin are a message for all of us: "He's been an inspiration. He's made me rethink growth—and the fact that, until you die, you have opportunities to be better every day." So far beyond all of Ben's achievements in the physical world, most notably in France and Philadelphia to forge the United States, we have a deeper spiritual message. This course should be required of all freshmen, and I have enrolled in the free Coursera program!

*Andrew R. Morris W'80 and Susan W. Morris C'80, Briarcliff Manor, NY*

### Still Learning about Franklin

I read with interest the story regarding Ezekiel Emanuel's development of a course on Benjamin Franklin. As a "double" Franklin alumna (Penn Dental, 1984; Franklin & Marshall College, 1980), it was always of interest to me to learn more about Ben. He's one of my favorite Americans, and I recall a seminar course that I took in the late 1970s at F&M.

After a few weeks of background, each student selected one of Franklin's areas of interest as a topic. In addition to a paper, we each made a presentation to the group of about 10 or so. We took field trips to Philadelphia from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where Franklin had donated funds to help start F&M in the 1780s. I vividly recall Franklin Court, Franklin's gravesite, and Pennsylvania Hospital.

My presentation was on printing. I had had a wonderful upbringing in a printing shop that my grandfather had started in the 1920s, then my father continued as a hobby. It was a great craft to learn, and I thought myself an apprentice, just like young Ben. That printing shop, also known as Stavrides Press, was donated to the University of Pennsylvania by my father, William C. Stavrides D'53.

For my term paper, I was able to discover the Silence Dogood letters, *Poor Richard's Almanack,* and Franklin's interest in the *Pennsylvania Gazette.* The origins of the *Saturday Evening Post* are also traced to Franklin.

As a retired professor myself, I embrace Ezekiel Emanuel's quest for information in areas that are tangential to his and my own area of study, as well as other "Americana." Thanks to Dr. Emanuel and Penn for continuing my education with Coursera.

*Wendy Stavrides Hupp D'64, Celebration, FL*

### More "Unruly" Women

I was amused by Drew Gilpin Faust's recollection of the status of women in the 1970s reported in "No Place for Unruly Women" ["Gazetteer," Jan|Feb 2023]. The unequal treatment started long before then.

First, the only facility to house "girl" students was Sergeant Hall at 34th and Chestnut Streets. That was a small building; therefore, only a few out-of-town "girls" could be admitted. My class—College for Women 1962—was the first in the newly built women's dorm, Hill Hall. Some of us commuters were fortunate to have the opportunity to live on campus when the building was opened for the second half of our junior year. Boys were admitted only to the large reception rooms on the second floor. We also had a curfew at night and on weekends too.

When I applied to Penn Law, the dean of admissions, Alan Kirk, told me that school history showed that the girls enrolled were either in the top or bottom of the class. I told him that I'd change that and be in the middle. That's where I was. The males were called "men"; the females "girls." We started with six women in the class, but two did not finish.

Some professors, and even some classmates, in the beginning, berated us because we were taking the place of a

man who would have to support a family, whereas we would get married, have babies, and drop out!

Three of the four of us remaining women became judges; I ended up in the radio business and then in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, which is a whole other story of the treatment of women!

*Lita Indzel Cohen CW'62 L'65, Philadelphia*

### Another Rainey Remembrance

Fro Rainey, who was compared to Indiana Jones in "Remembering Rainey" ["Gazetteer," Jan|Feb 2023] was my archaeology professor for two semesters. The way he made the subject come alive was brilliant and quite inspirational to me in my future endeavors as a dealer in rare objects. He also had a super sense of humor. During one lecture in the Penn Museum, he saw a student eating lunch with his foot on a Chinese door sculpture. He asked the young man if he knew what the inscription meant. Of course, he did not. So Dr. Rainey explained that it said something along the lines of "He who defaces this edifice will be sterile for life," causing the student to abruptly withdraw his foot. He invited me to join him on a dig in Italy one summer and I asked him why would I want to go to super-hot Italy during the summer. He replied with a straight face, "Girls!"

*Bruce Gimelson C'64, Garrison, NY*

### Blazing Trails

As a journalism minor, I was gratified to read Dan Rottenberg's tribute to Sharon Ribner Schlegel ["Letters," Jan|Feb 2023]. He seemed delighted that his *female* friend and classmate persevered in her quest for timely writing for the all-male daily newspaper, the *Daily Pennsylvanian* … and, frankly, so am I. Like other Penn women in the early 1960s who desired practical writing experience, I was constrained to writing for the *weekly* women's newspaper. However, I did endeavor to take advantage of the sole journalism practicum. As editor-in-chief, I wrote front-page articles, based on interviews with eminent professors, and published detailed women's news, which was ignored elsewhere.

I am also gratified to learn that *all* segments of the Penn community, namely academic and social organizations and graduation awards, are now available for qualified and interested students … as opposed to being siloed, as we were, before trailblazers "forced" the administration to "open" promised opportunities.

*Note:* The irony is that I *did* appear in the *DP*—but as a model in my father's men's store ads for the Varsity Shop!

*Jacqueline Zahn Nicholson W'62, Marietta, GA*

### Kahn Connection

It was such a pleasure to read "Living Lou" and the continued love of the Kahn-designed home for Steven and Koby Korman ["Elsewhere," Jan|Feb 2023]. As a retired architect who, through his friend my father, knew of Kahn since age nine, met him at 14, and worked for him for six years, I consider this a great article.

I believe the public at large should know about this extraordinary person, not only the architect, but the man as well.

*David Karp Ar'59, San Mateo, CA*

### Why Bring Up Only Israel?

First, let me give kudos to "The Final Hunt," Julia Klein's article on "Justice Department veteran" Eli Rosenbaum and his work helping investigate war crimes in Ukraine ["Alumni Profiles," Nov|Dec 2022].

I am writing in response to the letter from Gary Leiser ["Letters," Jan|Feb 2023], which referenced the article. I feel that his letter was redundant, since Rosenbaum had already stated that his group is "proving crimes took place in Europe," and should any perpetrators end up in the United States, they will prosecute them.

As to his question about the impact of the Justice for Victims of War Crimes Act, why bring up only Israel? Were no war crimes created by other actors? I feel that Mr. Leiser has a deep bias against the Jewish state.

As for what happened in Tantura and Deir Yassin, the full case is still out. We know that a massacre took place in 1948 by pre-state paramilitary groups like the Irgun, Lehi, and Hagana. No mention was made by Leiser of the following massacre and mutilation of 78 doctors and nurses in a convoy to Jerusalem by Palestinian Arabs.

I am not sure how many war crime perpetrators will come to the United States if laws against them exist here. Nor do I feel that it's the United States' job to be the world's policeman or to pass such legislation. Regretfully, religious and national conflicts have always taken the lives of non-combatants.

*David Oden Gr'70, Venice, FL*

### No Embellishment Required

As a freshman crew athlete at Penn during the 1971–72 academic year, I was interested to read, in Dave Zeitlin's article on Sean Colgan's collection of reminiscences of legendary coach Ted Nash ["Sports," Nov|Dec 2022], that "some of the tales have perhaps gotten a tad taller in the retelling, like when Nash leapt out of his car and dove into the Schuylkill River to try to save a drowning man." I can verify that this one story did not need to be embellished or exaggerated about coach Nash, who seemed to a green aspiring oarsman fresh from the Oregon woods somehow to be larger than life even when he was standing right in front of you.

On the main floor of Penn's boathouse wall at the time—this would have been the fall of 1971—I saw a newspaper clipping reporting precisely this story of his dive into the Schuylkill (the waters of which, I was assured, would give me typhoid if I took a drink); the clipping included a large photograph of Nash sitting in a boat with a blanket around his shoulders after coming out of the water having just done exactly that.

*David Knife C'75, Boise, ID*

# The Cane and the Glory

For nearly four years I have walked with a third limb. I wish it were a British affectation.

**By Howard Freedlander**



Illustration by Chris Gash

As my 55th reunion class assembled alongside even older cohorts near the Ben on the Bench statue for the 2022 Alumni Weekend parade, a heavy rain was falling. No one seemed to care. Good cheer permeated the senior-citizen participants. I joined the constant chatter and laughter, but was nagged by a bothersome doubt: Would my cane be enough to help me navigate Locust Walk's slippery surfaces without stumbling?

For nearly four years I have walked with a third limb. I wish it were a British affectation, a device to gain empathy. But no. It was dizziness and balance problems that brought me to the use of a stick. A fall in a restaurant, which prompted what I regarded as altogether too much attention from paramedics, culminated in an ambulance ride to a nearby hospital. Thus began a nine-month search for answers—punctuated by two more tumbles that filled me with anxiety.

Deciding that good sense required use of a protective staff, I bought one from a company called Fashionable Canes. The jaunty name does not hide the humbling need for a stick. It just disguises it with marketing tactics designed to appeal to vulnerable, vain people like me. Frequent promotional emails display fancy canes and showy handles. Make what you will out of my determined eschewal of their more ornate offerings. I move smartly with my simple but elegant wooden helper. I fancy myself no normal cane user; I am proud and determined. (My wife might use a different word.)

That may explain why, for all the years I've attended Penn reunions, I've always summarily dismissed the option to use a golf cart to travel the alumni parade route. And the approach of number 55 changed nothing in my attitude. Indeed I remained a bit contemptuous, arrogantly so, of this mode of transportation. I was no weakling. I was still tough, behind my otherwise gentle bearing.

The rainy 2022 alumni parade found me in full possession of this misplaced self-esteem. There would be no motorized transport for this former lacrosse player who prided himself on his scrappiness, his willingness—silly in retrospect—to play injured. There was just too much history at stake. My high school coach, Joe Brune, had been a former Marine. I could not let him down, even in absentia.

The upstanding Mr. Brune had some odd concepts about life. When a teammate hurt his leg on a steel grate on our practice field, he said, "A man who plays with one broken leg isn't half the man who plays with two broken legs." My impressionable teenage self may have found his philosophy humorous—but dared not to laugh. When another teammate explained his lateness due to a medical appointment, our erudite leader declaimed: "Old ladies go to doctors. You see me first." Though I liked my coach, I feared him too. And there are some shadows you can't outrun.

So the cane alone would be my concession to reality during a slippery parade. Mind you, I happily withheld any judgment of fellow senior citizens in the Class of 1967. They opted for comfort and safety. They did not hear a long-ago coach whispering in their ears: *ignore pain, play on.* They listened to the call of their bodies—and maybe their spouses.

What am I to make of these irrational inspirations? Even as I heed their mandates, I find them strange, unexplainable. A high school lacrosse coach who spouted ridiculous koans about physical toughness still has a senseless influence on me. I should know better. I do know better. And yet I still get suckered into trying to please him.

Maybe ex-jocks like to delude themselves into thinking they still retain the ability to withstand pain. How pleased I felt with myself, seven years ago, when a well-meaning nurse at Johns Hopkins Hospital offered me oxycodone shortly after prostate cancer surgery—and I declined in favor of extra-strength Tylenol. Though hurting from this prototypically male cancer, I could not escape the stubborn resolve to play through pain. I yearned not for relief, but for bragging rights.

As a 77-year-old whose days as a Penn athlete are forever gone, left languishing on River Fields, I continue to act in ways that defy logic. My common sense should take precedence. But misguided masculinity and pride still occupy the driver's seat. Instead of listening to saner sources of wisdom, such as wives and middle-aged daughters, I continue to hark back to the inanities of a former Marine whose teenage charges hoped to impress him with conspicuous disregard for their own bodies.

I should laugh at myself. And I do. But not enough. Standing on 37th Street as rain-soaked men and women in their late 70s awaited the annual parade of classes, I clutched my cane, called forth my inner toughness (stupidity?), ignored the carts and friendly drivers, and moved out quickly with my classmates.

But I really must conquer this demon that has so long driven me. Yes, my cane provides a ready sense of security. But so does the arm of one of my daughters as I climb down rail-less steps in the dark, or a female nurse as I gingerly disembark from an exam-room table. I am trying now to subject my concept of toughness and pride to a dosage of wisdom. Excessive masculinity is a persistent irritant. It spurs unwise decisions. A cure is elusive.

But I have a new goal for my 60th Reunion. Confident that I will be present in Ben Franklin's esteemed academic village, I will gladly call a cart if necessary and overcome any embarrassment. I will accept my longevity. I will not depend solely on my fashionable cane and unwise determination. I will listen to my wise wife, not the distant and delusional words of a lacrosse coach.

Manhood demands moderation. Even belatedly.

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Howard Freedlander C'67 last wrote for the *Gazette* in 2012.

# Ghost Grove

## The forest will come back. Just not in my lifetime.

**By Linda F. Willing**

When the East Troublesome fire roared through my mountain neighborhood on October 21, 2020, I was sure that our house would be destroyed. It wasn't—due to a combination of good luck and the efforts of brave firefighters who worked through the night to save buildings, even as some of their own homes burned. In less than 24 hours, 28 houses burned in my neighborhood. All told, nearly 500 structures were lost in what turned out to be the second-largest wildfire in Colorado history.

I did not lose my house that night. But I often feel I have lost my home.

We built our cabin in this mountain community nearly 30 years ago, drawn to the beauty of the natural environment and the opportunity to explore it on hundreds of miles of trails that wind through protected lands—national forests, a premier national park, and locally preserved areas.

I have walked these trails dozens—in some cases, hundreds—of times. Some of them are so familiar to me that I feel I could walk them blindfolded. And yet when I first ventured out after the fire, I felt I was in a different world. On a different planet.

Not a single tree survived for miles. The ones left standing had been bent over by hurricane-force winds and then locked in that position by the sudden intense heat. Trees burned so hot that their stumps burned holes in the ground, leaving sterile black pits. Roads and buildings that had never been previously visible stood out in stark relief against the monochromatic landscape.

But these are my trails. So I walk them again, and gradually they become familiar in their new form. It's been two years since the fire, and much of the ground is green with opportunistic plants—grasses first, then dandelions and thistles, and now an abundance of wildflowers: lupine and oxeye daisies and wild rose. They crowd the spaces between scorched boulders whose surfaces have flaked off like layers of onion, and ghost trees curved like barrel staves. And this



Photo by Linda F. Willing

past summer I noticed something else: the first finger-high shoots of pine trees, returning to their native habitat.

It will all come back. Fire is a natural force here, even if the East Troublesome blaze was determined to be human caused. Fires have swept through these mountains countless times over the centuries, renewing the landscape, making way for new, healthy forests to thrive. So it will all come back—just not in my lifetime.

I will never see it again. Not as it once was, not as it exists in my memory.

It's a strange feeling to know, for a fact, that something will never happen again in my lifetime. That a place that was as familiar to me as my own reflection in the mirror will remain a foreign land to the end of my days on this earth. I've already seen this place, as I know it, for the last time.

This comes as a shock, but it shouldn't. I've already done many things for the last time in my life. I was doing things for the last time even when I was a teenager exploring the world around me at Penn and it seemed that the only reality was one of possibility and the future. I never thought of endings then. I was only looking ahead. Even as we age, we always think there's at least a chance that we might return to a place, or see someone again, or hear a favorite musician play. And if we cannot do these things—because the friend moved on or the musician stopped touring—it's because they changed, not us.

In 1978, I climbed Mount St. Helens in Washington State and spent the night on the summit. Two years later a volcanic eruption dissolved that summit into smoke and ash, carried by the winds to settle in distant places—even on the sidewalks and gardens in my Colorado neighborhood. I've always liked the feeling of having spent a night in a place that no longer exists. The summit is gone, but I am still here.

I remember, in elementary school, being told that the sun would burn out in five billion years. What a sense of panic I had in that moment—the sun was going away!—until I was reassured that five billion years was the same as eternity, and the star's death would have no impact on me.

I let it go, that first glimpse of mortality at age seven. But that feeling now returns to me, walking these trails. Not only that things will end, but that some things have already ended.

The visceral knowledge of this fact makes every footstep on these trails feel strange to me. Of course, I acknowledge my own mortality. It's an undeniable reality. I've lost people close to me. I see and feel the effects of aging every day.

Yet, at a deeper level, I've never really believed it. And I think this is true for most people.

One of my oldest friends died last year after a long battle with cancer. In the months leading up to his death we talked often about mortality. It bothered Steve to think that all his memories would be lost after he was gone—all the unique experiences and adventures he'd had. It wasn't so much that he wanted to live indefinitely into the future; on the contrary, he hated the idea of completely losing the past.

I suggested that perhaps consciousness is conserved after death in some way. He was neither convinced nor consoled.

I know the feeling. As I walk these trails, I am confronted with the loss of my own experiences here, my memories, my sense of place and home. How tall will these young trees be when I am ultimately gone?

Perhaps the loss of our memories is like the fire that ravaged these trails two years ago. They are burned, vaporized, and yet the falling ashes will somehow nurture the next generation of life that continues on without us.

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Linda Willing C'76 is a former urban firefighter, National Park Service backcountry ranger, and the author of *On the Line: Women Firefighters Tell Their Stories*.


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# Weekend Highlights

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**University Update with President Liz Magill**

**Campus Tours, Interactive and Educational Panels**

**Parade of Classes and Alumni Day Picnic**

**Penn Spectrum Soiree**

**Face Painting & Balloon Artists at Kids Fun Zones**

**All-Alumni Breakfast & Memorial Service**

# MyPenn

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GAZETTEER

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# Remembering the True Legacy of MLK

**The University's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Symposium on Social Change** was highlighted by a candlelight vigil on January 16, hosted by the Mighty Psi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. The vigil—which began outside Du Bois College House, ended at College Green, and featured songs and quotations from King—completed an MLK Day of Service that also included a beautification project at Lea Elementary School, community wellness events, and a children's art workshop presented by Penn Reads Literacy Project. The symposium, led by the African American Resource Center, continued throughout the next 10 days with other discussions, programs, and service events (back in person for the first time in three years), culminating with the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture in Social Justice, featuring journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones (see next page).



Photo by Tommy Leonardi C'89

# Anger and Joy

Journalist and *1619 Project* creator Nikole Hannah-Jones reveals her motivations during annual MLK Lecture.

Near the end of an hour-long conversation in which *New York Times Magazine* journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones discussed how much of her career has been fueled by anger and pettiness, an audience member inside Zellerbach Theatre asked an unexpectedly simple question.

"What brings you joy?"

Hannah-Jones took a beat before responding. "I hope you can tell from my demeanor that I'm actually a very happy person," she said, smiling. "I have the amazing honor of getting paid to read and research and think and tell Black stories. Yes, I'm motivated by rage. But I feel so blessed every single day to do the work I do."

Hannah-Jones was on campus in late January for the 22nd annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture in Social Justice, hosted by Penn's Center for Africana Studies in conjunction with the Annenberg School for Communication. Joined in conversation by Annenberg Presidential Associate Professor Sarah Jackson, the investigative journalist professed to be both joyful and "an anxious mess" ahead of the premiere of the *1619 Project* docuseries on Hulu the next day. An offshoot of a *New York Times Magazine* essay series, podcast, and book of the same name, the *1619 Project* "aims to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of our national narrative," per the *New York Times*'s initial description when it debuted in 2019 on the 400th anniversary of the beginning of American slavery.

"I feel joy every day," continued Hannah-Jones, who's received both praise and criticism for the controversial *1619 Project*—and, in 2020, the Pulitzer Prize in Commentary for it. "I hope when the *1619 Project* documentary comes out, the message people take away from that is all of Black life has never been [just] suffering: that even in the hardest of circumstances and the harshest of situations, we loved, we danced, we created, we cooked for each other, we held each other, we had babies, we loved our babies. We have always held on fiercely to joy, even in a society that was designed to try to take every last drop of it."

The MLK Lecture, back in person after two virtual years, highlighted a 10-day commemorative symposium on social change, sponsored by the African American Resource Center and the MLK Executive Planning Committee. It also included wellness and service projects, dance and music events, a candlelight vigil, and more.

**"We have always held on fiercely to joy, even in a society that was designed to try to take every last drop of it."**

Touching on King's legacy, Jackson pointed out that his advocacy of economic equality sometimes gets overlooked. "There's this great quote he had a month before he was assassinated [in 1968]," noted the Penn professor and codirector of Annenberg's Media, Inequality & Change Center. "He said, 'What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't earn enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?'" Adding that it's "important not to allow Dr. King's legacy to be whitewashed," Hannah-Jones said that the civil rights icon "appears to have been in support of issues of reparations and other economic redistributions" beyond what is typically taught in schools or what she called the "bad-faith quoting" of him that tends to occur around his birthday each year.

After helping to accomplish many goals of the civil rights movement, King "recognized that legal equality is only going to go so far," Hannah-Jones said. "You have to deal with the material, economic disadvantages that most Black Americans, no matter where they live in the country, were dealing with. And he began to sharpen his critique. And that's when he begins to lose the white liberal northern support."

Hannah-Jones has argued herself that there's never been sufficient economic restitution for Black Americans after the end of slavery—through the 100 years of "racial apartheid" following the Civil War to the peak of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, when she made the case for reparations in a *New York Times Magazine* essay entitled "What Is Owed."

While not dismissing some of the "symbolic changes" that the summer of 2020

Nikole Hannah-Jones spoke at Penn a day before her *1619 Project* docuseries debuted on Hulu.

Photo by Eddy Marenco courtesy Penn Communications

spawned (like the tearing down of Confederate flags and monuments and "a bunch of corporations doing diversity initiatives"), she argued that activists had asked for too little, especially because she correctly predicted that the ensuing backlash would be swift. "If you really think it's time for a reckoning, we need to deal with the original issue of why Black Americans are suffering," she said. "We're suffering for a lot of reasons. But I'd rather suffer with money than without."

Hannah-Jones said that she's been angry about the treatment of Black people in this country for as long as she can remember, beginning when she was a kid reading the newspaper with her dad and deciding that she wanted to become a journalist. "People ask me all the time what motivates you, and I'm like, 'Rage. Shit, I'm mad.' That's why I do what I do: I'm angry at the society that we have. But it's how you channel the rage. You fuel it into research, you fuel it into what you're reading and who you're talking to and how you're writing the story."

It hasn't always been easy. As she worked her way up the ranks from newspaper to newspaper, she said she almost left the profession when she was challenged about the amount of stories she wanted to write about Black people. Later she had a public spat with her alma mater, the University of North Carolina, where she had been offered a five-year contact to be the Knight Chair in race and investigative journalism. But UNC's board of trustees initially resisted voting on the journalism department's bid for her to receive a tenured professorship, leading to a protest on her behalf. When the trustees subsequently did vote on and approve her tenure, she declined the offer and instead went to Howard University, where she's close to raising $25 million for a journalism center to increase diversity in the field. "That was a top five petty moment for me," she said, calling it a "circumstance where people thought they had power over you, and it was important to show they did not."

Yet behind all of her self-proclaimed pettiness and anger, Hannah-Jones remarked near the end of the lecture, lies a feeling of joy and an enduring spirit of optimism about the strength of Black people—and "how much amazing progress we've made only having our full rights and citizenship for half a century."

"We're here to commemorate Dr. King," she concluded, "and he said that he doesn't know if he'll reach the promised land. 'I might not get there with you.' But I know whether or not we do, we owe it to our ancestors to fight. We don't have any other choice. I never wake up and think how am I going to keep going. I don't have a choice. We don't have a choice. We might not ever see the world we're trying to build, but damn it, we all better fight for it." —*DZ*

Medicine

# Battling a Binging Brain

## A Penn neurosurgeon believes deep brain stimulation can be a tool to fight obesity.

A chance encounter on Locust Walk sent Casey Halpern C'03 M'07 GM'09 down an unexpected scientific path.

Halpern was a freshman classical studies major at Penn when he ran into Murray Grossman, a professor of neurology who had once been Halpern's youth soccer coach. After catching up, Grossman invited Halpern to check out his lab, to see if any of its research projects might spark his interest. "He was so welcoming," Halpern recalls, "and eager to educate me and mentor me."

That introduction set off a chain of events that came full circle in 2021, when Halpern returned to Penn as an associate professor of neurosurgery and division head of functional and stereotactic neurosurgery. He is particularly interested in applying novel therapies to complex and stubborn problems like mental-health disorders, addiction, and obesity.

Lately he has been investigating the use of deep brain stimulation (DBS) to curb binge eating. In a pilot study whose results were published last August in the journal *Nature Medicine*, he and other coinvestigators focused on two women who'd had initial success los-

Illustration by Laura Liedo

ing weight via bariatric surgery but found it difficult to keep it off years later. Halpern hypothesized that the problem lay not in the gut but the brain.

His lab implanted a pacemaker-like device with electrodes in each woman's brain. The device was used to monitor the women's eating tendencies, in the lab and natural settings, for six months before a stimulation phase in which electrical pulses were applied. Both women lost weight and reported "restored inhibitory control" over their eating habits. Though both women remained obese, one no longer met diagnostic criteria for binge eating disorder. And both opted to retain to the devices rather than have them removed after 12 months, which Halpern calls "a true success."

The pilot study will be expanded to six participants, though it will take proof of efficacy in a much larger number for the treatment to have a real shot at FDA approval. But the initial success aligns with Halpern's overarching research goal: to give care providers more tools to treat seemingly intractable conditions. He's done that by finding new applications for a well-established technology, drawing on the foundation of curiosity and collaboration he developed at Penn.

DBS was first used in the late 1940s to treat Parkinson's disease. In the 1960s the FDA approved neurostimulation devices for wider use, and a series of approvals in the early 2000s cleared it to treat tremors associated with Parkinson's disease, dystonia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder, with epilepsy added in 2018.

Treatment for Parkinson's targets areas of the brain involved in motor function. Halpern's work focuses on the mesolimbic dopamine pathway, a part of the brain's reward system that seems vulnerable to hijacking by conditions like addiction, OCD, and binge eating. The binge-eating study specifically targets structures in the basal ganglia known as the nucleus accumbens.

The exact neurochemistry of how DBS quells urges is not fully known. Part of Halpern's research seeks to devise new ways to measure effects within the brain and hone our understanding of neural connections.

Those unanswered questions have piqued Halpern's curiosity since his first stint at Penn, where he spent 15 years as an undergrad, medical student, intern, and resident, before becoming an associate professor of neurosurgery at Stanford University. Returning to his alma mater in 2021, he says, was "transformative" for his research because of the University's collaboration across disciplines. "For the work that we're doing, you really need that vibrance and enthusiasm for collaboration."

Halpern hopes to help establish DBS as one more treatment option for obesity. The need is clear: more than 40 percent of Americans are obese, and around three percent suffer from binge eating disorder. DBS is reversible and adjustable, and patients might benefit from combining it with other interventions (like pharmaceuticals in OCD and Parkinson's, or bariatric surgery in obesity). By expanding the clinical and scientific knowledge base, Halpern hopes to make it more than just "a treatment of last resort."

Halpern's work involves significant ethical questions. He's working in brain areas thought to contribute to the formation of personhood. He frequently combats negative perceptions of DBS, which can conjure images of electroshock therapy and other older procedures that caused psychosurgery to fall out of popularity before, and his team includes bioethicists to tackle such issues.

Yet Halpern says he is guided by a respect for patient autonomy and restoring power in the lives of people struggling with compulsions they can't control. He describes his most rewarding study as one in which he helped a dentist with essential tremor continue his practice, quelling the tremors via DBS.

"For patients with OCD and addiction and obesity, we're just scratching the surface of applying deep brain stimulation to these disorders," he says. "But our initial efforts have been very promising."

*—Matthew De George*

CAMPUS

## Pottruck Center Turns 20

**On January 20,** students, staff, and other members of the University community joined President Liz Magill to celebrate 20 years of the David S. Pottruck Health & Fitness Center.

Put into service in the fall of 2002 before an official grand opening ceremony in January 2003, the center added 65,000 square feet of state-of-the-art fitness and recreational space (including this 40-foot climbing wall) to the existing 94,640 square feet of Gimbel Gymnasium at 37th and Walnut. It's named after principal donor David Pottruck C'70 WG'72, a former Penn wrestler and football player, Penn Athletics Hall of Famer, and longtime supporter of the University.

The birthday bash included a cake, a DJ, prizes, tours of the facility, and a power-lifting Penn Quaker mascot, as well as rock-wall climbing.

# Orchestral Maneuvers

A treasure trove of Philadelphia Orchestra documents finds a home at Penn Libraries.


Eric Dillalogue, assistant director of operations at the Kislak Center, sorts through Philadelphia Orchestra documents.

For the last two decades, the Philadelphia Orchestra has said "thanks, but no thanks" to researchers interested in rummaging through its massive trove of financial records and organizational bylaws, personnel and personal letters, and countless photographs and slides. Now, thanks to an agreement announced at the end of last year between the 123-year-old Orchestra and the Penn Libraries, that's about to change.

The Orchestra's archives—consisting of about 1,000 boxes of documents pertaining to the orchestra and its longtime venue, the historic Academy of Music—are now part of Penn's Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

The gift represents a pitch-perfect match, according to Kislak director Sean Quimby. "Music associated with our city has been a particular curatorial focus and expertise of ours for a while now," he says. "We've covered music in and around Philadelphia from its founding, with the collection of Francis Hopkinson [a signer of the Declaration of Independence, as well as a composer] through the long history of the Philadelphia Musical Fund Society [founded in 1820 to support musicians and still going] and into the 20th century."

In addition to housing collections that include the Robert and Molly Freedman Jewish Sound Archive ["Profiles," May|Jun 2018] and that of the Philadelphia singer and civil rights activist Marian Anderson Hon'58 ["Gazetteer," Sep|Oct 2020], the Kislak Center is also the custodian of the papers of Leopold Stokowski and Eugene Ormandy, the legendary conductors who, respectively, pushed the "Fabulous Philadelphians" into modernity and then steered it into its position among the world's best musical assemblages.

Matias Tarnopolsky, the president and CEO of the Philadelphia Orchestra, first toured the archives at the Academy of Music when he joined the organization in 2018. Reviewing items like the Orchestra's founding documents or a handwritten 1912–13 season grid prepared by Stokowski renewed his appreciation for the "innovation that has defined this Orchestra since its inception," Tarnopolsky says. "Having a firsthand and deeper understanding of our past is profoundly inspiring and can help to shape and inspire our future. But I was also concerned that they were tucked away and inaccessible. Making these stories available and accessible became an immediate priority."

Although most of the archival materials have shifted to Penn Libraries, the Orchestra will hang onto a few key aspects of the holdings, including an extensive collection of current and historical scores that are used to this day for performances.

The collection includes both the "profound and the mundane," says Quimby. "In a lot of the documents, we're privy to the huge amount of invisible labor that goes into making a production happen and managing these brilliant personalities who are the face of the Orchestra." But whether it's a letter from composer Sergei Rachmaninoff to Ormandy, or a detailed

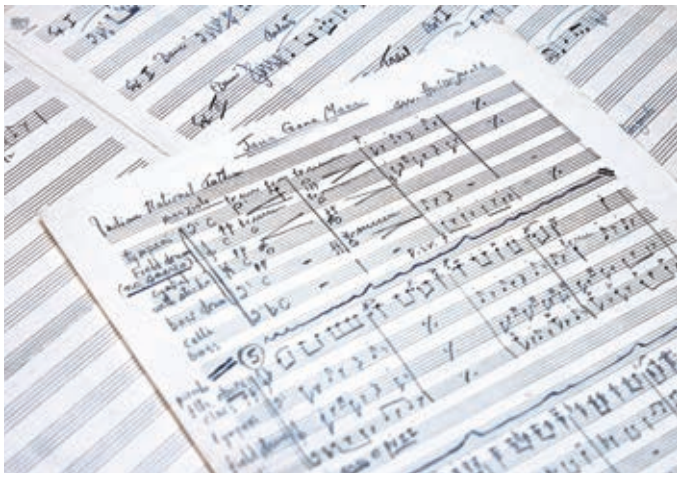


Photo by Eric Sucar, University Communications

These scores by Harl McDonald, a former Philadelphia Orchestra board member and Penn professor, are among the rare papers held at the Kislak Center.

itinerary for a 1937 month-long coast-to-coast train tour—complete with Pullman car assignments—the material is compelling.

Other highlights include performance programs spanning a century, a 178-box cache of records relating to the design and history of the Academy of Music, and nearly 50 boxes containing photos, including many autographed by notable artists and conductors. Separately, there are another 75 boxes containing 300,000 images (in formats such as black-and-white prints, negatives, contact sheets, and proofs) made by Adrian Siegel, a



longtime Orchestra cellist (1922–1959) who morphed from the institution's unofficial to (upon his retirement) official photographer, exhaustively documenting rehearsals and candid moments between peers.

Although mostly comprised of paper, the archives do contain some other media. Scattered among the photos are varied batches of slides, including some taken by various Orchestra members while on global tours. The recording collection of Donald Wetzel, an audio engineer for the Orchestra's radio broadcasts during the '60s and '70s, includes a complete set of the group's original 78rpm recordings (starting with its very first one from 1917), along with hundreds of other LPs, reel-to-reel tapes, cassettes, and CDs. Additionally, the donation includes more than 40 boxes of original film and video footage from programs produced by or for the Orchestra, as well as copies of broadcast TV specials, news appearances, and promos and ads. Another collection consists of dozens of tapes from an oral history project.

As an historian of technology, Quimby is especially intrigued by the chance to explore the impact of these changing media environments. "They allow us to trace the emergence of the Orchestra as a globally significant organization that adeptly adjusted to media formats as they developed," he says.

Another research thread that the trove might help unravel, he suggests, is the history of what were then known as women's volunteer committees. The Orchestra's version—formed in 1904, four years after its first concerts—was the first permanent organization of this kind in the US.

For now, though, the emphasis will be on getting the material in shape, little by little, for public access. "The archives arrive to us in pretty good condition since the Orchestra had a staff archivist," Quimby says. "But there's a difference between having a box that says it contains 1,000 pages of correspondence, and the kind of granular detail that will really help fine-tune the ability to research very specific topics." He estimates that it will take between three and five years to wrestle the material into order. The goal is to post material online as the work on cataloging and conservation is completed.

Performances and exhibitions will be part of the mix, too. This spring, for example, marks the return of the pandemic-interrupted "Music in the Pavilion Series" in the 1978 Orrery Pavilion on the sixth floor of Van Pelt Library. "We're very excited about the possibilities of sharing this extraordinary and special new addition to Kislak in as many ways as possible," Quimby says.

*—JoAnn Greco*

Photo courtesy Penn Libraries

GIFTS

## GSE Grant Sets Record

**A $16.25 million grant to Penn's Graduate School of Education** will create a new center for leadership in education and expand support for an existing annual prize to education innovators, the University announced in November. The gift—GSE's largest ever—is from the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Family Foundation, named for the former chairman and CEO of McGraw-Hill and focused on education, youth services, community health, and medical research.

The gift includes $10 million for a new McGraw Center for Educational Leadership, scheduled to launch in fall 2023, which will provide programs fostering an entrepreneurial approach to challenges in education for doctoral students, mid-career leaders in schools and higher education, and corporate chief learning officers. The remaining $6.25 million will further support the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education. Housed within Penn GSE since 2020, it provides three $50,000 awards annually for transformational work in preK–12 education, higher education, and learning science research. Past recipients include Sal Khan and Wendy Kopp, founders of Khan Academy and Teach for America, respectively.

"With the launch of the McGraw Center, those dedicated to teaching and learning will be able to devise more effective responses to the rapidly changing needs of learners today," said Penn President Liz Magill in the announcement. "We are deeply grateful to the McGraw family for their exceptional generosity."

"More and more, society needs educators who are well prepared to respond to the accelerated rate of change in the educational landscape, to turn challenges into opportunities, and to develop pioneering solutions to complex problems," added GSE Dean Pam Grossman. "Building on Penn GSE's outstanding legacy of preparing leaders in preK–12, higher education, and workplace learning, the new center will champion innovation across thought and practice."

# Return to Sender

Penn's law and medical schools join the elite exodus from *U.S. News & World Report*'s university ranking system.


Some of the top-ranked professional schools in the nation are tired of the system that ranks them.

On January 24, Penn's Perelman School of Medicine declared that it would stop contributing data for *U.S. News & World Report*'s annual medical school rankings. Perelman Dean Larry Jameson's announcement came almost two months after Penn's Carey Law School withdrew from *U.S. News*'s law school rankings.

Both schools had been ranked No. 6 in their respective fields, and both announced their exit from *U.S. News*'s process shortly after their peer institutions had done the same. Yale Law kicked off the action in November, spurning a No. 1 ranking after losing patience with a "profoundly flawed" system that Yale Law Dean Heather K. Gerken charged with "disincentiviz[ing] programs that support public interest careers, champion need-based aid, and welcome working-class students into the profession," thereby "undermining the core commitments of the legal profession." Nine of *U.S. News*'s top 14 law schools followed suit within roughly two weeks. An unsigned announcement from Penn called *U.S. News*'s methodology "unnecessarily secretive and contrary to important parts of the Law School's mission, including Penn Carey Law's increasing investment in need-based financial aid and public interest lawyering. We have directly and frankly shared these concerns with *U.S. News* and hope they will consider significant and meaningful changes in how data are calculated and published."

Among medical schools, No. 1 Harvard set off the flurry of defections on January 17. Stanford, Columbia, and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai quickly followed Harvard out the door, along with Penn.

"We reached the decision to end our participation not because of concerns that these rankings are sometimes based on data that can be inaccurate or misleading," Jameson explained, "but because the rankings measure the wrong things." He specified an overly narrow focus on the grades and test scores of matriculants at the expense of "other personal qualities, including creativity, passion, resilience, and empathy," which also "predict promise" of "transformative physicians, scientists, and leaders." He also objected to *U.S. News*'s "heavy weighting on federal research funding," calling it "another area where we excel" but noting that "medical schools vary widely in their research emphases and in their organizational structures, making comparisons difficult."

The disaffected schools have little control over *U.S. News*'s process, which relies on a mix of publicly available information and school-supplied data, including each institution's assessment of its peers. That subjective measure of reputation has significantly influenced rankings over the years and is among the information that will no longer be supplied by Penn Carey Law and the Perelman School of Medicine. *U.S. News* may of course elect to continue ranking the schools anyway, albeit on a playing field imbalanced by the absence of previously significant data.

Citing an interest in transparency, both schools pledged to make some of the data previously shared with *U.S. News* easily accessible. As of the end of January, Penn Carey Law's admissions website contained statistics on the GPA and LSAT scores of the most recent entering class, along with demographic data and information about financial aid through programs like the Robert and Jane Toll Public Interest Scholars Program, created by the late Robert Toll L'66 and his wife Jane Toll GEd'66 ["Gazetteer," Nov|Dec 2020]. The Perelman School's admissions website featured similar information, as well as a breakdown of the Class of 2022's post-graduation medical and surgical specialties.

January found *U.S. News* scrambling to limit the damage to its lucrative rankings franchise. The company's leadership sent a letter to law deans pledging to change their methodology in some respects. But schools—Penn included—did not appear to be clamoring for reentry by month's end. —*TP*

Illustration by Stephen Schudlich

# Play It Again, Sam

## The best men's lacrosse player in the nation never wanted to be anything but a "Penn man."

As drops of freezing rain land on his wavy blond hair, Sam Handley casually strolls around a near-empty Franklin Field on the final day of January, wearing sandals, sweats, and a blue North Face fleece.

Save for his 6-foot-5 frame, the Wharton senior almost looks unassuming—an impression deepened by his laid-back conversational style. "He's a little quiet," Penn men's lacrosse coach Mike Murphy says, "a little reserved."

Yet on the lacrosse field, with his helmet strapped on, Handley morphs into a ferocious competitor, "whether running by someone or running through someone," as Handley puts it. "I'm pretty calm and composed," says the Portland, Oregon native. "But if you mess with me, I'm definitely fiery."

Already one of the most accomplished players in program history, the tenacious midfielder entered the 2023 campaign as arguably the best college lacrosse player in the nation. Tapped by *USA Lacrosse Magazine* as its preseason player of the year, Handley is fresh off a 2022 season in which he had 36 goals and 37 assists, was a finalist for the prestigious Tewaaraton Award (the lacrosse equivalent of football's Heisman Trophy), and was named a first-team All Amer-


Sam Handley is on the watch list for the Tewaaraton Award, given annually to the nation's best college lacrosse player, after being a finalist for the prestigious prize last year.

Photo by Tommy Leonardi C'89

ican by several publications as well as Ivy League Player of the Year.

Asked if he's ever had a player come into a season with more buzz, Murphy is quick to respond. "No," the 14th-year head coach says. "Nobody here at Penn. Not even close."

Handley has been dominant from the time he set foot on campus, but he's had a tumultuous journey at Penn. In 2019, he set program records for a freshman in goals (35), assists (26), and points (61) and was the unanimous choice for Ivy League Rookie of the Year, helping the Quakers capture their first Ivy title in 31 years

**"When he's playing well, there's not a lot you can do defensively on him."**

["Sports," Jul|Aug 2019]. Less than a year later, in the 2020 season opener at Maryland, he took a hit whose pain reverberated as the game wore on and during the bus ride back to Philly. Feeling terrible over dinner afterward, he told his dad he needed to go to the hospital. Turns out, he had ruptured his spleen. "I'd been bleeding internally from whenever I got hit in the game," he recalls, "until they rushed me into surgery."

Handley credits the trauma surgeon, Brian Smith, for saving his life. But the recovery wasn't easy. He spent 10 days in the hospital, for most of which, he says, he "couldn't eat any food before throwing it back up." And regaining mobility—starting with walking around the hospital in medical compression socks—was a challenge. The 15-inch scar on his abdomen, meanwhile, was a constant reminder of what he'd been through.

After his hospital stay, Handley flew across the country to continue his recovery at his Portland home. About a week later, the COVID-19 shutdown caused most other Penn students to leave campus, too. "I guess I beat the rush hour traffic," Handley muses.

The 2020 season lost, a healthy and rejuvenated Handley eagerly anticipated a return to play in 2021. So when the Ivy League became the only Division I conference to cancel spring sports that year, it was an especially bitter pill to swallow—and it made him seriously wonder if he'd ever suit up for the Quakers again. But although he looked into transferring at the time, "the truth is I didn't want to be anything but a Penn man," he says. "I didn't have any interest in being a new guy in a new place and a new program again. I've been here so long. I know all my food spots. I know all the little ins and outs of campus." (His favorite food truck is Tacos Don Memo on 38th Street.)

It helped to know that Penn has as much of a chance to win a national title as most other programs—something the Quakers proved last year when they returned to the NCAA quarterfinals. And though he had "a lot of self-doubt" about whether his star-studded freshman campaign could have merely been a "flukey season," Handley picked up right where he left off to emerge as the top player in the country's best conference. (A whopping six Ivy teams qualified for the 2022 NCAA tournament.) He led the Quakers to a pair of dominant performances in the Ivy League Tournament ("Probably the best lacrosse weekend I ever had," he says) and set up the decisive goals in a first-round NCAA tournament win over Richmond in overtime ["Sports," Jul|Aug 2022].

"Last year Sam felt some pressure to live up to expectations," says Murphy, who believes Hadley's field vision and IQ sometimes get overlooked. "The thing that sticks out is his size and athleticism," the coach notes. "He looks like an NFL tight end. But I still think the thing that separates him is his understanding of the game, know-

## By The Numbers

**1**

Former Penn football players who have played in a Super Bowl after Justin Watson W'18 suited up for the Kansas City Chiefs in their 38–35 win over the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl LVII on February 12. Watson, Penn's all-time leader in receiving yards and receptions, caught two passes for 18 yards en route to his second Super Bowl triumph in the last three years. (He won a ring with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers two years ago but was inactive for that game.)

**50**

Years since the first Division 1 college football game featuring two Black starting quarterbacks—Penn's Marty Vaughn W'75 WG'81 and Brown's Dennis Coleman—was played. Both Vaughn and Coleman were recognized at the Ivy Football Association dinner in February, not long before this year's Super Bowl featured two Black starting quarterbacks for the first time.

**83**

Points the Penn men's basketball team scored in a home win over Harvard on January 30 to trigger the athletic department's newest free cheesesteak promotion: students with a valid ticket receive a free cheesesteak at Delco Steaks inside the Franklin's Table food hall. Delco Steaks happened to be temporarily closed that day because of a repair, but the Quakers turned it into a regular thing when they dropped 92 against Cornell the following week. (It was a far less routine occurrence when the Quakers needed to hit 100 points for fans to get a free cheesesteak at now-closed Abner's ["Gazetteer," Jul|Aug 2022].)

ing where the open guys are. When he's playing well, there's not a lot you can do defensively on him."

Had he followed the typical academic path, last season could have marked the end of Handley's Penn lacrosse career. But rather than graduate in May, Handley—along with classmates BJ Farrare, Piper Bond, and Dylan Gergar—dropped one class last spring, took the fall semester off, and returned to Penn this semester, needing to complete only one class to graduate. (It's a behavioral economics and public policy course.) Handley, Farrare, Bond, and Gergar—hardened by two thrilling seasons that bookended two lost ones—live together in an off-campus house. "Those are some of my best friends," Handley says. "I think adversity makes the bonds sometimes stronger."

Led by that veteran foursome and other promising players like junior Brendan Lavelle (who Murphy says is "poised to be one of the best defenders in the country"), the Quakers are hoping to finally break through and reach the NCAA final four, which this year will be held at Philadelphia's Lincoln Financial Field during Memorial Day Weekend. Penn's only been there once before, in 1988. Last year, the Quakers fell one game short after dropping a heartbreaker to Rutgers in the quarterfinals in a game in which Handley was hobbled by a broken foot. In 2019, they lost to Yale in that spot, in a 19-18 thriller. "That might be the hardest game to win in our sport," Murphy says.

Though he's dreaming of making it to championship weekend this May, Handley has big dreams beyond Penn too. He's projected to be the top pick in the Premier Lacrosse League (PLL) draft, has an investment banking job lined up in Los Angeles, and is in the product development phase of creating his own snack food brand. This past winter, he was also one of a handful of college players to try out for the US men's national lacrosse team, and though he didn't make it, he called it a "great overall experience."

But from February through May of this year, all eyes will be on Handley to see if he can replicate his college success one last time.

What does it mean for him to be widely considered the best college lacrosse player in the nation? Initially tentative about how to answer the question, Handley—a bulldog on the field, reticent off of it—later follows up with an email to carefully articulate his thoughts.

"Although being considered one of the best in the country is cool, I never started playing lacrosse to be the best," he wrote. "I started playing and kept playing because I loved it. However, if my younger self could see where we're at today, he'd be proud." *—DZ*

# THE OLDEN BOUGH

**Humans have revered ancient trees for about as long as we've chopped down forests. What does that fraught relationship reveal about our past? Can it illuminate a path toward a more hopeful future?**

By Trey Popp

On a bright November afternoon, Jared Farmer stood before a 55-foot-tall ginkgo in West Philadelphia's Woodlands Cemetery. The tree's fan-shaped leaves quivered at the tipping point of autumn—flame-yellow flashes streaking over seams of paling jade—while Farmer mused on its forebears. Two of the first three ginkgos planted in North America were cultivated on this very estate, by William Hamilton, who gave the third to his downriver friend John Bartram. The trio took root in 1785, two years before Philadelphia hosted the Constitutional Convention.

Jared Farmer sits next to the oldest ginkgo tree in North America, in Philadelphia's Bartram's Garden.

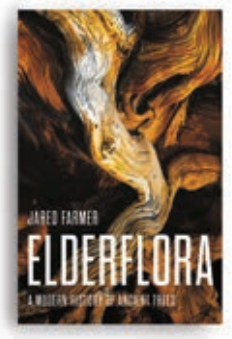
PHOTOGRAPH BY CANDACE DICARLO

"The one in Bartram's Garden is still alive," said Farmer, who joined Penn's faculty in 2020 and is the Walter H. Annenberg Professor of History.

In terms of longevity, that original is not much of an outlier. In the absence of external stress, ginkgo trees grow old without aging. That is to say, on a cellular level they do not senesce. This is one way trees in general differ from their human admirers. Wood production slows after a couple centuries, but ginkgos continue to churn out leaves, sperm, seeds, and antimicrobial defenses while converting sunlight into chemical energy in what Farmer likens to a "default mode of immortality." Some individual specimens have managed feats verging on resurrection. After the US detonated an atomic bomb over Hiroshima, a battered ginkgo less than a mile from Ground Zero generated new buds and a second growth ring for 1945. More than 75 years later, peace activists make pilgrimages every autumn to collect its seeds for distribution around the world.

**"No longer am I surprised to encounter secular people in search of the aura of instrumentally dated trees. Their seeking fits a deep pattern."**

The species' endurance is even more impressive on a geological timescale. *Ginkgo biloba* is the lone survivor of a plant order that flourished across the planet during the Age of Reptiles. Withstanding multiple mass extinction events and outliving their original seed dispersers, ginkgophytes were gradually driven into the mountains of present-day China during the last ice age, which wiped them out everywhere else. After the glaciers retreated, Chinese people started dispersing ginkgo seeds. Through all that time, and all those climates, the species appears to have remained essentially identical to fossilized antecedents that lived 100 million years ago. So when William Hamilton reintroduced it to North America, he became a link in a chain binding human caretakers with the fate of one of the oldest tree species on Earth.




The ginkgo's remarkable planetary career is one of many that Farmer sketches in *Elderflora: A Modern History of Ancient Trees*. The 2022 volume is a compendium of wonderful facts. Some of the "early instances of forest capitalism and forest conservation" were catalyzed by medieval English military demand for yew trees, whose ideal suitability for longbows triggered a Continental chopping frenzy from which central European stands never fully recovered—despite the conifer's uncanny ability to regenerate from fallen boughs or even stumps, and to change sexes (including on a limb-by-limb basis) at ages exceeding 1,000 years. In the 1820s, American entrepreneurs carved the massive base of Lake Erie's "Big Black Walnut Tree" into a public house, then a grocery store, and finally a traveling attraction that offered Manhattanites, Philadelphians, and ultimately Londoners the chance to file in 30 at a time to gaze at walls covered with genteel art. Thirty years later, another spectacle-peddler converted a multimillennial sequoia into a piano parlor big enough to seat "all the wives of Brigham Young"—who had recently married his 48th—only to be outmaneuvered by P. T. Barnum, whose smaller but fake mega-cedar looked more plausible than the genuine California "Mammoth Tree." More recently, radiocarbon dating has revealed that the Al-Aqsa Mosque on Jerusalem's Temple Mount was built in part with cedar beams reclaimed from Roman temples—which themselves had repurposed materials taken from monuments to Herod, the Jewish king who erected the Second Temple.

Meanwhile the planet's biggest ginkgo grove is now half a world away from China, on a South Carolina plantation where a German homeopathic company plucks the leaves of some 10 million brutally stunted, shrub-sized, but astonishingly resilient ginkgos with modified mechanical cotton harvesters to produce "mental sharpness pills" sold in over 60 countries.

Farmer's long-gestating book hit bookshelves and libraries at an opportune time. From Peter Wohlleben's forestry bestseller *The Hidden Lives of Trees* to Richard Powers' Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Overstory*, trees have been having something of a moment. In India, millions of volunteers have planted hundreds of millions of saplings in massive single-day drives that have become a new annual rite. Last year the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility issued its first payment to an independently verified carbon-emissions-reduction project—a $6.4 million beginning to a $721 million commitment to "results-based payments for forest-related emission reductions." Meanwhile scientific fascination grows for the mycorrhizal networks of the "Wood Wide Web," through which tree communities swap and share nutrients and send chemical signals.

*Elderflora* serves up a reminder that this outpouring of arboreal reverence is just the latest chapter in a saga as old as mankind. The ascent of the human species "started with fire," Farmer reflected as we strolled through the Woodlands. "It started with burning trees—clearing them for agriculture, or to produce a different type of habitat that was better for gathering

Chromolithograph depicting tourists walking in a grove of giant sequoias, each identified by name, circumference, and height.


food or hunting. And later, cutting trees for temples and houses and buildings. But there's this whole other part," he continued, "of people marking out trees and saying: *This is consecrated, and if you cut it, the gods will strike you down* … Or if we do cut it down, we will save that tree for the most sacred sweat lodge, or canoe, or temple door or shrine or palace."

People depend on all kinds of plants, from cereals and legumes to tubers and cotton. But few of them stir our spirits. Nobody hugs soybean stalks or winter rye. There's just something about trees—especially old ones—that tugs at human heartstrings in a unique way.

"The relationship between humans and trees is a fraught one," Farmer said as we strolled past flowering dogwoods and black walnuts and one of the biggest bald cypresses in Pennsylvania—a state named after its forests. "We revere them and we chop them down. We protect them and we vandalize them. But we tell stories about that desecration. And there's a reason we're still telling these stories."

Farmer is a Utah native who trained as a historian of the 19th century with a regional expertise in the North American West. At Penn he created and teaches an undergraduate seminar called "Petrosylvania," which students have lauded for its nuanced examination, through archival resources and fieldwork, of the histories and legacies of coal, oil, and natural gas in the "first fossil fuel state," with an emphasis on the city of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania. He came around to thinking about trees almost by accident. Or—you could say with equal accuracy—thanks to a Steam Age robber baron who doubled as an arboreal exoticist.

When Farmer first stepped onto the college campus Leland Stanford brought into being in the late 1800s, he couldn't take his eyes off the foliage. Stanford University was a Spanish Revival wonderland where Canary Island palms and Tasmanian blue gums branched out amidst relic live oaks and coast redwoods within a curtain of eucalyptus that separated town from gown. There was a tree on the uni-

Chromolithograph by Middleton, Strobridge & Co., circa 1860, courtesy Library of Congress Prints & Photographs

versity seal, a dancing tree mascot—it just went on and on, in this town that was itself named after a tree. "I had never seen a picture of Stanford," Farmer recalled. "I didn't know what to expect. And I was just dumbfounded."

When he reached the history department where he would pursue his doctoral degree, the experience turned almost biblical. "I walk into this interior courtyard, and there's an orange tree with a golden, ripe orange," he said. "I can remember picking this orange—I couldn't believe it was actually real—and eating this orange."

California is, among other things, a constant provocation to ponder the border between reality and artifice. Daily walks through Stanford's lushly wooded campus plunged Farmer into a curious space in between. The arboreal fecundity that generations of Californians have taken for granted is in large part a recent invention. Large swaths of the state were "basically treeless before European colonization." Before Spanish Franciscan friars planted the first mission orchards in the late 1700s, orange trees had been as alien as orangutans. By the mid-20th century, the state's vast citrus industry had created more wealth than its Gold Rush. As one brand of California capitalist reduced great tracts of redwood into shingles and railroad ties, another speculated on plantations of Australian eucalyptus as a fast-growing hardwood that could make up for the plunder—and perhaps even save the entire country from a lumber shortage, as some boosters pitched it. Meanwhile real estate developers plopped down palms beyond counting to lure homebuyers into an endlessly subdividable Golden State paradise.

On Stanford's campus, which bloomed with these dynamics, Farmer had an epiphany: "You could tell the history of modern California—California since the Gold Rush and the conquest and the genocide—with trees." His attempt yielded the award-winning *Trees in Paradise: The Botanical Conquest of California*, a "florid love letter to the Golden State" that sought to show that "conquest can be beautiful" as well as disruptive.

"We have forgotten the importance of trees in US history," the 2017 book argued. "It wasn't just the promise of landownership for white male citizens that set the republic apart from European monarchies. East of the Mississippi River, the land was wooded in a way that Europe had not been for centuries. Americans responded to this abundance with profligacy," turning trunks into timber with Bunyanesque vigor. Yet "the same spirit of improvement that had inspired the removal of forest cover in the East inspired the conservation—and addition—of trees in the Midwest and Far West."

North America exemplified a common trajectory in the 19th and 20th centuries, during which the breakneck liquidation of old growth forests curdled into remorse over their vanished majesty, ultimately galvanizing heroic attempts to protect whatever remnants could be saved. It happened to New Zealand's noble kauris, Chile's towering alerces, colonial Taiwan's multimillennial hinokis. ("To subjugate Taiwan," a Japanese official declared, "we must conquer its forests." Yet as Farmer observes in *Elderflora*, Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China "caused far worse deforestation than the reviled Japanese occupiers ever did.")

Often, the journey from plunder to penitence occurred within the lifetime of a single generation. Men who built their mansions from millennial conifers "pioneered nature protection as industrial philanthropy" through vehicles like the Save-the-Redwoods League, which may have "resembled a pro-eugenics social club for nature-loving Republicans" but nevertheless made common cause with Sierra Club progressives to preserve old-growth groves.

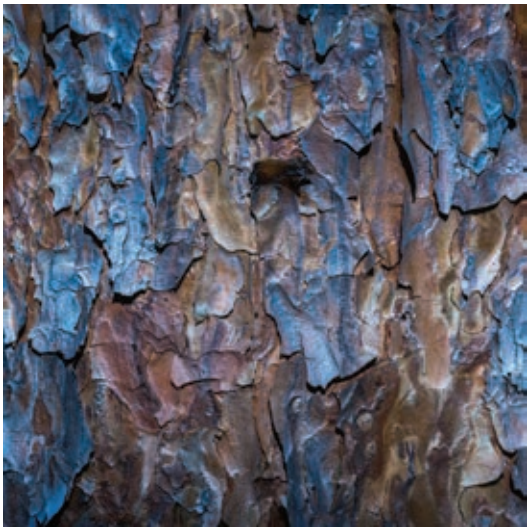
Farmer has always been environmentally oriented. If he hadn't pursued history, he reckons that he might have become a landscape architect or a geologist. "Or even a geomorphologist: I just love understanding how the surface of the Earth has changed in the human past." But writing an arboreal account of modern California changed the character of his environmentalism. "To my surprise," he told me, "I became a tree hugger—in a way that I sometimes used to snicker at."

*Elderflora* took him further down that path. Focusing on ancient specimens and long-lived species, which have inspired reverence across many cultures and eras, the book explores the shifting ways humans have turned to exemplary trees as objects of veneration and sources of insight.

Sweat lodges and temple doors are just the beginning. Even the history of modern tree-ring science, a central theme in *Elderflora*, reveals at least as much about human preoccupations as it does about the biology of bristlecone pines (from which the methodology has extracted especially rich knowledge). Men have sought all manner of things in the annual growth patterns of these gnarled Great Basin methuselahs—the reconstruction of biblical timelines, proof of sunspot radiation cycles, a record of our planet's fluctuating magnetic field, the history of regional megadroughts and global climate change—and found many of them. Wild-eyed fanatics and cold-eyed scientists alike have often treated superannuated trees primarily as a means to an end. Yet the mystique of ancient trees is as old as the epic of Gilgamesh, and Farmer partly credits 19th- and 20th-century trophy hunters with reawakening a reverence that had been subsumed by industrial-scale exploitation in much of the world.

"Again and again, when I thought I was researching evolutionary relics and history of science, the sources led me to cultural relics and religious studies," Farmer writes. "No longer am I surprised to encounter secular people in search of the aura of instrumentally dated trees. Their seeking fits a deep pattern."



# Cambium Landscapes

**It's been nearly 25 years** since biology professor Philip A. Rea last appeared in the *Gazette*—for his research on using plants to neutralize toxic wastes in contaminated soils ["Gazetteer," Sep|Oct 1999]. His interests have multiplied in the meantime. The Belldegrun Distinguished Director of the Vagelos Program in Life Sciences & Management has published on topics ranging from the history of statin drug development to a book of case studies of biomedical innovations.

On the side, he's been making fine art photography—including a series of close-up shots of tree bark.

"There are things we see almost each and every day which, if examined in isolation, as entities in their own right, from a particular angle or in a particular light, resonate with our senses," he explains. With these semi-abstract, highly textured renderings of striated, scarred, and flaking surfaces, Rea aims to convey a "heightened awareness of being alive but in an almost timeless, contextless way."

More of his photography can be found at philiparea.com.

It is scarcely a coincidence, for instance, that the Buddha is said to have achieved nirvana beneath a pipal tree. That *ficus* species, whose aerial root runners can split host trees apart to supplant them in tenacious feats of creative destruction, had been marked out as sacred by Vedic scriptures for centuries. The spread of Buddhism favored the fortunes of the pipal, which became a temple tree. Given that people neither eat its fruit nor use its poor-quality wood, Farmer observes, the species is distinguished by a uniquely human dynamic: it "was domesticated by—and for—devotion."

Olive trees yield sustenance, including oil once valued as fuel for light. But there are deeper reasons that the Hebrew Bible depicted an olive branch in the beak of a dove as the first tangible sign of worldly rejuvenation sighted by Noah after the flood, or that olive imagery abounds in the New Testament. Olive trees, which grow in a compartmentalized fashion from independent and exceptionally hardy roots, are so adept at regeneration, Farmer notes, that "Greek law protected stumps, for they were considered living fruiters."

Christian pilgrims have been visiting olive gardens associated with Gethsemane, near Jerusalem, since the fourth century CE—and Farmer adopts a sympathetic view toward contemporary evangelicals who believe they are praying under the same trees that shaded Jesus. "Could that possibly be true?" he asks in *Elderflora*, before citing eyewitness testimony from the historian Josephus that "the Roman commander Titus destroyed all the gardens and fruit trees adjoining Jerusalem in AD 70, leaving a melancholy scene of desolation." Yet it "seems doubtful that legionnaires axed every tree," he adds. "Besides, olives can resurrect from the stump. Believers can therefore believe."

And even for observers more impressed by radiocarbon dating suggesting an age of roughly 900 years, the remarkable fact remains: "At the Mount of Olives, these trees outlasted the Crusaders, outlived churches made of stone. They survived to become the second holiest Christian site in Jerusalem. Although they lack eternal life, their dispensation exceeds that of all current governments."

Perhaps the ease of chopping trees down amplifies the sentiment that accrues to specimens spared the axe. After deadlier weapons eclipsed the longbow, yews in all their long-lived and regenerative glory became "semisacred" icons of English churchyard cemeteries: consecrated trees imbued with "religious meanings at the local level" and symbolic resonance for groups ranging from traditionalist conservatives to New Age Wiccans. Across the modern world, the preservation of old trees and groves often takes on a nationalistic flavor just as readily as a religious one. Thus the cedars of Lebanon—which 16th-century European pilgrim-tourists "obsessively enumerated" as "incorruptible relics of biblical time"—have morphed into UNESCO-designated, government-protected icons that serve as "a unifying symbol in a nation divided by sectarianism and stymied by corruption."

Yet trees felled in the name of progress—be it scientific or commercial—have also been leveraged to bolster ideologies of all sorts, from ethno-chauvinism to political correctness. Consider the fate of the "Mark Twain," a 1,300-year-old sequoia cut down in 1891 to provide the American Museum of Natural History with the ultimate arboreal trophy: a cross-section of a tree whose base was more than 18 feet wide. Curators turned such artifacts into pedagogical tools that advanced particular historical narratives by way of timelines pegged to annual tree rings. In the early 20th century, these slabs frequently valorized a set of ideas verging on "white supremacy," as Farmer puts it in *Elderflora*, by means of tags emphasizing things like William the Conqueror; the Christian Crusades; and the arrival of Vikings, Christopher Columbus, and the *Mayflower* in the Western hemisphere. Yet a Mark Twain slab installed at Muir Woods National Monument shows how abruptly the historiographical winds can shift. "The original 1931 display included 'Battle of Hastings,' 'Magna Carta,' 'Discovery of America,' and 'Tree Cut Down,'" Farmer reports. "In the multicultural 1980s, Aztecs and Anasazi supplanted English kings and barons, and 'Tree Falls' replaced the overly candid terminus. After further revision in the 2000s, Columbus completed his three-step downgrade from discovering the New World to landing in it to merely sailing toward it."

Everywhere you go, people have singled some trees out as totems. Sometimes it happens literally, as with the cotton strings Indians wrap around chosen trunks or the rice-straw ropes used for the same purpose in South Korea. Sometimes it manifests in the form of protected preserves like Muir Woods or Sequoia National Park, each of which draws about a million visitors in a typical year.

"People have feelings about trees. People really care," Farmer exclaimed as we ambled along. *Elderflora* posits that the rise of tree ring science changed and deepened the character of that veneration. Beyond proving what had previously been conjecture—that some trees could indeed live thousands of years—dendrochronology demonstrated the astonishing resilience of particular species to drought, fire, pests, and other threats. Furthermore, annual variations in ring sizes in species like bristlecone pine enabled scientists to reconstruct the climatic conditions ancient trees had weathered.

One upshot was a pattern that's been repeated around the world: scientists bestow significance upon some specimen or stand, tourists flock to bear witness, and then a government endeavors to protect it. "There are now thousands of de facto sacred trees that didn't exist before" this secular process played out, Farmer exclaimed. "They are de facto

People posing with an 18-foot-diameter slab of the "Mark Twain" giant sequoia, felled in 1891 to be exhibited in the Natural History Museum in New York.

pilgrimage sites that people treat with reverence, and sometimes devotion, and have these very emotional experiences visiting these ancient trees. When you look at a place like Sequoia National Park, isn't that a sacred grove?"

Though sheer size is a good predictor of which trees humans choose to honor, veneration often flows to species that combine seeming immortality with extreme vulnerability. Before men came after them with serrated saw blades, the oldest sequoias had survived so many threats that they came to be regarded as essentially indestructible. Bristlecone pines embodied what pioneering dendrochronologist Edmund Schulman dubbed "longevity under adversity"—the oldest specimens often being found in poor soil and exposed locations, where limited competition favored a gymnosperm capable of shutting down damaged sections to bolster viable ones, even as its living outer layer of cambium remained just as vigorous at 4,000 years as at 40.

**Hallowed trees now bear a 21st-century dread. "They're beautiful anachronisms. Their climate left them 100 years ago."**

But tree love has lately become entangled with a sense of impending doom. In California alone, an estimated 129 million trees were killed between 2010 and 2017 by bark beetles, whose populations have exploded amid warming temperatures and drought conditions. Since 2014, this climate-pest interaction has brought death to at least 28 giant sequoias once regarded as all but imperishable.

Considering ancient trees from the vantage point of 2022 puts Farmer in a poignant mood. "They're beautiful anachronisms," he told me as we walked. "Their climate left them a hundred years ago." That atmospheric shift is etched into the rings of the very bristlecone pines it threatens. The fact that many continue to hang on shows "magnificent resilience," he added. "But trees have these hard mechanical thresholds for things like hydraulics. At a certain temperature, at a certain level of aridity, trees just have a hydraulic crisis and stop functioning. And that's going to happen more and more."

But apart from being what the *Wall Street Journal* called a "fascinating farrago of a book," *Elderflora* is also Farmer's attempt to "say something hopeful, or at least anti-hopeless"—as he puts it in the introduction—about the future.

"Climate doomism is 'our team's' equivalent of denialism," he remarked in the cemetery. "It's an abdication of hope. And if you give up hope, you give up the ethical imperative to act.

"So one of the challenges of climate action is finding time for hope," he went

Photograph by C. C. Clifford, 1891, courtesy Library of Congress Prints & Photographs

on. Tree appreciation offers a way that's already embedded in many cultures. "Our relationship to them is very old, and there's no reason to think that can't continue—even in a more precarious future when habitats are changing," he mused. "If you can imagine humans in the future still caring about a ginkgo 1,000 years from now, that's a continuity that connects to us now, that connects to ancient China—but then, through the ginkgo species itself, it connects you to a time before previous extinction events."

Among episodes in recent human history, the story of Australia's Wollemi pine suggests that this brand of tree-hugging has the potential to mobilize collective action. Before canyoneers spotted a few hardy specimens in the Blue Mountains in 1994, *Wollemia* had been thought to have gone extinct eons ago. The discovery of this "living fossil" touched off national excitement—and, almost simultaneously, national anxiety, when a wildfire prompted Aussies to agonize "over the possible extinction of a species they didn't know existed weeks before." The wild trees held on, and the largest one, dubbed "King Billy," was soon being cloned and marketed by a commercial nursery as a national icon "on par with koalas, wallabies, and kangaroos," Farmer writes. During the devastating Black Summer of 2019–20, when flames reached the very rim of the gorge that sheltered the original Wollemi pines, the government mounted what it called a "military-style operation" to save the stand, dropping water and fire retardant from bombers while firefighters irrigated below.

Yet a danger still lurks wherever old trees rouse human emotions. Used as rhetorical props, they can camouflage venality as easily as they can stir virtue. Standing among giant sequoias soon after his 2001 inauguration, President George W. Bush delivered an object lesson on how both can happen at once. "Some fear that places like this are scenes from a passing world. They're not. They will be here as long as we're willing to show careful regard for the environment … It will be to our lasting credit if these works of God are still standing a thousand years from now," intoned the president who was simultaneously withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol. Twenty years later, a similar script played out in Australia, where the ruling Liberal Party announced World Heritage Site protections for the Wollemi pine as an "asset of intergenerational significance." Meanwhile, Farmer notes, "the same politicians continued to give devotion and protection to Australia's coal industry, a stance climate activists called intergenerational thievery."

Nevertheless, ancient trees still have an undoubted power to stir people to stewardship, and that counts for something. Contemporary discourse around climate change is often tied to geological epochs. Rising during the Industrial Age from a baseline that had been steady for some 800,000 years, we are told, atmospheric carbon levels have now reached a level last registered on Earth roughly four million years ago. But *Homo sapiens*, who only came along much later, struggle to think on such distended timescales.

"Geological time is so intellectual. It's so remote," Farmer said as we approached the end of our walk. "It's very hard for people to feel geological time. But I think you can feel tree time. And there are trees all around the world that live a very long time. Not always 1,000 years, but they get to that seventh-generation—or beyond your grandchildren's grandchildren—threshold, beyond which it's normally hard to feel in the deep future."

And that, he said, may be one of the central challenges humans face in the 21st century.

"People are actually pretty good about retrospective thinking—long-term thinking in the past," the historian observed, casting a glance over the tree-topped tombs around us. "I mean, the cemetery is one of the oldest forms of landscapes. Burial grounds are really as old as our species. One of the great commonalities of all human groups is that we care about our dead. And not just at the moment of death, but we care about the place where the remains are placed. And we return to that place, and care about that place, and the connection between the dead, the living, and that place.

"But how many people care that much about 1,000 years from now? Or even know how to do that?" he asked.

In a present age dominated by economic thinking, arguments for conservation are frequently cast in terms of "ecosystem services." Through that prism, trees matter only insofar as they produce measurable benefits, be it a sustainable source of wood pulp for magazine paper, air-pollutant filtration, greenhouse-gas sequestration, or cooling shade for city streets. Farmer allows that all those things are relevant. But in *Elderflora* he draws upon a wider variety of human experience to suggest that trees can give us something whose value transcends quantification.

"One of the greatest gifts of trees is the gift of contemplation—the invitation to think about a long time. It's an ethical gift of temporal thinking," he said.

"You can't quantify that the same way as canopy cover or temperature difference between shaded versus unshaded neighborhoods—which is important too. But we collectively need to come up with ways to think about the future as a real place that we care about—that has people but also other living things that people care about," he declared. "And I think trees are a good way to do that.

"They're not the only way. But it's a very powerful way. A lot of people care about trees. In a sense, that gives even more urgency: if we want as many people as possible to experience the beauty of a tree, and care for it in a well-built city on a habitable Earth, all the more reason to act now."

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# A Life's Calling

**For Liz Theoharis, activism has been a way of life—from assisting her parents with their justice work, to community service as a Penn undergrad, to cochairing the recent revival of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign of 1968. The Presbyterian minister, social justice leader, and biblical scholar is committed to reframing the narrative around poverty and the poor while pushing for lasting policy changes.**

By Samantha Drake

Speaking at an interfaith vigil on the grounds of the US Capitol on the eve of the two-year anniversary of the January 6 attack there, Rev. Liz Theoharis C'98 cited the passage from the Gospel of Matthew, often known as the "Last Judgment," when Christ divides the saved and the damned according to their treatment of those most in need. In it, she said, Jesus called on the nations to meet the needs of the people, instead of oppressing and subjugating the people, denying them healthcare, ignoring the hungry, deporting immigrants, and denying them the rights to make decisions that impact their lives. She added with a slight smile: "And even though this is from thousands of years ago, doesn't it sound familiar today?"

In her remarks, Theoharis—one of several speakers at the event, organized by the Franciscan Action Network (FAN), a faith-based public policy advocacy group in Washington, DC—also remind-

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATHAN BAJAR

ed the approximately 70 attendees and 1,200 online viewers of Jesus's priorities according to the Bible: "Here's a spoiler alert—the issues that Jesus holds dear are not about gun rights or waving flags or determining who can marry who. They're not about having politicians pick their voters rather than voters electing their leaders. They're not about controlling women's bodies or harassing and threatening LGBTQ and trans youth. No, those issues are the work—the law—of empire," she said.

"Instead, Jesus's main concerns are food and sustenance and immigrant rights and healthcare and an adequate standard of living and decent housing and prison abolition. They're about peace among and between nations letting the light of justice and peace and truth shine, lifting from the bottom so that everybody—*everybody*—rises."

Theoharis is the cofounder and cochair with Rev. William J. Barber II of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. The movement, launched in 2018, is modeled on the Poor People's Campaign organized 50 years earlier by Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to focus attention on poverty and economic inequality through nonviolent direct action.

FAN Executive Director Michele Dunne calls the campaign "the most compelling movement in the United States addressing the interlocking issues of economic injustice, racial injustice, and environmental injustice." FAN invited Theoharis to speak at the vigil "because we knew she would speak with clarity, with conviction, and also with love," says Dunne. "She's an incredibly important and inspiring and challenging public speaker."

Though FAN had offered to put her up overnight in a hotel after her speech, Theoharis opted to ride the train back home to New York afterward, so she could take her son, Luke, 10, and her daughter, Sophia, 13, to school in the morning.

**Theoharis estimates she's been arrested 20 times. The first was during her time at Penn.**

The day after the vigil, she arrived around mid-afternoon at the Union Theological Seminary, where she directs the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice. She's been associated with the school for 20 years, having earned a master of divinity degree and doctorate in New Testament and Christian Origins there. These days, she works largely from her Upper Manhattan home but comes to the campus as necessary.

Her workspace is a meeting room in the basement level of the old building, located off a warren of corridors. King used one of the passageways in 1967 to safely leave the nearby Riverside Church where he gave his "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" speech. After King's assassination in April 1968, the SCLC moved forward with the Poor People's Campaign. The organization and thousands of demonstrators staged protests in Washington, DC, for more than a month calling for economic justice.

Under Theoharis and Barber's leadership, the revived Poor People's Campaign targets what it calls the "interlocking evils of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, militarism and the war economy, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism." The group's stated fundamental principles are threefold: shift the narrative on poverty and the poor; build power; and help enact legislation and policies to address poverty and related injustices around immigration, labor rights, voting rights, climate change, gun violence, and the rights of women and marginalized populations including the LGBTQ+ community.

The Poor People's Campaign has coordinating committees in nearly 40 states, a listserv of approximately 400,000 people engaged with the campaign, approximately 400 organizations that partner with or endorse the campaign, and it works with 20 national faith groups. Through these combined efforts, the movement has reached an estimated 50 million people, according to Theoharis.

The campaign's events have mobilized hundreds of thousands of people in person and millions more online, she says. Many events, like FAN's vigil at the Capitol, are intended to peacefully raise awareness and educate. Other efforts involve nonviolent civil disobedience. The Poor People's Campaign has protested at the Capitol and the US Supreme Court, blocked traffic, and taken over other spaces to draw attention to its cause. Theoharis estimates she's been arrested 20 times.

Her first arrest occurred during her time at Penn. She and other activists for the poor and homeless were charged with obstructing traffic in front of City Hall as they stood in the street to protest Philadelphia's cuts in funding for housing programs. Theoharis says she spent the night in jail reflecting on how much more effort society invests in criminalizing the poor instead of investing in the community's needs.

She's also been arrested while protesting with Walmart employees for better wages and benefits in front of Walmart heiress Alice Walton's Park Avenue apartment in New York just before Black Friday, and at the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy to call attention to the plight of families with contaminated drinking water.

The campaign's civil disobedience actions get results, Theoharis says. Upon the Poor People's Campaign launch in 2018, the group staged nonviolent direct actions simultaneously at the US Capitol and approximately 35 state capitals every Monday for six weeks. "It was the largest and most expansive wave of nonviolent civil disobedience in the 21st century and brought poverty and its interlocking in-

Martin Luther King Jr. used this passageway near Theoharis's basement work space at Union Theological Seminary to safely leave nearby Riverside Church after a 1967 speech on the Vietnam War.

justices into the nation's attention and political discourse," she notes. "Some policy changes were won around living wages in California, and healthcare expansion in Kansas, and pushing back work requirements for dental care in Kentucky. But perhaps even more importantly, poverty was on the national agenda for the first time in decades."

Yet making progress doesn't keep Theoharis from getting nervous about the prospect of being arrested or harassed. "You're taking a stance, not just to take a stance, but to say you feel so deeply and you think society or your adversary is doing something so wrong that you're willing to step in the way of that," she explains. "But you can't do that and then not be willing to go to jail or face some level of harassment or have people say or do mean things."

Theoharis first met Barber when she invited him to be a keynote speaker at the Kairos Center's founding symposium, during which relaunching King's Poor People's Campaign was discussed. Barber is the president of Repairers of the Breach, a Goldsboro, North Carolina-based organization he founded in 2015 to combat policies that negatively affect poor and marginalized communities. In addition, Barber recently became the founding director of the new Center for Public Theology and Public Policy at Yale Divinity School.

Theoharis says the two "really liked each other when we met," and they remained in touch. When Barber came to Union Theological Seminary on sabbatical in 2016, he conceived the idea to travel to five or six cities on a tour calling for the "moral revival" of the nation's constitutional and religious values. Barber and Theoharis ended up visiting more than 20 cities and towns across the country, culminating with a service at the Riverside Church. Together, they relaunched the Poor People's Campaign, drawing on their respective visions and networks, so that "I'll take the lead on some things, and he'll take the lead on other things, and we're both still directing and leading our own organizations," Theoharis notes.

This year, on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Poor People's Campaign sent a video message to the White House and members of Congress, in which Barber, Theoharis, and others demanded that the president and Congressional leaders meet with poor and low-income people, religious leaders, economists, and others to address policies that "threaten the soul of our nation."

Leading off, Barber spoke of "one America that has everything it needs [and] another America that suffers day in and day out." He took Republicans and Democrats alike to task for their failures over the last two years. "We've seen far too many Republicans gleefully glad to get power so they can support autocratic leadership and greed

and lust of for-profit mechanisms and so they can engage in retrogression to roll back rights that have already been won," he said. "And too many Democrats [are] too gleeful over compromised successes that yes, have done some things, things that we've supported, but have not finished the job."

Later in the video, Theoharis focused on the realities of people living in poverty in her own home state of New York, where "more than half of all kids are poor and low-income," she said. "More than one in four workers—2.3 million people—make less than $15 an hour. Health insurance gaps are associated with nearly 10,000 COVID deaths. And New York state public schools, the same schools my kids go to, are some of the most segregated in the country."

Theoharis has been a social justice advocate for as long as she can remember. She grew up in Milwaukee with her parents, Nancy and Athan Theoharis, and older siblings Jeanne and George. "I am very much a product of the Midwest, and I grew up in a family that was very dedicated to doing the work of social justice," she says. "From a very young age, I was going to protests and demonstrations and educational events, both around racism and poverty and how they manifested in Milwaukee and across the state of Wisconsin."

Nancy devoted her time to a variety of faith-based organizations, including the National Council of Churches of Christ and the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, and helped establish the Milwaukee Committee for UNICEF. A history professor at Marquette University, Athan pioneered the use of Freedom of Information Act document requests in research to uncover civil liberties abuses by the FBI, particularly under longtime agency director J. Edgar Hoover, and wrote several books on the subject. (Nancy died in 2020 and Athan in 2021.)

Theoharis recalls helping her parents when she was as young as seven or eight years old, setting up her mother's slide projector for a presentation or organizing index cards on the living room floor that her father compiled for the books he was writing. By middle school, family activities often centered on grassroots political campaigns, educating the public about global poverty, and helping bring international faith leaders, such as South African anti-apartheid activist Archbishop Desmond Tutu, to Milwaukee.

As a teenager, Theoharis helped organize a day camp focused on overcoming systemic racism. "Milwaukee's a very segregated city, it's a very impoverished city," she says. "We were always connecting the local to the global around issues of racial justice, anti-poverty work and democracy—so, many of the things that I'm still really interested in today."

Theoharis brought her activist outlook to Penn, where she pursued a degree in urban studies with a minor in anthropology. She says she worked "close to full-time the whole time I was going to college," including for a University program that coordinated student involvement in grassroots organizations in Philadelphia, and studied abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico. In the process, she found a community of students and faculty drawn to issues of inequality and committed to making a difference.

She also used activities she had enjoyed in high school, including dance, theater, and soccer, to create opportunities for public school students in West Philadelphia. "I coached soccer and recruited other soccer players to come and help lead sports. I started a choir at a middle school because it didn't have much of a program," she recalls. "I did have other interests, but I mostly turned them into things to do in the community across divides in differences, with special attention to issues of inequality."

Theoharis also met her future husband, Christopher Caruso C'94, at Penn. Caruso, a philosophy major, is the operations director at the Kairos Center.

Faith played a huge role in Theoharis's upbringing. Her mother was very active in faith-based communities, and even though her father was an atheist, he supported his family by attending church with them every week.

At 13, she was teaching Sunday school and by 16 she served as a deacon, visiting church members unable to attend church in person. However, Theoharis says, the idea of becoming a Presbyterian minister didn't take root in her mind until later.

At Penn, she became involved in organizations focused on ending poverty, such as the National Union of the Homeless and National Welfare Rights Union, and she found herself increasingly questioning how the church handled issues surrounding the poor.

"I was really disappointed in the church-at-large's response—not individual churches, necessarily—to the problems of racism and poverty. So many of our congregations and the church-at-large blamed poor people for their poverty and put out a message that if God wanted to address these issues, then they would be addressed," she says. "It was more or less the idea that poor people are sinners, not that poverty is a sin."

After graduation, Theoharis worked for the National Council of Churches to evaluate some of its social justice programs and train congregations across the country in effective anti-poverty organizing. She realized then that her organizing work around poverty and inequality needed to be done from a religious perspective.

Theoharis enrolled at the Union Theological Seminary in 2001, where she was named the first William Sloane Coffin Scholar. (She had known Coffin, a senior pastor at Riverside Church and a father of the peace and justice movement in the Presbyterian church, as a child.) But 12 years passed before Theoharis was ordained—due to an epiphany that set her on a new path. "I realized that part of the work I was called to do was to challenge the church's re-

sponses to poverty and to poor people in particular," she says.

Theoharis also realized that biblical and theological justifications for inequality and poverty posed an obstacle to her work, particularly Jesus's words in Matthew 26:11: "The poor you will always have with you." Many people have misinterpreted this passage to justify abdicating the responsibility to end poverty, she says.

She enrolled in a PhD program at Union Theological Seminary "because I couldn't go through a week of my life organizing out in the world around poverty and racism issues without people from all walks of life—religious and nonreligious—throwing the Bible and theology back at me to say, 'Well, aren't the poor going to be with you always?'"

Theoharis decided to challenge this and other theological justifications for injustice. In the process, she founded the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice in 2013, an expansion of the existing Poverty Initiative at Union Theological Seminary. Theoharis also wrote the book *Always With Us? What Jesus Really Said About the Poor*, published in 2017. By examining biblical texts, how the poor lived during Jesus's time, and Jesus's social, economic, and political status as a poor man, she contended that the phrase "the poor you will always have with you" actually means the opposite of how it has been generally understood.

In addition, Theoharis coauthored *Revive Us Again: Vision and Action in Moral Organizing* (2018) and edited *We Cry Justice: Reading the Bible with the Poor People's Campaign* (2021). She's written or cowritten numerous opinion pieces as well, for outlets including the *New York Times* and *Politico*. Along the way, Theoharis's work has been frequently recognized. She received the 30th Annual Freedom Award from the National Civil Rights Museum in 2021 and was named one of 15 Faith Leaders to Watch by the Center for American Progress in 2020, among other honors.

Ministers around the country look to Theoharis as an example, according to University Chaplain and Vice President for Social Equity and Community Charles L. "Chaz" Howard C'00. "If you polled 10,000 clergy people in the country about who the most impactful ministers are across a range of denominations, I think Liz would be on just about everybody's list," he says.

Howard knew about Theoharis through her writings and work with Barber. "I knew *of* her before I knew her. As a minister, she's very well known to other ministers," he notes. "Bizarrely, I didn't know she was a Penn grad until much later." He met Theoharis while participating in Poor People's Campaign activities, and the two have since become friends.

Theoharis's work is changing lives and helping shape policy, Howard adds.

"The relaunch of the Poor People's Campaign, which is in a lot of ways a continuation of Dr. King's work, is a big deal, really a big deal," he says. "The mass organizing and creation of a pretty robust network of both clergy and people who aren't ordained is a big deal."

At the same time, "the advocacy work that she and Barber have done has affected policies, particularly some of the things that President Biden and Vice President Harris have leaned into," he notes. "They've helped push the [Democratic] party to take more seriously challenges that poor people are navigating."

Theoharis and Barber's partnership as a white woman and a Black man working together on social justice issues is also noteworthy, Howard adds, with some caveats. "It's important to see her and Reverend Barber as a team. I think there's something inherently dangerously sexist about that—hitching her journey to the journey of a man. I don't mean to articulate that, and I don't think that's true," he says. "At the same time, one could say the inverse about hitching the journey of a Black man to a white woman. I think it's something that needs to be named but not overstated."

**"The poor you will always have with you" actually means the opposite of how it has been generally understood.**

In 2023, the Poor People's Campaign will continue to organize communities and build power, as well as prepare for the 2024 elections, Theoharis says. To have the biggest impact, the campaign is focused on "enlivening and enlarging" poor and low-income voters. A third of the US electorate that votes, not just those who are eligible or registered, are poor and low-income people. "That's a huge power block," she says.

In the five years since the relaunch of the Poor People's Campaign, Theoharis believes the narrative on poverty has indeed started to shift. Policymakers and think tanks credit the campaign with both raising awareness of the issues and putting forward solutions, such as raising the wages of the lowest-paid workers, that can make a real difference in people's lives, she says.

Clearly, the changes the Poor People's Campaign seek to bring about won't happen overnight. Theoharis's lifetime of activism has prepared her for the realities of the long road ahead—while her faith keeps her on that road.

"Faith is that, even when there's mostly death and destruction and pain and suffering and violence around, something else is possible," she says. "One of the things that keeps me really positive and committed to this work is that I truly believe that this is what is required of me if I'm going to call myself a Christian."

Theoharis readily acknowledges that she gets discouraged at times but says she finds inspiration in words from King's final speech in 1968: "Only when it is dark enough can you see the stars."

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Samantha Drake CGS'06 is a freelance journalist in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

# Rich History,

**At Penn Live Arts, the legendary Negro Ensemble Company is creating new work that explores this country's racial tensions and challenges. A February world premiere, *Mecca is Burning*, brought together five playwrights to imagine how four Black families in Harlem might navigate a white supremacist revolution.**

By Julia M. Klein

"This is lovely. I see you've got poetry in you," director Karen Brown tells cast members rehearsing *Mecca is Burning*.

That should prove useful: The Negro Ensemble Company's collaboratively written piece, climaxing in an apocalyptic racial confrontation, is a complex mosaic of poetry, prose, and music. Later in the evening, Brown, the NEC's executive producer and artistic director, urges another actor to be "a little poetic" in his delivery. He obliges, and his amped-up monologue takes flight.

Undaunted by a handful of absences, the company is making its way through draft nine—a near-final version—of the work-in-progress. The product of five playwrights, including Brown, it depicts the varying responses of four Harlem families to the catastrophe of race war. The scenario seems at once fantastical and, in its nod to white supremacist violence, ripped from the headlines. It chronicles a dystopic American future that is both threatening and still possible to avert.

The setting for this January rehearsal is a mostly bare, fluorescent-lit, mirror-lined studio space in New York's Theatre District. A grand piano sits covered and quiet. The actors, gathered around a table, read their own parts and fill in for missing colleagues. Like most new works, *Mecca is Burning* keeps morphing, and the cast is not yet off book. Brown, who is editing the script, listens intently, her lips pursed, trying to figure out what trims or adds are needed.

She is also envisioning lighting cues and sparring good-humoredly with set designer Patrice Andrew Davidson over scenic possibilities. "I don't like linear stuff. I like curves, I like angles," Davidson says. Costume designer Rhonda Lucas remains

The five playwrights involved in *Mecca is Burning* initially wrote their scenes independently, then collaborated to refine what one called "a huge *Moby-Dick* version of the show." The pointing hand belongs to cast member Imana Breaux.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON HAMERMAN

# New Visions


MECCA IS BURNING 77
A'BRIAN
Harlem is... Harlem is everything. Harlem is pure black energy. Harlem is the black and brown faces you see every day out there grinding to make a buck. Harlem is the heart
lem is the music. Harlem is the art. Harlem is the movement. Harlem is the voices
sounds
boogying and twerking in the street. Harlem is the subway a
tha
you
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arlem is the city blackou
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tunity for hustlers sell
and swiping your headlights to sell them back to
That's
Harlem is the pimp
our stride that causes
bour
and
to
w
down past our hip
we walk. That's pimping Bae! Harlem is the prophet barely standingstraight-u
e corner baptized in muscatel coherently articulating every government cons
That's Black Media.
Harlem is the lady
every day on the A-Train riding back and forth, asking for "change to spare
just bad luck. Harlem is getting home from work and can't get in the building
hat's going down on the stoop is more entertaining, and informativethan
t's Community.
Harlem is sitting
M&G's for an hour and a half waiting for them to open for breakfast, cause
ts and sausage, even the waitress with her funky ass attitude who toss
plate of food at you, is totally worth the wait. That's black business. Harlem
ring 125th street, trying to catch the African, bootlegger who sold you thatne
D.V.D., release, that got you yelling at yoh kids cause they tal
nly to find out the 46 baby crying was his kid who wouldn't
ops was recording. That's the cost of doing business.
can
wearing shorts a month before
they know it, and don't give a
Harlem is the old lady getting off
bags who won't let you help carry them, cause
as been doing it all her life, and will bust you up if you
your elders. Harlem is never having been to visit the
bitch ain't going nowhere, never has, so, who gives a shit.
d right here. Harlem isnever having to know our place cause
core, and that ain't gonna ever change. That's black power.
DEE'JA-RAY
ple, then Black people are everywhere, so Harlem is everywhere.
all Street, Harlem is Colfax Louisiana. Harlem is the Atlanta
is Elaine Arkansas. Harlem is Rosewood Florida. Harlem is
Carolina, hell, Harlem is Queensland, before it was renamed

noncommittal about her ideas. "I want to see how the actors perform, how they move," she says in an interview. "All I know is that it's present time."

"This is the final day of the development with the cast," Brown explains during a rehearsal break. "Next we're going to start blocking it, and giving people beats and motivations—all that actor stuff."

Opening night is just over a month away.

The mid-February premiere of *Mecca is Burning* at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts represents the culmination of the renowned New York-based company's 2022–23 residency at Penn Live Arts. As artist-in-residence of the Brownstein Residency for Artistic Innovation, the group has been creating work that embodies contemporary Black concerns, as well as interacting with Penn students and community members.

Christopher A. Gruits, executive and artistic director of Penn Live Arts, says awarding the residency to the NEC made organizational sense. "There's a really long history here of supporting Black storytelling," he says, citing past productions of August Wilson plays and the University's association with the BlackStar Film Festival. "I was trying to build on that legacy and really think about how we can create formats and platforms for Black artists to go deeper in addressing some of the issues that are facing Black America today."

In October, the NEC premiered *Our Voices, Our Time: One-Act Play Festival* at Penn, before transferring the three one-acts to New York's Cherry Lane Theatre. This past fall, NEC members, including Brown, paid two visits to the University's academically based community service class, "August Wilson and Beyond," cotaught by Herman Beavers, the Julie Beren Platt and Marc E. Platt President's Distinguished Professor of English and Africana Studies.

"We wanted our students to have a sense of the productivity, but also the excitement and the challenges that went with trying to start a theater company," Beavers says. "When the NEC came on the scene, there were still people saying, 'What is there about Black life that's even worth depicting on Broadway?'"

Since its inception in 1967, the NEC has built a reputation for advancing Black playwrights, directors, actors, and perspectives. The company's alumni include Denzel Washington, Samuel L. Jackson, Louis Gossett Jr., Sherman Hemsley, Phylicia Rashad, Angela Bassett, Laurence Fishburne, and Ruben Santiago-Hudson. "The NEC is this place where several generations of actors went to be trained in the craft of theater," Beavers says.

The group's founders—playwright Douglas Turner Ward, producer/actor Robert Hooks, and theater manager Gerald Krone—drew inspiration, in part, from the 1959 Broadway production of Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and the 1964 Obie Award-winning *Dutchman* by LeRoi Jones (the future Amiri Baraka). "Doug [Ward] was influenced by the principle of being able to create out of your own experience and have it respected," says Brown, a former journalist and educator.

In 1973, Joe Walker's *The River Niger,* about a contemporary Black family in Harlem, became the first NEC production to transfer to Broadway, where it won a Tony Award for Best Play. It was adapted into a 1976 film starring Cicely Tyson and James Earl Jones. In 1981, the NEC premiered Charles Fuller's *A Soldier's Play,* about an investigation into the murder of a Black sergeant on a Louisiana Army base during World War II. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and was adapted into the 1984 film *A Soldier's Story*. The original production, featuring Samuel L. Jackson and Denzel Washington, never made it to Broadway, but a recent Roundabout Theatre Company revival did, winning a 2020 Tony Award. The national touring version played Philadelphia this winter under the auspices of the Kimmel Cultural Campus's Broadway Series.

In Beavers' view, the NEC diverged from the more overtly political Black Arts movement of the 1960s and '70s in its emphasis on "glimpses into Black life." Its work, he says, tended to be less formally experimental, "more grounded in the idea of the well-made play," and "not necessarily as confrontational."

"I don't think NEC has ever been one of those identifiable 'in your face' political theaters," says Levy Lee Simon, one of the *Mecca* playwrights and a former NEC actor. "But I think that anything we do is political when we are being bold enough to tell our own stories. It's just a different approach."

Brown describes the NEC's mission as presenting Black perspectives to a diverse audience. "We all experience the same things: love, joy, hate, pain, passion," she says. "We are charged as the Negro Ensemble Company to try to provide some voice for what is being felt in this community. What the University of Pennsylvania is providing for us is an opportunity and a platform to reach outside the community."

"We are bringing back our voices, our time, so to speak, into the arts," says Steven Peacock Jacoby, an actor who made his NEC debut in the one-act play festival. "We are an expressive people. These are diverse Black voices stating their frustrations, their love—our humanity. We're not just caricatures. We've given so much to this world, it's about time we get our just due."

This year's NEC premieres, both the one-acts and *Mecca is Burning,* tackle racism and violence head-on. "We have to define ourselves as a company of the now," says Brown. She argues that the Black community is increasingly embattled: "We are looking at a rise in divisiveness, a rise in racism. We are looking at the limiting of women's rights, of voting rights for African American people."

In Cris Eli Blak's one-act, *Clipper Cut Nation,* a Black barbershop in an unspecified big city is the setting for a confrontation between a father, Sanford Grady, who years earlier lost his son to

Kenya Wilson, one of eight actors in the cast of *Mecca is Burning*, in rehearsal for the play, with choreographer Leslie Dockery in the background.

street violence, and a mayoral candidate who may have been culpable. "That really hit home to a lot of people," says Jacoby, who played the bereaved father.

Another of the one-acts, Cynthia Grace Robinson's *What If… ?,* is a direct response to the murder of George Floyd, in May 2020, by a Minneapolis policeman. One character, a Howard University student, tells her mother, a nurse caring for COVID patients, about a similar confrontation involving her best friend. The worried mother urges her daughter to avoid a subsequent protest. "I've already lost your father," she says. "I can't lose you, too."

In *Mecca is Burning,* the strains of gentrification—or what playwright Blak calls "an invasion, an occupation, a stealing of property"—foreshadow armed conflict between whites and Blacks. In the world of the play, the inciting factor is former President Trump's flight from arrest, which touches off nationwide white supremacist riots. Over the course of a day, characters of varying temperaments, inclinations, and politics must decide how to respond: Should they try to escape the conflagration, or take up arms? "Sometimes the pressures of being Black in America are just too much," one male character says.

**"We are charged as the Negro Ensemble Company to try to provide some voice for what is being felt in this community."**

In *Mecca,* Jacoby plays yet another man marked by loss: a widower, Henry, seeking to protect both his daughter and his community. "He wants to make a difference," says Jacoby. "He doesn't want to be part of the scenery."

Having seen *A Soldier's Play* as a child, Jacoby grew up admiring the NEC. Initially drawn to broadcasting, he was living and studying in London when, in November 1995, he saw Guy Burgess play *Othello*. "I can do this," he told himself. He went on to attend New York's Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute, where his mentor was the late Irma Sandrey, a member of the Actors Studio and a protégée of Strasberg himself.

Despite a long list of acting credits, ranging from theater to commercials, Jacoby sometimes needs to take day jobs; he currently is a doorman at a Brooklyn hotel. *Mecca is Burning* has

Photo by Don Hamerman

been a particular acting challenge, he says: "You have different points of views and different styles of writing—and how it's structured feels more like vignettes of different characters in one setting. We're calling it a montage."

Writing collaboratively required "piecing a puzzle together," Blak says during a Zoom call along with two of his fellow playwrights, Levy Lee Simon and Lisa McCree. The first step, in October, was "a lot of conversations," he says. "We started with the seeds—we didn't start with the plant."

The *Mecca* playwrights (including Mona R. Washington, who also authored the third one-act) wrote their scenes, each involving a specific family, separately. They then conferred over Zoom, refining what Blak calls a "huge *Moby-Dick* version of the show."

While the central conflict and characters didn't change, Blak says, Brown's gentle guidance helped fine-tune the script. "We would listen to [the pages] together. We would see what worked," he says.

"We all have different voices, yet we're all aiming for the same target. The importance of having multiple writers is to show there's no monolithic experience to Black life. There is no one way. There are multitudes, there are layers. And that's why the piece isn't just one song on repeat."

When he was growing up in Houston, Blak gravitated to basketball and hip hop. "Theater felt expensive and inaccessible and costume-y and extravagant," he says. Then he realized: "Maybe I can change that, maybe I can tell the stories that I wish I had been exposed to when I was growing up." He first connected with the NEC in 2020, when he won its 10-minute play contest.

As a child actor, McCree says, "I was never in anything that I could identify with. I was tired of playing Glinda, the Good Witch, but never anything that really spoke to my experience as a young Black child." Her playwriting career got a boost in the 1990s when she won a New York University competition. Now based in Connecticut, McCree spent a quarter century in Harlem and still considers it home. So when Simon, a longtime friend, asked her to join the *Mecca* project, she "just jumped on board."

Born and raised in Harlem, Simon, who now lives in Los Angeles, is an award-winning actor, director, and playwright who "always felt a calling" to theater. His first professional acting job, in 1987, was with the NEC, in a revival of *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*. New York's Circle Repertory Company produced his first play, *God, the Crackhouse, and the Devil,* in 1994. In 1996, he won a fellowship to the University of Iowa's three-year Playwrights Workshop, where he earned an MFA. "I figured I'd write a play a year, and ended up writing 18," a dozen of which have since been produced, he says. Before *Mecca,* his work had received 45 productions.

Last fall, Brown called Simon "out of the blue" and told him she was planning a play reflecting, as he recalls, "how our people are responding to the political climate of the world today." Says Simon: "I was in right there. I consider myself as much an activist as a playwright and an artist."

As Simon sees it, "you get to a point where Black folk living in this country have done everything: we've protested, marched and sung, and things are still

Photo by Don Hamerman

Cast members Imana Breaux (facing page), Alton Ray and Kenya Wilson (below).

the same." He makes a small correction: "They have improved marginally. But we just had another police shooting recently. So what do we do? When I look at this country's history, everything that's happened, happened collectively. We can't do it all ourselves."

"We've been asking people to stand up for too long," Blak says. "What we should be asking is, 'Stay standing.' How many reckonings have we had? We keep sitting down. Change is only possible with conversation and consistency. I hope this shows just how chaotic it can get, how dire it can get, if we just keep waiting for the change."

"Silence is violence against us," says McCree. "It's not important that there [be] a resolution in this piece. Because there's not a resolution in real life."

It's February 15, an uncommonly spring-like evening. After Zoom meetings and rehearsals in New York and Philadelphia, *Mecca is Burning* has landed in the Annenberg Center's Harold Prince Theatre for opening night.

Clusters of furniture onstage represent four apartments in a Harlem building. Two couples, a father and daughter, and two sisters talk mostly of domestic concerns: work, school, conflicts over where and how to live. But the politics of race keeps intruding.

A video backdrop sets the scene with a loop of Harlem images, from magnificent brownstones to gritty high-rises and graffiti-covered walls. Later the screen becomes a newscast announcing the flight of former President Trump from justice and the violence breaking out in its wake. Interspersed with video of the January 6, 2021 storming of the US Capitol are photographs of white-hooded Ku Klux Klansmen and grisly lynchings.

Murmuring voices outside the apartment building erupt into shouts and gunfire, shattering a fragile peace. Finally, an image of Tyre Nichols, who died in Memphis in January after a police beating, fills the screen. It is not always entirely clear what is past, what is present—or what is to come. That may be the point. In a climactic face-off, the most militant of the women sings a fragment of "Strange Fruit," the 1930s anti-lynching ballad popularized by Billie Holliday.

Sprawling, insistently polemical, and intermittently powerful, the show runs nearly two-and-a-half hours, exhausting some audience members and inspiring others. A couple of dozen people stay afterward for a talkback with Brown, Blak, and the cast that lasts almost as long as the first act.

"I want to congratulate everybody. This was so real, so current, so raw, and yet so loving and sweet. I can't think of anything that was left out," says Jettie Newkirk, describing herself as "an 87-year-old Southern woman" who initially had no idea what the evening held in store. A lawyer and former educator, Newkirk chairs the Community Advisory Board of Penn's Netter Center for Community Partnerships.

Karen Fitzer, a 69-year-old ESL teacher, tells Brown and the company that she "fell in love with the play," but didn't know how to address the issues it highlighted. "How do you proceed?" she asks.

"We do things like this," the director says.

*Julia M. Klein writes frequently for the* Gazette.

Photo by Don Hamerman


**Knighted by Britain for his work as the Allies' "railroad czar" in World War I, the Penn alumnus and Pennsylvania Railroad veteran went on to remake the Canadian National Railways before the Great Depression, poor health, and scandal brought him low.**

By Dennis Drabelle

"ENGLAND MAY LOSE SUPERMAN," warned a 1922 British newspaper headline about Henry Worth Thornton C1894 Hon1923. Four decades later, historian J. Plomer summed up Thornton's reputation in *The Railway and Locomotive Society Bulletin*. He was "not only a great railroader, but an international figure with a unique and dramatic career, personally venerated and loved, probably, by more people than any other person in the history of commerce and transportation in the English-speaking world."

Some of Thornton's distinctions came courtesy of Penn: class president in his freshman year, recipient of an honorary doctorate in 1923. Eight years later, his name was the second to be engraved on the since-retired Guggenheim Cup, celebrating alumni who "honored the University most by notable success in any walk of life." The tribute situated Thornton between the first Guggenheim honoree, the eminent scholar of Elizabethan literature and longtime Penn faculty member Felix E. Schelling C1881, and the soon-to-be-third, Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts C1895 L1898 ["The Justice Who Was of Two Minds," Nov|Dec 2009].

Thornton attained his most glittering honor in 1919, when, after he became a naturalized British citizen, a royal sword-tap on the shoulder transformed him into a knight of the British empire—a reward for his brilliant work as the Allies' World War I railroad czar. He was also inducted into the French Legion of Honor and the Belgian Order of Leopold, making him the toast of four countries—the United States, Great Britain, France, and Belgium—with a fifth, Canada, soon to come.

A dozen years after his ennoblement, however, Sir Henry's reputation was plummeting and his health was shot. Like many another swaggering businessman in the heady 1920s, he'd run afoul of the Great Depression, but in his case there was more: character flaws that justified the title of his biography, *The Tragedy of Henry Thornton*.



ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN TOMAC

At Penn, Thornton was a guard on Penn's "famous '92 and '93 championship football teams."

Born in 1871, Thornton grew up in Logansport, Indiana, where seven lines of the Pennsylvania Railroad, familiarly known as the Pennsy, converged. Railroad ties, if you will, may have been what first drew young Henry and James Alexander McCrea to each other when they were prep-school students at St. Paul's in Concord, New Hampshire—at the time McCrea's father was a Pennsy vice president. At any rate, the boys struck up what became a lifelong friendship.

At Penn, Thornton's brawny build and height of six foot three made him prime gridiron material; the *Pennsylvania Gazette* issue of October 13, 1922, identified him as "a member of the famous '92 and '93 championship football teams, playing guard." Football meant so much to Thornton that after graduation he coached Vanderbilt's team for a year, compiling a 7–1 record. On entering the business world, fittingly enough he caught on with the Pennsy, starting, as the *New York Times* noted years later, "on the lowest rung of the ladder." He climbed that ladder to become Engineer of Maintenance of the Way at age 28; two years after that, he was made a division superintendent.

The Pennsy expanded into New York City (hence Penn Station), where its subsidiary the Long Island Railway grew into what was probably the largest suburban passenger carrier in the United States. James Alexander McCrea, Thornton's chum from St. Paul's, was now the Long Island's general superintendent and in need of an assistant. McCrea got Thornton transferred into the slot, and in 1911, at age 40, the right-hand man succeeded the boss as general superintendent.

Thornton held that job until 1914, when a committee representing the Great Eastern Railway of England visited the United States to recruit an American as the firm's general manager. They found their way to Thornton, a choice explained 30 years later by John Walker Barriger, president of the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville Railway, in an address to a society of railroad buffs: "[Thornton's] magnetic personality, ease of manner, and fluency of speech [had already] brought him public recognition to a degree seldom gained by a railroad officer below the highest rank." Thornton, his wife, the former Virginia Blair, and their two children duly moved to England.

Putting an American in charge of the Great Eastern rankled with some Britons, especially after the railroad's chairman tactlessly said to a reporter, "There is no man in England big enough for this job; here is the man who will do it!" But the Great Eastern was in part a suburban railroad, and Thornton's experience with the Long Island served him well—until the First World War broke out a few months later and, in Barriger's words, "The exigencies of the struggle dissolved personalities and united all for King and Country."

Thornton climbed the wartime British railroad ladder until he was a major general in the army responsible for the transportation of men, materiel, and supplies in coordination with French and Belgian colleagues. His biographer, Canadian journalist D'Arcy Marsh, argued that Thornton and his fellow railroaders' contribution to the Allied victory was too often slighted. "Had they not brought into existence, overnight, a system which made it possible for the troop train southbound from Victoria Station to synchronize, even to the matter of seconds, with the convoyed troopship and the train that met it at Calais—the tide might have turned at the Marne, and the [German army] might have marched through Paris."

Thornton returned to the Great Eastern when the war ended in 1918, but four years later the rumored departure of England's superman came to pass. The Great Eastern was merging with two other firms, and Sir Henry was so miffed at not being named the new entity's general manager that he quit. A timely offer came his way: the presidency of the government-owned Canadian National Railways. After meeting with Canadian prime minister Mackenzie King, who assured him there would be no political interference in his work, Thornton accepted the job, which came with the handsome annual salary of $50,000 Canadian, the same as his counterpart's at the CN's privately owned rival, the Canadian Pacific.

Thornton may or may not have heard the nickname applied to the Canadian National by its detractors: "Canada's white elephant." But he knew what a daunting task he'd taken on—looking back years later, he admitted to relishing "a good fight [and] here was certainly the place to have it." The CN was an amalgamation of several predecessors, which Marsh described as "joined together in name, [but] the marriage, as it were, had never been consummated." Thornton's remit included giving the stitched-together firm a common identity, publicizing it, cutting fat, repairing old lines, investing in new ones, and extending service to some of the remote stretches of Canada, a country "not yet … out of the pioneer stage." All this was to be done in competition with the Canadian Pacific, something of a legend in that its transcontinental reach had helped bring British Columbia into the federation half a century earlier, thereby giving Canada the sea-to-shining sea breadth of its neighbor to the south.

Thornton got started by touring much of the CN's extent—22,000 miles in all—and delivering countless pep talks. Looking back on that period, he explained that "in the last analysis the real thing I have



Photo courtesy University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center

Thornton with his first wife Virginia Blair and their two children. His divorce and remarriage to a woman half his age would cause a scandal.

done to make the Canadian National Railways a success is to pound, pound, pound, until it is now second nature with the employees to understand that a messenger boy is as important in his sphere as I am in mine, and that the minute a single man slacks on the job a bolt begins to rattle."

One of Thornton's most endearing and useful traits was his rapport with ordinary workers; before leaving England, he'd been presented with a badge making him an honorary member of the Railwaymen's Union, a token that he wore on his watch-chain for the rest of his life. In Canada, he enhanced his appeal to employees by hanging out with them after hours. "I … leave the house about midnight and go down in the yards for a yarn with the men," he told a visiting American journalist. "It's quiet then. I like it." His cultivation of workers went a long way toward blunting their reaction to the 9,000 jobs—about eight percent of the total workforce—that he eliminated. So effective was Thornton's administration that at the end of the decade the CN's annual earnings peaked at $17 million. As Marsh observed, "The White Elephant was no more."

Thornton brought attention to the company by exploiting the new medium of radio. "Equipment for transmitting programs was installed in passage lounges, stations, and hotels," writes historian T. D. Regehr in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* entry on Thornton, "and in 1923, using the best available technology, the company created North America's first radio network." The CN sponsored Sunday afternoon broadcasts of concerts by the Toronto Symphony and other programs. Thornton also had radios installed in CN trains, and he himself went on the air to deliver annual Christmas messages to his employees; thanks to these and other "appearances," his voice became one of the most recognizable in Canada. The CN eventually sold its radio network to the government, and it evolved into today's Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Under Thornton's leadership, the CN built its own hotels to compete with the Chateau Lake Louise and other Canadian Pacific Railways hostelries in Banff and Jasper national parks. His most dramatic implementation of the policy to knit Canada's far-flung parts into a whole was the CN's takeover of a new line from Saskatchewan to Fort Churchill, Manitoba, on Hudson Bay. In Marsh's view, this was "one of the great stories of Canadian development," not least because it lessened the domination of the country by its eastern provinces. Under Thornton, the CN became a showcase for the principle of government ownership.

**"A few minutes later … there was one less tree at Jasper, but the President won his hole."**

Such an unbroken string of triumphs can instill hubris, and Sir Henry was not immune. One telling instance reported by Marsh took place on a Jasper golf course. Thornton's ball "had landed in a clump of trees and his position was hopeless; so hemmed in with timber was he that it looked as if he would have either to pick up [the ball] or lose heaven knew how many strokes ploughing his way out. Other players had stopped, curious as to what he would do." Reasoning that not for nothing was he president of the CN, Thornton conferred with his caddy. "The boy put down his bag and started off for the club house at the double. Presently he came running back with two men following him, carrying a crosscut saw. … A few minutes later … there was one less tree at Jasper, but the President won his hole."

More troublesome was Thornton's marital record. He and Virginia divorced because of what they thought of as incompatibility, but which, to satisfy the laws of Pennsylvania, where they had married, had to wear the prurient label "indignities to the person." The scandal was exacerbated by Thornton's remarriage, a little over a month later, to a Bryn Mawr graduate named Martha Watriss, who, at age 28, was 27 years his junior. The term "trophy wife" had yet to be coined, but that's how people tended to perceive the second Lady Thornton.

Nonetheless Sir Henry's star was still in the ascendant. On a 1928 European trip, he acted as an unofficial Canadian ambassador, especially in Scandinavia, where there was a widespread feeling that Canada had lured immigrants from the region with misleading hype and then done little or nothing to help them get settled. In one speech after another, Thornton almost singlehandedly repaired relations—an accomplishment that Marsh calls "the zenith of his career." With regard to immigration generally, however, Sir Henry unfortunately reflected the prejudices of his time. Speaking at a luncheon in New York in 1924, he declared, "We demand only that the immigrant possess five qualifications: sound mind and body, a willingness to live under our traditions—for we want no communists—an ability to earn a living with the help we offer, and that he be a Caucasian. Canada cannot afford to create for herself a racial or negro problem."

Photo courtesy Library of Congress Prints & Photographs

Back in Montreal, where the CN was headquartered, the Thorntons entertained lavishly. He deemed this a necessity of his job and made little distinction between company funds and his salary; more than once he found himself on the verge of bankruptcy. The Depression hit both him and the railway hard, and so did the change of government wrought by the national elections of 1930. Two years before American voters were to vote the Republicans out of office for failing to anticipate the stock market crash or take effective action to ameliorate its effects, Canadians showed the way—except that the politics were in a sense reversed. Out went Canada's incumbent Liberal Party, and in came the Conservatives. Former prime minister Mackenzie King's pledge against political interference with the CN was now inoperative.

Thornton's enemies had been lying in wait. In furtherance of what Marsh called "a plot to discredit Sir Henry in the eyes of his associates, his employees and the country," in June of 1931 the House of Commons Railroad Committee summoned him to testify. A sly MP named Peter McGibbon said he was being peppered with complaints from his constituents, who viewed the CN's executives' salaries as excessive and the company itself as "a fertile field for graft." Challenged by a member friendly to the CN, McGibbon retracted his "fertile field for graft" slur, but the damage had been done. Newspapers across the country picked up the phrase, which the persisting hard times made more damning.

Thornton, meanwhile, was angling for the CN to acquire Cook's Tours, a global travel agency that he expected to bring tourists to Canada in droves. But his grandiose plan fizzled, and the Conservative inquisition carried on, flyspecking expenses present and past and slamming the railroad's luxury hotel in Jasper as wretched excess—never mind the many tourists it drew or the money they pumped into the Canadian economy. There was talk of a merger between the CN and the Canadian Pacific, or at least government-imposed cooperation. The fight seemed to have gone out of Thornton, who after several days in the hot seat suggested that a commission be appointed to investigate his and the CN's performances.

He got what he asked for, and the Duff Commission, so-called after its chairman, Justice Lyman Duff, set out on a tour of CN holdings. One issue it examined was duplication of routes by the CN and the Canadian Pacific. A notorious example came to light in British Columbia, where the two railroads ran parallel for miles on either side of the Fraser River. Then came a bridge on which the Canadian Pacific train crossed the river, and it seemed as if the sensible thing would finally happen: the two lines would fuse. But the next time a Canadian Pacific passenger looked out the window, there was the CN train, which had crossed to the other side, too, as if neither railroad wanted to be caught fraternizing. This certainly seemed wasteful, but one of Thornton's subordinates combed the CN's routes and discovered that only a quarter of them duplicated the Canadian Pacific's—hardly surprising given the CN's multiple ancestry.

By then Henry Thornton had been diagnosed with cancer. Before the Duff Commission finished its work, he issued a statement in which he reminded his critics that every expense now being second-guessed had won governmental approval when originally submitted—in short, he was being judged by a double standard. Nevertheless, he continued, "I … feel that the successful operation of this enterprise can only be carried on if the country as a whole is heartily behind the management." He handed in his resignation, effective August 1, 1932. Before leaving Montreal by train, he listened to a panegyric from the station manager and responded, "Tell the boys that I'm sorry I couldn't say goodbye to them all. Tell them …" At that point, Thornton's emotions got the better of him, and he couldn't go on.

He was stripped of his pension but given $125,000 in severance pay. He looked to India for a possible job as head of a commission empowered to take a comprehensive look at that nation's railways, but it didn't pan out. He and Martha settled in New York City, where his condition worsened. The CN's unions were planning a gala dinner for him in Montreal—meant to be, in Marsh's words, "the most eloquent testimonial ever tendered an industrial executive by the labouring millions of North America"—but before it could take place, Sir Henry died on March 14, 1933, at age 61.

In a diary entry, Mackenzie King had mused darkly on Sir Henry's downfall. "Thornton has himself to blame … of late his bad habits have got the better of him and destroyed his judgment. Had he possessed a Christian faith & lived by it he would have been one of the greatest of men. As it is he is now a colossus fallen." (That allusion to Thornton's religion probably had to do with his divorce and quick remarriage.)

Marsh took a more nuanced view: late in Thornton's tenure at the CN, he had become a whipping boy for Canadians' outrage over the stock market crash and the ensuing hard times. But Marsh also pointed to a dichotomy in Sir Henry's character: "He had never been an acquisitive man—that was the ironic aspect of his defeat—but he had developed an insatiable appetite for the spending of money, as a form of self-assertion."

The Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific never merged. The CN remained publicly owned until 1995, when it was privatized. Today the CN is the largest railroad in Canada—a posthumous tribute to Henry Thornton, without whose stewardship in the 1920s the CN might not have survived.

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Dennis Drabelle G'66 L'69 is the author, most recently, of *The Power of Scenery: Frederick Law Olmsted and the Origin of National Parks*.

## Calendar

**Annenberg Center**
pennlivearts.org
**Mar. 3** Anais Mitchell
**Mar. 11** Theo Bleckmann
**Mar. 15** Terence Nance Spotlight
**Mar. 16** *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty*
**Mar. 24** The Crossing
**Mar. 25** FLIP Fabrique
**Apr. 13** Arturo O'Farrill
**Apr. 21–22** Paul Taylor Dance Company

**Arthur Ross Gallery**
arthurrossgallery.org
open Tues.–Sun.
At the Source: A Courbet Landscape Rediscovered
**Through May 28**

**ICA**
icaphila.org
Terence Nance: Swarm
Carolyn Lazard: Long Take
**Mar. 10–Jul. 9**

**Kelly Writers House**
**Mar. 20** WXPN Live at the Writers House
**Mar. 22** Daniel Snelson Gr'15 and Mashinka Firunts Hakopian: Speculative Poetics for Video Games and AI
**Mar. 27–28** Jason Reynolds
**Mar. 29** Chloe Gong C'21, Candice Iloh, A. S. King, Nova Ren Suma: YA Authors in Conversation About Craft
**Mar. 30** Conversation with Literary Agent Eric Smith
**Apr. 19** Speakeasy Open Mic Night
**Apr. 24–25** Wayne Koestenbaum

**Penn Libraries**
library.upenn.edu
Shadow and Light, Beau Beausoleil: memorializing Iraqi academics assassinated between 2003–2012
**Through April 14**
Beautiful Blackbird: The Creative Spirit of Ashley Bryan
**Apr. 6–June 21**

**Penn Museum**
penn.museum
**Mar. 12** *Fugetsu-Do* and *Morkovcha* (film screening)
**Mar. 18** The European Discovery of the Ancient Egyptian Afterlife (lecture)
**Mar. 22** Aramaic Incantation Bowls (lecture)
**Mar. 22 & 29** Ancient Alcohol Tour & Wine Tasting
**Mar. 31** Up Late with the Sphinx (children's program)
**Apr. 12** North American Mounds as World Heritage (lecture)
**Apr. 15** The Kom el-Khamaseen Project, 1997–2022 (lecture)
**May 3** Marshland of Cities: Lagash and its Neighbors (lecture)

**World Café Live**
worldcafelive.com
**Mar. 4** Durand Bernarr
**Mar. 8** Monobloco
**Mar. 9** Chadwick Stokes & The Pintos
**Mar. 10** John Byrne Band
**Mar. 15** Candlelight Jazz: Aretha Franklin & Nina Simone
**Mar. 22** The Wild Feathers and Will Hoge
**Mar. 23** The Soul Rebels
**Mar. 25** Ibeyi
**Apr. 4** The Moth StorySLAM: Clean
**Apr. 7** Wilder Woods
**Apr. 13** Donovan Woods and Henry Jamison
**Apr. 15** Ben Vaughn Quintet
**Apr. 20** Sun Ra Arkestra
**Apr. 28** Simrit

**Above: Still from *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty* by Terence Nance**
Image courtesy Penn Live Arts

Gustave Courbet, *The Source of the Lison*, 1864, oil on canvas. University of Pennsylvania Art Collection, Gift of Thomas W. Evans.

# Lost and Found

## Mothballed for so long it was forgotten, a dark Courbet landscape returns to the light.

In 2016, soon after marking its 100th anniversary, the School of Dental Medicine set about sprucing up the building endowed by its founding benefactor, pioneering dentist and art collector Thomas W. Evans. Workers cleaning out the basement dumped a couple boxes on the desk of Liz Ketterlinus, Penn Dental's vice dean of institutional advancement. The dusty contents included, among other errata, a couple hundred 19th-century French calling cards. Ketterlinus called Lynn Marsden-Atlass, who curates the University's art collection and had recently helped mount an exhibition of Evans's *objets d'art* at the Arthur Ross Gallery ["Arts," Sep|Oct 2015]. Marsden-Atlass arrived within the hour.

She sorted through the calling cards—mostly royalty and former clients of Evans, who had cultivated a relationship with French Emperor Napoleon III—and pulled out a small, unframed canvas that was virtually black with age. "I couldn't figure out what the image was because the varnish was so darkened," Marsden-Atlass recalls. "But in the lower left-hand corner you could make out three letters of a signature that I happened to recognize." Marsden-Atlass had spent 10 years teaching 19th-century art in Paris, but this was still a bit of a mystery, so she sent the canvas to renowned conservator Barbara Ventresco. Once cleaned, the painting was still dark—but with the moody intent of its creator rather than decades of age and neglect. It revealed a waterfall spilling out of a murky cavity in a foreboding limestone wall, and it was signed *G. Courbet.*

That would be Gustave Courbet, who led the Realism movement in 19th-century French painting and is seen as something of a hinge between the salon-endorsed Historicism of the early 1800s and the Impressionists who followed in his *plein air* footsteps.

It took a few more years, but in 2022 a panel of experts representing the Institut Gustave Courbet in Ornans, France, formally authenticated the painting as an 1864 depiction of the source of the Lison River in eastern France, near the artist's birthplace. The canvas was also listed in the final inventory of Evans's Paris home upon the dentist's 1897 death. It is now the centerpiece of an exhibition that runs at the Arthur Ross Gallery through May 28. *At the Source: A Courbet Landscape Rediscovered* offers a focused consideration of the artist's later-life landscape work, which is often overshadowed by the forthrightly political and convention-busting figurative paintings of peasants and laborers that first won him recognition at the century's midpoint.

The newly discovered painting shares the walls with three borrowed Courbet landscapes—including a larger-scale depiction of the *Source of the Lison* from a private Minnesota collection—plus a canvas by an unknown imitator of Courbet that's one of two pieces on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A small assortment of postcards and books, including an 1825 tourist guide that outlines an itinerary for visiting the Lison's waterfall and grotto, helps provide some social and economic context for the currents of thought that come together in the focal Courbet painting.

André Dombrowski, the Frances Shapiro-Weitzenhoffer Associate Professor of 19th Century European Art who co-curated the exhibition with Marsden-Atlass, calls it an "innovative landscape depiction" that "messes interestingly" with the tra-

Photos courtesy Arthur Ross Gallery

EXHIBIT

## Walking The Edge

**JJ Tiziou C'02 started walking around Philadelphia in 2016.** The 100-mile trek tracing the city's border, which has become a biannual rite, typically takes him between five and 10 days. He's done it alone, but more often in the company of anyone who cares to join, for some piece of the journey ["The Edge," May|Jun 2020]. Before striding out on his latest circuit in February, he curated "Walking the Edge," a themed community exhibit at the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education that runs through April 1.

Inviting the public "to share their artistic expression about perimeters, borders, and boundaries along the city of Philadelphia or in other urban landscapes and natural spaces," the show attracted paintings, photography, sculpture, textiles, and mixed-media contributions from more than 100 artists. Pictured: *Step Into the Unknown*, by Varvàra Fern, 2021.

ditional approach to the genre, whose sky-filled compositions typically drew viewers' eyes into a distance whose bright boundlessness suggested a "potentially redemptive future." *The Source of the Lison* exemplifies the way Courbet's landscapes broke from tradition.

"They are really dark, quite remote," Dombrowski says. "They tease our eyes not into the distance but into caves, and sources of water—and thereby both attract and trap the viewer, quite literally. It's a landscape painting that wants to stick your nose more into the here and now of the immediate world, rather than any fictions of distance and destiny."

The Lison's source was "enmeshed" in a growing ambivalence about industrialization's impact on picturesque natural settings, Dombrowski notes. Its tumbling water had been harnessed by a mill that hugged one riverbank—as shown by one of the exhibit's postcards. Salt mining was also prominent in the area, which Courbet knew intimately from his youth. In the context of such industrial intrusions, Courbet's "landscapes are often made out to be one of the sites in which an environmental consciousness develops in painting."

Yet the painter's commentary on such sites was oblique. He took care to leave the Lison's mill outside of the frame, for instance—recording only a wooden railing that had been installed for the benefit of nature tourists.

"Courbet wants to construct a modern landscape that's in tune with the overall pleasures that landscape painting provides," Dombrowski explains. "Who wants an industrial site over there? He wants to sell and market these, so their tourist appeal needs to be front and center." Instead, Dombrowski suggests that the painter "transposed" the unease into a "deeply claustrophobic" rendering of the site.

"He doesn't create a comfortable entry into the landscape, but actually a rather haunting and dark and mysterious form of landscape representation, that I think he feels is a little bit closer to a modern, changing landscape that entirely refuses the industrial complexes within it," the professor muses. "He's not literally showing [the industrial aspect], he's just making the landscape a bit more of a damaged, moodier, darker entity."

Courbet's technique, meanwhile, typified an "early modernist impulse" to deliberately emphasize "the relationship of the material world and the materials of painting," says Dombrowski. Scenes rich in water, rocks, and moist undergrowth provided him with an opportunity to reflect these aspects via the "viscosity of the paint in which he renders them." In subsequent decades, Impressionist painters would take further steps toward drawing attention explicitly to paint itself in their depictions of outdoor scenes.

Yet the curators hope viewers will encounter this rediscovered work (whose permanent campus home is still being determined) on its own terms. "There isn't really a painting like it on campus, or in Philadelphia," says Dombrowski. "It shows the ways 19th-century painting prefigured forms of environmental consciousness that we are today so focused on."

In conjunction with the exhibit, Penn Press has published a richly illustrated catalogue featuring scholarly essays considering the painting from angles ranging from the site's geology and industrial development, to its development as a tourist attraction, to Courbet's landscape oeuvre and talent for self-promotion, to the "gilded life" of Thomas Evans.

The circumstances under which Evans acquired (or was given) this painting remain obscure. One hypothesis, says Marsden-Atlass, hinges on his acquaintance with Napoleon III's wife Eugénie de Montijo, who was known to have purchased Courbet works through an intermediary. "Maybe he followed suit," she speculates.

The *Source of the Lison*'s decades-long relegation to a box in the Evans Building's basement is likewise open to multiple interpretations.

"I think it disappeared because it got tarnished and dirty and it probably needed some care for which probably there were no funds," says Dombrowski. But the professor's puckish side wonders if someone in Penn Dental's past was just unsettled by the dank grotto itself: "I can't help but think that an institution that fights tooth decay couldn't quite handle the cavity it represents." —*TP*

Photo courtesy JJ Tiziou

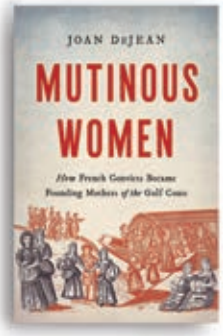
# The French Connection

The "interesting little trail" that unlocked a family's past—and made a Penn connection.

Long before the advent of Ancestry.com, John Guttmann C'75 and his siblings had taken an interest in their history. With the help of relatives still living in their home village in Austria, they've been able to trace their father's side of the family from his parents' immigration to the US in 1914 back to the early 1800s. But their mother's family's origins were more of a mystery.

Their earliest known ancestor on that side, Patrick Milton Kelly, had emigrated from Ireland in the 1850s, settling in New Orleans, says Guttmann. But family heirlooms suggested a French lineage as well. These included a small book—a diary, they assumed—handwritten in French; and a large oil painting depicting a man in military dress next to a woman and three children, dating from the 1700s. Family lore had it that the man had come from France to fight in the American Revolution and then stayed, eventually bringing his wife and children to join him in New Orleans. But all they really knew was that his name was DuForest.

After their mother's death in 2018, the painting came to one of Guttmann's three sisters, and they began trying to learn more about it. The art museum at Louisiana State University put them in touch with an art historian "studying itinerant painters in colonial-era America," Guttmann recalls. "He knew who [the artist] was right away: it was an itinerant Spanish painter who was traveling around Louisiana, Florida, in the south, earning his living doing family portraits." The art historian—Philippe Halbert, currently interim curator of American Decorative Arts at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art at Yale, but then a doctoral student—also suggested that he might know someone who could identify the figures in the portrait, based on the name DuForest.




"And then I got a call from Joan DeJean," says Guttmann, "and so it was this interesting little trail that led us [to her], and we had multiple conversations."

DeJean, Trustee Professor of Romance Languages, had talked with Halbert about the Guttmanns and their portrait while Halbert was on a fellowship at Penn's McNeil Center for Early American Studies. The author of many books on French history and culture, she had just finished her latest one, *Mutinous Women: How French Convicts Became Founding Mothers of the Gulf Coast* ["Briefly Noted," Jul|Aug 2022].

Based on extensive archival and genealogical research, the book traces the histories of a group of women arrested on often trumped-up charges by corrupt Paris police and deported to Louisiana in a ship called *La Mutine* in 1720. Among the deportees was Marie Daudin, the daughter of a dock worker in Orleans, France. DeJean informed the Guttmann family that Daudin's granddaughter, Marie Angelique Revoil, was the woman in the painting, having married one Jean Joseph DuForest in 1767.

In a Zoom presentation for the Alliance Francaise with the Guttmann family, DeJean sketched Marie Daudin's life story and the family's trajectory from abject poverty to a level of affluence sufficient to be enshrined in a large-format (approximately five by six feet) formal portrait, featuring a "killer doll" held by one child, which, DeJean noted, would have been "an expensive doll for the period."

The women had been rounded up at the behest of John Law, a Scottish economist who had been given near total control of France's economy, DeJean explained. Promoting the vast Louisiana colony—which



Painting photo courtesy Guttmann family

encompassed much of the midsection of North America and extended up to the Great Lakes from the Gulf Coast—was seen as key to replenishing the country's treasury, depleted by wars waged by Louis XIV. At the time, Law "could do anything," she said, and he wanted women for Louisiana—a decision that "determined the lives of many of the first French women in this country."

Of 225 female prisoners sentenced to lifetime exile, Daudin was one of about 60 who survived transport across the Atlantic and were left on the Gulf Coast in February 1720. Heading straight to New Orleans, "Marie moved up from the start," DeJean said, and "always married well." Her first marriage was to a ship's captain, Antoine Michel Caron, who died in 1729 in a Native American uprising against the French at Natchez. The following year she married Pierre LaRoche, a master carpenter, with whom she had a daughter, Marie Catherine LaRoche, born in 1731. After his death in 1736, her third and final marriage was to a merchant named Jacques Massicot, who gained great success in the fabric trade, importing textiles from France. This union, DeJean writes in *Mutinous Women*, "turned her life around."

In 1747, Marie Catherine LaRoche married Massicot's junior partner, Pierre Revoil. With Marie Catherine taking an active role, the couple would go on to amass significant land holdings in the growing city, including the current sites of the venerable Bourbon Street bar Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop and the Omni Royal Orleans Hotel.

The "diary" belonged to Revoil. It actually seems to have functioned as a combination inventory book and family record, said DeJean, in which the purchase price of some cotton cloth and the 1751 baptism of his and Marie Catherine's daughter—and Jean Joseph DuForest's future wife—Marie Angelique Revoil appear on the same page. ("He's a merchant. You don't waste half a page.")

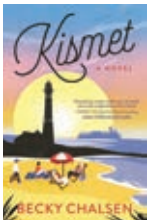
With each generation, the family acquired greater wealth and prominence. When Marie Daudin died in 1768, her estate was worth "50,593 *livres*," DeJean writes. "In France, even grand families rarely passed on anything like this to their children."

For John Guttmann and his sisters, the "big question mark" was how to connect the painting with Patrick Milton Kelly—"and Joan really enabled us to do that, which is very meaningful to us," Guttmann says. "To me it's an American story: This guy immigrates from Ireland and marries the descendant of one of these French prisoners who came over. Go forward two generations, and you have my [maternal] grandfather, who moves from New Orleans up to New Jersey and New York for a job, and my grandmother—who was also Irish and was the daughter of a couple who were barkeeps and lived above the bar. And then their daughter, my mother, marries my father, also [named] John Guttmann, who is the son of Ellis Island immigrants from Austria."

That the key which unlocked the family's origins came by way of Penn was an added bonus, he says. A political science and American civilization major, he "fell in love with the place right off the bat" when he visited during high school from his home in Montclair, New Jersey. The rest of the family is still settled in the New York–New Jersey area, but after law school at Cornell, Guttmann headed to Washington, DC. He clerked two years for a federal judge before joining the then-fledgling environmental law firm of Beveridge & Diamond ("I was the 12th lawyer," he says) and rising through the ranks to serve as managing partner. He's currently a principal with the firm.

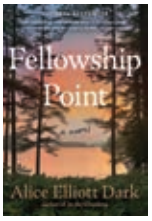
Guttmann has two daughters, one a doctoral student in philosophy and the other a freelance writer, and he notes that as he and his sisters have gotten older, the motivation to discover and share the family's past with the next generation has only grown stronger. "We've been engaged in an effort to reconstruct the whole history on both sides," he says, "and Joan just took it to another level." —*JP*

# Briefly Noted




**KISMET** *by Becky Chalsen C'15* (Penguin Random House, 2023, $17.00.) Set in the beach town of Kismet, Fire Island, this novel about love, sisterhood, and destiny follows Amy Sharp as she navigates her marriage, her past, and her twin sister's wedding over a Fourth of July weekend.


**FINDING THE WORDS: Working Through Profound Loss with Hope and Purpose** *by Colin Campbell C'91* (Penguin Random House, 2023, $29.00.) After his children were killed in a drunk driving accident, Campbell was thrown headlong into deep, unimaginable grief and found the common wisdom about coping privately to be unhelpful. This book is meant to encourage active grieving—instead of shrouding the universal experience in stigma and mystery.




**FELLOWSHIP POINT** *by Alice Elliott Dark C'76* (Simon & Schuster, 2022, $28.99.) This sweeping novel follows two lifelong friends, both shareholders in a generations-old land partnership. When Agnes is diagnosed with breast cancer in her 80s, she seeks to convince Polly to donate their large swath of land along the coast of Maine so its remote beauty will remain protected.


**NAMING GOTHAM: The Villains, Rogues, and Heroes Behind New York Place Names** *by Rebecca Bratspies L'92* (History Press, 2023, $23.99.) Bratspies, a professor at CUNY School of Law, uncovers the vibrant personalities behind the names of New York's many roads, bridges, tunnels, neighborhoods, and institutions.

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# The Voice of AOC

Running communications for "one of the most transformative politicians in the country."

Photo by Justin Tsucalas

Lauren Hitt C'13 has one of the most powerful voices in American politics, but it's not her own.

Hitt is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's communications director, meaning she is the primary spokeswoman, speechwriter, and media strategist for the US representative whose charismatic way with words has Washington insiders predicting she could be New York's next senator or maybe even president one day.

Yet AOC's aggressively progressive politics means that as adored as she is on the left, she's abhorred by the right, while moderate Democrats worry her headline-making statements could scare away swing voters.

"It's super challenging," Hitt says. "But I like the challenge."

Ocasio-Cortez has a social media megaphone most politicians can only dream about: 13.4 million followers on Twitter, 8.6 million on Instagram, and 1.8 million on Facebook. Nominally a backbencher with little formal power in the House of Representatives, Ocasio-Cortez often dominates Washington's news cycle.

Hitt's job, she says, is making sure a "totally brilliant communicator" gets heard by the right people—whether that's the powers that be in Washington, progressive activists across the nation, or her constituents in Queens, New York.

"How do we talk to our base? How do we motivate them? Who even is our base? What is the right path forward? How do we talk about that?" Hitt says. "All of these are very big questions that I get to go into work and ideate around. And that's really rewarding."

It's a big job, but Hitt's colleagues say she stays grounded. "You're working with one of the most transformative politicians in the country," says Aya Saed C'13, Ocasio-Cortez's legislative director and Hitt's former classmate at Penn. "And Lauren still is able to do the work and advise members of Congress, with complete humility and thoughtfulness."

Unlike some Type A personalities in Washington—where there are stories of aides who started plotting their path to the White House in middle school, usually right after watching *The West Wing* for the first time—Hitt didn't know what she wanted to do with her life when she got to Penn, "except that it should have nothing to do with math."

She thought about journalism, but the industry's instability unnerved her—ironic, as she'd soon work on political campaigns "in which you are inherently laid off at the end of the cycle," she says. An advisor suggested taking Kathleen Hall Jamieson's Intro to Political Communications course, which immediately hooked her on the field's mix of creative wordsmithing and data analytics.

Hitt grew up in a quietly conservative household outside Baltimore, where her parents leaned right but never really talked about it. "There was definitely an ethos of: *You make your own luck in this world, you pull yourself up by your own bootstraps*," she says. So when a TA in Jamieson's class suggested an internship at her old employer—the American Enterprise Institute, a neoconservative thinktank—Hitt went for it. And, in a way, it was a formative experience. "You sit through enough of these guest lectures, who included the likes of Paul Ryan and Newt Gingrich, and you're like, *Oh, I'm probably not a Republican*," she says.

**"She has this ability to rip you up with a sword."**

An internship the next summer in then vice president Joe Biden's communications shop confirmed Hitt's leftward leanings while, back at Penn, she devoured nearly every politics course the Annenberg School for Communication had to offer.

She later worked on President Barack Obama's reelection campaign, and then on Bill de Blasio's successful run for mayor of New York. Hitt returned to Philly in 2015 to run comms for attorney Ken Trujillo's mayoral campaign. The campaign manager, Jane Slusser, said she recruited Hitt hard, calling her "one of the smartest people I know." After Trujillo dropped out, Jim Kenney hired Slusser to run his campaign for Philadelphia mayor and Hitt to do his comms. And when Kenney won a crowded Democratic primary and cruised in the general, Hitt stayed on as the city's director of communications as Philadelphia hosted the 2016 Democratic National Convention and Kenney pushed through a soda tax to pay for a new pre-kindergarten program, the first major city to pass such a levy.

"One of the interesting things about her is that she came from a campaign to administration, which is a sometimes difficult transition, from being in war mode to then transitioning into government," says Kenney. Sometimes, she remained in war mode when dealing with reporters. "She has this ability to rip you up with a sword," the Philadelphia mayor adds. "When I say these things to her, she's like, 'Oh, stop.' I don't think she revels in that reputation, but it's very effective."

Hitt left the mayor's office to head back to the campaign trail in 2018, saying she felt compelled to work on elections again after Donald Trump W'68 won the White House. But Hitt found herself in the leadup to the 2020 elections working for moderate Democrats she liked personally but didn't fully align with ideologically. She felt a shift occur after a white nationalist, anti-immigrant gunman killed 23 people at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, in August 2019. "I had seen the cost up close of taking a more moderate approach to gun reform, to fighting back on racism, immigration—all of those forces had collided at once to cost the lives of children and

parents," she says. "When that happened, I distinctly remember some politicians in the aftermath of that saying, 'Well, we have to be careful how we respond to this as a party, because we don't want to write an ad for the NRA. And I just was like, 'I can't get my head there, how that is your reaction to this?' And I hope I never understand."

Tired of compromising on her principles, Hitt leapt at the opportunity when the job in AOC's office opened up. "I said to her, 'If you don't hire me, I really don't know what else I'm going to do,'" Hitt says.

Hitt quickly developed a reputation among Capitol Hill's newly emboldened progressive community. When Rep. Cori Bush led a sit-in protest on the Capitol steps, it was Hitt who helped the group communicate the message, says Saed, who worked for the Missouri Democrat at the time. "I think that was one of the moments that really solidified her not just as a leader within the office, but frankly a leader within the entire movement," Saed says.

Three years in, Hitt's stretch on Capitol Hill is the longest of her career. She has no plans on leaving anytime soon, she says. But when, or if, she does, her friends expect she'll go far.

"I will 100 percent not be surprised when Lauren Hitt ends up as a press secretary for the president," Slusser says. "Like, I really look forward to seeing her behind that podium one day."

*—Jim Saksa C'08*



# Superheroes in Scrubs

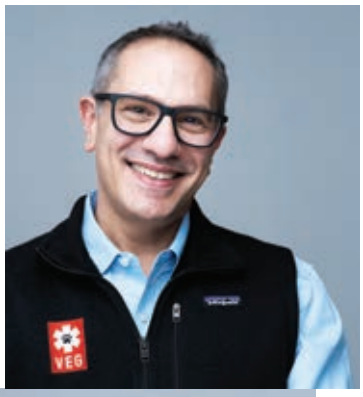
## Veterinary Emergency Group has a new philosophy for taking care of pets in need.

"Veterinary medicine is hard, and nobody expects any differently," says David Bessler V'03, founder and CEO of the Veterinary Emergency Group (VEG).

But the difficult part shouldn't be wrestling with burnout, unrealistic expectations from clients, or the stress of ballooning student debt, he adds. "The hard part should come from: *man, diabetic ketoacidosis is hard. Doing surgery is hard*. That should be the hard part."

With that in mind, he and VEG cofounder and president David Glattstein WG'12 are trying to change the reputation of the veterinary emergency industry—for customers and workers alike. And having opened more than 40 clinic locations in less than 10 years (with at least 25 more planned for 2023), VEG is rapidly expanding by doing things a little differently.

For starters, pets and their owners stay together, from the time they enter the door to the time they leave. "When you bring your kid into the ER, they would never take your child away from you in the emergency room, but that's what we do with pets [at a typical ER]," Bessler says.




**David Bessler (top) and David Glattstein run Veterinary Emergency Group.**

At VEG, pet parents can stay with their animals during all phases of treatment, including surgery and overnight hospitalization. An open floor plan allows freedom of movement, so pet parents can "see all the craziness that's happening"—and as a result, perhaps develop an appreciation for the challenging work that is usually hidden from view.

Veterinary nurses are "the lifeblood of a hospital," explains Glattstein. Yet in traditional hospitals "the customer doesn't see any of the magic that they're doing in the back. [At VEG] the nurse is getting to show all the years of experience they have right in front of the customer."

Bessler wants customers to "see us as their friends, their heroes, their helpers—not the enemy." Discord between pet parents and veterinary staff is one of the top reasons for job stress in the industry, and it can be especially rough in emergency veterinary medicine ["Rescue Mission," Mar|Apr 2022]. On any given day at his previous jobs as an emergency veterinarian, Bessler says, "there was a good likelihood that I would get yelled at by a pet owner who would tell me, 'You killed my cat, you killed my dog, all you care about is the money.' Or I'd get yelled at by my boss—because *they* got yelled at by some customer who said, 'All you care about is the money.'"

When he found himself hoping for slow days at work, he decided he needed a change. He purchased a company in 2014 to gain more control. About two years later, Glattstein entered the picture after feeling unfulfilled in the investment industry and wanting to be "in the trenches … building a business." He had written a paper on veterinary entrepreneurship while at Wharton and later "realized this is an amazing industry and something I wanted to be in long term."



Photos courtesy Veterinary Emergency Group

Bessler jokes that Glattstein just googled "entrepreneurial vet near me" and discovered Bessler, who by then had opened a second emergency clinic. "And in the email, I wrote, 'You're a Penn grad like me," explains Glattstein. "And David, because he's an 'entrepreneurial vet near me,' wrote back right away."

Glattstein thought that the VEG method of emergency veterinary care "needed to be spread everywhere"—far beyond Westchester County, New York, where the first clinic opened not far from Bessler's and Glattstein's homes. They secured investment from Sequoia Heritage (which has also backed firms including Apple, Google, WhatsApp, Instacart, and Zoom), and clinics started rolling out across the country. "Now people are coming to us, saying 'We need a VEG in our community,'" Glattstein says.

To attract and retain talent, they offer equity to all doctors, nurses, and managers; student loan payoff assistance of up to $5,250 per year; unlimited continuing education; shared experiences like national retreats; and other opportunities for growth.

At VEG, veterinarians sit on the floor with pets, where they're more comfortable. When someone calls, they speak directly with a licensed veterinarian. Scribes follow doctors, taking notes and writing up reports, so that parents get discharge information sooner. And a VEG Cares charity program, funded by donations, pays up to 100 percent of the cost for low-income community members who can't afford their emergency bill.

Occasionally, if the VEG Cares funds are exhausted or an unreasonable customer refuses to pay, other services will be given away for free, too. "When your back is against the wall, and somebody's telling you, 'All you care about is the money, you're not going to help my dying pet who's totally savable just because we don't have the money,' every single one of our doctors is empowered and entitled to give shit away for free—to save themselves," Bessler says.

If so much of veterinary career stress "comes from being tortured by pet owners who are unhappy," he continues, "let's make it less likely for them to be unhappy." The VEG customer experience is different, Bessler posits, because it avoids charging people for dimly understood procedures that happen behind closed doors. Instead, a pet owner is swiftly "taken into the back, and a bunch of people who know a whole lot about my pet are surrounding me to help," he says. "And if I can't [afford my pet's treatment], they'll help me figure something out. They find a way to say yes."

Through it all, Bessler is guided by his love of emergency veterinary medicine—what it is and what it can be. "It's an extremely rewarding career, because you get to be the most helpful at the most important time, and do the most good for the most people in the shortest amount of time," he says. "You're a superhero." *—NP*

Photo courtesy Susan A. Hutson

Susan A. Hutson C'89

# New Sheriff in Town

## Louisiana's first Black woman sheriff is striving to reform an infamous prison.

Since her days at Penn, and over a three-decade career practicing law and monitoring troubled police departments, Susan A. Hutson C'89 has come to see the insidious impact of systemic racism on the criminal justice system—and has made it her mission to seek change.

"I don't know if you're a spiritual person or not, but I feel like I've been led on my journey," the 56-year-old says. "You don't know why you get someplace. There's a Creator moving you there."

Now Hutson's stepping into a new role—one that might be her most challenging yet and require a little help from above. In a December 2021 runoff election in Orleans Parish, the former independent police monitor for New Orleans was elected sheriff, taking 53 percent of the vote in a "stunning victory," as local media described it, over 17-year incumbent Marlin Gusman C'77 W'77. With the win, Hutson has made history: the progressive Democrat, inaugurated last May, is the first African American woman to lead a sheriff's office in Louisiana and the first woman to head the New Orleans office.

But Hutson doesn't linger on that accomplishment. She is too busy, she says, pushing for reform, starting with changing the culture at the notorious Orleans Justice Center (OJC) she oversees. With a population of roughly 1,000 inmates, most awaiting trial, the jail has for the last decade been under a consent

decree mandating 174 reforms, primarily for failing to protect inmates from physical and sexual assault and failing to provide adequate medical and mental healthcare. The OJC also has struggled with problems of understaffing, poor sanitization, and excessive use of force by its deputies. "We're trying to turn this upside down," Hutson says via Zoom from her office, "and create real and lasting change."

Hutson campaigned on improving relations with the City of New Orleans, which funds a chunk of the sheriff's $55.7 million budget; recruiting deputies to bolster staffing; reducing the jail population, especially when it comes to the incarceration of Black and brown people for lesser crimes; increasing transparency around jailhouse incidents; and providing mental health services for the more than half of the OJC residents (the term she prefers to inmates) suffering from mental health issues.

Hutson also says she wants those in custody to have easier access to educational programs, to not only occupy them in the short term and potentially reduce violence, but also allow them to leave jail with better prospects than when they arrived. "This is an opportunity," Hutson says of her message to residents. "I can't probably get you where you need to be, here, but at least I can plant that seed, something to kickstart it."

Early progress has been mixed. Hutson didn't get the full budget she wanted, but she did secure a raise for starting deputies in a bid to attract recruits, thanks in part to David Trautenberg C'80 GEd'80 GrEd'16, the new chief financial officer for the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office. "That was one of the sheriff's campaign promises," Trautenberg says. "That was a win. … She's committed. She has the long view and really is unflappable many times. Her having gone to university in Philadelphia has given her a broader vision of what community is and, coupling that with her legal background and life experiences, she has street cred that she utilizes throughout the day to navigate through these trickier scenarios."

Critics, however, say she isn't moving fast enough on reforms. The judge overseeing the consent decree has asked for more transparency regarding several incidents. One month after Hutson started, two inmates died in one weekend. In another instance, prisoners held a three-day protest.

Will Snowden, Louisiana director for the nonprofit Vera Institute of Justice, which is dedicated to ending mass incarceration, is advising Hutson on policies to reduce the jail population. "I don't want to give her a hall pass unnecessarily," he says. "But she's demonstrated a commitment to learning how to be successful in this particular role and not necessarily relying on traditional approaches of the past."

Hutson says she's trying to master not only the ins and outs of managing the jail but also the politics that come with an elected position. "I'm really about the work," she says. "I want to make it better. But when you're dealing with other people's areas and power, they see loss of control. I'm learning."

**"There was no justice. When I started the work of oversight, I knew this is where I needed to be."**

It's an approach she's taken since her time at Penn, says Hutson, an economics major who was exposed to social activism at the University. She attended student meetings in the aftermath of the 1985 MOVE bombing and joined protests against South Africa's apartheid system, violence against women, and racism within Greek life.

At her next stop, Tulane University Law School, she learned more about a system that too often failed poor and Black people and blamed female victims of domestic violence, she says. "I still didn't know anything about systemic issues, but it started to open my eyes."

After graduating from Tulane in 1992, she worked as a defense attorney and then in the Corpus Christi, Texas, prosecutor's office, where she investigated the police department. That's when she discovered her passion for oversight.

She went on to become a police monitor in Austin and Los Angeles, where she reviewed 7,000 civilian complaints that first year alone, she says. "I learned so much the three years I was there," she notes, including how to get buy-in from strong Los Angeles Police Department unions. "I learned a little more diplomacy."

Always in the back of her mind, Hutson says, were family run-ins with law enforcement that she had heard about from her parents. In East Texas, she says, she had uncles who were detained and mistreated by police. Well before that, in 1941, her grandfather was shot and killed by a small-town Texas sheriff following an altercation with a white teenager. "There was no justice," she says. "When I started to do the work of oversight, I knew this is where I needed to be."

In 2010, she took on police misconduct in New Orleans as its independent police monitor. "It was a big challenge," she says. "I knew the system was protecting itself." In her 11-year tenure, Hutson says she established an investigation team to look into officer-involved shootings, released bodycam footage, and opened investigations into citizen complaints of retaliation—as well as complaints from within the police department's ranks.

With that same drive to make the machinery of justice more just, Hutson ran for sheriff. "We have to change," she says. "I have four years at least to try to do everything I can."

*—Lini S. Kadaba*

"One hundred years is a long time to live in the world, but I would do it all over again."

*—Rev. R. Hunter Keen C'48*

***Celebrate Your Reunion, May 12–15, 2023!***

# 1948

**Rev. R. Hunter Keen C'48** will celebrate his 100th birthday in April. He writes, "Becoming 100 years of age means that you can look back and see significant changes in the views of Penn, and in our culture. For example, my mother, **Rachel Barry MacAllister C1911**, was among the first women to graduate from Penn. During her time, there was a policy prohibiting men and women from 'fraternizing,' and she was called into the dean's office one day for speaking with a male. The dean told her that even if a man and a woman were engaged to be married, they were not allowed to speak to one another on campus. My mother told him, 'If I were engaged to a man who wouldn't talk to me, I would break off the engagement!' I have now lived long enough to see there are more women students than men at Penn, and there are many female faculty, as well. There have also been several women presidents, including the current one, Liz Magill. These are positive changes I've seen in my near 100 years. After I was discharged from the US Army after World War II, Penn offered me the best acceptance of the Army Specialized Training Program college credit and G.I. Bill. After graduating, I attended Princeton Theological Seminary and was ordained as a minister. In 1950, I became the founding pastor of Warminster Presbyterian Church (PA). During that time, I'd been a bachelor for 30 years, and I met a beautiful young widow named Barbara who had two young children. We grew to love each other, were married, and had two additional children. After that, we moved to Sisseton, South Dakota, where I served the Dakota tribe (also known as Sioux) on the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation. After spending 20 years with the Dakota people, I was invited by an Indian friend, Rev. Cecil Corbett, to come and work with the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho. I retired in 2001 and moved to Spokane, Washington, where I still reside with my wife, Barbara. Our four children grew up on the Lake Traverse and Fort Peck Indian Reservations, and they all remain in contact with many different people there. They each felt it was good to have been raised in more than one culture, and that it gave them a broader life experience to learn that although people can be very different from one another, they can still form strong bonds of friendship and love. I am grateful for the part the Native American people played in my life's journey. One hundred years is a long time to live in the world, but I would do it all over again."

# 1956

**Ilga Winicov Harrington CW'56 Gr'71**, a retired research professor of molecular biology at Arizona State University, has released her memoir *Uncharted Journey from Riga*. She writes, "It tells of a composite journey from Latvia in World War II through war-torn Europe, with stops in a German labor camp followed by five years in a displaced persons camp in the American occupation zone in Germany. All this is a prelude to immigrant status in the US in the early '50s and adaptation to a new society. My initial education spanned two different eras at Penn, and the book shows glimpses of Penn in those years. The rest of the book travels through the joys and frustrations of becoming an independent woman scientist (microbiology, biochemistry, and molecular biology) in academia, at a time when we first learned about information from DNA and how it applies to all biology. The complexity of concomitant responsibilities to family, children, and society at large on this journey have made it into a rich tapestry of life. October saw the publication of *Aunt Hilda*, my sixth short

## Events

### NEW YORK

Join "Books & Bagels"—the PennNYC book club—on April 1! Visit www.penn.nyc for more info and the link to register. Email Kristin Glaudel GEd'04 at kristin@penn.nyc for more information. Become a member of the official Penn Alumni Club of New York for free by signing up for the biweekly newsletter at bit.ly/PennNYCnewsletter.

### WESTCHESTER & ROCKLAND COUNTIES

A night of comedy and cocktails with two Penn alumni comedians at the Emelin Theater in Mamaroneck! Nationally acclaimed Shaun Eli Breidbart W'83 and Daniel Naturman W'91 will take to the stage on Saturday April 29 along with a roster of other talent. Join us for a preshow warm-up cocktail—for details email: PennClubpresident@pennclubwestrock.org or visit: pennclubwestrock.org.

## We Want to Hear from You

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story in the Goose River anthology, and my food column 'Thrifty Good Food' in a local paper is still going strong after 14 years. Writing for the general public is much different than writing scientific papers but has kept me busy and engaged in retirement."

***Celebrate Your Reunion, May 12–15, 2023!***

# 1958

**Steve Schuck W'58** has been inducted into the Colorado Business Hall of Fame by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce and Junior Achievement-Rocky Mountain. Steve is a founder of Schuck Chapman Companies, a real estate development company.

# 1959

**Samantha Grier CW'59 (aka Shulamit Sofia)** writes, "Being a Penn grad has been among the most meaningful parts of my life. Despite receiving a master's of social work from Columbia, it is the Red and the Blue that holds my heart. After my post-master's certification in community consultation and child development under the auspices of the National Institute of Mental Health, I began parent education programs that grew into Parents Place in White Plains, New York, which was later replicated in San Francisco when I moved there in 1979. In 1985 I founded my second nonprofit, Caring for Children, in San Francisco, with the support of the Milken and Buffett Foundations. Caring for Children has comforted and supported more than 250,000 youngsters in over 20 countries with the gift of a teddy bear. Known as a 'transitional object' in psychiatric literature, this low-cost intervention provides enormous emotional and psychological support to a child in crisis. Working with police departments (NYPD, SFPD, and LAPD), Caring for Children introduced using teddy bears as an innovative police practice. Most recently, Caring for Children has helped over 5,000 Syrian refugee children living in Jordan and Turkey as well as thousands of migrant children stuck at the US border. Unfortunately, the pandemic made our programs untenable, and Caring for Children closed in 2022. I have since begun a new phase of life. After decades of spiritual study and certification in spiritual counseling, in 2013 I published *Climbing the Sacred Ladder: Your Path to Love, Joy, Peace and Purpose*. My second book, *Spiritual Aging: Your Path from OY to JOY*, will be published in March, and I have begun a coaching practice for AGERS wanting to maximize their experience of this major transition. Anyone interested can reach me at SpiritualAging@gmail.com under my pen name Shulamit Sofia."

# 1961

**Michael Pschorr C'61** has published an essay in the Jan|Feb issue of *Cruising World* magazine titled "Leaving My Comfort Zone," which describes a sailing trip he took at age 78, with his son, from San Diego to Panama City, Panama. He writes, "Our month at sea was almost all under sail as repeated engine failure and often overcast skies meant sparse if any electricity from three solar panels. The unscheduled repair stop we made was Acapulco, Mexico, where some diesel mechanics did a lot, but alas days out at sea, the engine failed, never to restart."

# 1962

**Steve Stovall W'62 ASC'63** of Thornton, Colorado, writes, "I taught marketing at a collegiate business school for 21 years (how's that for a C student out of Wharton?) before finally retiring five years ago. Competitive distance running is something I have pursued since age 30. Now, training for races occupies a big chunk of each day. One son claimed I spend more time training than Olympic distance runners. Yep. The beauty of this is that there are age group categories in races, so in the final results one can see how well they ran in one's age group, such as over 80. As Woody Allen said, '80 percent of success is showing up.' Oh so true. I think the most over-80 runners I've encountered at a race is four. Often there are two, and sometimes I'm the only one. I boast 'first in age group,' leaving out that I was the only one, or 'second in age group,' omitting the fact that there were only two. My last two races, I was the oldest runner who finished. And I wasn't last! All kinds of little medals and ribbons are displayed in our garage, where they belong. This keeps me busy and engaged, plus it allows me to get away with eating chocolate and drinking beer without adding weight. There's no zen epiphany behind my running. Just the fantasy that I'm fast and bound for the Paris Olympics. Oh, one more fact: it now takes me as long to run a 5K race as it did to run 10K races when I was half this age."

# 1966

**Andrew Cohn C'66** writes, "I've retired for a second time: this time from serving as president of the energy and utility consortium of Harvard Medical School and its five affiliated hospitals and research institutions in the Longwood Medical Area of Boston. I continue to serve on the board of the greater Boston grantee of the US Legal Services Corporation that provides pro bono civil legal assistance to vulnerable populations; and I serve on the board of 826 Boston (www.826Boston.org), which operates 'writers' rooms' in the Boston Public Schools to publish student writing and to bring authors into the classroom. I'm also teaching at the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement, including, for example, a course on the ancient Maya of Mesoamerica and another on medieval Iberia under Muslim rule. Because my wife Marcia and I have a grandson in Denmark, we travel to and stay frequently in Copenhagen."

# 1967

**Carl Mark Koch GCE'67 Gr'72** has published a book of poetry, titled *Pandemic Poet: The First Two Years*. He writes, "The book contains over 250 poems about the pandemic, real-life experiences, childhood memories, nature, travel adventures, holidays, parodies, current events, and inspirational thoughts. After working as an environment engineer and partner at

Greeley and Hansen, I retired with my wife Nancy to Maris Grove, a retirement community in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania. While I published many technical papers and presentations during my professional career, I never wrote poetry until the pandemic." More information about the book can be found at amazon.com/author/carlkoch.

# 1970

**David Sweet C'70** writes, "After a career in law, public policy, and politics, I am now fully retired. My last gig was a five-year term on the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. Prior to that, I worked, at different times, with three Pennsylvania governors, was a partner in two major Pennsylvania law firms, and served in the state House of Representatives. I was also fortunate enough to be a member of Penn's board of trustees from 1994 to 2007. I now live in Center City Philadelphia but travel frequently to see friends and more recently, my three wonderful grandchildren (and of course, their parents—my son **Andrew Sweet C'10** in San Francisco, and daughter Natalie in Kansas City, and their terrific spouses). Chasing little balls (tennis and golf) and catching up on decades of neglected reading takes up much of my time. Also, I am doing a bit of volunteer work and enjoying Philadelphia's many cultural opportunities."

# 1971

**Terry Patterson SW'71** writes, "After 30 years as a tenured professor at the University of San Francisco and directing the doctoral program there, I am currently in independent practice in San Francisco, specializing in individual and couple psychotherapy and consultation. I've also been president of the APA Society for Couple & Family Psychology and the Association of Family Therapists of Northern California, and have authored a book, *Real-World Couple Counseling and Therapy: An Introductory Guide* (2020), with Jerrold Shapiro." Terry welcomes alumni contact at pattersont@usfca.edu.

# 1972

**Robin Palley CW'72** has been elected president of the Nick Virgilio Haiku Association and Writers House, an arts and literacy nonprofit serving Camden, New Jersey. She writes, "Our organization uses short-form poetry, especially modern American haiku, to support concise thinking, mindfulness, and literacy in an underserved population around Camden's Waterfront South neighborhood. It also operates the Upright Remington imprint with several anthologies published and available on Amazon. (And we are seeking like-minded individuals to get involved)." Robin is also senior vice president of healthcare strategy at Epsilon, a Publicis Groupe company. Her poetry has recently been published in *Frogpond*, the *Shaping Water Anthology*, and other poetry journals. She adds, "I live in the Spring Garden section of Philadelphia with my partner Henry Brann and a cheeky Maine Coon cat named Biden."

**Arthur N. Read C'72,** general counsel for Justice at Work, a legal services organization representing low-wage workers in immigrant communities in Pennsylvania, has been honored with the annual Pennsylvania Bar Association Immigration Law Pro Bono Award. In part, he was recognized for his efforts to help implement federal protections for workers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey under the federal Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act.

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# 1973

**Seth Bergmann GEE'73 writes,** "I ran the Rothman 8k in Philadelphia on Nov. 19, finishing third out of 29 men aged 70-plus."

**Carol Adaire Jones CW'73** writes, "I retired seven years ago from a career as an environmental economist in government and academia, with the plan to better control my schedule with consulting (wrong!). My most memorable career experience was at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration working on the Exxon Valdez oil spill case for the federal government (preparing the claim for the lawyers to file), and going on to lead the economic valuation of 36 natural resource damages cases, which recovered more than $190 million in addition to the $1 billion Exxon Valdez settlement. Consulting projects include working with partners in Indonesia, the Bahamas, and other biodiversity-rich countries to develop local capacity to bring environmental liability cases for illegal deforestation, illegal wildlife trade, and coral reef destruction. I have had wonderful opportunities to travel both for work and pleasure with my husband, Jay Pendergrass, who is also in the environmental field. I cannot believe it has been (almost) 50 years since I graduated from Penn. I am excited to be participating with two dozen other classmates on the Organizing Committee for our 50th Reunion (May 13–14, 2023), and for a series of events leading up to the big weekend! Please send contact info, alumni news, and ideas for events to reunion@ben.dev.upenn.edu."

# 1974

**Dr. Richard H. Epstein C'74 M'78 GM'82** was honored with the J. S. Gravenstein Award for lifetime achievement in the area of technology in anesthesia by the Society for Technology in Anesthesia at its 2023 annual meeting. Richard is a professor of clinical anesthesiology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. He was previously on the faculty of the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University from 1985 to 2015. He lives in Miami with his wife, Libby, and shares that his daughter, Yoella, lives with her husband and four children in Philadelphia. Richard invites alumni contact at rhe@comcast.net.

**Michael Wald C'74 W'74** writes, "I've published a book about two years living and working abroad as an older, experienced volunteer in the Peace Corps. *Why Didn't You Call? A Peace Corps Panama Exposé* is nonfiction but is written like a novel, with 50 full-color photographs that

make readers feel like they are on the journey with me. The book gives insight to anyone thinking about living, working, or volunteering abroad to help prepare them for the experience and, thus, avoid the high failure rate of these endeavors. Other important recommendations are included to help policymakers get better results from efforts in the developing world. For excerpts, visit www.authormichaelwald.com."

**Rabbi Stephen Wylen C'74** writes, "I'm pleased to announce the publication of my newest book, *You Should Know This: A Rabbi Explains Christianity to Jews* (Amazon Books, 2022)."

# 1975

**Diane Zaino Chase CW'75 Gr'82** was recently named senior vice chancellor for academic affairs for the University of Houston System, and senior vice president for academic affairs and provost for the University of Houston.

# 1976

**Alice Elliott Dark C'76,** an author and associate professor of creative writing at Rutgers University, gave a reading of her latest novel, *Fellowship Point*, at Hammer Museum in Los Angeles earlier this year. The story follows two lifelong friends, both shareholders in a generations-old land partnership. When Agnes is faced with a dire medical diagnosis, she seeks to convince Polly to donate their large swath of land along the coast of Maine so it will remain protected. The novel explores themes of history, legacy, class, aging, family, and women's friendship.

**Chris Jennewein C'76 G'76** writes, "I've never forgotten the great times at the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, an undergraduate experience that launched me on a media career. My latest entrepreneurial effort in this industry is *Times of San Diego*, a local news website introduced in 2014 and now read by nearly 600,000 people a month. In October, we were named 'Best News Site' in San Diego for the sixth time by the local press club. Independent news sites like mine are appearing throughout the country to provide sorely needed local news coverage as legacy newspapers contract. It's exciting to be part of this new wave in the media."

**David Unkovic C'76** of Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, and **David van Hoogstraten C'77 G'77** of Washington, DC, who were freshman roommates at 326 Rodney in the Quad in 1972–73, met in Princeton, New Jersey, on November 19 to attend the Penn–Princeton football game. They write, "We were thrilled to see the Quakers, who had been trailing the entire game, pull ahead of the Tigers by one point with five seconds to go for the win ["Sports," Jan|Feb 2023]. Congratulations to the Penn players, coaches, band, and cheerleaders on a great 2022 season!"

# 1977

**Susan Feibus C'77** has joined the law firm Dykema as senior counsel in its business litigation practice group.

**David van Hoogstraten C'77 G'77** see **David Unkovic C'76.**

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# 1978

**Diane Kaplan CW'78** was nominated by President Joe Biden Hon'13 to the board of directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in July. She was awarded the William A. Egan Distinguished Alaskan Award from Commonwealth North in October and the Arliss Sturgulewski Award from the YWCA in November.

# 1979

**Michael Scullin C'79** received the French Medal of Honor for Foreign Affairs at a ceremony at Philadelphia City Hall in December. The award was presented by François Penguilly, consul general of France in Washington, DC. Michael served as honorary consul for over 17 years, stepping down in June. The medal rewards service by French diplomats and civil servants stationed outside of France.

# 1980

**Dan Kaplan W'80** has been elected president and CEO of the board of governors of the Polo Club of Boca Raton, Florida. He writes, "The Polo Club is a 1,700-home Platinum Country Club featuring two 18-hole championship golf courses, 27 tennis and pickleball courts, five restaurants, a spa and fitness facility, and other amenities. I retired as a partner from Ernst & Young in 2018 and needed a full-time, unpaid job to fill my free time."

**Joe Mahoney C'80 G'84 Gr'89,** the Caterpillar Chair of Business in the Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, was named among the Top 50 Undergraduate Business Professors for 2022 by Poets & Quants.

**Mark O'Brien FA'80** see **Kit Warren FA'81.**

# 1981

**Gregg Fallick C'81 L'84** writes, "I live in Taos, New Mexico, as a recovering lawyer and aspiring ski bum."

**John Jutila WEv'81** writes, "I've been busy growing companies for private equity investors and recently joined Boston-area Tekscan Incorporated as CEO for Artemis Capital Partners, a company founded by MIT engineers developing advanced tactile sensor technologies for leading-edge research, medical, and industrial applications. I was previously a CEO and investor in Ripley Tools and Champion ONE. I earned my doctorate degree from Grenoble Ecole de Management in France in 2017 and was previously a senior executive with Nokia Networks, Asahi Kasei, Micro Semi Corporation, and various start-up technology ventures. After relocating my family numerous times, including several years living in Austria, I've now settled into a renovated historic mountain lake home (circa 1790) in New Hampshire with my wife, Elizabeth, and enjoy time with our three children and four grandchildren."

**Kit Warren FA'81** writes, "I'm pleased to announce the opening of my solo show at the Zillman Art Museum-University of

Maine, January 20–April 21. *Altered States & Other Stories* is a selection of work created over the past three years. If you're in the area, my husband **Mark O'Brien FA'80** and I would love to see you there!"

# 1982

**Rosario Cassata C'82** donated more than $5,000 to provide holiday gifts for 45 children through his family's organization, the Cassata Foundation. The toys were presented at a Target in Long Island, New York, during its annual "Shop with a Cop" event in partnership with the Suffolk County (NY) Police Department.

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# 1983

**D. Anthony Bullett C'83** writes, "Keystone Equality officially launched on January 26 and will be the leading political organization advancing LGBTQ equality in Pennsylvania. I serve as a member of the board of directors that includes current and former leaders of major regional LGBTQ groups, trans-led support organizations, and elected officials. The board represents the diversity of LGBTQ communities with individuals from urban, suburban, and rural areas across Pennsylvania."

# 1985

**David Jehn W'85** has a new role at JetBlue as vice president of network planning and airline partnerships. He writes, "My responsibilities include building JetBlue's growing route network, including expanding into Europe, as well as developing and enhancing relationships with myriad airlines domestically and around the globe. Outside of work, my wife Cathy and I are doing tons of traveling and loving living in New York!"

**Dr. Daniel S. Zapson C'85** writes, "On the day he was born I didn't think I could feel more pride. On the day he was accepted into the University of Pennsylvania, Class of 2027, I did! Congratulations to my son Ben on his early decision acceptance at the Wharton School."

# 1986

**Aeon J. Skoble C'86** has been appointed Bruce and Patricia Bartlett Chair in Free Speech and Expression at Bridgewater State University, where he is also a professor of philosophy and co-coordinator of the interdisciplinary program in philosophy, politics, and economics.

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# 1988

**Geri Austein Kalinsky C'88** has been promoted to senior vice president of talent acquisition and internal mobility at Warner Music Group, headquartered in New York. She lives in Bayside, New York, with her husband and two kids.

# 1990

**Angela Montez C'90,** special counsel for Eversheds Sutherland US, has been appointed to the national board of directors of the Gift of Adoption Fund. Gift of Adoption is a national nonprofit that provides financial assistance to complete the adoption of children in vulnerable circumstances.

# 1991

**Colin Campbell C'91,** a writer and director for theater and film, is also the author of *Finding the Words: Working Through Profound Loss with Hope and Purpose*, which details his journey through grief after his children were killed in a drunk driving accident. The book is described as "a fresh, unconventional guide meant to encourage active grieving—instead of shrouding the universal experience in stigma and mystery" (colincampbellauthor.com). Colin has also created a solo performance piece based on his experiences, titled *Grief: A One-Man ShitShow*. It has been described as "comedic and heartbreaking, profound and profane" (griefaonemanshitshow.com).

**Sadia Carone C'91**, a stand-up comedian, artist, and musician, recently released a comedy album, *Total Dick Experience*. Sadia writes, "Note: the songs are cute, not nasty, but possibly not safe for work. It is light-hearted comedy." The album can be heard at tinyurl.com/SadiaMusic. In addition, on October 1, Sadia presented a TEDx talk at Faurot Park in Lima, Ohio, titled, "Family Secrets—An Incest Survivor Speaks Out." The talk can be viewed at youtu.be/v5IptvecExQ.

# 1992

**Rebecca Bratspies L'92** writes, "I have a new book out, titled *Naming Gotham: The Villains, Rogues, and Heroes Behind*

*New York Place Names* (History Press). If you've ever been stuck in traffic wondering who on earth Major Deegan was, this is the book for you. New York City's many roads, bridges, neighborhoods, and institutions bear the names of a colorful assortment of people from key periods in the city's history. But to date, New York has chosen to commemorate mostly white men. This fact reflects the historical balance of power in the city—both in terms of who had the power to name things and who got to define what counts as history. As I was researching and writing this book, that began to change. Most significantly, the Shirley Chisholm State Park, named after the first Black woman elected to Congress, opened in 2019. This shift in who the city memorializes reflects the changing narrative that New Yorkers tell themselves about their city."

**Scott W. Hawley C'92 W'92** writes, "The Ralph Schlemmer Orchestra (RSO) just released five brand-new tracks! We are on Apple Music, Spotify, and other platforms. If you like bongos and mayhem—deep fakes and COVID quacks—and what Jesus eats for lunch, these five songs are for you. In the late '80s Brian Guido and I knocked around the campus of Frankfurt American High School—a remarkable place during a remarkable time—in what was then West Germany. Both of us were children of the US military. Both of us children of the Cold War. In 2022 we formed RSO. Guido composed the tracks and played all the instruments in Sacramento. I wrote the lyrics and recorded the vocals in Atlanta. We hope you will check us out!"

**Ellis Mass C'92 W'92** has been named chief marketing officer at Labor Finders International, an industrial staffing firm, and works out of its headquarters in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. He writes, "I'm excited to be leading the department of a dynamic and growing company, whose mission is changing lives through meaningful employment and partnerships. My wife of nearly 30 years, **Ellen Segal Mass Nu'92 GNu'95**, and I continue to live in Parkland, Florida, where we are soon to be empty-nesters, as the youngest of our three children heads off to college in the fall."

**Jennifer Friedman Sklarew C'92**, assistant professor of energy and sustainability at George Mason University, writes, "I'm happy to share that my book, *Building Resilient Energy Systems: Lessons from Japan,* was published by Routledge in November. The book applies my experiences in the US and Japanese governments to examine how shocks, resilience priorities, and stakeholder relationships combine to influence energy system transitions. I develop global lessons from a case study of Japan's trajectory from the time of the 1970s oil crises through the period following the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. I'd enjoy collaborating with others working on energy system resilience and transitions!"

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## 1993

**Dr. Adam Denish V'93** writes, "I was humbled to be honored at the Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center's annual gala on November 12. As a board member of the oldest Holocaust museum in the United States, I am proud to support its mission for the last 11 years. Our event raised much-needed funds to enhance the work of our staff to combat hate and antisemitism. We produce educational events, and a Holocaust survivors and second-generation speaker series to enlighten the public of the atrocities of the past and hope they never happen again. To find out more, check out www.HAMEC.org."

**Lisa Nass Grabelle C'93 L'96** and **Kiera Reilly C'93** write, "We can't wait to 'Talk Thirty to Me' with classmates for our 30th Reunion, May 12–13. Thanks to **Alysa Mendelson Graf C'93, Eli Faskha EAS'93 W'93, Mitchell Kraus C'93,** and **Cris Pereira Werneck C'93**, for organizing the Ambush Interviews leading up to our reunion. Outreach chair **Jen Bernstein C'93** encourages everyone to register to attend Alumni Weekend now! Events include a kickoff party Friday night and a full day Saturday: our political pollsters panel, parade of classes, class picnic, and our big party at night. **Eddie Matz W'93**, the creative genius behind the viral parody music video, 'You Down with '93?,' hopes everyone can join him (and his overalls) on Locust Walk for the alumni parade of classes. Check our class Facebook group, Penn Class of 1993, for reunion updates, follow us on Instagram @Penn_1993, and email us at UPenn1993@gmail.com. We hope to see everyone on campus in May! Our hashtag is #talk30tome93."

**Peter J. Kalliney C'93 G'93,** the William J. and Nina B. Tuggle Chair in English at the University of Kentucky, has published a new book, *The Aesthetic Cold War: Decolonization and Global Literature* (Princeton University Press). From the book's press materials: "A revisionist account of superpower involvement in literature, *The Aesthetic Cold War* considers how politics shaped literary production in the 20th century."

## 1994

**Daniel Farber Huang WG'94** and **Theresa Menders WG'94** have published a new book, *Get Lost: Personal Privacy Strategies for Extremely Busy People*, and a companion online course, Extreme Personal Privacy. They write, "We also continue to raise awareness of displaced people through the Power of Faces, a global portrait project that shows individuals with their inherent courage, beauty, dignity, and grace ["Profiles," Jul|Aug 2019]. In March 2022 we were reporting on the plight of refugees fleeing Ukraine into Poland and previously in Greece, Turkey, Mexico, and Bangladesh. We continue to raise awareness of vulnerable populations and this year will be reporting on Latin American communities lacking adequate healthcare as well as South Pacific regions impacted by climate change. You can see more at thepoweroffaces.com."

**Margaret Saito W'94** see **Dr. Tony Saito D'95.**

# 1995

**Frank A. Farry W'95**, who previously served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for seven terms, was sworn in on January 3 as a member of the Pennsylvania State Senate to represent the 6th Senate District in Bucks County. He's been assigned to serve on seven standing senate committees during the 2023–24 legislative session, including being appointed chairman of the Urban Affairs and Housing Committee, a panel that oversees the operations of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. The other committees he will serve on are Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure as vice chair; Appropriations; Communications and Technology; Community, Economic and Recreational Development; Health and Human Services; and Law and Justice.

**Victor McCray GEx'95,** vice president for research and a professor of chemistry at the University of the District of Columbia, has been reelected vice chair of the National Science Board (NSB). NSB is both the policymaking body of the National Science Foundation and an independent advisor to Congress and the president on science and engineering policy. In December, Victor was honored at the Wharton Club of DC's 51st Annual Joseph Wharton Award Dinner.

**Dana Brakman Reiser C'95** writes, "I'm thrilled to announce the publication of my second book, *For-Profit Philanthropy: Elite Power and the Threat of Limited Liability Companies, Donor-Advised Funds, and Strategic Corporate Giving* (Oxford 2023), coauthored with Steven A. Dean. I've been writing about philanthropy and social enterprise as a member of the Brooklyn Law School faculty for 20 years, where I hold a chair as Centennial Professor of Law. I live in Brooklyn with my husband **Jeff Reiser C'95** and our daughter, Charlotte."

**Dr. Tony Saito D'95** and **Margaret Saito W'94** write, "There is a new Penn Club in Central Massachusetts! If you live in this area, please consider joining the Penn Club of Worcester. Our first meeting will be June 8. Join our Facebook group at tinyurl.com/PennClubOfWorcester or contact drtonysaito@alumni.upenn.edu."

# 1996

**Suzanne Saldi Garber GGS'96** writes, "I successfully defended my dissertation, entitled 'Predictors of US Hospital Responsiveness to International Patient Inquiries,' and graduated with my Doctor of Science from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Key findings for US healthcare institutions included staffing, implicit bias, website marketing, and foreign language/cultural competency needs. Anyone wanting to learn more can view the paper on ProQuest or contact me at suzgarber@gauze.net."

**Jeff Jackson C'96** has been appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom to be a judge of the Superior Court of California in San Mateo County.

# 1997

**Carl Irace C'97** has been appointed to the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) Panel for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York by the Clerk of the Court. The CJA Panel consists of attorneys who are authorized to be appointed to represent indigent defendants in federal criminal cases in which the Federal Defender office has a conflict.

**Lydia Hoff Kris WG'97** and **Gary Kris WG'97** were recently featured in the *Journal News*/lohud.com, a newspaper in New York State, for their new chocolate and coffee shop in White Plains. The Pamplemousse Project opened in December and donates all profits to local charities. The article can be read at tinyurl.com/kriscoffee, and more information about the cafe can be found at thepamplemousseproject.com.

**Dan Malasky C'97,** chief legal officer of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, writes, "On New Year's Day, I toasted Penn's sprint football head coach emeritus Bill Wagner and his wife Connie at the Bucs game. Coach Wagner was recognized for '50 years of head coaching excellence' on the Raymond James Stadium jumbotron and was treated to a picture with the Bucs super fan known as 'Big Nasty!'" Malasky kicked the winning field goal in the Penn sprint football team's victory over Army in 1996—one of the best wins in the 50-year tenure of Wagner, who retired from Penn in 2019 ["The Unlikely Legend," Nov|Dec 2019].

# 2001

**Katie Alex Stevens C'01** writes, "My husband Eric and I are thrilled to announce the birth of our son, Zephyr Vassilios, on November 17. Big brother Xander, who turns three in March, is already requesting that I play Penn Band standards for their entertainment (though neither, perhaps fortunately, is yet throwing toast). I continue to work in product management for Harvard Business School Online, and Eric is in financial management for the Boston Public Schools."

# 2005

**Blair Kaminsky C'05,** a partner at the law firm Holwell Shuster & Goldberg, has been selected as one of 10 honorees for *New York Business Journal*'s 2022 Women of Influence Award. The award honors women across a wide range of industries who have made an impact both professionally and in their communities.

**Megan Malta Scauri C'05** writes, "I joined the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) in New York as senior librarian for special collections and digital projects in August 2021. My husband Joe and I welcomed our third child and first daughter, Livia, in September 2022, joining big brothers Frankie (December 2016) and Luke (February 2020). I've been enjoying spending time with my little ones while on maternity leave but look forward to getting back to my 'book babies' in the new year. AJHS is the oldest ethnic, cultural archive in the United States, and one of five partners housed in the Center for Jewish History near Union Square. All are welcome to visit our exhibits and/or register to view our research collections! More information can be found at www.ajhs.org."

**Jordan Stanger-Ross G'05** received the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Impact Connections Award, the highest national awards for Canadian humanities researchers. Jordan was recognized for his highly collaborative public history project, *Landscapes of Injustice*, which centers on the mass displacement of Japanese Canadians during the 1940s (landscapesofinjustice.com). He is a history professor at the University of Victoria, Canada.

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## 2008

**Reuben Asia C'08** has been promoted to partner at Faegre Drinker. Reuben is a member of the law firm's Real Estate group and practices out of its Philadelphia office.

## 2009

**Jarad Mason C'09 G'09** and **Ivy Cheung Mason C'10** write, "We are overjoyed to announce the birth of our son, Oliver Clark Mason, on October 5 in Boston! Oliver joins older sister Ella Marie Mason." Ivy is a postdoctoral fellow at Mass General Brigham in the Division of Sleep and Circadian Disorders and a teaching fellow at Harvard University. Jarad is an assistant professor of chemistry at Harvard University.



**Ari Mittleman G'09** was recognized on January 17 at the European Parliament's International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration. Ari is the author of *Paths of the Righteous: Stories of Heroism, Humanity and Hope*. In the press release, he said, "My book came about after the tragedy at the Tree of Life congregation in Pittsburgh. I was looking for positive stories that were not in the depressing headlines. We need to look for the positive in these difficult times of rising antisemitism." Ari's book was featured at the event, and he participated in a panel discussion.

## 2010

**Caroline H. Cheng L'10** has been promoted to principal at the law firm Jackson Lewis P.C. Caroline is an attorney in the firm's Washington, DC, office who represents public and private employers in labor and employment law matters.

**Ivy Cheung Mason C'10** see **Jarad Mason C'09 G'09.**

**Andrew Sweet C'10** see **David Sweet C'70.**

## 2011

**Mathew A. Golden C'11 L'14** has been elected partner at the law firm Potter Anderson & Corroon LLP. He works in the Corporate Litigation Group and focuses his practice on corporate and commercial litigation in the Delaware Court of Chancery.

## 2014

**Darcella Patterson Sessomes GrS'14** has been appointed chief of the Division of Programs and Reintegration Services for the State of New Jersey Department of Corrections.

## 2015

**Becky Chalsen C'15** is author of a new novel, *Kismet*. From the press materials, "*Kismet* is a sun-soaked novel about love, sisterhood, and destiny, set in the glorious beach town of Kismet, following Amy Sharp as she navigates her marriage, her past, and her twin sister's wedding over Fourth of July weekend."

**Jennie Shulkin C'15** is cofounder and CEO of the digital health company Override Health. She writes, "Our company uses the latest in pain neuroscience and virtual teams of multidisciplinary specialists to help chronic pain patients regain function and quality of life."

## 2016

**Jiye Bahng Lee Nu'16 GNu'19** writes, "I am currently a PhD student at the University of Miami, and my husband, **Kyutae Lee C'17**, is pursuing his MD-PhD at the University of Miami as well. We joyfully announce the birth of our son, Titus Lee, born June 3, in Miami."

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## 2018

**Carlo Comia C'18** is a founding member of Aspiring Physician Executives (APEx), a student-run, Philadelphia-based organization that works to diversify the next generation of healthcare leaders. On December 8, APEx presented an "Evening with Executives" for students from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Carlo helped organize the event and served as a co-moderator for the panel.

## 2019

**Ryan Finch C'19** writes, "My new consulting company, Handly.io (www.handlyio.com), is focused on providing B2B services to coaches, consultants, and startup founders. We specialize in offering web design, public relations and digital marketing, executive coaching, workflow automation, and the staffing of virtual assistants. Our mission is to help these businesses to become more operationally sound through strategic guidance. I am proud of the work that we have done to date and excited about the future."

**Matthew P. vandenBerg GrEd'19** has been named president of Ohio Wesleyan University. Currently the president of Presbyterian College in South Carolina, he takes up his new post in July.

## 1942

**Z. William Rubin W'42,** Juno Beach, FL, a former travel consultant; Aug. 11, at 101. His wife is Shirlee Silvert Rubin Ed'45.

**Edward F. Solomon W'42,** Lower Merion Twp, PA, founder of Pride Dog Food Company; Dec. 5, at 101. He served in the US Army Air Corps during World War II.

## 1946

**Jane MacCabe Kelly CW'46,** Gladwyne, PA, Nov. 6. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. One daughter is Linda Kelly Graves GNu'86.

## 1947

**Hewitt S. Gurnee Jr. WG'47,** Midland, MI, a retired real estate manager for Dow Chemical; Nov. 23, at 102. He served in the US Army during World War II.

**Bernice Schwartz Levine PSW'47,** New Rochelle, NY, a retired social worker for children; Nov. 21.

## 1948

**Leo J. Dolan WEv'48,** Bryn Mawr, PA, a retired owner of a jewelry business; Oct. 17, at 101. He served in the US Navy during World War II. His children include Leo J. Dolan Jr. WG'73 and Regina Dolan Dunn DH'73.

## 1949

**Edith Trelease "Terry" Aney Davidson G'49 Gr'54,** Oneonta, NY, a retired English professor at SUNY Oneonta; Nov. 29, at 99. She served in the Women's Army Corps during World War II.

## 1950

**Barbara Greenstein Blum CW'50,** Haverford, PA, a longtime Democratic political activist for civil rights, women's rights, and human rights; Nov. 7. She also owned and operated a bookstore with her late husband Charles M. Blum EE'49. Two daughters are Susan Blum Fort C'78 and Lauren Blum Weisberg C'78 W'78, who is married to Harvey Weisberg C'78.

**Frederick W. Feibelman W'50,** Columbus, OH, a retired investment broker; Nov. 2. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, and the cross country team.

**Ursula Wilhelm Harper Ed'50 GEd'53,** Worcester, MA, a former elementary school teacher; Nov. 29. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Xi Delta sorority and the choral society. Her husband is Dr. Robert S. Harper M'55, and one daughter is Betsy E. Harper C'81.

**John S. Kemper Jr. EE'50,** Glen Mills, PA, a retired executive at the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO); Oct. 27. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. His wife is Doris Turner Kemper HUP'54 Nu'54.

**Fred Langford Ar'50,** Cape May Court House, NJ, an architect; Nov. 24. At Penn, he was a member of the track team.

**Jay B. Langner W'50,** Maplewood, NJ, founder of Hudson General Corporation, an airport services company; Nov. 21. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

**Norman A. Oshtry G'50,** Philadelphia, June 29.

**Graham J. Ross W'50,** Larkspur, CA, a retired engineer and sales manager at a manufacturer of packaging and bottling machinery; June 29, 2021. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity and the swimming team.

**Reno M. Zinzarella C'50,** Allentown, NJ, retired superintendent of Westwood Regional School District (NJ); Dec. 11. He served in the US Army Medical Corps as a physical therapist. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Chi Rho fraternity and the track team.

## 1951

**Molly McCarthy Brueger CW'51,** Ann Arbor, MI, a retired student counselor at the University of Michigan; Nov. 15, 2021. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority and the Penn Players.

**Thomas Dolan IV G'51,** Lafayette Hill, PA, a conservationist who was the former executive director of the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association; Dec. 28, 2021. In the 1940s, he identified a new type of mayfly, which was later named after him (*Dolania americana*). One son is Thomas Dolan V C'72 GLA'75.

**Morton Jaffe W'51,** Chicago, a former attorney and real estate broker; May 5. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of WXPN and the debate council.

**Donald D. "Pete" Miller W'51,** Pinehurst, NC, a retired executive in the metal trades industry; Nov. 7. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity.

**Betty McKaig Morton Ed'51,** West Chester, PA, a former executive at Sir Speedy Printing; July 4. At Penn, she was a member of the basketball, field hockey, and tennis teams. One son is David B. Morton W'81.

**Warren H. Shadek WG'51,** Pompton Plains, NJ, a retired industrial engineer at American Cyanamid; Nov. 5. He served in the US Army during World War II.

## 1952

**Dr. Albert J. Anderson Jr. C'52 D'55,** Old Saybrook, CT, Dec. 26. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity.

**Samuel "Bud" Diamond W'52 L'55,** Philadelphia, a former lecturer at Penn; Sept. 15. In 1960, he cofounded the law firm Diamond, Polsky and Bauer, where he served clients until retiring in 2010. From 1990 until 2006, he lectured in the department of general honors, which encompassed the University Scholars and Benjamin Franklin Scholars programs and united students from Penn's four undergraduate schools. He also held lectureship positions in Penn Law (1993–1995) and in Penn's Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (1995–2006). His wife is Miriam Forman Diamond CGS'07, and one grandchild is Aaron J. Block C'20.

**Rosalind "Ronnie" Merow Schwam CW'52,** Wyncote, PA, retired owner of an interior design firm; Oct. 23, 2021. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority. Her husband is Gerald F. Schwam Ar'53.

**Dr. John R. Whitaker Jr. M'52,** Cape Canaveral, FL, a retired surgeon; April 29.

### 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

**Nancy Gingrich Cavanaugh CW'53,** Nevada City, CA, a retired teacher; Nov. 1, 2021. At Penn, she was a member of the field hockey team. One brother is Richard E. Gingrich W'50.

**Mary Joyce "Mary Jo" Huben Jones HUP'53 Nu'56,** Danville, PA, a former nursing faculty member at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital; Oct. 30. Her husband is Dr. Frederick L. Jones Jr. M'56, and one son is Dr. Frederick L. Jones III C'79 M'83 WG'00, who is married to Christine C. Jones WG'87. Her grandchildren include Liliane L. Jones C'17, Frederick M. Jones C'19, and Benjamin J. Jones C'21.

**Richard H. Oeschger Ar'53,** Old Lyme, CT, Dec. 19. He retired from General Dynamics Electric Boat, which designs and constructs submarines. He served in the US Navy.

**Arthur J. Schomer W'53,** Bellevue, WA, a retired management consultant; July 3. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity.

**Katherine Eisentrager Weibel HUP'53,** Lansdale, PA, a former school nurse for the Upper Darby School District (PA); Oct. 25. Earlier in her career, she was a surgical nurse for the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Her husband was Dr. Robert E. Weibel M'55, who died Sept. 29 (see Class of 1955).

# 1954

**Neal D. Coberly Jr. W'54 G'65,** Atherton, CA, a banking systems and financial management consultant for SRI International, a research and technology development center; Oct. 8. He served in the US Air Force.

**Jack Farber W'54,** Palm Beach Gardens, FL, a philanthropist and retired chairman of CSS Industries, a greeting card and gift wrap company; Dec. 7.

**Stephen A. Glassman W'54,** Chicago, a retired vice chairman at Macy's; June 1. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Alpha fraternity. His daughters are Diane Glassman Tarshis W'85 and Sharon Glassman Shaw GAr'85.

**R. Drew Kistler W'54,** Pittsburgh, a retired vice chairman of an investment management firm; Nov. 30. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. He later served as president of the Penn Alumni Society of Pittsburgh and the Wharton Club. One daughter is Mary Kistler Bean W'81.

**John F. Norcross W'54,** Ashburn, VA, a retired sales executive at a packaging company; Dec. 7. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Chi Rho fraternity, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, and the Glee Club.

**Patricia Magelaner Reeder HUP'54 Nu'54,** Wilmington, DE, a retired nurse and nursing instructor; Jan. 24, 2021.

**Kenneth H. Steingold WG'54,** Providence, RI, co-owner of a Volvo car dealership; Dec. 17. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

# 1955

**Stephen A. Bassock W'55,** New Canaan, CT, an executive in the securities industry; Nov. 16. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity and Penn Players. His brother is Michael Peter Bassock W'57.

**John F. "Jack" Kohl W'55,** Springfield, PA, a retired controller for British Petroleum Oil; Nov. 24. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

**Charles J. McMahon Jr. MtE'55,** Philadelphia, a professor emeritus of materials science and engineering in Penn's School of Engineering and Applied Science; Dec. 10. In 1964, he joined Penn's faculty as an assistant professor of metallurgy and materials science, moving up to full professor in 1974. He chaired the department of metallurgy and materials science from 1987 to 1992. He was an early member of Penn's Laboratory for Research on the Structure of Matter, and as computers became popular in the 1990s, he developed a CD-ROM that displayed information about 3D materials science. This "smart textbook," which accompanied his nationally renowned course *The Bicycle and the Walkman*, was one of the first online learning initiatives, and he earned a National Science Foundation grant to expand on this innovation. In 1992, he won Penn Engineering's S. Reid Warren Award for Distinguished Teaching, and nine years later, he won Penn's Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching. He retired in 2002. He served in the US Navy. As a student at Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and the ROTC. His children include Elise McMahon C'89 and David B. McMahon C'98. Two brothers are Kevin McMahon EE'62 and John A. McMahon MtE'65.

**John H. "Jack" Porter W'55,** Vero Beach, FL, cofounder of the communications firm Porter Novelli, and a former University trustee; Nov. 7. After graduating, he worked for an advertising agency and then became director of public affairs for the Peace Corps. In 1972, he cofounded Porter Novelli with Bill Novelli C'63 ASC'64. He served on Penn's board of trustees from 1981 to 1986, as well as on the boards of Penn Medicine and the School of Nursing, and on several other committees. In 1992, he retired, splitting his time between Philadelphia and Barbados. Barbados inspired his novel, *Trouble Tree* (2008). As a student at Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, ROTC, and the basketball and lacrosse teams. One stepson is Colin S. Abernethy C'89, and one step-grandson is Callum P. Abernethy W'24.

**Henderson "Woozy" Supplee III WG'55,** Bryn Mawr, PA, a life insurance agent; Aug. 23. He served in the US Army National Guard of Pennsylvania and worked for four years in the office of the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Psi fraternity. His brother is Andrew R. Supplee GCP'68.

**Dr. Alfred S. Tong C'55 D'58,** Honolulu, a dentist; March 6, 2022. He served in the US Navy.

**Dr. Robert E. Weibel M'55,** Lansdale, PA, a retired senior medical officer for the US Department of Health and Human Services' National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program; Sept. 29. He served in the US Army. One daughter is Sandra B. Weibel C'82. His wife was Katherine Eisentrager Weibel HUP'53, who died Oct. 25 (see Class of 1953).

**Robert A. Weil W'55,** Southbury, CT, a former commercial real estate broker; Nov. 16. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity.

# 1956

**Caroline Guinness Durr CW'56,** Maynard, MA, Dec. 12. She retired from American Cyanamid Research. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

**Isaac S. "Sandy" Goldman WG'56,** Chicago, a principal at a financial investment firm; Dec. 12.

**Mickey J. Littmann W'56,** New York, a retired managing director at an investment management firm; Nov. 22. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, ROTC, and the sprint football and crew teams, and he was a manager of the wrestling team. His son is Mark J. Littmann W'06.

**Mildred Foulks Morton SW'56,** Blue Bell, PA, a retired middle school guidance counselor in the Philadelphia School District; Nov. 17. Her husband is John A. Morton GEd'57.

**John V. "Skip" Rawson Jr. W'56,** Skillman, NJ, retired founder and owner of Rawson Food Services, a Wendy's franchise company; April 18. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity. One granddaughter is Holly E. Butrico W'20.

**Hon. Dolores Korman Sloviter L'56,** Gladwyne, PA, retired chief judge of the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, a former Temple University law professor, and a champion of women's rights; Oct. 12. She was the first woman to both serve on the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and ascend to chief judge. She was routinely referred to as the first female partner at a Philadelphia law firm in the 1960s and the city's first female law professor in the 1970s. She was also a member of the Trustees' Council of Penn Women.

# 1957

**Cary H. Rush EE'57 GEE'67,** a retired engineer for the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO); April 27. He was also a photographer and author. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of the ROTC and the Amateur Radio Club.

**William D. Vandell W'57,** Saratoga Springs, NY, a retired human resources executive at ACME Markets; Nov. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Theta Xi fraternity and the Glee Club. One son is Richard D. Vandell G'99.

**Richard D. Walls W'57,** Elba, NY, retired owner of an industrial uniform laundering service; Nov. 19. He served in the New York Army National Guard.

# 1958

**Dr. Francis A. DeFrino D'58,** New Milford, CT, a retired dentist; May 18. His wife is Dianne Woods DeFrino CW'58, and one son is Peter A. DeFrino C'85.

**Dr. Theodore Oslick C'58,** Glenside, PA, a retired pulmonologist; Dec. 19. At Penn, he was a member of the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

**Robert D. Owen W'58,** Blandon, PA, a retired supervisor in the financial planning department of Mack Trucks; Dec. 15.

**Dr. Edward J. Strow Jr. D'58,** Haddon Heights, NJ, a retired dentist; Nov. 11. He served in the US Coast Guard as a dentist.

**G. William Teare Jr. WG'58,** Annapolis, MD, former president of Printing Industries of America (now Printing United Alliance), a nonprofit trade association for the printing industry; June 11. He served in the US Marine Corps.

**Richard J. Warren G'58,** Newtown Square, PA, a former director of research and development for SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals; Oct. 20. He served in the US Army.

# 1959

**Dr. Charles M. Aaronson GM'59,** Fairfax, VA, a dermatologist; Nov. 12, 2021. He served in the US Air Force.

**David I. Bavar WG'59,** Baltimore, a former president of a real estate agency; Sept. 28.

**Dr. Robert L. Gerlaugh GM'59,** Vero Beach, FL, a retired physician; Dec. 11. He served in the US Navy during World War II and as a flight surgeon in the US Air Force during the Korean War.

**David C. Hartney WG'59,** Pittsford, NY, a retired manager at Eastman Kodak; Nov. 1. He later became a certified financial planner. He served in the US Navy and the US Navy Reserve.

**Dr. Harry M. Hoffman D'59,** Rydal, PA, a retired orthodontist; Dec. 30, 2021. His wife is Deborah Rifkin Hoffman Ed'59; two children are Jerold B. Hoffman C'84 and Allan M. Hoffman C90; three grandchildren are Henry N. Hoffman C'20, Louis S. Hoffman C'22, and Robert M. Hoffman GFA'23; and his brother is I. Leonard Hoffman L'58.

**Norman C. Moran WG'59,** Towson, MD, a semiretired investment banker; Oct. 20. He served in the US Marine Corps. One granddaughter is Storey L. Wanglee C'18.

**Col. Dr. Joseph A. Neal M'59 GM'64,** Clinton, MD, a retired US Air Force colonel; Oct. 24.

**Regina M. Wielga Nu'59 GNu'63,** Mechanicsburg, PA, a retired nursing instructor; Dec. 8, 2021.

**Robert L. Yoder WG'59,** Phoenix, a retired bank executive; Nov. 4. He served in the US Army National Guard of Florida.

# 1960

**Doreen Kotzen Carmody Ed'60,** Milwaukee, a retired high school physics and chemistry teacher; Nov. 17. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority.

**Preston L. "Lin" Davis L'60,** Milton, PA, a retired lawyer; Sept. 21.

**Richard T. Hykes W'60,** Haverford, PA, an economics professor at Drexel University; Oct. 20.

**Adolf A. Paier Jr. W'60,** Bryn Mawr, PA, retired CEO of the accounting and financial consultancy Novus Corporation and a former member of the Penn Museum's board of advisors; Oct. 5. He also cofounded Privakey, which provides authentication and transaction verification services. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity and the gymnastics team. His wife was Geraldine Shnakis Paier HUP'66 Nu'68 GNu'85 Gr'94, who died Dec. 24 (see Class of 1966).

**R. Russell Williamson II W'60,** Walpole, MA, a former executive at a printing company; Nov. 22. He served in the Massachusetts Air National Guard. At Penn he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity.

# 1961

**Linda Schutt Buchman HUP'61,** Hanahan, SC, a former nurse; Nov. 30.

**James F. X. O'Reilly WG'61,** Newtown, CT, a retired manager at the chemical company Union Carbide; March 17, 2022.

# 1962

**Stephen R. Dickler C'62,** Hilton Head Island, SC, a retired sales manager in the broadcasting industry; Nov. 14. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity.

**Stuart A. Gordon C'62,** Palm Beach Gardens, FL, an attorney; May 5. At Penn, he was a member of the *Daily Pennsylvanian* and the crew team.

**Benjamin F. Hammond Gr'62,** a professor emeritus of microbiology in Penn's School of Dental Medicine and the school's former associate dean of academic affairs; May 14. While completing his PhD at Penn Dental, he joined its faculty as an assistant instructor of microbiology. He became an assistant professor in 1962 and a full professor in 1970. He earned Penn's Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching in 1969. From 1972 to 1985, he chaired the department of microbiology, at which point he became the school's associate dean of academic affairs. He retired from Penn in 1991 and has since been lauded as a pioneering Black member of Penn Dental Medicine's faculty.

**Richard G. Krassen W'62,** Philadelphia, a retired life insurance salesman; April 27. His wife is Carole Levin Cohn CW'62.

**Dr. William S. Zavod C'62 GM'70,** Merion Station, PA, a pediatrician; Oct. 13. His wife is Rosalie Bernstein Zavod MT'64, and one son is Blaine S. Zavod C'97.

# 1963

**Edward M. Cross WG'63,** Norfolk, VA, a retired professor of information systems and decision sciences at Old Dominion University; Dec. 8.

**Patricia Clark Kenschaft G'63 Gr'73,** Arlington, MA, professor emeritus of mathematics at Montclair State University; Nov. 20.

**Dr. Victor J. Krym D'63,** Pittsford, NY, a retired dentist; Jan. 29, 2022.

**Charles B. Mathias GEd'63,** Berwyn, PA, a retired advertising executive in the pharmaceutical industry and a former member of Penn's School of Nursing's board of advisors; Dec. 17. One daughter is Brette Mathias Reiman C'89.

**Paul F. Raggio WEv'63,** Lansdale, PA, a retired sales manager for Santa Fe Railroad; Dec. 5.

**Dr. Barry R. Zitomer M'63,** Morristown, NJ, a physician; July 20.

# 1964

**Karen Jandreau Clark CW'64 Gr'04,** Philadelphia, a middle school teacher, college professor, and social justice advocate; Feb. 27. She was also an adjunct professor in Penn's Graduate School of Education. As a student at Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

**Ronald R. D'Souza GEE'64,** Lagrangeville, NY, Nov. 26. He retired from IBM and took up a second career as a management consultant and auditor.

**Tom G. Hussmann WG'64,** El Paso, TX, a retired founding director of a bank; Nov. 4. He served in the US Navy.

**Ernest H. Josar SW'64,** Bethlehem, PA, a retired social worker and former professor of social work; Nov. 23. He served in the US Army.

**Edward G. Pringle WG'64,** Shelburne, VT, a retired management consulting services executive; Dec. 15. He later taught at the University of North Carolina.

# 1965

**Anthony J. Plitnik WG'65,** Malvern, PA, a retired commercial real estate executive; Nov. 24. He served in the US Army Reserve.

# 1966

**Dr. Jeffrey Hartzell M'66 GM'70,** Merion, PA, a longtime physician at Pennsylvania Hospital and hospice-care pioneer; Oct. 13. He worked at Pennsylvania Hospital for more than 30 years and cofounded the facility's hospice-care program. In the 1980s and '90s he was the team doctor for the Philadelphia Flyers hockey team, and for a time, he also served as an alternate physician for the Philadelphia Orchestra. One sister is Mary Lee Young CGS'72 GEd'75.

**Geraldine Shnakis Paier HUP'66 Nu'68 GNu'85 Gr'94,** Bryn Mawr, PA, a former faculty member at the University of Arizona College of Nursing, and a former member of the board of advisors for the Penn Museum and Penn's School of Nursing; Dec. 24. Her husband was Adolf A. Paier Jr. W'60, who died Oct. 5 (see Class of 1960).

**Stanley M. Rea Jr. WG'66,** Saint Louis, retired vice president and general counsel of Nestle Purina PetCare; Nov. 7. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

**Dr. John F. Sinclair D'66,** Windsor, VT, a dentist; Dec. 14.

# 1967

**Manuel Haendler SW'67,** Quincy, MA, an executive director of a homeless shelter; Dec. 16.

**Robert L. Hooker WG'67,** Wooster, OH, a retired marketing professional and pilot; Nov. 27.

**James J. Lennon WG'67,** Wynnewood, PA, an investment executive; Dec. 9. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

# 1968

**Margaret Wilner Hut C'68,** Chevy Chase, MD, a retired editor of Washington, DC-area parenting publications; Dec. 3. At Penn, she was a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority. Her husband is Steve Hut Jr. C'68, and her children include Nick Hut C'96 and Katie Hut C'02. Two brothers are John R. Wilner W'62 and Richard K. Wilner C'71.

**Jack V. Morreale Jr. WG'68,** Eden Prairie, MN, a retired banker; May 11. He served in the US Army.

**William J. Noonan W'68,** Sarasota, FL, a retired executive at the industrial supply company Grainger; Oct. 21. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

**Joel F. Sherzer Gr'68,** West Lake Hills, TX, professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin; Nov. 6. His wife is Dina Marin Sherzer Gr'70.

# 1969

**Thomas J. Blyskal C'69,** Valley Forge, PA, Dec. 17. He retired from the insurance industry. At Penn, he was a member of the football team.

**Keith E. Heller WEv'69**, Lancaster, PA, a retired treasurer and controller for an architectural firm; Nov. 4. He served in the US Army.

**Dr. Bert McKinnon C'69,** Flagstaff, AZ, a retired orthopedic surgeon; Dec. 9. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of the rowing team. One brother is William S. McKinnon ChE'67.

**Edward A. Rubel WG'69,** Harwich Port, MA, a banker; Nov. 10. He served in the US Navy.

## 1970

**Robert F. Fowler II WG'70,** Atlanta, a retired management consultant and interim CFO for multiple companies; Nov. 20. He served in the US Army.

**Paulette E. Setler Gr'70,** Sewickley, PA, a former pharmaceutical executive; July 26, 2021.

## 1971

**George E. Kelley WEv'71,** Virginia Beach, VA, a retired car salesman; Dec. 20.

## 1972

**Dr. Stephen Miles Berger GM'72,** Columbus, OH, a retired cardiologist; Dec. 7. He served in the US Army as a physician.

**Mary Jane Grams Scruggs Nu'72,** Pennsville, NJ, retired director of nursing at the Salem County (NJ) Department of Health; Nov. 30.

## 1974

**Dr. Mark J. Doherty D'74,** Lakeville, MA, a dentist and cofounder of a dental practice consulting group; Oct. 7. His son is Dr. Mark E. Doherty D'03.

**Huy Hong GCE'74,** Norristown, PA, a former manager at an engineering firm; July 10.

**Steven R. "Monk" Koch WG'74,** Rye, NY, a retired financial executive for Texaco; Dec. 17.

**Theresa A. Powell CW'74,** Media, PA, vice president for student affairs at Temple University; Jan 2. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority and the Black Student League.

## 1975

**Dr. William R. Colite D'75,** Middletown, CT, a retired dentist; Dec. 17. One son is Dr. Stephen W. Colite D'06.

**Carolyn Graves Hill-Jones GrEd'75,** Westborough, MA, a retired high school curriculum director; Nov. 15.

## 1976

**Dr. William F. Gadbois GM'76,** Orleans, MA, a urologist; Dec. 9.

**Robert J. Keefe GEE'76,** Warminster, PA, a retired senior technical advisor at Chase Manhattan Bank; Oct. 1. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity.

**Dennet W. Latham GAr'76,** Lake Oswego, OR, a retired architect; Nov. 12.

**Robert S. Morrison W'76,** Skillman, NJ, an accountant; Nov. 30. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.

**Marian A. Orfeo C'76,** Lynnfield, MA, an administrator at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, a biomedical and genomic research center; Nov. 24.

## 1977

**Lynn J. Karasik GNu'77,** Wynnewood, PA, a school nurse for the School District of Philadelphia; July 20. She was also a lecturer in community and behavioral health at Penn.

**Dr. Steven A. Levy V'77,** Evans, GA, a former owner of a veterinary hospital; May 27.

**Antonio Magliocco L'77,** Brooklyn, NY, a co-owner of a wine and spirits distributor; Oct. 25. One brother is John T. Magliocco W'64.

## 1978

**Joseph P. Browne Gr'78,** West Chester, PA, a professor of English and Irish literature at West Chester University; Oct. 24. One son is Dr. Timothy L. Browne M'08.

**John S. Calligheris Jr. W'78,** Hamilton, MT, a former New York City police officer; Oct. 17. He was a veteran of the Korean War.

**Rochelle Dubin Caplan SW'78,** Philadelphia, director of Children and Youth Services for the Philadelphia Department of Human Services; Dec. 15.

**Dr. James L. Pearlstein D'78,** Beverly Hills, CA, a dentist; Aug. 31. His sister is Anita Pearlstein Miller CW'70.

**Kathy-Ann Fagan Reissman WG'78,** Arrowsic, ME, a retired director of public markets for the telecommunications company Alcatel Lucent; Oct. 9.

## 1979

**Byung C. Choi Gr'79,** Jersey City, NJ, a former engineer for ExxonMobil; July 4. One son is Neil C. Choi W'95.

**William T. Hill WG'79,** Little Rock, AR, an investment manager; Nov. 16.

## 1980

**Jane Guernsey Birmingham C'80,** Laguna Beach, CA, cofounder of D-Day 2044, a nonprofit organization that teaches World War II history; Dec. 5. In the 1980s, she worked at Penn as a development officer.

**Roberta Balloch McGady GNu'80,** Philadelphia, a former school nurse for the School District of Philadelphia; Nov. 19.

## 1981

**Irvin H. Hurwitz C'81,** Paoli, PA, a former director of development at Penn; June 28. After working as an attorney, he came to the University in 1988 as the associate director of development. He spearheaded the Campaign for Penn from 1991 to 1995 and served as director of regional major gifts until 1999. That year, the Perelman School of Medicine hired him as its director of alumni development. In 2002, he became the assistant dean for development and alumni affairs at Temple University School of Medicine. Afterwards, he held positions at the National Museum of American Jewish History, the University of Delaware, and the consulting firm Schultz & Williams, before becoming a freelance development consultant in 2021. His wife is Janet Leight Hurwitz EE'81, and his son is Samuel M. Hurwitz EAS'14.

## 1982

**John G. Christoffersson GEE'82,** Lake Oswego, OR, a retired technology executive in the publishing industry; Nov. 14.

**Leland R. Cory WEv'82,** Chestertown, MD, a retired special project analyst at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia; Jan. 5, 2022. He served in the US Army.

## 1983

**Stephen C. Garlington WG'83,** Philadelphia, a retired employee of the Philadelphia School District; Oct. 27.

**Lance John Graber W'83 WG'88,** Scottsdale, AZ, a founder and principal of a real estate private equity firm; Nov. 5. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity and the football and track teams. One son is Devin P. Graber W'14.

**Judy E. Reardon L'83,** Manchester, NH, a former political strategist and legal counsel for US Senator Jeanne Shaheen (NH); Dec. 16.

## 1984

**Laurence C. Keck WEv'84,** Bensalem, PA, a former manager at Verizon; Dec. 11. He served in the US Army National Guard. His wife is Anne Yocum Keck Nu'73.

## 1986

**Dr. Steven Schreiber M'86,** Pompton Plains, NJ, a retired emergency doctor; Dec. 23.

## 1987

**George Gerard Bitto WG'87,** Emmaus, PA, chief financial officer for Versum Materials, a manufacturer for the semiconductor industry; Dec. 15.

**Karen McSorley Imbalzano C'87,** Shrewsbury, MA, a research associate at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School; Oct. 28. Her husband is Anthony N. Imbalzano Jr. C'86.

## 1989

**John M. Pembroke W'89,** Chandler, AZ, president and CEO of Credit Union Executives Society, which educates and develops future leaders at credit unions; Nov. 21. At Penn, he was a member of Psi Upsilon fraternity and the Black Student League.

**Sharon Marie Rhoads WEv'89,** Mentor, OH, a former chief financial officer for Vetstreet, a pet health resource; Nov. 14. She later opened a farm animal sanctuary.

## 1990

**Michael Peter Sawczuk Gr'90,** Nanticoke, PA, a retired associate professor of business management at Penn State University; Dec. 11.

## 1992

**Darren A. Bowie L'92,** New York, a global chief privacy officer and managing director of a bank; Nov. 25.

## 1993

**Dr. Susan L. Rattner GM'93,** Media, PA, a retired professor of medicine at Thomas Jefferson University; Dec. 22.

## 2001

**Benjamin R. Sommerness WG'01,** Excelsior, MN, an executive at a business development firm; Nov. 7. He served in the US Army.

## 2004

**Matthew P. Walls WEv'04 G'12,** Princeton, NJ, a procurement executive at the pharmaceutical company Bristol Myers Squibb; Dec. 7.

## 2012

**Kenneth Okechukwu Dikas GEd'12 L'15,** Los Angeles, a corporate lawyer; Dec. 3.

## 2018

**Thiena Dao WG'18,** Mountain View, CA, a former senior manager at Google; Dec. 12.

## 2021

**Mark R. Bookman Gr'21,** Philadelphia, a disability activist, historian, and visiting researcher at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto; Dec. 16. In 2018, he received the Penn Prize for Excellence in Teaching by Graduate Students.

## 2025

**Maurice A. Campbell II C'25,** Mount Vernon, NY, a student in Penn's College of Arts and Sciences; Dec. 20. At Penn, he was a member of the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

# Faculty & Staff

**Dr. Arthur K. Asbury Hon'15,** Philadelphia, the Van Meter Professor of Neurology Emeritus at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine, who held a variety of leadership positions at the school; Oct. 19. From 1974 to 1982, he served as chair of neurology and in 1983 was appointed to the Van Meter professorship. He served as interim dean and executive vice president from 1988 to 1989, then fulfilled a three-year term as vice dean for research and a four-year term as vice dean for faculty affairs. He retired in 1997 but remained active at Penn, again becoming interim dean in 2000–2001. He was renowned for his clinical and experimental studies of peripheral neuropathies, particularly those seen with chronic kidney failure, and in patients with diabetes mellitus and Guillain-Barré syndrome. This research has continued to impact diverse treatments, ranging as far as swine flu vaccines. In 2000, he won Penn's Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching. He also received the Penn Health System I. S. Ravdin Master Clinician Award, among other accolades. He served in the US Army Reserve. His wife is Carolyn H. Asbury Gr'82, and one child is Dr. William F. Asbury V'86.

**Jerry Berndt**, Hilton Head Island, SC, a former college football coach who led Penn to four straight Ivy League championships in the 1980s; Dec. 4. Hired as Penn football's head coach in 1981, he quickly turned around a struggling program and guided the Quakers to a share of the Ivy League title just one year later, thanks to a memorable last-second win over Harvard ["Old Penn," Nov|Dec 2022]. Under Berndt, Penn went on to win another share of the league title in 1983 before capturing outright crowns in 1984 and 1985, ushering in a new era of dominance. He left Penn to become the head coach and athletic director at Rice in 1986, and he later served as the head coach at Temple and the offensive coordinator at the University of Missouri. He was inducted into the Penn Athletics Hall of Fame in 2014. One daughter is Jamie L. Berndt C'87, whose husband is Eric D. Wojcikiewicz C'88.

**Jane Guernsey Birmingham.** *See Class of 1980.*

**Karen Jandreau Clark.** *See Class of 1964.*

**Samuel "Bud" Diamond.** *See Class of 1952.*

**Dr. Audrey E. Evans,** Philadelphia, a professor emerita of pediatrics at Penn, the first chief of the division of oncology at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), and cofounder of the Ronald McDonald House; Sept. 29. In 1969, she was recruited to become CHOP's first chief of oncology, as well as an associate professor of pediatrics at Penn. She became a renowned figure in the world of childhood cancer, developing a protocol for assessing which children with neuroblastoma need aggressive treatments and which can be aided with less invasive methods. The Evans Staging System was used for decades, and during her tenure at CHOP, the mortality rate for children with neuroblastoma dropped by 50 percent, according to some accounts. She was also one of the first researchers to recog-

nize the importance of nursing, psychology, and social work in the care of children with cancer, advocating for a "total care" approach. In 1974, she cofounded, with Philadelphia Eagles general manager Jimmy Murray, the first Ronald McDonald House. The house, which offered a home away from home for families while their children received hospital treatment, became a model for more than 375 other Ronald McDonald Houses in 45 countries. "A family with a sick child is a sick family," she was known to say. Among many accolades, she received the William Osler Patient Oriented Research Award from Penn in 1997. She retired from her leadership positions at Penn in 1989 but continued to work on neuroblastoma in the lab for another decade, retiring from teaching in 2001 and from CHOP in 2009. In her retirement, she helped found the St. James School in Philadelphia in 2011. A biopic about her life, *Audrey's Children*, recently began filming.

**Dr. Dwight L. Evans,** Philadelphia, a professor emeritus and former chair of psychiatry, medicine, and neuroscience in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine; Nov. 19. He came to Penn in 1997 after teaching at the University of North Carolina and the University of Florida. In 1999, he was appointed the Ruth Meltzer Professor of Psychiatry. He chaired Penn's department of psychiatry until 2016, one of the longest tenures at Penn Medicine. He also oversaw the establishment of Penn Behavioral Health and served as psychiatrist-in-chief of the Penn Health System, director of the Penn Comprehensive Depression Center, and codirector of the Penn Neuroscience Center. He was known internationally for his research on the impact of stress and depression on other diseases, including cancer, AIDS, and cardiac cases. He led the creation of the NIH-funded Penn Mental Health AIDS Research Center and served as its inaugural director. In 2015, he was named the inaugural Roehrhoff Rickels Professor of Psychiatry. He retired in 2016.

**Stephen Gale,** Philadelphia, associate professor emeritus of political science in the School of Arts and Sciences; Oct. 30. He came to Wharton in 1973 as an assistant professor of peace science. In 1977, he was promoted to associate professor and chair of a department that was named regional political science and relocated to the School of Arts and Sciences. He also taught organizational dynamics courses. He became political science professor emeritus in 2011. His research dealt with technology transfer and business development, real estate analysis, security, and project evaluation. He testified on Capitol Hill and appeared frequently in the media. He retired in 2012.

**Benjamin F. Hammond.** *See Class of 1962.*

**Dr. Jeffrey Hartzell.** *See Class of 1966.*

**Irvin H. Hurwitz.** *See Class of 1981.*

**Lynn J. Karasik.** *See Class of 1977.*

**Robin L. Leidner,** Philadelphia, a former associate professor of sociology in the School of Arts and Sciences; Sept. 23. She joined Penn's faculty in 1988 as an assistant professor of sociology. She immediately became an engaged member of Penn's feminist community, leading a seminar titled *Women, Work, and the Family: Controversy and Change* for Penn's 250th anniversary conference in 1990. She also taught sociology of gender courses in the gender, sexuality, and women's studies program and served as the sociology department's undergraduate chair. Her book *Fast Food, Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinization of Everyday Life* showed how employers sought to alter the emotions of workers and clients and has been cited over 2,500 times. She retired in 2022.

**Charles B. Mathias.** *See Class of 1963.*

**Charles J. McMahon Jr.** *See Class of 1955.*

**Alan L. Myers,** a professor emeritus of chemical and biomolecular engineering in the School of Engineering and Applied Science. In 1964, he was hired by Penn as an associate professor of chemical engineering and was promoted to a full professor in 1972. Five years later, he was named chair of the department of chemical and biochemical engineering. In 1983, he received Penn's S. Reid Warren Award for Distinguished Teaching. That same year he also cofounded the International Adsorption Society, a nonprofit professional association. He later served on the first executive committee of the Penn Association of Senior and Emeritus Faculty (PASEF) in 2006.

**Geraldine Shnakis Paier.** *See Class of 1966.*

**John H. "Jack" Porter.** *See Class of 1955.*

**Katherine Eisentrager Weibel.** *See Class of 1953.*

## School Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| Ar | Architecture |
| ASC | Annenberg |
| C | College (bachelor's) |
| CCC | College Collateral Courses |
| CE | Civil Engineering |
| CGS | College of General Studies (till 2008) |
| Ch | Chemistry |
| ChE | Chemical Engineering |
| CW | College for Women (till 1975) |
| D | Dental Medicine |
| DH | Dental Hygiene |
| EAS | Engineering and Applied Science (bachelor's) |
| Ed | Education |
| EE | Electrical Engineering |
| FA | Fine Arts |
| G | master's, Arts and Sciences |
| GAr | master's, Architecture |
| GCE | master's, Civil Engineering |
| GCh | master's, Chemical Engineering |
| GCP | master's, City Planning |
| GD | Dental, post-degree |
| GEd | master's, Education |
| GEE | master's, Electrical Engineering |
| GEng | master's, Engineering and Applied Science |
| GEx | master's, Engineering Executive |
| GFA | master's, Fine Arts |
| GGS | master's, College of General Studies |
| GL | master's, Law |
| GLA | master's, Landscape Architecture |
| GME | master's, Mechanical Engineering |
| GM | Medicine, post-degree |
| GMt | master's, Metallurgical Engineering |
| GNu | master's, Nursing |
| GPU | master's, Governmental Administration |
| Gr | doctorate |
| GrC | doctorate, Civil Engineering |
| GrE | doctorate, Electrical Engineering |
| GrEd | doctorate, Education |
| GrL | doctorate, Law |
| GrN | doctorate, Nursing |
| GRP | master's, Regional Planning |
| GrS | doctorate, Social Work |
| GrW | doctorate, Wharton |
| GV | Veterinary, post-degree |
| Hon | Honorary |
| HUP | Nurse training (till 1978) |
| L | Law |
| LAr | Landscape Architecture |
| LPS | Liberal and Professional Studies |
| M | Medicine |
| ME | Mechanical Engineering |
| MT | Medical Technology |
| MtE | Metallurgical Engineering |
| Mu | Music |
| NEd | Certificate in Nursing |
| Nu | Nursing (bachelor's) |
| OT | Occupational Therapy |
| PSW | Pennsylvania School of Social Work |
| PT | Physical Therapy |
| SAMP | School of Allied Medical Professions |
| SPP | Social Policy and Practice (master's) |
| SW | Social Work (master's) (till 2005) |
| V | Veterinary Medicine |
| W | Wharton (bachelor's) |
| WAM | Wharton Advanced Management |
| WEF | Wharton Extension Finance |
| WEv | Wharton Evening School |
| WG | master's, Wharton |
| WMP | Wharton Management Program |

# Classifieds

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# Pine Alpha

This bristlecone pine slab, housed in the Penn Museum, comes from a California tree that had been growing for about 900 years when Ramesses II reigned over ancient Egypt. Felled in the mid-1950s by dendrochronologist Edmund Schulman, the 4,000-year-old conifer played a pivotal role in the calibration of radiocarbon dating. The analysis of carbon-14 isotopes to estimate the age of organic materials began in 1949, but the method produced disagreements with some well-established dates of Egyptian artifacts. By sampling material from the precisely dateable annual tree rings of *pinus longaeva*, Henry N. Michael CCC'48 Gr'54 and Elizabeth K. Ralph Gr'73, along with C. Wesley Ferguson of the University of Arizona, developed a scale to correct for discrepancies that were ultimately found to stem from fluctuating concentrations of carbon-14 in Earth's atmosphere. Using this slab and well-preserved wood samples of still older origin, the researchers created a reliable chronology stretching back to 7,400 B.C.E.



Photo by Candace diCarlo

*Photo by Eric Sucar, Office of University Communications*

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