

# THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

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## Shelter from the Storm: The Case for Guaranteed Income



**The Long Road to  
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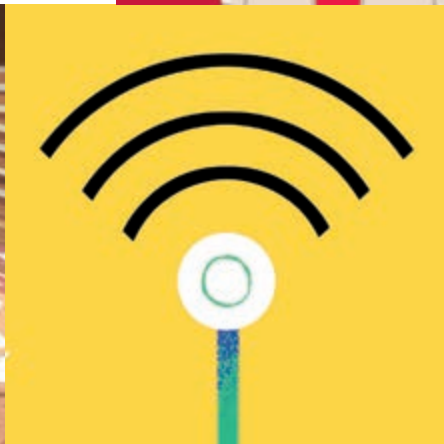
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# THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

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# Promising News

**It's** been said often that the pandemic has exacerbated long-standing inequities in American society, wealth inequality very much included. While many in the US are better off than they were a year ago (building up savings as they worked remotely while having fewer opportunities to spend), the economic burden—in terms both of lost employment and having to stay on the job in unsafe conditions—has fallen on lower-income households.

Among the policy responses gaining traction even before the novel coronavirus emerged was the idea of a universal basic income (UBI)—which Andrew Yang made a centerpiece of his presidential campaign, for example—and the related, but more targeted, concept of a guaranteed income. In this issue's cover story, "Fighting Poverty with Cash," associate editor Dave Zeitlin C'03 reports on new data showing that guaranteed income payments do make a significant, positive difference in recipients' lives.

School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2) assistant professor Amy Castro Baker and her research partner Stacia West of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville are analyzing the impact of a pro-

gram initiated in Stockton, California, to distribute \$500 monthly to selected recipients for two years; results for the first (pre-pandemic) year came out in March. They found that the payments helped recipients meet expenses and improve their overall quality of life—and *did not*, as is often claimed by opponents, create a disincentive to work.

**Guaranteed income payments do make a significant, positive difference.**

While apparently this is the first income experiment to be tried in decades, more pilot studies are on the way. Castro Baker and West will head a new center at Penn designed to serve as a clearinghouse for information and resources on guaranteed income programs to aid in policymaking.

Dave also spoke with Castro Baker about her own background, growing up watching her parents struggle and being the first in her family to

go to college, and about the hate mail she has received in the course of her work, which she attributes to the US history of "attaching shame and blame to the safety net." Noting that Martin Luther King Jr. was advocating for a guaranteed income more than 50 years ago, she told Dave, "This is not a new idea." But it's one whose time may be coming. Castro Baker has "a lot of hope."

As detailed in "The Vaccine Trenches," by Matthew De George, work toward the new messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines against COVID-19—now injecting hope into millions of arms daily—goes back nearly that long. While the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines were approved for emergency use in record time, before that sprint the race was more like an ironman triathlon.

The article recounts how Katalin Kariko first became convinced of mRNA's potential as a young researcher and eventually found a like-minded collaborator in Penn colleague Drew Weissman. Amid many setbacks, their work together led to the key breakthroughs that paved the way for today's vaccines. But that achievement may have only scratched the surface. The two researchers and others in Weissman's lab also share insights about possible further use of the technology in a broad array of infectious and other diseases.

It is noted in passing in JoAnn Greco's article, "Webside Manner," that an 1879 *Lancet* article suggested that telephone calls could replace some office visits, so

the basic concept of telemedicine has been around for a while, too. Use had been growing before 2020—but when lockdowns started last spring, Penn went from 1,000 telemedicine visits per month to 7,500 per day, to cite one statistic from the piece.

JoAnn spoke with Penn Medicine physicians and researchers and with alumni involved in the field about the impact of that explosive growth, the groundwork that had been done previously, and what may lie ahead in a post-pandemic era—including issues of access and equity. If those can be resolved, the technology could improve healthcare in rural and other underserved areas and lessen time commitment and other costs of doctor visits.

Also in this issue, in "Writing Lives," we highlight recently published memoirs by four alumni writers—all very different, and well worth seeking out. (For this, I was delighted to write about Nick Lyons W'53, whose relationship with the magazine goes back even before my time here!)

Finally, "Gazetteer" opens with details on Penn's scheduled in-person Commencement ceremony and planned full return for faculty, students, and staff next fall, accompanied by some views—both aerial and ground-level—of the campus now. (See our website for a video supplement!)



# A Sense of Purpose, A Sense of Place, A Sense of Penn

Looking ahead to better days—without forgetting what we’ve been through.

By Amy Gutmann

“Philadelphia,” President Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said, “is a good city in which to write American history.” The occasion of that remark came on FDR’s renomination to be his party’s candidate for a second term in 1936. The location, as we all know, was right here at Penn, on Franklin Field. It was in that same speech that the 32nd president observed how human history runs in a seemingly mysterious cycle, bringing his remarks to a thunderous conclusion as he declared: “To some generations much is given. Of other generations much is expected. This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny.”

We know in retrospect, of course, that even though he spoke some years before the outbreak of war in Europe, and fully half a decade before America’s entry into it, FDR’s remarks were eerily prescient. Today, 85 years later, they seem hardly less so. This month, on May 17, I expect to stand proudly—*joyfully*—on that same Franklin Field where President Roosevelt spoke, to congratulate the amazing undergraduate Class of 2021, a generation that indeed has had its own rendezvous with destiny.

“Joyful” in fact does not begin to describe my feelings at being able to mark the waning of the pandemic with what will be the first mass attendance event held on campus in more than a year. How apt, how appropriate, that it should mark the achievements and the triumphs of these wonderful graduating seniors who arrived at Penn in the sepia-toned days of 2017, a time we now fondly think of as *before*. They leave Penn to

go out into a world haltingly but determinedly returning to normal, but a world that will forever be *after*—changed and altered in ways we don’t yet know or fully comprehend. Their task, their rendezvous with destiny, will not just be to make sense of it, but to use their skills and their sense to make it better.

In September, the University has called all students, faculty, and staff to a full return to campus. As 2021 gives way to 2022, we look forward (would ‘ecstatically’ be too strong an intensifier

Americans when our population was far less than a third of what it is today—and the thing that jumps out at you is just how fast the memory faded. As one historian put it, “as soon as the dying stopped, the forgetting began.”

And that forgetting, which in many respects appeared intentional, was so very successful. The hue and outcry against Americans wearing masks we all experienced somehow elided right over the fact that there are literally thousands of images of our grandmothers and grandfa-

**The thing that jumps out at you is just how fast the memory faded [after 1918]. As one historian put it, “as soon as the dying stopped, the forgetting began.”**

here? I think not!) to a resumption of some of the many experiences and traditions that make Penn uniquely Penn. Freshman convocation. The Econ Scream. Toasting Penn football. Packed in the Palestra. Family weekend. Hey Day. Class reunions. Just bumping into someone—literally—on Locust Walk. The list goes on and on.

How tempting it might be to throw ourselves once again into the joy of human contact while giving hardly a thought to what we have all just been through. Read about the great influenza pandemic of 1918—that killed an estimated 675,000

thers doing just that back in 1918—back in a time when the science of virology was nascent, and the understanding of how to contain and control the deadly influenza outbreak was at best incomplete. Even so, our grandparents knew what they had to do. Yet undoubtedly, the phenomena of open classroom windows, of restaurant dining and church services alfresco, of masks and handwashing and social distancing were not new. They were only new to us. Because somehow we chose not to remember.

This is the thought that needs to stay prominent even as we begin to so hap-

pily look ahead to better days to come: that we don't want to forget. That we must not forget. But to do so, we are going to figure out how we remember. Perhaps here too, FDR was prescient—Philadelphia *is* a good city in which to write history. And Penn will play a big part in it. Certainly from the very earliest days of the pandemic, Penn was charting a clear and truly historic course of what was to come. From the start—when the question on everyone's mind was 'Just what is a coronavirus?'—the world turned to Penn, and the four decades of pioneering research Perelman School of Medicine Professor of Microbiology Susan Weiss had already undertaken into that very question ["The Mother of Coronaviruses," Nov/Dec 2020]. Weiss's lab had long been an epicenter of coronavirus research, responsible for training many of the scientists who were suddenly at the forefront of a global race against time. Alumni from her lab became key players in the development of vaccines, in public health preparedness, and in undertaking additional scientific studies of the virus to make it possible to test for and manipulate the viral genome.

Meanwhile, the moment the SARS-CoV-2 genome was sequenced, the dash to create a viable vaccine commenced. Here again, key research many years in the making put Penn at the center of an unprecedented global effort. Decades before this, Penn researchers Drew Weissman and Katalin Karikó began investigating a novel approach to creating vaccines and other medicines by developing synthetic messenger RNA that, when injected into the body, would instruct cells to create specific antibodies to fight against a targeted disease. However, while making sound sense on paper, in practice the procedure always failed because the body's immune system was highly effective at recognizing the synthetic mRNA and destroying it before it could accomplish its mission. Many years of painstaking and often frustrating re-

search ensued. Then came a key discovery, described in a series of scientific papers starting in 2005, that enabled the scientists to fool the body's defenses and allow the synthetic mRNA to do its work ["The Vaccine Trenches," this issue].

This technology—never before successfully employed in medicine—lies at the heart of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, two of the first most effective vaccines developed in the fight against COVID and a primary line of defense against the pandemic here in the United States. On December 18, Drew and Katalin received their first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine together at Penn, more than 20 years after they began their basic science collaboration.

This is what is expected: to make these vital discoveries; to teach and spread knowledge; and yes, to help us remember. Heather Starkey, a professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in the College, is doing just that. Working with the Penn COVID-19 Community Archiving Project in the University Archives and Records Center, she has encouraged students in all her classes to write about their experiences at Penn during the COVID-19 pandemic for posterity ["Gazetteer," Sep/Oct 2020]. Professor Starkey reflects, "Penn survived the 1918 flu pandemic, but we have very few archived sources about what students, faculty, and staff experienced during that time. I hope that the memoirs that students submit to the archives will enable scholars in the future to see how our university persisted—and to extract helpful lessons about surviving and finding meaning through learning and community in a time of adversity."

How better to sum up the sense of purpose and place that is Penn? Philadelphia may well be the perfect city to write the history and create the memory of what our nation and our world have been through. And I have no doubt our students know it too. Five members of the great Class of 2021 confronted the initial COVID quarantine by deciding that no

matter what the restrictions, they too could make a difference. So they organized a nationwide effort to send individual letters of support and appreciation to nurses and doctors caring for the sickest COVID patients. They called their effort Lockdown Letters—a tribute to a unique moment in our history. As I write, more than 13,000 frontline healthcare workers have received messages of hope from strangers who were simply willing to take the time to share their thanks. It's a small everyday act, but each individual letter is a piece of history. One letter, typical of the many thousands, said simply: "Your dedication, bravery, and courage have not gone unnoticed."

A century hence, someone will unfold, and read, and remember. This was a generation of which much was expected. A generation that gave its all. A generation that met its rendezvous with destiny. This was Penn.

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## LETTERS

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Letters should refer to material published in the magazine and may be edited for clarity, civility, and length.

### Well-Matched

Congratulations on the Mar|Apr issue. I don't remember a more interesting one—including the one my junior year in which a *Daily Pennsylvanian* piece of mine was reprinted.

I'm sure it helped that I have been friends with Budd Mishkin C'81 (whose essay "My Losing Seasons" appears in "Alumni Voices") since our days together at UTV, that I was friends in high school with Jonathan Zimmerman's older brother Jeff and that I majored in history ("The History Wars"), that I've been a political junkie since the late 1960s ("Calling It"), that I'm a humanist who lost his dad to Alzheimer's ("The Humanist Is In"), and that my mom and younger daughter were/are educators ("Black Education Before *Brown*"), but kudos on a job well done.

David Elfin C'81, Bethesda, MD

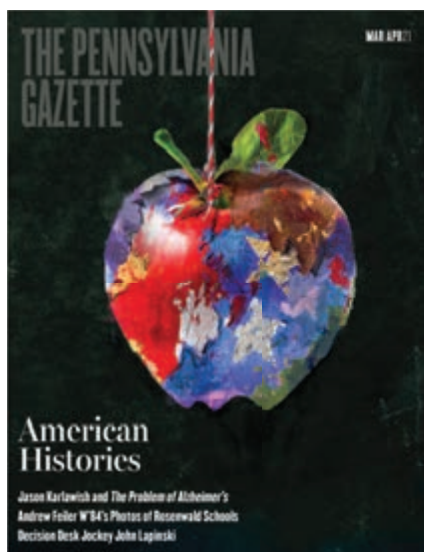
### Keep Them Coming

Just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the great work in the Mar|Apr edition. The articles on education ("The History Wars," by Trey Popp) and Alzheimer's ("The Humanist Is In," by Julia M. Klein) were particularly insightful, well written, and enlightening. The *Gazette* at its best—keep them coming!

Xiomara Corral C'84, Jersey City, NJ

### Well-Written Profile

I thoroughly enjoyed "The History Wars," Trey Popp's well-written profile



**"Congratulations on the Mar|Apr issue. I don't remember a more interesting one."**

of Jonathan Zimmerman, especially because I majored in history at Penn and consider myself a history buff.

Zimmerman's comments were fact-based, informative, insightful, nuanced, reasonable, and not tendentious in the least. I wish that more academics, public intellectuals, and political pundits emulated him!

Vincent T. Lombardo C'78, Cleveland

### We Are Not Taught to Disagree with Respect

I have just read "The History Wars," and I applaud Jonathan Zimmerman's direct approach and the fearlessness of his convictions. Having been a practicing social worker for 32-plus years, I agree that human behavior, communication, and education should become a stronger focus. Students are not taught how to think critically, without fear, even if their perspectives do not "conform" to some pre-ordained thought process of the decade.

Sadly, the teachers who would read these essays are not supported in appreciating a student's ability to formulate thoughts and present them. It is human nature to be biased in some way by our own individual histories, but we are not taught to disagree with respect, to focus on the idea, not the person/group delivering it.

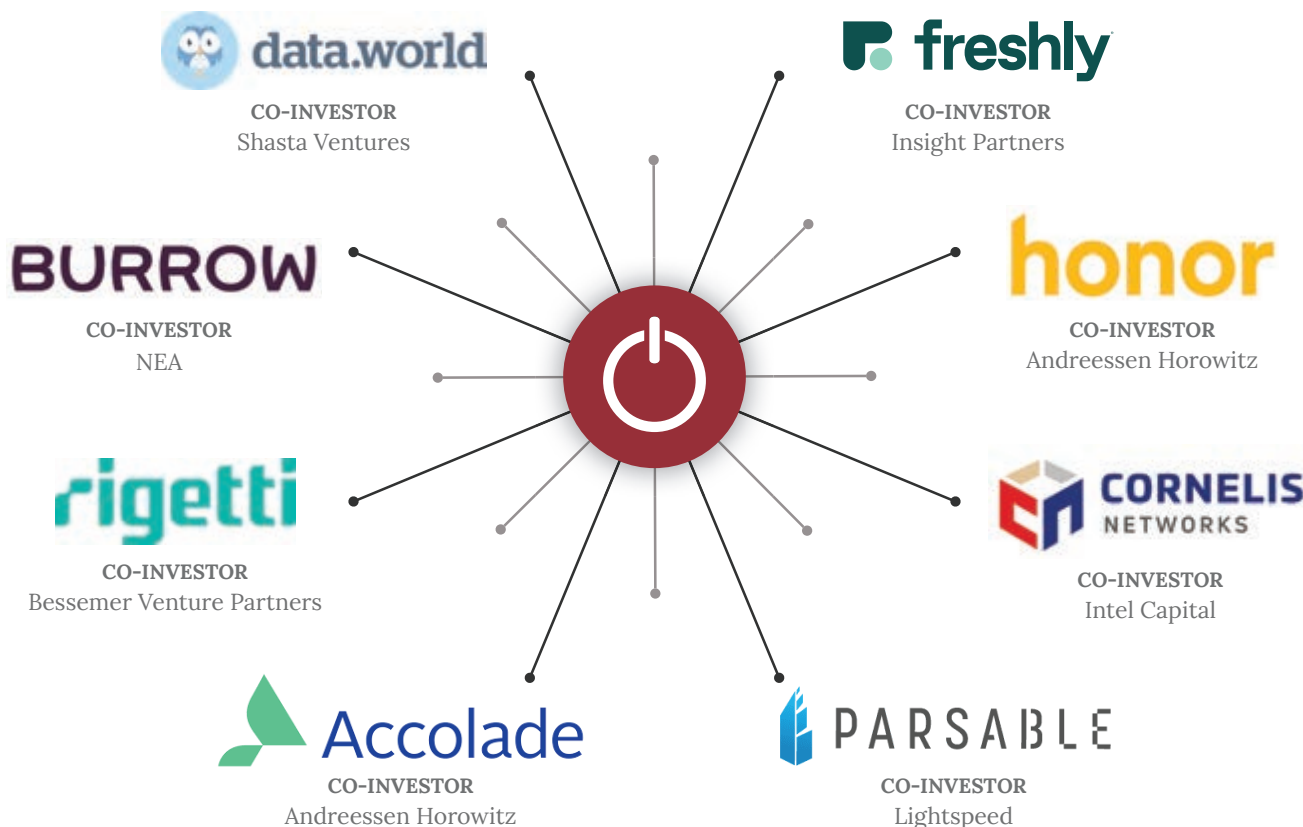
Rewriting history, the "white-washing" of the past, or now "multi-coloring" it, is also not the answer. It is our children who will be making the change in American society, but only if critical thinking, respecting varying perspectives is encouraged and nurtured.

This process should start in elementary school, and by high school should be the norm. By college, it should be expected. I agree with Zimmerman's quote, "We have radically different understandings of America right now. But that's not the problem. The problem is



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## LETTERS

we don't actually have venues and institutions to deliberate those differences."

*Sandra Clark Jones SW'88, Mill Creek, WA*

### Bias on Full Display

The Mar|Apr issue illustrates the chasm that divides America and Americans. This is clearly demonstrated by "The History Wars," written by senior editor Trey Popp and introduced by editor John Prendergast ["From the Editor"]. The bias of the editors is on full display and matches the orthodox view of most media.

The demonization of Donald Trump W'68 and his supporters has been a priority of a significant segment of American society. When anyone questions the unequal burdens created by the Paris Climate Accords, they are immediately labeled as ignorant "climate change denialists." Questions about policies to control the pandemic become "disinformation." Anyone pointing to the devastating crisis at our southern border must be "xenophobic" and "racist." Any questions about some of the obviously odd happenings in the 2020 election must be contributing to the "campaign of lies about election fraud" and probably caused the "insurrection" of January 6. Anyone wondering about the suppression of reports about the activities of Hunter Biden must be unduly influenced by "disinformation" or a "Russian effort to influence the election."

When burning and looting last summer were called "mostly peaceful protests" and the events of January 6 were called "armed insurrection," we should just accept that as reality. Now, there are a significant number of calls for generating lists of Trump supporters to make it difficult to find new jobs.

All of this is a continuation of the hatred of Donald Trump. Continual false claims that Trump was a Russian agent are acceptable. Concerns about the 2020 election process are conspiracy theories. We are in a time of very likely fundamental change in America. Banning

books and censoring speech has never led to a good outcome for a country. Are reeducation camps next? Have I just placed myself on a watch list?

*Eugene E. Nalence GEd'66, Drexel Hill, PA*

### "Silent Generation" Speaks

The Silent Generation is generally, well, silent. But with the passage of time a previously dormant voice struggles to the surface, like a seed seeking the sun, to make a public comment. So here's one from my Class of '62 in the Wharton School. WTH do you mean when you write, "The deadly attack on the US Capitol on January 6 ... [was] abetted by a campaign of lies about election fraud, resulting in a violent attempt to 'Stop the Steal.'?"

You don't have to be a graduate from an Ivy League school to see that there was fraud in the most recent election. While you and I are approximately a generation apart, our common heritage of higher education should enable both of us to understand the biggest lie is that which denies election fraud.

Did you not read and absorb last issue's letter from Aaron Yunis, representing a third generation of Penn graduates, who said that you "have no real interest in promoting common bonds amongst Penn alumni"? As politics in the pulpit have no place, likewise I opine louder than normal for one who was taught to be seen and not heard, that political parties and preferences distort facts and reason. Please. Think about it. Or maybe I should say, please think.

*Michele C. Greene W'62, Williamsport, PA*

*We respect the opinions of alumni and strive to present a diversity of views in this space. However, no evidence of significant fraud in the 2020 election has been presented in any forum, and there is ample evidence—in the form of judges' rulings, multiple recounts, and statements by state election officials and leaders of law enforcement and national security agencies—that the results were fair and accurate.—Ed.*

### Words Matter

The subject article on Jonathan Zimmerman's research and writings fascinated me, in part because we share elements of personal history—I majored in history at Penn, served in the Peace Corps, and have lived abroad in several countries. It was also fascinating as an example of subtle advocacy writing, for the piece's author, Trey Popp, injected his own reading of American history and politics into the report on the views of Professor Zimmerman. Such subtle insertion of the author's points of view into the article serves as a model of the challenges presented by what Zimmerman calls the second failure of education writ large—teaching people "to engage across their differences." For example, Popp names the events of January 6 at the US Capitol building an insurrection, using the same term a few paragraphs later for the rebellion of Southern states against the USA. Words matter, as does the way they are presented. One must wonder if Zimmerman would see the irony in applying the same term to a riot which resulted in an hours-long disruption of an election's certification process and a years-long war that changed the nature of the Republic's governance.

*Ed Stafford C'79, Philadelphia*

### Seek Help with Diagnostic Disclosure

I very much related to Jason Karlawish's comments, in "The Humanist Is In" [Mar|Apr 2021], about the dilemma of how and when to "come out" to others, whether about sexual orientation or Alzheimer's disease. The challenge extends to any serious medical diagnosis. I was diagnosed with ALS in August 2017, and shortly after that my (openly gay) primary care physician told me that disclosing my diagnosis would be like "coming out." He advised meeting with a psychologist who could help me talk through how to have thoughtful and caring conversations with family and friends. His advice was invaluable. Two years later,

after selling the company that my wife and I had co-owned for more than 25 years (the sale being a direct result of the diagnosis), I again consulted a psychologist about how to disclose my diagnosis to our employees, customers, and broader professional community.

Despite a diagnosis that “sucks,” I have been fortunate to continue full-time work for the new owners of our company (admittedly from a motorized wheelchair and with heavy dependence on voice recognition software). I’m also lucky to be in my second clinical trial at MGH in Boston where I work with a remarkable research team—especially neurologist Katharine Nicholson C’04. Somehow, research spinal taps that I have undergone with her have been made a little more tolerable by swapping stories of Penn undergrad experiences.

*Bruce D. Rosenblum C’81, Somerville, MA*

### Medical Advances Missing

I enjoyed the Alzheimer’s article, “The Humanist Is In,” by Julia Klein [Mar|Apr 2021].

What was missing was the scientific and medical advances of the Perelman School of Medicine. Penn has become the leading immunotherapy center in the world.

Raymond G. Perelman W’40 Hon’14’s gift (I would call it a *giant* gift) to the School of Medicine has placed Penn at the forefront of research in the Alzheimer’s/ Parkinson’s disease field. More on that would have added considerably to the article.

*Thomas Warren WG’67, Dublin, NH*

### “Unique Partnership” Neglected

Thank you for your wonderful article about the Rosenwald schools [“Black Education Before *Brown*,” Mar|Apr 2021]. As a Philadelphian, I had heard of Julius Rosenwald and Sears & Roebuck. And Booker T. Washington is famous for so many accomplishments.

While the thrust of the article was on the buildings (the occasion for the article was a book of photographs) and the schools’ many famous graduates, there

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is only a single sentence stating that the schools were the product of a “unique partnership” between these two men. I would have been interested in learning more about this “unique partnership,” how they found each other, what they shared in their thinking, etc.

*Ronald S. Banner M’67, Penn Valley, PA*

### Overabundance of Caution?

I note with dismay the decision by the Ivy League presidents to cancel all sports for the 2021 spring season. While I can understand the decision to cancel the indoor winter sports out of an abundance of caution (even though the rest of Division I basketball schools seemed to play their seasons safely), it’s hard for me to understand the rationale to cancel the 2021 season of outdoor spring sports. Given that these sports are played outdoors and the players are not usually in close contact, the risk to their health, based on what we’ve observed and learned over the past year, would seem

to be negligible. And many college and professional teams have shown how to implement testing protocols that work.

The loss of two seasons by the spring teams will not only adversely affect the student-athletes who came to school expecting to play and train for them, but I doubt that I am alone among alumni who played intercollegiate sports at Penn who will show our displeasure with this decision by withholding contributions to our teams until they are permitted to practice and play. If fall sports are cancelled again, it would lead me to wonder what the Ivy presidents are really up to.

*Edward Sproat EE’73 G’88, Frederick, MD*

*About a month after the Ivy League canceled its 2021 spring sports season, Penn decided to permit its spring-season teams to play games against only local competition, beginning March 27. For more on the Quakers’ modified—but still long-awaited—return to the field, see “Sports,” this issue.*



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# Impermanent Residence

On the elusive idea of home.

By Chelsea Cheng

“Going home?”

The customs officer looked at me, waiting expectantly for an answer. I was at the Boston Logan Airport, on my way to my grandparents’ house in Chicago for Thanksgiving break.

It was supposed to be a simple question, but I hesitated before replying, “No, my home is in Shanghai.”

After a second, I remembered that on the form I had written “returning home” for my purpose of traveling. “Uhm, yes, actually.”

The customs officer raised his eyebrow. “Where are you from?”

“Shanghai?” I replied, trying not to appear nervous. “Or Chicago?” The officer began to look annoyed.

“Where do you live?” He asked.

“I live in Massachusetts.” And then I added, “at school.”

Eventually, the customs officer just gave me another look and let me go.

For my second year of high school I left Shanghai, where I had lived since I was

three, to attend a boarding school in Massachusetts. During some school breaks I visited my grandparents in Chicago, and during others I returned to Shanghai. My home became divided between three places: Massachusetts, where I went to school; Chicago, where my grandparents stayed; and Shanghai, where my parents lived. As I moved around between these three places, home became a fleeting and impermanent concept.

I had always been the most excited to go back to Shanghai. Shanghai felt like the closest thing to home, but the more I was away, the less familiar it became.

The first year I returned, the wet market across from the compound where we lived had been taken down and a set of tall, black gates closed off the area it used to occupy. I looked at the gates recalling mornings when I’d tagged along



with my grandma to buy fruits and vegetables—waiting as she said hello to familiar ladies in colorful aprons and arm warmers selling onions, turning my face when we walked past the raw meats, and covering my nose when I smelled fish. Next to the wet market there had been a small vendor from whom we used to buy scallion pancakes—but the vendor had also disappeared. In the playground, the large, rusty blue swing I used to pretend was a ship when I was little had been replaced by a newer one. The rubber playground tiles that my brother and I used to peel from the ground to make stacks we could stand on to reach the monkey bars had been replaced with ones that couldn't be taken apart.

Even the smell of my house had changed. The living room no longer smelled like fresh laundry, or canola oil from the kitchen, or the scent of cold nighttime air that puffed out of my mother's soft down jacket as I hugged her when she came back from work. It now smelled of an herbal scent diffuser my parents bought at a mall, mixed with a little bit of cat (who had become the newest member of our household a year after I left).

Yet as the familiarity of Shanghai slowly eroded, I began to notice that Massachusetts was becoming increasingly comfortable for me. I found myself laughing, playing games, and watching *Spirited Away* with my dormmates on the soft maroon sofa in the common room. I remember studying with my classmates in the winter by the fireplace in my art teacher's living room, cozied up with her dog and her kids.

When the pandemic began, I couldn't go back to Massachusetts to finish the school year and had to stay in Chicago instead. I found myself staring at my phone in bed at night, the light from the screen switching from yellow to blue to white as I flipped through old photos and looked back on my time at boarding school. I realized that I missed the New England snow. I missed the day when

my friends and I had spread out blankets on damp grass, phone flashlights turned on below our water bottles so they glowed in blue and pink, cutting mooncakes with a paring knife in the dark because we couldn't celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival with our families. I missed sitting in the quietness of the music center's practice rooms at night, toying with the piano keys and breathing in the smell of dry rosin and wood.

It was only by looking back at those old photos while I was in Chicago that I realized that Massachusetts had grown closer to me as Shanghai grew further away, and that during my time at boarding school I had begun to find something like a home.

As I spent the last few months in Chicago with my mom, who had gotten stuck there with me because of COVID restrictions, we looked for home together. We discovered an H Mart just 15 minutes away from where we stayed, and hunted down dried bean curd, mung beans, and dried lotus seeds together, walking through all the grocery aisles. We found red bean mooncakes there, too, and we steamed blue crabs to celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival together with my grandparents.

Slowly, I realized I might have begun to find something that resembled home again. I found comfort in the familiarity of putting on the blue slippers Grandpa gave me, and opening up the freezer to see at least eight pints of Edy's butter pecan or coffee ice cream that Grandma ate while watching Chinese court dramas late into the night. I enjoyed hearing the music thrumming through the walls from Grandpa's small computer room, where he played a Chinese children's song from 1995 on his old speakers. And as the weather turned cold, I enjoyed the warmth and coziness of my grandparents' house.

If you asked me where my permanent residence is today, I wouldn't know how to answer. It's not the boarding school in Massachusetts, because I'm attending

university in Pennsylvania. But it's not really in Pennsylvania, either—because I'm still staying at my grandparents' house in Chicago, and my parents still live in Shanghai.

But growing up and moving to boarding school might have taught me that home is a feeling rather than a place—and one that might be easier to recognize in hindsight. Home is something that will continue to change and transform, escape me when I look for it, and then appear when I don't.

Chelsea Cheng is a College freshman who is studying behavioral science and enjoys design and creative writing in her free time.



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# Rice Pudding

The pandemic, the stovetop, and going beyond family ties.

By Marci Alboher

I don't even like the idea of rice pudding. The texture makes me gag. But as I followed a Nepali recipe meant to nourish new mothers, I was comforted by the smells of ginger and cinnamon filling my apartment and energized by my new mission.

It was July, a few months into the pandemic, and a routine I'd begun in mid-March had taken a beautiful turn. I was no longer spending weekends cooking for a pregnant woman. My younger friend Misa had just given birth to a healthy baby girl, Kimi, and I was pour-

ing my heart into creating meals for the new parents instead. The rice pudding had proven such a hit that her husband started eating it too, and they requested it for the next few weeks.

When the lockdown hit, so many of us were physically separated from older and younger relatives. The way to show love was to stay away, especially from those who didn't live nearby. Yet that left a void, and the urge to fill it cemented a link between Misa and me.

We met about 15 years ago. Misa was a twentysomething in her first job fa-

cilitating workshops for the Posse Foundation, which helps high-achieving students from under-resourced schools attend college. I was in my early 40s, a lawyer turned journalist/teacher looking for a rewarding volunteer gig. I'm a first-generation college graduate, and Posse's mission spoke to me.

Misa sought me out, looking for a mentor. I was craving connection to younger people in New York, where community can be hard to find. She reminded me of myself in my first job: so determined to make a difference, seeking out women who seemed to have it figured out.

We met for coffee and got close quickly. I listened, offered advice about work, invited her to networking events, and made introductions. In return she included me in her world, making me feel relevant and up to date. We clicked.

I have a sweet spot for twentysomethings. And before long Misa intro-



duced me to a slew of them. I was drawn to her crowd, a crew of practical idealists who were determined to fix all that's broken in our world and smart enough to get it done.

I'm now 54 and a lot of my life feels settled. These days I find that I'm going deeper rather than constantly shaking things up.

In contrast, every few months Misa and her husband Nico take another big step on life's journey—creating roots, building a home, a community, a family. As they went about all that amidst the turmoil of 2020, their commitment to planning and building lifted my spirits. In the face of all that chaos, they remained focused on a clear and grounding goal: to stay healthy and safe for their child. Their cocoon is so far from their parents, who live abroad, and siblings, who live in distant states. Yet I live only a few miles away. That proximity turned us into COVID neighbors. Outside of my husband and mother, and a few neighbors, Misa has been one of the only people I've seen regularly.

As someone whose work relates to aging, I can't help putting a name to what's going on with us. Though our rapport is easy, I'm always aware of the age gap between us. I believe that a critical part of aging well is what the psychologist Erik Erikson called "generativity"—investing in something that will live beyond us, whether that is younger people or other kinds of legacy. Parents practice generativity naturally through their children and grandchildren. But for the increasingly large cohort of us who hit midlife without kids of our own, connecting with younger generations has to be an intentional act.

Which gets me back to the rice pudding. My cooking for Misa grew out of a ritual to stay connected to my own family. Within the first few weeks of lockdown, my 79-year-old mom in New Jersey and my 14-year-old nephew Manny in Florida decided to meet up on Zoom one Sunday to cook together.

Cooking was one of their favorite in-person activities. Manny has a passion for it and wanted to learn some of the family recipes. My brother and I join on many Sundays. But seven months later, my nephew and mother have barely missed a single week of "Meals with Mema."

They've worked their way through family staples like Saucy Susan Chicken and Grandma Molly's Biscochos (Greek-Jewish sesame cookies), plus Manny favorites like noodle kugel, French lasagna bolognese, Mark Bittman's no-knead bread—and at least a dozen other dishes. The planning has become elaborate. Every Wednesday, recipes swirl via email. Manny started an Instagram account to show off his meals.

When I texted photos of our meals to Misa, she asked if she could place an order for lasagna—plus avocados, almonds, and a few other items that her regular grocery purveyor lacked. Thus my pandemic deliveries began.

For the first few weeks, I'd package up part of what I cooked with Mom and Manny, shop in a nearby market where I felt safe, then carry the items to Misa's apartment, two miles away. I didn't want to take a taxi or the subway, so I was dependent on good weather and my own two feet. Over time, I started cooking things I knew Misa and Nico would like, separate from the meals we made in our family Zoom sessions.

This led to a series of firsts for me. I took my first bicycle rideshare as a way to make deliveries easier. Cycling opened a whole new way of seeing New York City, one I may have never tried had I not been committed to getting to Misa in a way that felt COVID-safe.

I took my first pandemic taxi ride for a food delivery. It was raining and my usual methods wouldn't work. Once inside the cab, I realized that between the partition, masks, and open windows, being in a taxi was no more dangerous than a masked conversation on the street. I'm now taking taxis regularly.

I embraced another first: letting my hair go gray. It felt like an appropriate moment to wear my age a bit more proudly. As my friend the longevity expert Ken Dychtwald recently quipped in the *New York Times*, it's a good time to be "useful more than youthful."

This was a time, too, of new perspective. When I was in my thirties and many of my peers were consumed with having babies, I struggled through a 10-year marriage with a man who couldn't commit to having children. The question of whether I would become a mother loomed over me like a constant cloud. I could barely attend a baby shower or birthday party without falling apart. I skipped a good number of them, sparing myself the pain. Yet here I was itching to be involved in Misa's new family. A baby shower over Zoom. Visits at the doorway and distanced chats while sitting on our favorite bench. Pushing Kimi around and around the block in her carriage so that her mother could run upstairs and eat. Delivering pastries and packing boxes for their move to a new apartment.

There's no doubt that I was making one family's life a touch easier—but the deeper truth is that all of it, especially the food, has been as much for me as it has been for them. Many people have gotten the same lift from connecting with strangers across generations. My mother and Manny, for example, regularly deliver their extra food—in person—to older neighbors who don't have family nearby.

I never thought I'd say this, but now that Misa has moved beyond her new mom diet, I miss rice pudding. I'm comfortable with the idea that I'll never have kids and grandchildren of my own. But I have a taste of what it feels—and smells—like to nourish the next generation, something that will stay with me long after the days of physical distancing are over.

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Marci Alboher C'88 is author of *The Encore Career Handbook*, and a vice president at Encore.org, a nonprofit that supports leaders bridging generational divides ["Second Acts," Sep/Oct 2013].





# Bringing up the Dead

Searching for Marcel Proust, and everything else.

By Joanne Mulcahy

**W**e'd entered without a map. The Père Lachaise cemetery loomed so large in my mind that I was sure I would instinctively find my way to the right grave. To be safe, my husband Bob photographed the faded blue sign at a side entrance that identified the dead alphabetically and by number. I thrilled at the thought of passing the tombs of writers I loved, along with luminaries like Edith Piaf, Amedeo Modigliani, and Frédéric Chopin. But I wasn't seeking every famous grave. The object of my pilgrimage was Marcel Proust.

The author of the seven-volume *In Search of Lost Time* was an unlikely obsession. I'd read parts of the first book, *Swann's Way*, while I was an undergraduate at Penn. I found it a rough go. But for nearly a decade, I've worked on a biography of the Proust enthusiast and 20th-century American artist Marion Greenwood. She dropped out of high school at 15 to study at the Art Students League in New York. At 18, she was one of Yaddo's early residents. She called the famous Saratoga Springs artists' retreat "my university," and likely encountered

talk of Proust at the lively dinner table discussions with other artists and intellectuals. An autodidact, she was unafraid to appear ignorant. "Let's talk about Plato," she'd propose. But it was *In Search of Lost Time* that prompted her search for self and meaning as an artist. She named numerous cats "Albertine" for one of the novel's love interests.

Later, when Greenwood married the British writer Charles Fenn, letters full of Proustian references sustained their often long-distance marriage. Some conveyed longing to discuss the latest volume, others brimmed with accusations—"You would have driven even Proust mad," or, "You're as faithless as Albertine." The demise of her marriage left Greenwood mired in regret about her lost youth, financial choices, and life path.

I returned to *Swann's Way* in order to understand Marion Greenwood, but the novel also held up a mirror. When I started at Penn, I'd planned to become a social worker. Instead, literature called. In the 44 years since I graduated, I've become a writer and a teacher. At 65, an irrepressible urge to measure my life surfaced. Had I done anything worthwhile? I didn't need a madeleine to unleash a flood of memory, as the famous sweet had for Proust (though I could now buy one at Starbucks). I arrived at Père Lachaise with existential questions. It seemed fitting that I ask them at Proust's grave.

Biographers are an obsessive lot, following their subject's footsteps, searching for clues amid the evidence: letters in archives, fragments saved, memories others hold. But how do we enter the consciousness of another, especially a dead "other"? At Penn, I spent one long night in the library transfixed by Leon Edel's *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica*. Edel once compared the biographical process to falling in love. Biographer Richard Holmes calls the search a "haunting." Hilary Mantel reminds us, quoting St. Augustine: "the dead are invisible, they are not absent."

Père Lachaise is the most visited cemetery in the world, named for the Jesuit confessor to Louis XIV. Secrets and stories saturate the place. The October day of our visit was fittingly gray. Oak, ash, and maple trees formed a golden tower of autumn leaves over cobblestone paths. We wandered past gigantic mausoleums with domed tops like small basilicas. Others rested behind rusted iron gates, their curlicue patterns choked by climbing ivy.

Even Bob, who unlike me has a sense of direction, was flummoxed by our failure to find Proust. The fuzzy photo we were using as a guide simply didn't match vine-tangled reality. I initially applauded the French refusal to give special prominence to the famous. But after two hours, I wished Proust's tomb hosted a six-foot neon sign.

I also regretted that I'd chosen to wear stylish ankle boots rather than running shoes. Throughout our stay, I tried to blend into the intimidating Paris fashion scene with a form-fitting jacket, skinny jeans, and scarves—all to no avail. Something always screamed "American." But as we scratched our heads over Proust, I spied a group of women in hiking pants, hauling heavy backpacks. If our own appearance announced "American," they shouted "Northwestern." I've never been so happy to see fellow Oregonians. They had entered at the proper place and received a printed map.

Our guides sought Oscar Wilde's grave but promised to direct us to Proust. We followed them toward a gaggle of tourists surrounding a glass barrier protecting the Wilde mausoleum. Grease from the red lipstick kisses of zealous devotees had nearly destroyed the original tomb's flying angel—a figure based on the British Museum's Assyrian figures. In photos, the hapless angel appears stricken with a terrible case of measles. The cemetery closed the tomb until the Irish government came forward to pay for the glass protected version.

Our Oregon friends outlined the path to Proust and bid goodbye. But gravestones with Arabic writing filled the indicated spot. After multiple attempts, we finally entered a narrow lane where a single rose fluttered atop gleaming black marble: "Marcel Proust, 1871–1922." Fifty-one years seemed an impossibly brief span for the creation of his masterpiece. And where were the hordes that flocked to that literary rock star across the cemetery?



Proust began *In Search of Lost Time* in 1909, the year Marion Greenwood was born. Numerous editors rejected *Swann's Way*, so Proust published it at his expense in 1913. *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower* followed in 1919 and won the Prix Goncourt. Proust la-

bored over the final five books for the rest of his life, bedridden with pulmonary illness. He didn't live to witness his work catapulted to its place in the Western literary canon.

At 24, Marion Greenwood rose to fame as the first woman to paint a mural in Mexico. Major awards, commissions, and critical praise for her portraits followed. By the 1940s, she was one of the most celebrated women artists in the US. Then, as abstract expressionism eclipsed realism, the limelight faded. Yet she persevered, creating remarkable work that is little known today.

What does artistic or literary or any sort of reputation mean? Greenwood lamented her fading star and failed marriage. Every impediment sent her back to Proust to wrestle with loss and time's merciless passage. To understand how the past lived inside her, both indelible and elusive. To renew her faith in the struggle to create art. She once told an interviewer that she frequented galleries to see the latest trends, then retreated to her studio to paint portraits. "I'm just myself again. I can't help it."

To discover and be who we truly are: Can we ask anything more of ourselves?

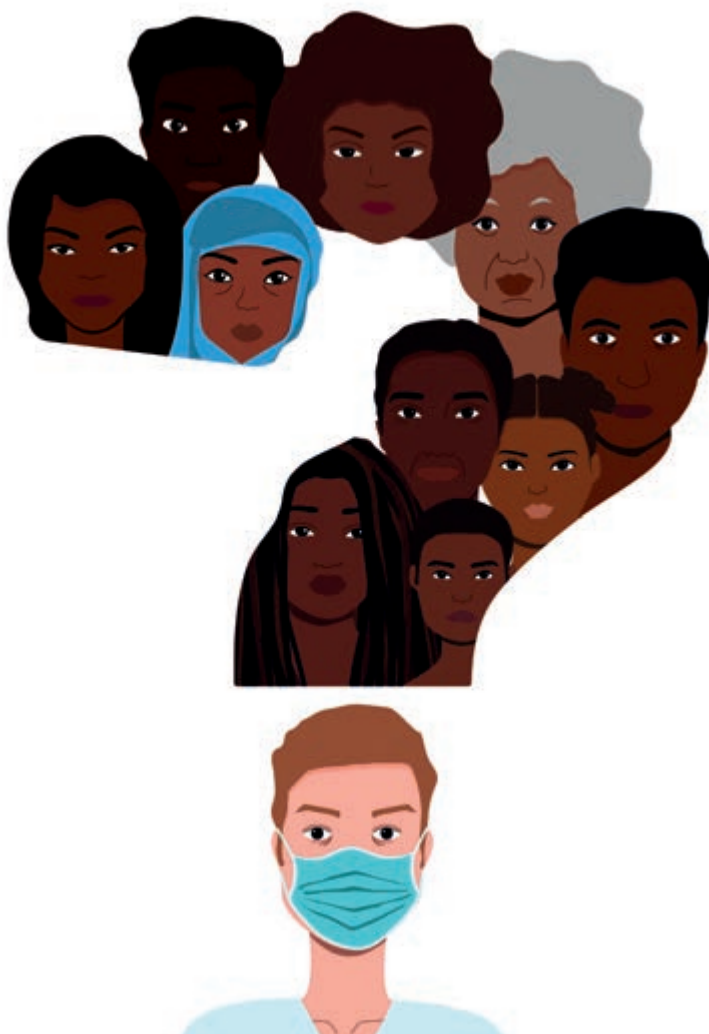
Greenwood died at age 60 from a cerebral hemorrhage. I once visited her grave in Woodstock, New York, turning to her as she had to Proust. Standing before slabs of marble and granite, we beseech the dead. Tell us what matters. Reassure us that the lonely and often thankless work of writing or painting or any passion can sustain us, even if it's not recognized, even if it does not endure.

We go to cemeteries for the same reason we write biographies: to feel the spark that lit another's life, and to learn how to kindle our own.

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Joanne Mulcahy C'77 Gr'88 is the author of *Remedios: The Healing Life of Eva Castellanoz* and *Writing Abroad: A Guide for Travelers* (with Peter Chilson).





# Shot of Confidence

How talking about “vaccine hesitancy” distracts from the problem we really need to fix.

By Christopher A. Womack

**C**OVID-19 has upended ordinary life in the United States, and perhaps no group has felt its wrath more acutely than African Americans. The pandemic has focused a searing spotlight on problems that have existed for many years. Some of them are news to no one: Americans from a wide variety of backgrounds recognize that economic inequality and social exclusion continue to constrict the

lives of Black Americans in meaningful ways. Yet the pandemic has also exposed a dynamic that is far less appreciated—but whose importance has never been clearer: mistrust in our country’s healthcare system. And insofar as awareness of this problem has grown, it has mostly entered public discourse via a term that obfuscates and compounds the real issue. The term in question is “vaccine hesitancy.”

Although Black Americans are not much more likely than whites to contract the virus, according to CDC data, they are almost three times as likely to be hospitalized for it and twice as likely to die from it. Given that stark reality, one might assume that African Americans would be lining up in droves for the vaccine. But that has not been the case.

What’s behind this hesitancy? There’s been no shortage of experts weighing in on this question in US news media. But to fully grasp African Americans’ concerns, we need to take a step back to view the bigger picture. In that spirit, I went out and took the commonsense tack of talking to people. Too often, as one person memorably told me, the experts talk about Black Americans as though “we are not in the room.” So I conducted structured interviews with 35 African Americans—men and women from a wide range of socioeconomic and professional backgrounds whose ages ranged from 34 to 92.

Of the people I surveyed, 32 percent told me they either had or intend to get the vaccine. To provide some perspective, the influenza vaccine’s acceptance rate among African Americans, based on CDC data for the 2019–2020 flu season, was 41 percent. (Current data show that the percentage of African Americans who have or would take the COVID vaccine is rising—but a bit more slowly than for other racial groups in the country.)

On its face, the ratio I encountered in my interviews appears to confirm the diagnosis of so many experts: Black Americans suffer from a lamentably high rate of “vaccine hesitancy.” But if a single revelation emerged from my interviews, it was that this catchall phrase obscures more than it illuminates.

“Vaccine hesitancy,” in the definition offered by Noni MacDonald, a founding member of the World Health Organization’s Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety, “refers to delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of services. It is influ-



enced by factors such as complacency, convenience, and confidence.”

Vaccine hesitancy is a well-documented phenomenon in the general population. Before COVID-19, experts typically discussed it in relation to the refusal of certain parents to inoculate their children against vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, polio, and pertussis. But the term may not be the best description of the concerns particular to the African American community. The difference lies in the fact that vaccine hesitancy in the general population hinges on perceptions about the safety of particular vaccines, whereas the main issue among African Americans is mistrust of the healthcare system in general.

The historical record is replete with instances of mistreatment of African Americans by the US healthcare system. They range from the experiments performed by James Marion Sims on enslaved Black women, to the notorious Tuskegee Syphilis study, to the non-therapeutic medical experiments conducted on inmates of Philadelphia’s Holmesburg prison in the latter 20th century. Yet for many of the people I interviewed, historical examples took a backseat to their own intimate experience of today’s hospitals and healthcare providers.

Some of their reflections echoed concerns common among many American patients—like the feeling that doctors treat them with one eye on the clock, making them feel more like “a number” to be dispatched than a person who merits close and unhurried listening. But 72 percent of my respondents told me they thought the healthcare system itself is biased against African Americans. The examples they gave were not limited to historical references, but rather full of stories about their own mistreatment by the healthcare industry. Some lamented failures in hospital care that seemed hard to explain except as a function of racial disparities. Many articulated a sense of alienation from physicians who had no connection to the patient’s community—leading to deficiencies

in care that some chalked up to “unconscious bias” and others could not escape concluding was “on purpose.” Several respondents expressed an uneasy feeling that they felt they or their family members had been pushed too aggressively to participate in research studies. As one person told me, the issue isn’t that patients are recruited into medical research—which can benefit us all—but rather the manner in which healthcare providers went about it that disquieted them.

Concerns like these contributed to mistrust among my respondents across the age spectrum and regardless of socioeconomic status. And they are reflected in anecdotal and statistical evidence. When Serena Williams publicly revealed what struck her as a dismissive reaction by healthcare providers to serious complications after the birth of her daughter in 2017, Black women across the country had reason to nod in weary unison: they are three to four times more likely than white women to die of pregnancy-related complications. More recently, the death of Susan Moore, a Black physician who died of COVID-19 after alleging mistreatment by hospital personnel because of her skin color, reinforced longstanding suspicions among many African Americans about where they rank in the hierarchy of concern.

Some of the people I interviewed recounted stories of family members and friends who they felt suffered mistreatment by the medical community that led to severe consequences or death. In other words: the mistrust is real, and it is a product not just of abstract history but rather contemporary lived experience.

In that light, it is easier to understand the origins of skepticism about COVID-19 vaccines. “How can you find a vaccine in a matter of months,” as one respondent put it, “but when we discuss health issues in the African American community, [they say]: *We are working on it*—and that was 10 years ago?”

Here is the disconnect: experts are telling the African American community,

*Take the vaccine; it is safe.* But for African Americans, any particular vaccine is only one part of a bigger picture. *Why should I trust you*, many of them wonder, *given the pattern of mistreatment my community has suffered at your hands?*

The experts are right about one thing: there is an immediate need for widespread vaccination to blunt the progression of this pandemic. But the only way to get there is to recognize that, where Black Americans are concerned, the core issue isn’t mistrust of a vaccine’s safety, but rather suspicion of a healthcare system that has failed to earn their trust.

Just as the pandemic has thrown this issue into stark relief, it also presents a golden opportunity to address it in a real and lasting way. Thus far governments, vaccine manufacturers, and other entities have committed vast resources to reach out to communities of color to discuss vaccine safety. All of those efforts should be applauded. But no less vital is change within the healthcare system itself, to make it more cognizant of and responsive to problems of its own creation.

Many of my respondents welcomed the sense of urgency around the COVID vaccine—but worried that the energy would dissipate before deeper issues can be resolved. Will the White House follow up press conferences combatting “vaccine hesitancy” with task forces charged with addressing mistrust of the medical system? Will those expert recommendations be filed in a binder, or spur meaningful action? As we address the issues of healthcare equity and disparity, will we opt for quick-and-easy, or embrace the comprehensive improvement necessary to safeguard the health of every American?

I feel optimistic that if we commit to the latter course, we can address and overcome mistrust of the healthcare system, transforming it to the benefit of us all.

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Christopher A. Womack G’08 has over 30 years of experience in healthcare, focusing on healthcare disparities and policy.



The campus from above, looking southeast from College Hall.









# On the Horizon

As Penn prepares for a limited in-person Commencement and a full return in the fall, here's a look at what most of us have been missing.

**DO** you miss strolling down Locust Walk? Taking photos beside the Benjamin Franklin statue? Marveling at new buildings that have gone up, or revisiting old ones that have passed the test of time?

Even as some students have migrated back this semester, COVID-19 has dramatically altered University life over the past year and curtailed opportunities to enjoy campus for students and alumni alike.

Clockwise from top, this page: 450-bed New College House West, scheduled to open to students in Fall 2021; LOVE sculpture on College

Green; University Meeting and Guesthouse; Fisher Fine Arts Library and Weitzman Pavilion; Wharton Academic Research Building.



Or perhaps it's the hope that can be gleaned knowing that a return to normalcy may be on the horizon.

In mid-March, citing the widespread distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine and other safeguards in place, the University announced the "return to an in-person teaching, research, and residential environment for the fall of 2021," barring any "unpredictable turns" in the pandemic.

Also contingent upon the trajectory of the pandemic,

Perhaps these photos, offering a snapshot of Penn this March—one year after it first closed due to the pandemic—will help alumni who have kept their distance feel more connected.



Sharp shadows at Penn Park;  
the Biopond awaiting spring;  
outdoor dining on Sansom Street.



the University announced plans to “hold one limited in-person undergraduate Commencement ceremony at Franklin Field on the morning of May 17,” with philanthropist Laurene Powell Jobs C’85 W’85 serving as the Commencement speaker.

The ceremony will include academically eligible seniors who have abided by Penn’s asymptomatic testing protocol during the semester. But

family and friends of the graduates, as well as graduate and professional students, will not be able to attend. (The University will broadcast a livestream at [commencement.upenn.edu](https://commencement.upenn.edu). All other graduate ceremonies will be presented virtually, and the initial plan to hold a separate in-person ceremony for the Class of 2020, whose Commencement last year was entirely online, has been put off.)

Between those restrictions and the fact that Alumni Weekend will again be held virtually, from May 14–15, it will be a much quieter campus than it usually is this time of year—as we all eagerly await the day when photos capture a University buzzing with activity once again. —DZ





## Extra Credit

The Ivy League's only student-run credit union promotes financial literacy for its classmate clients.

In the early stages of quarantine, while Penn students were learning how to bake bread and squeezing in socially distanced walks, the executive board of Penn's Student Federal Credit Union (SFCU) went to work figuring out how to help those whose lives had been disrupted the most by the coronavirus.

One of only three student-run federal credit unions in the country, the SFCU serves the Penn community—students, alumni, and their immediate family members—with all the offerings of a typical bank, like checking accounts, debit cards, and transition loans. But when COVID-19 left some alumni and students scrambling to find secure jobs and housing,

the SFCU launched its emergency loan program, which ran in two waves from mid-March through July of last year.

"We wanted to get something out there as soon as possible," says Tor Aronson C'22, SFCU's former chief lending officer and its current chairman. The program dispensed more than \$20,000 in loans with discounted interest rates and longer deferral periods, the majority of which went to alumni, who make up 35 percent of the credit union's clientele.

While alums took the most advantage of the emergency loans, SFCU board members predominantly focus on how to help people they interact with on campus: their classmates, friends, and sometimes even roommates.

Much of its work is geared toward assisting international and first-generation, low-income (FGLI) students navigate a banking system that often feels foreign. "I think a lot of people who come from less privileged backgrounds have seen their family members or their friends fall into the trap of US debt," says Mohammad Oulabi C'21, the SFCU's former CEO and a FGLI international student from Cairo, Egypt. "So there's a lot of negative association with taking out credit cards in order to build credit history and credit scores." Among the benefits that the SFCU touts for international students are not requiring a social security number to open an account, free and unlimited incoming international wires, and a debit card that can be used worldwide.

### EDUCATION COSTS

#### Tuition and Aid for 2021–22 Academic Year

Undergraduate Tuition | **\$54,652**

Housing | **\$11,358**

Dining | **\$5,946**

Fees | **\$7,058**

Total | **\$79,014**  
(2.8 percent annual increase)

Total Undergraduate Financial Aid  
**\$259 million**  
(1.2 percent annual increase)

Since personal finance is not generally taught in school, "not a lot of people know, at 18, how valuable things like credit scores are and how to build them," Oulabi adds. To that end, the SFCU recently set aside \$1,000,000 for a free credit builder program designed to help students build credit history without taking on a single dollar of debt. The program allowed participants to take out a \$1,000 shared secured loan in a frozen account they couldn't access. Then, the SFCU made monthly payments to repay the loan and any accumulating interest on the customer's behalf, reporting these to credit agencies to allow the customer to increase their credit score.

"We're just doing what we were founded to do," Oulabi says. "As a credit union, all the revenue we make, we try to give back to our members. We wanted to help as many people as possible—and not just during a time of crisis. We wanted to make more permanent changes and improve people's financial lives in the long run."

About 100 employees manage the \$7 million credit union, located at 34th and Walnut Streets (though much



of the work is now done remotely). Founded in 1987 by Kenneth Beck WG'87, Steven Feld WG'87 GrD'03, and Robert Kaplan G'88 WG'88 as the first (and still only) student-run credit union in the Ivy League, the SFCU recruits students in much the same way that any other club on campus might. There's an alumni board of directors that weighs in on broad strategies for the SFCU's 1,000 members, but it's the students who run day-to-day operations—a chance to earn real-world experience in the financial services industry that Oulabi says he “could not have imagined” before arriving at Penn.

“Part of what's great about being small and entrenched in the community we serve is that we can move very quickly and not waste time wondering what the Penn community needs,” adds Emily Becker C'23, who was recently elected the SFCU's chief lending officer. “We kind of just know that, or know how to find out.”

While lacking in experience compared to more seasoned banking executives, SFCU leaders believe being students is their biggest asset, not a hindrance. Case in point: the credit builder program was spawned after Aronson heard one of his friends complain about having a low credit score.

“Our clients are our friends that we used to see around campus all the time or talk with,” Aronson says. “We can hear really well what they are going through and tailor our services to those candid conversations.”

—Beatrice Forman C'22

## Unlocking Futures

John Legend on entrepreneurship, criminal justice reform, and love.



**A**s made clear by the multiple references to his membership in the EGOT club (winner of an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony) during a virtual event hosted by Wharton's Venture Lab in early March, John Legend C'99 Hon'14 is best known as a talented musician and performer. But as the recipient of this year's Penn Wharton Entrepreneurship Alumni Achievement Award, Legend was being honored with a very different kind of prize—adding a “P” to his “EGOT” to make “PEGOT,” Wharton Vice Dean of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Karl Ulrich quipped.

The first non-Wharton grad to win the award, Legend's entrepreneurship and philanthropy is mostly rooted in education and criminal justice reform. Among other organizations, he's started the Show Me Campaign, which aims to give every child access to a quality education, LRNG Innovators to empower teachers to redesign learning, and FREEAMERICA to end mass incarceration.

During one exchange with Wharton dean Erika James—the moderator for an event that also included remarks from Ulrich, Penn President Amy Gutmann, and Ravi Viswanathan EAS'90 WG'98, advisory board chair of the Venture

Lab (the University's entrepreneurship hub)—Legend discussed a FREEAMERICA endeavor called Unlocked Futures. Backed by Bank of America and the venture philanthropy fund New Profit, Unlocked Futures funds and brings together a new breed of social entrepreneurs: those affected by the criminal justice system.

Here's an excerpt of those remarks from Legend, who discussed the importance of love in his work. (The entire discussion can be viewed at [venturelab.upenn.edu](http://venturelab.upenn.edu).)

**Cornel West, one of the things he said, was that justice is what love looks like in public.** And I think what he meant by that is that if you love people that you don't even know ... it shows itself in policy, it shows itself in justice, it shows itself in equality. So I use that as a guiding force for how I think about my activism. How do I show love for people I don't even know? How do I show love for people who may be overlooked, who may be under-resourced, who may be oppressed, who may be out-cast because they look different or they love differently or they worship differently?

When it comes to what that means with incarcerated people, and people who are formerly incarcerated, sometimes they're at the bottom when it comes to who society shows love toward. ... It's easy for me to see their humanity, and I want others to see their humanity too. And *particularly* when they come

out of prison, they need the opportunity to contribute to society, whether it's getting jobs, creating jobs as entrepreneurs, voting, getting housing. All sorts of elements of being part of a community and being part of society are made extremely difficult because they're returning from prison.

And so we started Unlocked Futures as a way to inspire and fund entrepreneurs in the nonprofit and for-profit space who have been formerly incarcerated and give them opportunities to create jobs. They have ideas. A lot of them were hustlers in their own way, in a more illicit way, before they went to prison. And we want to give them an opportunity to create jobs and use that entrepreneurial spirit in a way that's legal and adds to their community, rather than detracting from it. ...

I think the bottom line is seeing their humanity, knowing that nobody should be only defined by the worst thing they've ever done. And I think part of the way I'm able to do that is knowing I have family members who have gone through the same thing. I know what it's like for them to come out and feel like they have nowhere to turn—when it comes to housing, jobs, all kinds of things. There are so many doors slammed in their faces. And we wanted to create an opportunity for them to contribute to their community and to make better lives for themselves and for their families. —DZ

Brittany Watson, left, and Chelsea Reinhard stand in front of Penn Vet's mobile unit (pre-pandemic photo).



## New Set of Wheels

With a mobile veterinary hospital, Penn Vet's Shelter Medicine Program has kept saving animal lives amidst COVID-19 restrictions.

**A**s a 40-foot-long hospital, the School of Veterinary Medicine's new mobile unit is "actually larger than most surgery centers," says Brittany Watson V'10, clinical associate professor of shelter medicine and community engagement, and director of Penn Vet's Shelter Medicine Program. "It's the only reason that we can really operate [with adherence to COVID-19 restrictions] because otherwise we'd be too close together."

The mobile unit offers a safe, controlled environment for students to practice their surgical skills while also helping homeless animals in need. Without it, the program's surgeries at its shelter partner, the Animal Care & Control Team of Philadelphia (ACCT Philly), would not have been able to continue during the pandemic.

Under normal circumstances the Shelter Medicine Program offers spay/neuter surgeries with nine different

shelter partners, basic animal health examinations in-home and in-shelter, humane education for high schoolers, and policy consults with area shelters ["A Double Reward," Sep/Oct 2010].

The mobile unit, acquired in 2019 and supported in part by the Bernice Barbour Foundation and Pet Smart Charities, is set to expand the program's reach even further. It is designed for surgical procedures, medical and clinical assessments, and educational outreach; and it offers several kinds of diagnostics, with dental radiographs, dental machines, and ultrasound to come eventually.

However, like many initiatives, the rollout was delayed due to the pandemic while organizers determined what measures were needed to

keep students, staff, and the community safe.

“The mobile unit allows us to go where we’re most needed in the community,” Watson says. And during the pandemic, the team—which also includes the Bernice Barbour Assistant Professor of Clinical Shelter Medicine Chelsea Reinhard, and the Bernice Barbour Mobile Clinic Lead CVT Danielle Okulski—decided the greatest need was at Philadelphia’s municipal animal shelter, ACCT Philly.

**“The mobile unit allows us to go where we’re most needed in the community.”**

As an open-admission shelter, ACCT Philly took in more than 17,000 animals in 2019. Between 2017 and 2019, 38 percent of all surgeries at ACCT Philly were performed by Shelter Medicine Program participants, lifting a significant financial and practical burden off of the shelter.

In the same time period, the Shelter Medicine Program completed more than 11,247 total surgeries and 1,000 exams across all of its shelter partners. Those numbers will surely rise post-COVID when the mobile unit—which officially launched last October and is typically at ACCT Philly twice a week—is operating at full capacity.

During these unprecedented times, Watson and Reinhard have also cocreated a new emergency preparedness course for the Shelter Medicine Program. “We’ve had it in our docket for a really long time,” Watson says. “And then when all this happened, we’re like, ‘Well, what’s a better time to teach emergency preparedness and response than now?’”

“We’re hoping it can be a permanent course,” adds Reinhard.

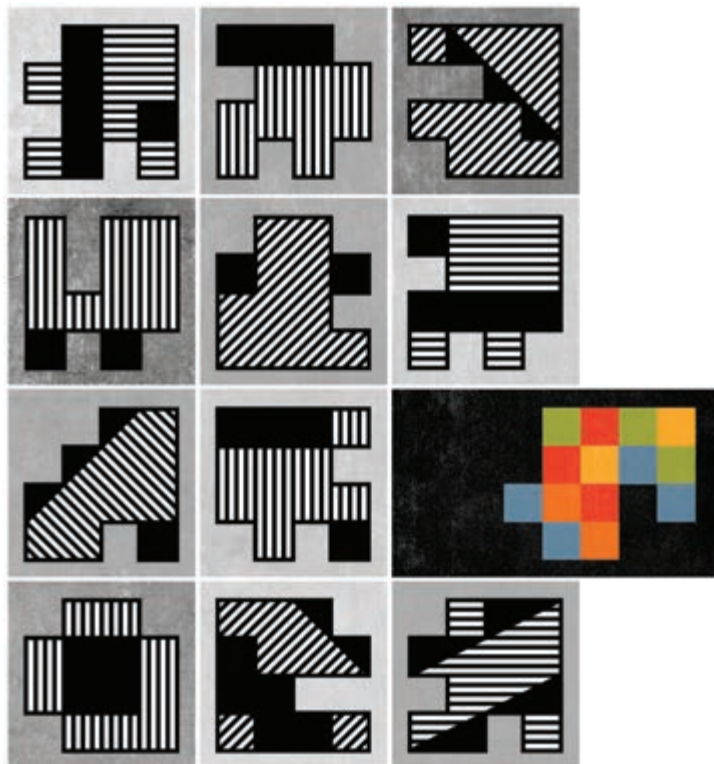
Even when it wasn’t offering treatments, the mobile unit and the systems around it have proven useful during the pandemic. In preparation to see patients in the unit, the team implemented an electronic medical records system, which for now is utilized for telemedicine visits. Watson says the telemedicine option has nearly doubled the amount of time they can provide public services through their partner Pets for Life.

“It’s kind of like we’re setting this up as [the Shelter Medicine Program’s] hospital system,” she explains. “And then because we have the hospital system, we can then do the telemedicine; whereas if we didn’t have the mobile unit and the systems surrounding it, it would be very difficult—probably impossible, honestly—for us to execute.”

When COVID is no longer a major factor, she says, the program will use the mobile unit for community clinics and, down the line, as an asset in disaster and emergency response, and in animal cruelty cases. —NP

## New Era Dawning

As Penn’s Orphan Disease Center marks 10 years, new technologies promise major gains in treatments and cures.



“Here’s to hope, shining from Jim’s lab in Philadelphia as a beacon around the world,” said Penn President Amy Gutmann, kicking off the 10th anniversary symposium of the Orphan Disease Center—*Jim* being James Wilson, the Rose H. Weiss Professor at the Perelman School of Medicine and director of the ODC, established at Penn a decade ago to “facilitate and fund research, and develop transformative therapies for rare diseases with significant unmet need,” in the words of its website.

Held virtually from February 24 to 25 and titled “A New Era of Rare Disease Diagnostics and Therapeutics,” the symposium featured panels on ethics, patient voices, global access to treatments, patient registries, and industry perspectives and incentives. The high-powered lineup of speakers included Wilson; founding donor George Weiss W’65 Hon’14; acting Food and Drug Administration commissioner Janet Woodcock; Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health; former UK



Prime Minister David Cameron; and Nobel Prize winner Michael Brown C'62 M'66 Hon'86, whose keynote address—"An Orphan That Saved Millions"—described how his work on the rare condition familial hypercholesterolemia spawned the statin drugs used by 20 million people to control blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and prevent heart attacks. (Symposium sessions can be viewed at the center's website.)

**"Approximately one in 10 people are living with a rare disease."**

Citing the dictionary definition of *orphan* as meaning "isolated, abandoned, not supported, or not funded," Wilson clarified that "abandonment in this context does not refer to the love and commitment of family, friends, and caregivers for those living with rare diseases"—who in fact play a critical and central role in the field—but the reluctance of the pharmaceutical industry and other stakeholders to devote resources to the roughly 7,000 known rare genetic diseases. "Lost in this calculus," he added, is the fact that, while numbers for any one condition are small, in the aggregate "approximately one in 10 people are living with a rare disease."

In recent years, several therapeutic platforms with the "potential to treat diseases at their root" have emerged, he said, "which really form the basis of our work." He listed protein replacement therapy and messenger RNA (mRNA) therapy [See "The Vaccine Trenches," page 42]; gene therapy, the focus of Wilson's own work; and—"the new kid on the block"—genome editing. This technology "really cuts at the heart of the pathogenesis of these diseases by correcting the specific mutation," but "while very powerful in concept, many forms of genome editing may be limited to individual patients with individual mutations," he said.

The ODC fields two flagship programs to promote research. JumpStart involves collaborating with rare disease communities to provide expertise and pilot grants to collect information and develop research toward treatments. In six areas designated as Programs of Excellence, the center is making a more significant commitment based on ODC's potential to "add value" in realms where "transformative treatment is feasible," Wilson said.

Grants generally run one to two years, at \$50,000–\$100,000 annually, with the hope that investigators will be able to go on to secure more stable government or corporate funding. ODC has funded 400 awards totaling more than \$38 million to 120 institutions in 25 different countries; 76 grants totaling more than \$8 million have

gone to faculty at Penn and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), he added.

George Weiss "didn't even know what an orphan disease was" until a family member's diagnosis led to "a long period of discovery" and a decision to approach Penn about starting a center "to help all kids" suffering from them, he said. He praised Penn Medicine leaders for their receptiveness and follow-through on the idea—and added that Wilson, besides being brilliant, has "business DNA, which is very rare in the scientific community."

When Weiss proposed a walkathon to raise money and awareness in Philadelphia, Wilson recalled, he countered with a bike ride for representatives of different rare disease communities and their supporters. Dubbed the "Million Dollar Bike Ride" by Weiss, it has become ODC's "marquee fundraising event," Wilson said. He initially thought \$1 million was a stretch, but in 2019 (before a pandemic-induced pause last year), "we hosted 32 disease teams, 750 cyclists and volunteers, and raised directly and through matching funds \$2.2 million for 36 awards." (Registration is open for the 2021 event, which will be held virtually on June 12.)

The genetic diseases the ODC focuses on strike cruelly early in life, and Wilson highlighted the need for broader screening of newborns to identify patients early enough to benefit from new therapies. This is especially important since orphan drug approvals are likely to "grow exponen-

tially" going forward and a "virtual explosion of gene therapy trials" is currently in progress. "To put it bluntly, we have a problem of our success," he said. Approvals for new treatments for these diseases "will continue to outstrip our ability to detect them through traditional newborn screening programs—and this problem will only get worse."

Wilson noted that the 1997 science fiction film *Gattaca*—which posited a seemingly implausible future where genetic testing at birth determined a person's fate—was released just a few years before the human genome was successfully sequenced.

Already the time and costs required for sequencing have gone from 15 years and \$300 million to something like 19 hours and less than \$500, Wilson said, predicting that the costs will continue to drop. "A logical application of this powerful new technology would be to use whole genome sequencing at birth to diagnose those who will develop rare monogenic diseases, focusing on those that can be treated, and this would allow a newborn screening program to address what will be the escalating number of diseases for which there are treatments."

NIH director Francis Collins—who led the Human Genome Project—echoed the theme of technological advance and emphasized the need for approaches to treat multiple diseases. "I don't know of any other technology that has advanced this quick-

ly,” he said of genomic sequencing. “People say you can’t ever get faster, better, and cheaper; you have to pick two out of three. This time we got three out of three.”

But while “the precise DNA misspelling responsible” for nearly 7,000 conditions has been identified, only 500 or so have an FDA-approved effective therapy. “That number grows, but grows slowly,” he said. “What you’d really like to have is a scalable approach that could be applied to lots of these disorders, not just one at a time.”

Reflecting on the center’s first decade, Wilson recalled “the futility of what our discipline was” in his early years as a clinical geneticist—and the distance traveled since. “Clearly, that’s changed in this new world, where there are potential answers, even beyond hope, for individuals living with rare diseases,” he said—creating a whole new set of challenges around ethics, access, reimbursements, and other issues. “These are high-class problems, but ones that we are definitely going to have to tackle.”

While the pandemic has posed significant personal and professional challenges over the past year, “I really believe that the setbacks that we’ve realized with COVID are even more galvanizing for the rare disease communities,” he added. “I can’t even speculate what it’s going to be like when we celebrate 20 years—but I know it’s going to be a very interesting ride.” —JP



## Water Everywhere, For Everyone

The Water Center at Penn addresses inequities throughout the region and country.

**M**illions of people in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania regularly turn to the Delaware River for recreation, whether it’s tubing in Bucks County, hiking in the Catskills, or sunbathing in Cape May where the river empties into the Delaware Bay. Yet millions of others aren’t able to take advantage of such assets, and they can’t even enjoy the river as it winds through their own neighborhoods because it remains cut off by busy highways, industrial wastelands, or overgrown shorelines.

To paraphrase the old poem—water, water is everywhere but there’s nary a drop in which to swim, or boat, or fish for those who live by the 27-mile stretch of the Delaware that flows by cities like Philadelphia, Camden, and Chester.

“Why shouldn’t downstream urban residents have a clean river that they can enjoy just as their more affluent neighbors do?” asks Andrew Kricun, a senior advisor at The Water Center at Penn, whose mission is to encourage solutions to global water challenges. Kricun—who previously served

as executive director of the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority and is on the New Jersey Environmental Justice Advisory Council—is part of a team that is collecting and analyzing data on the limiting factors to achieving “swimmable” conditions in the urban sections of the river.

Kricun says equity lies at the heart of this and many other water issues facing the US. “The good news about the water sector is that we don’t need some undiscovered or untapped technology,” he says. “Best practices already exist. ... Our goal at The Water Center is to identify the low-cost, low-hanging fruit—interventions like planting rain gardens to soak up stormwater or installing netting to capture debris from sewer overflows—that can ensure clean water in affordable ways that don’t result in rate increases.”

Healthy watersheds are essential for many other aspects

of daily living aside from recreation, of course. A glance at the list of threats that the World Economic Forum predicts we'll all be facing in the next decade reveals that several, including extreme weather, climate action failure, natural disasters, and biodiversity loss, are directly associated with water. Plus, about 10 percent of the world's population still lacks reliable access to basic drinking water, according to the World Health Organization. Problems with potable water even occasionally plague Americans, and one Water Center project examined the issues that caused the water failures in Flint, Michigan—while determining whether similar conditions exist in other post-industrial and economically challenged cities in the Great Lakes region.

When former Philadelphia Water Department Commissioner Howard Neukrug CE'78 launched the Water Center in 2018, he spoke with "a lot of different people [and] ended up with the concept of water as the universal connector," he says. "It touches upon everything from climate change to failing infrastructure." Thanks to those hot-button issues, Neukrug says, awareness has grown about the importance of ensuring universal access to clean and safe water. "So, even though the problems continue to grow, I no longer have to explain what a watershed is," he adds. (It's the origin point of a water system, the spot that channels rainfall and snowmelt through waterways and eventually into reservoirs.)

Coming from a background in urban water systems, Neukrug decided to make cities his focus. In less than three years, the center has completed 10 projects, including two sponsored by the Heinz Foundation that involve efforts around metropolitan Pittsburgh. The first provided an assessment of the challenges and opportunities for the city to improve the quality of and access to its water resources for all constituents; the other offered recommendations on ensuring a safe, sustainable water distribution system for the financially distressed, shrinking city of Duquesne.

Small municipalities are particularly strained when it comes to technical assistance and funding options, observes Karl Russek, director of programs and applied research at the Water Center. "So many of the communities that are experiencing the most significant effects of inadequate access to water and regular flooding tend to be poor cities," he says. "Just filling out the applications for state funds can cost tens of thousands of dollars, not to mention the manpower, time, and expertise they involve. But if these cities miss out on addressing flooding issues, say, there's further erosion, property values go down, and the tax base decreases. It just accelerates the cycle." He's currently leading a team that will produce a "Local Decision Makers Guide" aimed at easing

## LEADERSHIP

### Whitney Soule Tapped as New Admissions Dean

Replacing Eric Furda C'87, who left Penn after 12 years at the end of 2020 ["Furda Says Farewell," Sep/Oct 2020],

Whitney Soule has been named the University's vice provost and dean of admissions, effective July 1.

Soule has three decades of experience in admissions, including the last 13 years at Bowdoin College, where her tenure was marked by increasing the numbers of students of color, first-generation students, and students on financial aid.

In the announcement on her hire, Penn President Amy Gutmann and Provost Wendell Pritchett Gr'97 said that Soule "shares our strong belief—proven true in Penn's growing strength and continued success—that excellence and diversity in higher education are inextricably linked."

Soule began her career in college admissions at her alma mater, Bates College, and then spent 11 years at Connecticut College, before moving to Bowdoin in 2008. Under her watch, Bowdoin's selectivity grew with a decreasing admit rate and a growing admit-to-matriculant yield rate. She also joined with colleagues to create a unique collaboration with other highly selective liberal arts colleges that improved the ability of students, families, and counselors to learn more about the opportunities available at those types of institutions.

"The admissions team at Penn has a reputation for creative approaches to building talented and diverse classes each year," Soule said in a statement. "For me, one of the most rewarding aspects of admissions work is the matchmaking between applicant and school and doing so with systems that are responsive and supportive both for the students and for the institution. Penn's commitment to excellence, access, inclusion, and innovation, and the dedication to these values in Penn admissions, is a natural fit."

Since Furda's departure, John McLaughlin C'05 has been serving as interim dean of admissions. Gutmann and Pritchett praised the admissions department veteran for "his exemplary work and his love of Penn and look forward to his continued contributions to our campus community in the years to come."



the path. "Our goal is to produce a document that basically sits local officials down and lays everything out for them," he says. "You have these problems, here are the programs that can help you. Here's how to collect the in-

formation they require, and here's where to send it."

Russek is an example of the newer breed of experts that the Water Center is attracting. Unlike Kricun and Neukrug, he isn't an engineer nor does he have a background



in public utilities. He studied water restoration at the University of Alaska and then spent more than two decades in environmental underwriting—assessing natural resource damage, risks, and industry/regulatory issues—before arriving at Penn to pursue a master's in environmental studies. Meg Kramer LPS'18, the center's director of strategic development, came to Penn for the same degree following a career in pharmaceutical marketing. And Erica DePalma LPS'20 joined the center as its research program coordinator while focusing her studies on hydrology. She's already assumed lead roles in projects related to West Philadelphia's Cobbs Creek and South Bend, Indiana.

One of the Water Center's four primary objectives is to attract and support the next generation of water leaders, Neukrug says. "The issues around water go much further than the concerns of a utility, which delivers water and service," he observes. "They bring into play things like green infrastructure, community outreach, education and equity, and the design and landscape of cities. It's a real change for the industry and it happens to hit squarely with the types of projects that today's graduates—whether they're just entering the workforce or whether they're looking for a complete career change—like to work on. We're getting people that didn't used to come into the water business, and they're coming with ideas and excitement." —*JoAnn Greco*

## Dirt Destroyers

EarthEnable, which replaces unsanitary dirt floors in rural Africa, wins 10th annual Lipman Family Prize.



**W**hen Gayatri Datar first arrived in Rwanda eight years ago, she was eager to improve community health in one of the world's poorest countries. But it was only after several discussions with rural Rwandans—initiated through a Stanford entrepreneurship course called "Design for Extreme Affordability"—that she determined the best way to do so.

"The dirt floor kept coming up over and over again," Datar says. Whether it was a child crawling and putting their hands in their mouth or dust clouds floating everywhere, the floors in people's

homes were a longstanding source of concern, she learned—and replacing them "a ubiquitous need that hadn't really been addressed before, to our knowledge."

Such is the origin story of EarthEnable—a company that delivers low-cost flooring solutions to Rwanda (and, more recently, Uganda) and in April won Penn's Lipman Family Prize, which is "given to one organization that celebrates leadership and innovation to the social sector with an emphasis on impact and transferability of practices." The award comes with \$250,000 in unrestricted cash, access to tuition-free executive educa-

tion programs at Wharton Executive Education and the Center for Social Impact Strategy, and an ongoing partnership with the University.

Datar says the prize money comes at a key time as EarthEnable's micro-franchising business model of training and equipping local masons to sell and install its floors can now be taken "to the next level so we are able to both cer-

**"The leadership and innovation of our prize community continues to grow."**

tify as well as train them." And the other Wharton benefits also "come at the perfect moment because a lot of our rising leaders haven't had the type of educational opportunities like an exec ed program—and that would have been really hard for us to afford."

Founded and endowed by Barry Lipman W'70 and his wife Marie Lipman, the Lipman Family Prize is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, having given out \$3.3 million to social impact organizations, including a winner and two other honorees each year. In addition to EarthEnable's winning prize, The Luminos Fund and Promoting Equality in African Schools—both of which focus on increasing educational access for children in need—snagged \$100,000 apiece as finalists out of more than 115 applicant organizations.

"The leadership and innovation of our prize commu-

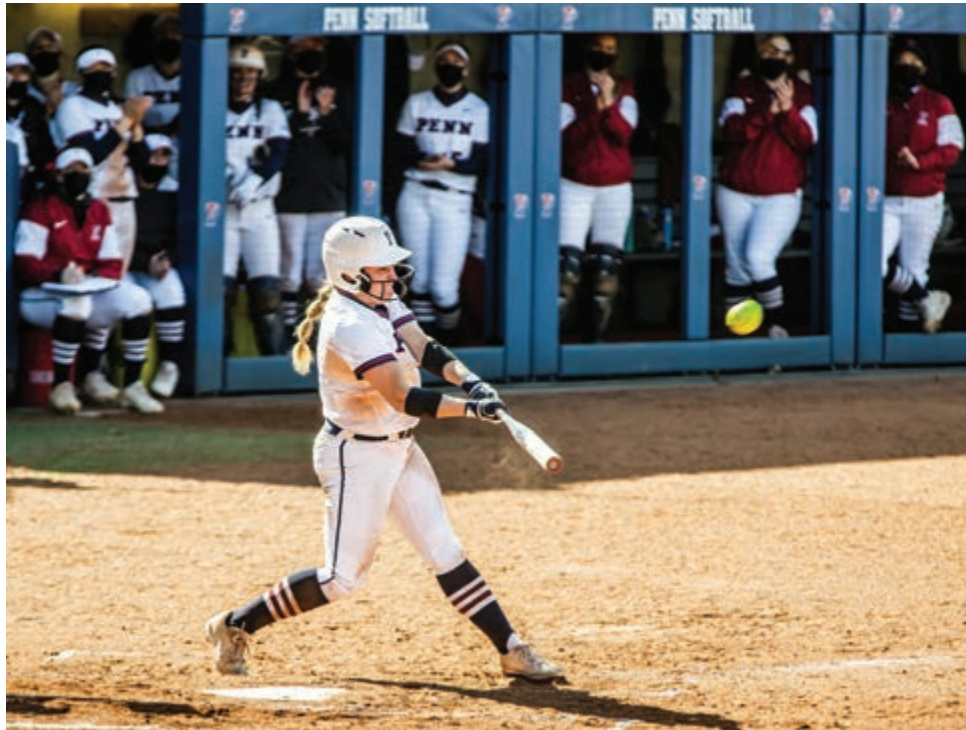
Emma Nedley connects on a three-run home run during Penn's softball doubleheader sweep of St. Joe's on April 3.

nity continues to grow and we continue to look forward in expanding our social impact footprint with these new organizations," Barry Lipman said in the announcement. "The important work of these three honorees in such unprecedented times highlights the continued need of our social impact work."

EarthEnable's impact has already been felt. According to a World Bank study, replacing a dirt floor with a clean one has been shown to reduce diarrheal disease by 49 percent and parasitic infections by 78 percent. And the locally sourced earthen floors the company uses, as well as a recently developed plaster product, are much more affordable and environmentally sustainable than a concrete floor.

For Datar, the proof is in both the numbers—the rapidly growing organization achieved 150 percent growth and served 10,282 individuals across several districts of Rwanda and Uganda in 2019—and the anecdotal evidence she hears while living in Rwanda. "Little things I never would have realized," the EarthEnable CEO and cofounder says—like how people no longer have to rewash their clothes if they fall from a clothesline and get muddy.

"It's a one-time intervention and it doesn't require any behavior change," she says. "Once the floor is there, it's there. And it's something people actually want. That's been a thing that continues to inspire me as much as the health impact—everyone wants to live in a nicer-quality home." —DZ



## Once Again, Play Ball!

Though the Ivy League season was canceled, Penn's spring-sport teams returned for local action.

**W**hen Penn softball coach Leslie King looked around Penn Park on a warm Saturday afternoon, she saw people stop what they were doing to sit on the grass and gaze onto the softball field. She saw picnicking families look over with curiosity. She even saw the Easter bunny.

No spectators are officially allowed at any games—one of the rules implemented when the University decided in March to allow its spring-sport teams to play a modified schedule against teams within a 40-mile radius of Penn.

But the softball stadium's prime location at the center of a semi-public park created a unique moment for players and passersby alike to enjoy a live Penn sporting event for the first time in more than a year. "Mentally and physically," King says, "it was just so healthy for everybody."

While the games have certainly uplifted spirits, it's been far from a return to normal. In mid-February, the Ivy League canceled its spring sports season, wiping out an entire year of conference competition following previous cancellations of fall and winter sports due to

the pandemic. The Ivy's decision was particularly tough for the spring-sport athletes, who also saw their 2020 seasons cut short at the onset of the pandemic ["Dashed Dreams," May/June 2020].

"It was pretty devastating," admits King. Even with the advancement of COVID-19 vaccines and the safer nature of playing outdoors, the "big sticking point for the league was travel," King says. "They didn't want to make an exception for athletics," when other university-sponsored travel has been restricted.

But about a month after the Ivy League's decision, Penn received University and Philadelphia Department of Public Health approval to move into "Ivy Phase Four," which allowed for local competition beginning March 27. (Previous phases that went into effect earlier in the semester



allowed teams, including basketball and football, to practice together for the first time in close to a year.)

"It felt like we got dealt bad news after bad news after bad news for months," King says. "And to finally get that little bit of good news that you guys can play some softball was great."

An "optimist by nature," King had kept city rivals like Drexel, Saint Joseph's, and Villanova on Penn's schedule, so the softball team had games teed up when March 27 arrived. So did John Yurkow's baseball team. The harder part for him was getting his players back in the flow after so much time on the sideline. "Starting the season the way we did, I've never felt that unprepared before as a head coach," says Yurkow, whose team lost its first five games before sweeping a doubleheader against La Salle.

Without any championships to contend for or NCAA tournaments to strive toward, Yurkow and King see the 2021 season as being more about staying sharp and acclimating freshmen (which could give them an advantage over other Ivy League teams heading into next year). But it varies from program to program.

While Penn's national-caliber lacrosse squads had difficulties finding teams to play, the men's and women's track and field teams were able to set up several meets at Franklin Field, including one on April 24 to at least partially replace the Penn Relays, which was canceled

for a second straight year after 125 consecutive previous runnings.

Star performances were also not lost. In Penn's second track meet on April 3, senior Camille Dickson broke the program long jump record. And that same day, junior Emma Nedley belted a three-run home run to lead the Quakers to a softball sweep over St. Joe's on a day the team honored its five graduating seniors.

King is excited to see what Nedley and the rest of her "very talented class" can do next year after two straight pandemic-shortened seasons. But she does have some reservations about the future of the program since the Ivy League has been the only Division I conference to cancel sports this year.

"I'm fearful that potential recruits are going to look at the conference and just think they don't really care about athletics," the softball coach says. "I don't think that's the case; I think the Ivy League cares about the health and safety of its players. But I don't know if that's the perception out there."

Yurkow is less worried about that being a problem. "I can tell you that we haven't skipped a beat in terms of recruiting," the baseball coach says. "The opportunity that Penn provides both on and off the field far outweighs any doubt."

There are other uncertainties on the horizon, including whether any players will try to use an extra year of eligibility that the Ivy League

## SPORTS

### Penn Athletic Director Departs for Brown

**After almost seven years as Penn's athletic director,** M. Grace Calhoun left on April 19 to take the same position at her alma mater, Brown University.

Hired in 2014 to replace Steve Bilsky W'71 as the T. Gibbs Kane, Jr. W'69 Director of Athletics and Recreation ["Passing the Baton," Sep/Oct 2014], Calhoun oversaw Penn's 33 varsity athletics programs, 38 club programs, and other intramural and recreational offerings for students, faculty, and staff.

During her tenure, Penn teams won 27 Ivy League or conference championships in 16 sports, as well as three individual national titles and three national runner-up team finishes. In addition, Penn had 133 All-Americans, 226 individual NCAA Championship qualifiers, 31 Ivy League Players of the Year, and 119 Ivy League individual champions.

In the announcement, Penn President Amy Gutmann said that Calhoun "will depart having left an indelible mark on Penn Athletics—not only on the field of competition but also in a deeply felt commitment to the overall health, safety, and success of our student athletes and in the strategic planning and operations of the division."

Calhoun began her career in athletics administration in 1993, a year after graduating from Brown, where she was a member of the track and field team. She worked for six other institutions before arriving at Penn, where she continued Bilsky's priority of expanding fundraising efforts and upgrading athletic facilities, leading a successful development campaign that is on track to raise \$200 million by the end of the academic year.

Calhoun also helped revive Penn's storied men's basketball program, which had fallen on hard times, with the hiring of Steve Donahue as head coach in 2015. And she's been a national leader in intercollegiate athletics, chairing the NCAA Division 1 council and the Ivy League Directors of Athletics.

Calhoun has four daughters with her husband, Jason Calhoun, who has been head coach of Penn's men's golf team since 2017. Calling the decision to leave Penn "bittersweet," she said, "I will miss these relationships dearly, but the tug of my alma mater is strong."

Rudy Fuller, a senior associate athletic director for intercollegiate programs and a former Penn men's soccer coach, will serve as the interim AD until a permanent appointment is made. —DZ

Council of Presidents granted senior student-athletes if they enroll at a graduate school of their current university (a departure from Ivy norms). But for Yurkow, the joy of opening day at the ballpark overrode anything else at the time.

"It was almost a surreal feeling," he says. "The first game, seeing our guys get dressed and putting on their uniform, that's when it started to really sink in."

King agrees. "To see them put their jerseys on," she says, "that was a moment." —DZ

# FIGHTING POVERTY WITH CASH

Several decades since the last big income experiment was conducted in the US, School of Social Policy & Practice assistant professor Amy Castro Baker has helped deliver promising data out of Stockton, California, about the effects of giving people no-strings-attached money every month. Now boosted by a new research center at Penn that she'll colead, more cities are jumping on board to see if guaranteed income can lift their residents out of poverty. Will it work? And will policymakers listen?

By Dave Zeitlin

**A**my Castro Baker SW'04 remembers one piece of hate mail more than any of the others. It contained letters that were cut from the pages of a magazine and glued onto a piece of paper—like a ransom note from the movies. “Misogyny, white nationalism, white supremacist rhetoric” is how she describes it. “A hodgepodge of internet rumors.”

An assistant professor at Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2), Castro Baker is an unlikely target for such vitriol. She still has a hard time understanding why anyone—even a troll from the darkest corners of the internet—would send menacing letters to her office or, even more harrowingly, to her suburban Philadelphia home.

“On the one hand, it's scary. When people are going out of their way to figure out where you are, that's frightening,” admits Castro Baker, sitting in a plaza outside the SP2 building on a late February afternoon, the last vestiges of winter failing to fend off flocks of masked students eager to enjoy all the outdoor spaces that campus has to offer. It's doubtful any of them are as excited as Castro Baker, who in one week's time will see research that she spent years working on made public for the first time—the same research that led to the hate mail, which, in many ways, only intensified what's become her career mission. “On the other hand,” she continues, “if you're not being criticized in some ways then I feel like maybe you're not asking the right question.”







The question that Castro Baker set out to answer was this: What would happen to a person in or near poverty who received no-strings-attached guaranteed payments every month? And the answer, at least from one pilot program, was even more promising than she imagined when she and her research partner Stacia West, a professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, were selected to coordinate and evaluate the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED), the nation's first mayor-led guaranteed income demonstration.

Launched in February 2019 by Michael Tubbs, then the mayor of Stockton, California—and supported by funding from the Economic Security Project, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and private donors—SEED gave 125 Stockton residents, selected randomly from neighborhoods at or below the city's median household income, \$500 per month for 24 straight months (unconditionally and with no work requirements). Preliminary findings were released this past March from the first year of the experiment (pre-COVID, from February 2019 to February 2020). They showed, among other things, that recipients of the cash experienced reduced income volatility, showed improved mental health, and, perhaps more surprisingly, were likelier to find full-time employment. (Post-COVID data will be released next year.)

"That is the biggest pushback we get: that if you give people money, no strings attached, they're going to stop working," Castro Baker says. "We never thought that would happen because that's absurd. Who can live on \$500 a month anywhere, let alone California? But what we did see was that the \$500 created a new kind of cognitive capacity where people could take risks in the economy that they couldn't take before, because they had a cushion and their wellbeing was in a healthier space."

While people have indeed argued over the years that government money is a disincentive to work, others have insisted

that living in poverty is more of an impediment than it is a motivator—an idea that the SEED data would seem to support. Per the findings, the \$500 monthly payments "removed material barriers to full-time employment and created capacity for goal setting and risk taking, once basic needs like food and utilities were covered." In February 2019, 28 percent of the SEED recipients had full-time employment; one year later, that number jumped up to 40 percent. In contrast, the control group (Stockton residents who participated in the study but did not receive monthly payments) saw only a five percentage point increase in full-time employment over the same one-year period.

West likens it to a college graduate having enough economic security to afford to take an internship, which would put them in a better position to land their next job. "We always think about people as an 'other,' especially someone who receives a guaranteed income payment or maybe someone who's very low income," West says. "We look at them as somehow being undeserving and someone who will squander the money and quit working. But I think if we regard people in the same way we regard our families and ourselves, then you really change the narrative."

"I was definitely excited that the critics could not find the narrative they wanted to find in the data," adds Erin Coltrera SPP'14, who teaches at Penn with Castro Baker and served as SEED's research and program officer on the ground in Stockton. For her an equally compelling data point involved the health and wellbeing responses from the participants, who filled out surveys throughout the program and reported greater decreases in anxiety and depression than the control group. "You're not talking about taking a pill," Coltrera says. "You're not talking about some sort of medical intervention. You're literally just talking about reducing the anxiety and stress of people's lives so that they can feel better."

The data also ran counter to a longstanding assumption among critics that

people will spend any government money that's not integrated into a specific social welfare program on drugs or other vices. In Stockton, people spent their SEED cash on basic needs, including food (nearly 37 percent), home goods and clothes (22 percent), utilities (11 percent) and auto costs (10 percent). Less than one percent was spent on alcohol or tobacco. "The thing about guaranteed income is that it pushes back at a lot of things that make people very uncomfortable," Coltrera says. "It requires trusting people. And especially in this country, there's not a lot of trust of folks who experience poverty."

And that's where Castro Baker believes the hate comes from. "I'm white but the pushback I hear a lot—both from trolls and commentary—is really rooted in anti-Blackness," the Penn professor says. "We spent many years in the US attaching shame and blame to the safety net." But buoyed by the promising Stockton data, and now spearheading a new center at Penn that will analyze similar pilot programs in other US cities, she plans to continue to drive the conversation forward. "What's been most surprising about the pushback is that when it comes, it's very ugly," she says. "But the support far outweighs the pushback."

**"I'm** now convinced that the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective—the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income."

This quote graces the website of a new group called Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI), founded last June by Tubbs and the Economic Security Project (which is led by Facebook cofounder Chris Hughes) to create a coalition of American mayors to advocate for direct, recurring payments. But the words are not new. They were written more than 50 years ago, by Martin Luther King Jr.

"This is not a new idea," Castro Baker says. "It's been around since the birth of



Amy Castro Baker, standing here outside of College Hall, believes Penn is a good home for the recently launched Center for Guaranteed Income Research.

democracy and was the subject of Dr. King's last book. But the question I often get is: *why now?*"

The US has tested basic incomes before with studies in the 1960s and 1970s, including the Seattle-Denver Income Maintenance Experiment, and with the creation of the Alaska Permanent Fund in 1982. But the idea has been picking up steam recently, with Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey among the Silicon Valley executives advocating for it with a \$15 million donation to MGI, and Chris Hughes arguing in the *New York Times* early in the pandemic last May that "a guaranteed income should be permanent American policy, not just an emergency measure to help with this crisis."

Currently about 40 mayors, from American cities both big and small, have joined MGI, which together with the School of Social Policy & Practice in October established the Center for Guaranteed Income Research. Castro Baker and West will colead the Penn center, which has the stated goal to "consolidate the key learnings from the pilots taking place in MGI member cities, to address knowledge gaps in the contemporary understanding of guaranteed income's impact for Americans, and to allow the organization to layer data with anecdotal evidence in federal advocacy."

One big factor for the momentum swing was Andrew Yang's calls for every American adult to receive \$1,000 monthly payments from the federal government during his 2020 presidential campaign, bringing the idea of universal basic income (UBI) from the fringes of the internet into dinner table conversations. (Castro Baker makes sure to draw a distinction between UBI and guaranteed income, with the former going to everybody and the latter generally targeted "to reach households at or below a particular income threshold" or certain populations.) More recently, President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan showed how much further policymakers are willing



to go to fight poverty through stimulus payments and child tax credit expansions. "But really, this is something that activists and researchers have been working on for decades," Castro Baker says, pointing to the Great Recession between 2007 and 2009 as "this tipping point where people are now working more and making less. And if you're under 35, you're part of the first generation to do economically worse than your par-

ents. We keep trying to fix a new economy with old tools. And it's not working. And then the pandemic, of course, has cracked this wide open."

Castro Baker first encountered the idea of guaranteed income at graduate school at Penn, but she wasn't always a staunch believer in it. Her tune only changed when she began to do research with West six years ago. "We kept writing about mortgage foreclosure, the gender

wealth gap, the racial wealth gap, and she kept saying, ‘Amy, we have to talk about guaranteed income,’” Castro Baker recalls. “I said, ‘No, we’re not talking about that. No one’s going to publish our papers.’ We had arguments about it constantly as we were writing. And I finally gave in. She was right ... It was probably a failure of imagination in terms of what I thought people would tolerate. I just didn’t think people were ready for it—and I was totally wrong.”

Before Castro Baker was convinced of the merits of guaranteed income by West, West was convinced by none other than Dolly Parton. While driving home one day, West, a Tennessee native, heard an NPR interview with the country music icon, who discussed her plan to give unconditional monthly cash payments to families who lost their homes in the 2016 Great Smoky Mountain wildfires. “And I was like, ‘Oh my god, Dolly Parton is doing guaranteed income—literally for the first time since 1982 in the US, and never in the context of an environmental disaster.’” West called Parton’s foundation and offered to analyze the effects of the payments. She found that people were able to save their money or put it toward rebuilding their homes as intended.

“It all comes down to income inequality driving so many of our social problems,” West says. “A person with an addiction that has money can go to treatment. A person with an addiction that has none is going to have so much worse outcomes. Looking at all of these social problems, I’m like, ‘Well shit, if people just had money, that would probably fix it, right?’”

Studying the real-world implications of guaranteed income wasn’t such a no-brainer for West’s academic mentors, who told her she’d never get tenure that way. Castro Baker had similar conversations when she and West were weighing whether to work with SEED. “I was told explicitly by many senior people in my field, ‘Do not touch this project. You do not have tenure. You are risking your career. This is crazy.’”

They decided to send in a letter of intent anyway, not really expecting to be selected as the research team. “We’re not economists; we’re social scientists,” Castro Baker says. “We’re early career. We’re junior scholars. But we kept looking at it and said, ‘Why not throw your hat in the ring?’”

After several meetings in 2018, they were selected to run the first modern basic-income experiment in the US since the 1970s, filling Castro Baker with “equal parts terror and excitement.”

Soon the question shifted from *why not?* to *now what?*

Just as the timing seemed right for this kind of income experiment, so did the place. Once known as the foreclosure capital of the country, Stockton was walloped by the subprime mortgage financial crisis more than a decade ago and has yet to recover. About one in four residents now lives in poverty. Castro Baker also calls the north-central Californian city a potential bellwether for the country due to its diversity and population of roughly 300,000.

Harder to figure out than the *why* and the *where* was *how* to conduct the experiment—and present the findings in the most compelling way. Plus, Castro Baker was suddenly confronted with the “huge ethical implications” about which residents to pick to receive the payments and to be in the control group. “It’s really a question of whose economic future are you going to change,” she says. “Suddenly decisions ordinarily made by researchers in the privacy of their office or in conjunction with colleagues was a political process and a public process.” Soliciting feedback from the Stockton community, Castro Baker and West revised their plan to ensure that anyone over 18 had an equal chance of being chosen after applying but that the selections would come from residents who live in a neighborhood with a median income at or below \$46,033, because of a “tremendous desire to make sure the

money wouldn’t get taken back by the government in taxes.”

Interaction with Stockton residents continued to be vital for their “mixed-method” randomized controlled trial, which combined quantitative and qualitative data, the latter of which relied on people filling out surveys (a long-form one every six months in addition to monthly surveys via text message) as well as “in-depth interviewing in people’s homes and communities, and what we would call short-form ethnography,” Castro Baker says. “The best science, when it comes to social science, is the science that’s rooted in context and community. And you can’t do that from your office. It was just as valuable for us to collect the stats as it was to spend hours and hours sitting with people and hearing their experiences of how they made sense of guaranteed income.”

While West led the quantitative side of the study, she was pleased to let Castro Baker focus on the qualitative components, calling her partner “one of the most brilliant qualitative scientists in the US right now” because of how she can pull narrative threads through hard data. Coltrera agrees with that assessment, saying, “I think Amy really is one of the only people in the country that can do *this* work *this* way.” That’s one of the main reasons why Coltrera, who has been a teaching assistant for Castro Baker and a Penn adjunct professor, uprooted her life in Philadelphia to relocate to Stockton to work as SEED’s research and program officer. But it took plenty of not-so-gentle persuasion. “Oh my god, I told her she was absolutely nuts!” Coltrera recalls as her first response to the job offer. But “the more Amy pitched what SEED could possibly do, the more I kept thinking this is the kind of work I want to be doing because it gets at the root of so many of the social problems we face in social work every day.”

Coltrera—who’s since transitioned into a similar role at the Center for Guaranteed Income Research—was also swayed



by Castro Baker's emphasis on "what a social worker would bring to the table." Coltrera quickly learned why, conducting home visits to manage 300 relationships and deal with logistical challenges such as dropping off gift cards to compensate people for filling out surveys (since the SEED payments were no-strings attached, this part of the experiment was not mandatory); helping to troubleshoot the devices that participants used for those surveys and debit cards through which SEED funds were distributed; and generally just "making sure they feel heard, they feel connected, and they know that we're still here." Sometimes, Coltrera adds, the participants simply wanted to talk. And they still do, texting Coltrera just to touch base even though she's now back in Philadelphia full time. (Before COVID, she was in Stockton about 80 percent of the time; from about May 2020 through this past February, she split her time between Stockton and Philly more evenly due to the pandemic.) "Our hope is they feel this is reciprocal—that we're not just mining them for their lives and information," says Coltrera, citing "horror stories about research on populations where they don't get to feel like they're part of their own narrative."

"One of the neatest parts for me was actually working with the control group," she adds. "These are folks not getting the money and are doing it because they know there's fundamentally something important happening here and they want to be a part of it."

For Castro Baker, seeking out such a high level of community engagement wasn't just the right thing to do but an important way to "move the needle around poverty and justice" because "scientists tell terrible stories." Giving Americans the opportunity to hear directly from Stockton residents, some of whom shared their experiences with the press, "really jolted the narrative and ground the data into real stories," she says. "It's been really powerful to have those two

things next to each other." National media brimmed with such stories this spring. One Stocktonian told the *Atlantic* that the SEED cash allowed her to pay off some credit card debt, buy groceries without going to a food bank, and secure a new apartment after a fire. Another told *USA Today* that she used the money to pay bills, buy her kids gifts, and fix her car so she could keep working.

Two particular stories from SEED participants stood out the most to Castro Baker. One was told to her by a dad, struggling to pay his bills, who was suddenly able to buy his daughter a prom dress and shoes. "What that meant in terms of dignity, that he was able to show up for this child in a way he couldn't before, you can't even measure that," she says. "And for the teenager being able to participate in a normal rite of adolescence, those types of dignity things that took place within the experiment are incredibly powerful."

The other involved someone who was able to get dental work done, allowing them to smile more and move their hand away from their face during conversations. "That's about what it means to be human," she says. "And the idea that something so small, like \$500, can shift that for someone is pretty remarkable."

**M**uch of Castro Baker's work can be framed through the lens of her childhood—"a phenomenal childhood," she says. "But the struggle to make ends meet, that is my story." She grew up in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where her dad was a toolmaker and her mom had a range of different jobs, from cleaning houses to working retail. They were both smart, Castro Baker says, but had trouble getting ahead in the blue-collar city marked by industrial decline. "I really saw firsthand what it was like watching my parents work and work and work, and it was never enough," she says.

The oldest of four, Castro Baker shared a room with all three of her siblings for parts of her life. At times, other families

**"That's about what it means to be human. And the idea that something so small, like \$500, can shift that for someone is pretty remarkable."**

moved into their home because they didn't have a place to stay. She became the first in her family to go to college, matriculating at Cairn University, a small Christian school in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. From there, she went on to earn a master's in social work from Penn, where she spent much of her time working with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Homeless Health Initiative, which provides free health services to families living in local emergency housing shelters.

Castro Baker continued to practice social work after graduating from Penn, primarily in West Philadelphia, and "realized you can spend a whole career telling everybody how big and bad every social problem is, but at a certain point you kind of have a responsibility to do something about it." After getting a PhD from CUNY Graduate Center at Hunter College (where she studied the impact of mortgage foreclosure on women while raising two now-teenage kids), she briefly worked as an assistant professor of social work at the University of Wyoming before Penn drew her back in 2015 with a full-time faculty job offer and the opportunity to study social inequities and predatory lending markets, especially as it pertains to women and minorities. "If you want to sort of push the boundaries and ask big questions and maybe do things in a non-traditional way in terms of research, Penn rewards that type of innovation," she says. "So it's a good home for me."

She also thinks Penn is a good home for the Center for Guaranteed Income Research, pointing to SP2's commitment to social justice and Provost Wendell Pritchett Gr'97 in particular as a champion of this kind of work. "What's been really exciting," she says, "is how nimble Penn has been in responding to the scale of the project" as the number of MGI pilot programs that the center is running continues to grow. Those include Pittsburgh; New Orleans; Saint Paul, Minnesota; Richmond, Virginia; Oakland, California; Newark, New Jersey; Patterson, New Jersey; and Gary, Indiana. (Other mayors who are part of MGI include those from four of the country's seven most populous cities—Los Angeles's Eric Garcetti, Houston's Sylvester Turner, Philadelphia's Jim Kenney, and San Antonio's Ron Nirenberg ASC'01.)

"We're the first ones to finish one of these experiments, so people keep calling us, saying *help us*," Castro Baker says. "Not many researchers right now in the country are working on this. So the idea behind the center is to create a cohesive body of science around cash, such that as policy proposals are coming into multiple tiers of government, we'll have a body of science to back it up."

The center will both expand on the Stockton study and draw lessons from it. One of the main lessons? "Oh my gosh, it's really hard to give people cash—*really hard*," says West, who recently moved from Tennessee to Philadelphia in January to colead the center (and because she and Castro Baker are now partners in life as well as in research). "You can't just write checks to people. We're contacted by incredibly well-meaning nonprofits from across the country who want to do guaranteed income right away. But there's so much work that goes into building trust in the community, into choosing the right disbursement mechanism based on the population, into dealing with people losing SNAP or TANF benefits. It's really not as simple as it looks."

As for adaptations, the center's leaders would like to see more data about whether guaranteed income works the same in

different parts of the country (West is particularly interested in the rural South) and for different subpopulations (Castro Baker is curious about women and caregivers). "What we don't want is a bunch of replication where every city is targeting the same population and asking the same questions," says West, adding that she hopes over the next three years, the center will be able to provide a "sample of around 2,000 people spread across the US, instead of just one sample of 125 in California." Castro Baker adds, "One of my fears as a scientist is the political momentum is moving faster than the data. So my job and my team's job is to make sure the science catches up to the political momentum, so we don't have big, expensive policy mistakes. There's a ton we don't know about guaranteed income."

One question that continues to loom large is how governments would pay for this. And while they each have their own ideas—"We know that budgets are moral documents and you can tax corporations and incredibly wealthy people at the rates they should be taxed," West says—they're not ready to answer big policy-related questions about how UBI or guaranteed income might affect the broader economy at the federal, state, and local levels. "I'm an applied social scientist, so I don't look at labor market or macroeconomic effects," Castro Baker notes.

Her SP2 colleague, Ioana Marinescu, has studied the latter and concluded in a Wharton Public Policy Initiative paper published in 2019 that "giving people cash with no strings attached has only a small negative effect on work, and can improve educational and health outcomes, especially among the most disadvantaged. Paying for such a program, however, is not a trivial matter. As political appetite for UBI is growing, a new UBI program is more likely to be implemented at the state level than at the federal level." (The Penn Wharton Budget Model analyzed UBI in 2018. Using its own set of econometric assumptions, it estimated three ways to finance a pro-

gram at the federal level: with deficits, a payroll tax, and with transfers funded by external sources. "Under all three scenarios, a Universal Basic Income program dampens hours worked, capital services, GDP, and Social Security revenues.")

As a self-described "pragmatist," Castro Baker tends to focus on the art of the possible, and has felt encouraged that US mayors are looking to take matters into their own hands to fight for the roughly 10.5 percent of Americans in poverty—and the many more who are "hovering just over that line where they cannot get ahead and don't qualify for the safety net either."

She's similarly optimistic that basic income has for many years garnered bipartisan support, from Andrew Yang to Richard Nixon. "On the left, people see guaranteed income as a solution to structural injustice," she says. "On the right, it's more about a push for efficiency and the idea of more libertarian strains of thought saying the government shouldn't tell you what to do when you have needs; you're an expert on your own life."

In addition, students in her SP2 policy analysis courses have developed more "intolerance and impatience around justice" each year, Castro Baker says. And now the pandemic has "exposed the fractures in our economy that have been there for decades. People have not recovered from the Great Recession, and the pandemic has just amplified it."

Yet through all the suffering that COVID-19 has caused, and the looming economic threats that lie ahead, Castro Baker believes change may finally be on the horizon. "On the one hand, we're watching poverty skyrocket because of the pandemic. And the ways in which we're exacerbating the gender and racial wealth gap in the time of the pandemic is terrifying to me," she says. "But at the same time, it's forcing a conversation about how we want the economy to work and what we want the safety net to look like that's been a really long time coming."

"So I have a lot of hope."



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# The Vaccine Trenches

Key breakthroughs leading to the powerful mRNA vaccines against COVID-19 were forged at Penn. That triumph was almost 50 years in the making, longer on obstacles than celebration, and the COVID-19 vaccines may only be the beginning of its impact on 21st-century medicine.

By Matthew De George

**K**atalin Kariko is most comfortable at a lab bench. That's where she's spent most of a career that dates to the late 1970s. Even as a lead researcher on papers that broke new ground in gene therapy, even as a vice president of an emerging biopharmaceutical power, she was never above doing the unglamorous work in the lab: the repetitive cell culturing and data collection that she easily could have delegated.

Lately her time in the lab has been reduced by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with a shift to a more advisory role at Bi-

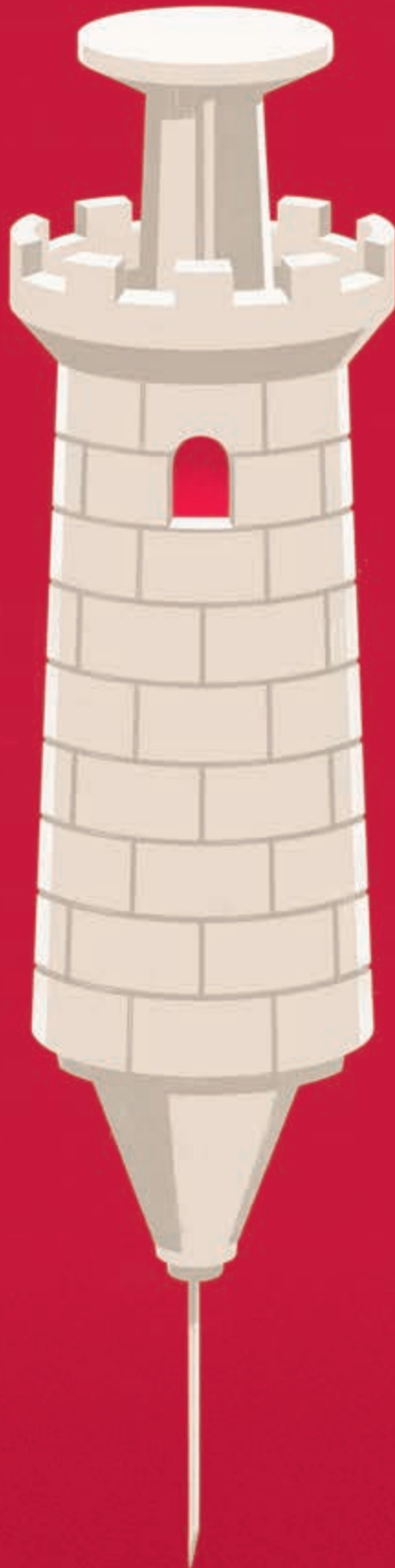
oNTech, the German pharmaceutical company she joined in 2013. (She remains an adjunct professor at the Perelman School of Medicine.) But the diligence that served her so well in the lab still shines through as she reviews the path she's taken through five decades of science research.

Speaking from her home office in the Philadelphia suburbs in February, Kariko—Kate or Katy to her colleagues—strikes a tone most remarkable for its magnanimity. When you ask about the messenger RNA (mRNA) technology behind the first two commercially available

COVID-19 vaccines to hit the American market—technology revolutionized and refined at the Perelman lab in which Kariko worked for decades—you don't get any self-adulation. Nor do you get any resentment at the many entities that turned down her research funding requests—no matter how justifiable a bit of bitterness might be.

Instead, you get a tour through the history of all the stepwise improvements, from Kariko's lab and collaborators across the world, that have led us to the current moment, in which mRNA offers







not just a chance to stanch a global pandemic but also a promising new platform to tackle all manner of diseases.

Though she's not above enjoying the acclaim she has lately received for the technology she's long championed, Kariko quickly puts her contributions to it in perspective.

"Science builds on science," she says. "We always built on the people who

came before us, and people will use our data. Of course, everything was important that those people did. I would hug them if I could."

Kariko's attitude is a key part of how she and others helped unlock the promise of a method that many dismissed as a clinical dead end in the 1990s. When the sector struggled to attract funding—when Kariko's attachment to it imper-

iled her job prospects at Penn—she and her Perelman colleague Drew Weissman, a professor of infectious diseases, battled to defend its merits. They persevered in part because of their openness to trying new things, to share their findings and entertain new possibilities even when their ideas were met with skepticism.

The end product is a pair of safe and effective vaccines, produced by Moderna and a partnership between BioNTech and Pfizer, that have sped to market in record time. They are based on mRNA, which codes for a molecular analogue of the spike protein that lines the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and uses that analogue to teach the immune system to develop antibodies against the virus. Yet this technology isn't just a powerful weapon against the pandemic. The underlying method represents a new frontier in biologic medicine whose vast possibilities encompass infectious diseases, cancer treatments, and even repairing autoimmune and genetic conditions.

"We knew when we started with this technology that it would be very useful if a pandemic hit, because it's so fast and so easy to make a vaccine with it," Weissman says. "But we weren't hoping for a pandemic to prove that."

**W**eissman's journey to mRNA started with a photocopy machine, where he used to jockey for pole position with Kariko. At least that's what he likes to joke. Even if they hadn't spent so much time in line to run off pages from academic journals, Kariko is certain she would've found Weissman sooner or later.

The basic science of ribonucleic acid (RNA) was well established by the time Kariko arrived at Penn in 1989. Discovered in 1961, it plays a foundational role in just about all forms of life, enabling cells to synthesize proteins encoded in their genome. In human cells, the genetic code rests in double-stranded DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). Genes are transcribed in the nucleus to messenger RNA (mRNA), which



travels into the cell's cytoplasm and is translated into proteins in the ribosomes. Some viruses, including SARS-CoV-2, use single-strand RNA instead of DNA as their only genetic information.

Kariko arrived at Penn during what she calls “a revolution” for mRNA science. She was hired by Elliot Barnathan C’77 M’81 GM’86 GM’87, then an associate professor of medicine, to conduct basic research in his lab, which focused on blood vessels. Even in that position, Kariko was always looking for ways to incorporate mRNA, either as a remedy or part of the investigation process. Excitement in the field was growing. In 1985, the first polymerase chain reaction (PCR) machines, which allowed scientists to

## Kariko and Weissman helped unlock the promise of a method that many dismissed as a clinical dead end in the 1990s.

customize strains of RNA, were patented. (Even three decades later, Kariko describes that new technology as “so empowering.”) Another key advance was the development of positively charged lipids that could encase and deliver negatively charged RNA to cells, a technology made commercially available in the late 1980s. By 1990, the Human Genome Project added attention to the field of genetics, though it shifted funds toward DNA research. Despite that, a proof of concept study of synthetic mRNA translation in living mouse models was published in 1990, and the first therapeutic use of RNA in rats was reported two years later.



Those findings ran against the prevailing wisdom that because mRNA too easily degraded in the body, it wouldn't have therapeutic value.

Kariko traces her interest in mRNA back to her first day in the lab in her native Hungary in 1978, when her graduate supervisor tasked her with collecting a sample of RNA that could be shipped to a lab in New Jersey for sequencing. She

was drawn to the potential power this class of molecules might have in medicine. If you could tailor mRNA to inject into cells, you could control which proteins they produce, what genes they express, what metabolic pathways they follow. Her zeal earned her a reputation as “the RNA hassler,” at Penn and beyond. “I went to meetings and if someone was sitting next to me, I’d ask what they were

doing and I always offered, ‘Oh I can make an RNA for you,’” Kariko recalls.

“Kate was really just unbelievable,” says Barnathan, who is now the executive director for research and development at Janssen, a pharmaceutical company under the Johnson & Johnson umbrella. “She was always incredibly inquisitive. She read voraciously. She would always know the latest technology or the latest paper, even if it was in a totally different area, and she’d put two and two together and say, ‘Well why don’t we do this?’ Or, ‘Why don’t we try this formulation?’”

That enthusiasm paid off as funding dried up in the 1990s. At that time, mRNA began to fall out of favor. Since mRNA interventions couldn’t modify the genome the way DNA therapy theoretically could, they were seen as short-term aids, not the moonshot solution to thorny problems like hereditary diseases that attracted much of the funding.

Kariko was demoted from the tenure track in the mid-1990s, from a research assistant professor position to a newly

created role as senior research investigator. When Barnathan left for the private sector in 1997, she joined the neurosurgery lab of David Langer C’85 M’90 GM’98 for two years [“Alumni Profiles,” Jan/Feb 2020]. But even as she bounced around between increasingly tenuous perches, she continued publishing, including a 1999 paper (based on research done in 1996 with Barnathan) in which she used urokinase receptor proteins to demonstrate effective overexpression of in vitro transcribed mRNA in living cells.

Weissman arrived at Penn in 1997, having spent seven post-doctoral years at the National Institutes of Health. In a lab run by Anthony Fauci, Weissman explored the role of dendritic cells, one of the “sentinel cells” that detect and help defuse threats to the immune system, in HIV infection. At Penn, his research focused on dendritic cells’ broader response to pathogens.

As he dug into the literature, Weissman spent countless hours xeroxing pages from academic journals ... which meant a lot of time waiting in line with

Kariko. The more they chatted, sharing tidbits of their research, the more “the RNA hassler” made Weissman wonder if mRNA could be useful in his lab. Soon they were collaborating.

The pairing proved to be *kismet*, and while the infusion of funds from Weissman’s new lab didn’t solve all the financial quandaries, it opened up new avenues for Kariko’s explorations. They endured frustrations along the way. Kariko had little success in getting grants or interest from venture capitalists. At times it seemed like the powers-that-be were rubbing her nose in it. In the early 2000s Kariko and Weissman were approached by a pair of MBA students competing in a Wharton School entrepreneurship competition, but the idea of a company built around mRNA technology was, according to Kariko, deemed too implausible by the contest’s board.

“Katy and I worked on this from the beginning,” Weissman says. “We never gave up. We never felt that it was bad technology and we had to stop. But we

## Bringing the Vaccine to the Masses

**Mace Rothenberg C’78** offers a rueful laugh when recalling his 2020 calendar. As Pfizer’s chief medical officer, his duties included traveling to the company’s many labs and research stations around the world—a task once done in person, no Zoom required. On his itinerary for the first week of March: a trip to meet teams at Pfizer’s research and development center in ... Wuhan, China, where COVID-19 was first identified.

That trip never happened. By March, Wuhan was starting to see the light at the end of a months-long tunnel of lockdowns. The United States was staring into the abyss, with schools closed and businesses shuttered. Rothenberg’s check-ins with employees, in Wuhan and elsewhere, shifted from the usual to the extraordinary, emphasizing measures to keep employees safe without disrupting a global supply chain of medications, COVID-19-related and otherwise.

By January, Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla decided to put Pfizer out front in the vaccine quest, marshalling resources throughout the pharmaceutical giant.

“It was really a test of the organization’s strength and culture,” Rothenberg says. “We talk about culture a lot, but it’s not until you’re

really challenged by something unexpected that you see what the characteristics and the culture of an organization are. Looking back at the last year, it’s really extraordinary. I feel really privileged to be part of an organization that responded so well to this challenge.”

Rothenberg joined Pfizer in 2008 and spent 10 years in its oncology department, rising to chief development officer of oncology in 2016. He became CMO on January 1, 2019, a position he held until his retirement in January 2021. (He’ll remain with the company until the spring and will then shift to an advisory role.) Having done most of his clinical research in cancer, he wasn’t well acquainted with mRNA vaccinology before the pandemic. Like everyone at the company, he got a crash course as Pfizer partnered with BioNTech, the Germany-based firm founded by the husband-and-wife team of Ugur Sahin and Ozlem Tureci.

One thing Rothenberg was familiar with was Pfizer’s potential to play a key role in coordinating a complex endeavor. In pulling together a company-wide effort, Rothenberg relied on a key standby of his history: collaboration. One of his most significant projects in oncology research was helping to create Project Data Sphere, a digital “library-laboratory” that allowed scientists to share in-process and pre-published cancer research. Launched in 2014, it has allowed researchers to share ideas, leading to more than 100 novel datasets and more than 20 peer-reviewed papers.



## Kariko had little success getting grants or interest from venture capitalists. At times the powers-that-be seemed to be rubbing her nose in it.

had to fight the entire way. We spent time trying to get people, biotechs, and pharmaceuticals interested in this. It took a long time, but now we've achieved it."

Despite those setbacks, the work continued. Kariko and Weissman improved the technology by conquering one obstacle at a time.

One major issue was RNA's inherent toxicity. Free-floating RNA outside of cells is usually a sign that something is wrong, like rupturing cells or viral intrusion. Its presence triggers an inflammatory response, and the space between cells is full of enzymes that rapidly degrade RNA. Its short half-life outside of cells was a major impediment to overcome.

By 2004, the pair had worked out which receptors their therapeutic mRNA tripped. Kariko noticed that a different type of RNA, transfer RNA, rarely triggers the immune system. She theorized that it slipped under the radar due to modifications in the nucleosides that comprise it. By tinkering with the nucleosides in her synthetic mRNA, Weissman and

Kariko dampened the unwanted immune response, a process they patented in 2005 and have licensed to companies including Moderna. (BioNTech, which Kariko joined in 2013 as a senior vice president, funds research at Weissman's lab.)

From afar, Barnathan sees the totality of Kariko's work in this field as a "patchwork" of little solutions, that when stitched together produced an innovative whole.

"She would take those pieces of information, put it all together, and she wanted a pretty thing that would keep you warm and was beautiful, and that's what her mRNA was," Barnathan says. "It was a patchwork quilt of putting together little scientific discoveries here and there—some which had been discovered a long time ago, some that were just published in *Science* the day before. But she would

take that information, put that together, and keep iterating on how to do it."

The nucleoside breakthrough thrust the technology into the fast lane. In recent years it has been deployed widely, though most treatments remain in clinical trials, which can take up to a decade or more to complete. Moderna in 2010 used it to regenerate pluripotent stem cells, and there is growing recognition that mRNA-based techniques could open a new frontier in gene editing that could complement the power of CRISPR-Cas9, the DNA-editing method that was honored with the 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. In 2014, Kariko joined BioNTech cofounders Ugur Sahin and Ozlem Tureci to author a paper hailing mRNA as "a new class of drugs." An article by Weissman and Kariko the next year

The same tack proved useful for COVID-19. Pfizer was transparent with its protocols for clinical trials, releasing them to the public in September. The company shared preliminary results, providing a window into the process and inviting feedback from colleagues. Like other institutions, it used pre-print servers, which publish scientific papers before peer review, to permit promising information (and, Rothenberg concedes, some bad data) to reach scientists faster than the usual publication process.

Collaboration has been vital on the distribution side, too. Pfizer's global president of vaccines is Nanette Cocero Gr'93 WG'94. In her 15 years at Pfizer, she's worked all over the world, formerly leading the emerging markets division of Pfizer's Innovative Health business. She's also the chair of the Vaccine CEO Steering Committee of the International Federation of Pharmaceuticals and Manufacturers Association (IFPMA), which sets industry-wide best practices on access and affordability. IFPMA was an early participant in COVAX, a joint effort by the World Health Organization; the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations; and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Against a virus that knows no borders, global cooperation and coordination are vital.

"The spirit of collaboration that we have seen in this pandemic is something I hadn't witnessed before but that I hope will continue long into the future," Cocero said in an interview with *Wharton Maga-*

*zine*. "As an industry, we committed to work as one team to harness our scientific expertise, our technical skills, and our manufacturing capabilities to do everything in our power to get life-saving breakthroughs into people's hands as quickly as possible."

Like Penn mRNA researcher Drew Weissman [see main story], Rothenberg has taken a public advocacy role. Pfizer launched a series of public-service announcements through the "Science Will Win" campaign, including videos of Rothenberg laying out the vaccine's benefits in layman's terms. His physician's bedside manner evident, Rothenberg says he approached it as though talking to his mother. It's hardly conventional marketing—vaccine contracts come through governments, so Pfizer isn't competing for consumer market share, per se, but rather competing against misinformation—but then this isn't a conventional challenge.

"I think more than for most other products, there really was a need to educate people because this was a new platform, this was a disease that people didn't know about, and we didn't have long-term follow-up on the vaccine or even the disease," Rothenberg says. "We're now learning more about that as we go along," and at each step "educating the public about the disease, about protective measures you can take, and about how the vaccine was developed—and addressing some concerns and misinformation that's out there regarding an mRNA platform."

billed mRNA as “fulfilling the promise of gene therapy,” a technology coming “out of the shadows and into the spotlight,” as Kariko wrote. In 2017, Weissman and his colleague Norbert Pardi, a research assistant professor of medicine, hit a significant milestone in the production of a single-dose mRNA vaccine for Zika virus that was effective in mice and rhesus macaques. Pardi has since turned his attention to other pathogens, including mRNA-based influenza vaccines.

“We had the platform, we just needed to figure out what we wanted to do with it,” Pardi says. “It’s extremely versatile. We can use it for many, many purposes.”

Weissman says that when he first heard of the novel coronavirus causing severe respiratory disease in Wuhan, China, his mind didn’t automatically jump to mRNA. And for all her decades of promoting the therapeutic possibilities of mRNA, Kariko didn’t either. “When I heard about it in February, I thought, ‘Oh, it is in China; it won’t get here,’” she recalls. “But the CEO of BioNTech, Ugur Sahin, he’s a visionary, and he immediately thought, ‘Oh, we need to do something with that.’”

**T**hese days Weissman spends much of his time outside the lab, talking to non-scientists about COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA. In those conversations, he walks a fine line. Yes, the vaccine came together with unprecedented speed—less than a year compared to the more typical timeline of up to a decade. But no, the technology isn’t new. Only the application is.

“People say, ‘I’m afraid of this vaccine; it was developed 10 months ago,’” Weissman observes. But he is quick to answer: “It wasn’t. We developed modified RNA 15 years ago.”

The mRNA technology is ideal for the challenge: quick, safe, and effective. It is produced in a cell-free system, transcribed in vitro from enzymes and a genetic template in a few hours. There was nothing that physically needed to be transported (i.e., cell cultures or sam-

ples) from scientists at the beginning of the outbreak. “A year ago, a message came over the internet and we could learn what is the sequence of the virus,” Kariko said during a Perry World House panel in January. “If it had happened 20 years ago, you had to have physically the sequence in your hands, the viral construct in your hands. But here, the information was sufficient.”

The vaccines produced by Moderna and BioNTech/Pfizer have two components: mRNA, cased in lipid nanoparticles (LNPs). The latter is a delivery device, an extra layer of cloaking that helps localize delivery without sparking an unwanted immune response. The mRNA encodes a protein analogous to the spike proteins that protrude from the SARS-CoV-2 virus and allow it to bind to and infect cells. Dendritic cells take up the mRNA, translate it to proteins that are incorporated into the cell membrane, and present these engineered products to the body to induce an adaptive immune response. The process produces antibodies that remain in the bloodstream so that if a vaccinated individual encounters SARS-CoV-2, a neutralizing response can quickly be mounted. (Both vaccines encode identical spike proteins; their proprietary mRNAs differ slightly in the non-coding regions and utilize different lipids.)

mRNA vaccines have a lot going for them from a safety perspective. Since they don’t contain any of the pathogenic substance—seasonal flu vaccines, for instance, use heat-killed or weakened virus, which is why a small percentage of people can get sick from them—there’s no chance of contracting COVID-19 from the vaccine. The therapeutic mRNA in the vaccine cannot penetrate the nucleus, so it can’t alter the genome. The vaccines produce a relatively robust and durable immune response. Studies as of early 2021 indicate that the vaccine still protects against some of the newly emerged variants of SARS-CoV-2, though they show a “small but significant” reduction in efficacy.

While many companies are pursuing COVID-19 vaccines by different methods, the first two to hit the market utilize mRNA. The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine began its Phase 3 clinical trial last July and received emergency use authorization from the US Food and Drug Administration on December 11. A week later, Moderna got the green light. (Three other vaccines in various states of development and approval, from AstraZeneca/Oxford, Janssen/Johnson & Johnson, and Novavax, utilize other technologies, some of which offer advantages including longer shelf life and less stringent storage temperature requirements.)

“It was with bated breath that we watched the development of this vaccine,” said Paul Offit, the Maurice R. Hilleman Chair of Vaccinology at the Perelman School of Medicine, at the same Perry World House panel. “And both the Pfizer and Moderna products have been remarkably successful, at a level I think no scientist would have predicted a year ago.”

There are some limits to what we know about these COVID-19 vaccines, mostly because we’ve had a limited time to observe their effects. The trials for both versions passed the required safety hurdles, but questions remain about long-term effects for certain population subgroups, like pregnant women. Clinical trials on children are also just getting off the ground. These questions can’t be answered until there’s been more time to study them. The same can be said of the virus itself, which humans have only known for a little more than a year.

Yet the mRNA vaccines have already achieved an impressive track record, with more than 60 million doses dispensed by mid-February. They are 95 percent effective at blocking infection and 100 percent effective in blocking severe infection.

Vaccines, Offit emphasizes, involve a risk/reward calculus. The risks of a virus that has killed millions are known and dire. The risks of the vaccine remain largely theoretical, as a full understanding of rare side-effects in certain populations will simply



take more time to develop. “When you look through all the data, you can’t help but be compelled by the safety and efficacy of this vaccine,” Offit said. “The choice to get a vaccine is an easy one right now.”

**W**hen Weissman and Pardi presented a paper in 2017 on an LNP-encapsulated mRNA vaccine method, recent human history was on their mind. Twice in the previous two decades, coronaviruses had caused respiratory viruses that reached epidemic status: SARS in 2002, MERS in 2012. Taking the long view, it was not a matter of *if* another pandemic would happen, but *when*. While they were focused to some degree on the “renaissance in the field of therapeutic protein delivery” that mRNA offered for conditions ranging from cancer to hereditary genetic diseases, Pardi in particular had a growing understanding of how the mRNA technology could be mobilized in the face of an infectious disease.

Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, that perspective still applies. If the past is any guide, there will be another pandemic sometime in the future caused by a virus like SARS-CoV-2, maybe one deadlier than the current crisis. The technology that informs the COVID-19 vaccines presents a powerful weapon in the arsenal for when that day comes.

“The technology really is limitless,” Weissman says. “There are thousands of diseases, there are hundreds of vaccines that we could make, many of which we’re working on. A lot of it is how to pick, and we pick based on how important the disease is and how doable it is.”

Economic incentives play a role—and that dynamic has now flipped. From a technology for which Kariko once struggled to obtain thousands of dollars in funding, mRNA therapy is now a multi-billion-dollar industry. AstraZeneca, for instance, paid Moderna \$240 million in 2012 for drugs that hadn’t yet been developed. Moderna was valued at \$7 billion when it went public in 2018— with

the NASDAQ stock symbol MRNA—before its first treatment had been approved. Its market capitalization is now north of \$50 billion. BioNTech’s market value has grown from \$3.39 billion at its initial public offering in October 2019 to more than \$26 billion in January 2021.

Kariko’s current research deals primarily with cancer treatments, including a partnership with the pharmaceutical company Sanofi. BioNTech is also exploring treatments for the autoimmune disease multiple sclerosis, which has showed promising early results. Weissman’s lab at Penn has five mRNA vaccines in trials, covering seasonal flu, HIV, and herpes. Weissman has funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to pursue a possible single-injection remedy for sickle cell anemia, an mRNA therapy that would target bone marrow stem cells to rewrite the area of the genome encoding aberrant proteins.

Even within the narrow lane of infectious disease, the scale is mind-boggling. The World Health Organization has identified around 150 infectious zoonotic viruses, those that have jumped from animals to humans. Estimates of the reservoir of potential zoonotic viruses in mammals vary widely, from around 10,000 to half a million. Any one of them may have the potential to mutate and jump from animals to humans like SARS-CoV-2 did.

It’s possible that the next blockbuster use for mRNA is a disease unknown to science. But the technology’s simplicity and scalability offer a plug-and-play platform promising drug development in a fraction of the time required by traditional methods.

“I think governments and policymakers also need to learn the lesson that they should support basic science, and they should support vaccine development prior to a pandemic because it’s too late to develop vaccines in the middle of a pandemic,” Pardi says. “You need to develop these vaccines before a pandemic. We know many of the viruses and other

**The technology offers a plug-and-play platform promising drug development in a fraction of the time required by traditional methods.**

pathogens that can potentially cause an outbreak and can potentially cause the next pandemic, and we have to be ready for those events. And the way to be ready is to develop vaccines prior to those outbreaks. And the messenger RNA technology is really fantastic because if you develop these vaccines, these prototype vaccines, and if you have an outbreak and maybe the virus that causes the outbreak is slightly different from the vaccine strain, you can use the technology to very quickly adjust the vaccines.”

Those challenges lie in the hypothetical future. The pathway to get there with the technology, if history is any guide, is to chip away at problems sequentially. For now, mRNA’s potential is being showcased globally at a critical moment, even as many additional innovations are being tested. The arduous journey from theory to application is a rewarding one for those who have shepherded the technology.

“It’s very important to know that what I’m working on is something useful,” Pardi says. “And now, we see that the work is very useful ... and we hope that we can come up with more RNA therapies in the future and help even more people—not just vaccines but also other kinds of medicines. It’s a really fantastic feeling, and this is what keeps us moving forward.”

“It’s a fantastic feeling,” Weissman adds. “I’m a clinician, so my dream was always to develop something that would make people better. And I think we’ve done that.”

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# Webside Manner

Virtual healthcare by smartphone or computer helps physicians consult with and diagnose patients much more quickly, while offering them convenience and flexibility.

The potential to save lives and improve efficiencies is tremendous. But can uncertain regulations and reimbursements, equity and access disparities, and shaky internet connections be surmounted?

By JoAnn Greco

Early in his career, and all through medical school, C. William Hanson III M’83 maintained an interest in technology, even working in data processing and computer science for a spell. But passing the dim hours between sunset and sunrise on the second floor of a bland University City building crammed with routers and servers was never part of his plan. Yet that’s where he often found himself in the early 2000s: sitting before a bank of video monitors—a sort of night watchman, albeit one with a lifesaving and groundbreaking mission—as the inaugural medical director of one of the country’s first “teleICU” programs. Accompanied by several critical care nurses and a clerical assistant, he’d spend the night watching feeds from cameras placed in 30 intensive care

rooms at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP) and Pennsylvania Hospital. At the same time, he and his crew kept tabs on data coming in from bedside ventilators and EKG machines and blood pressure instruments.

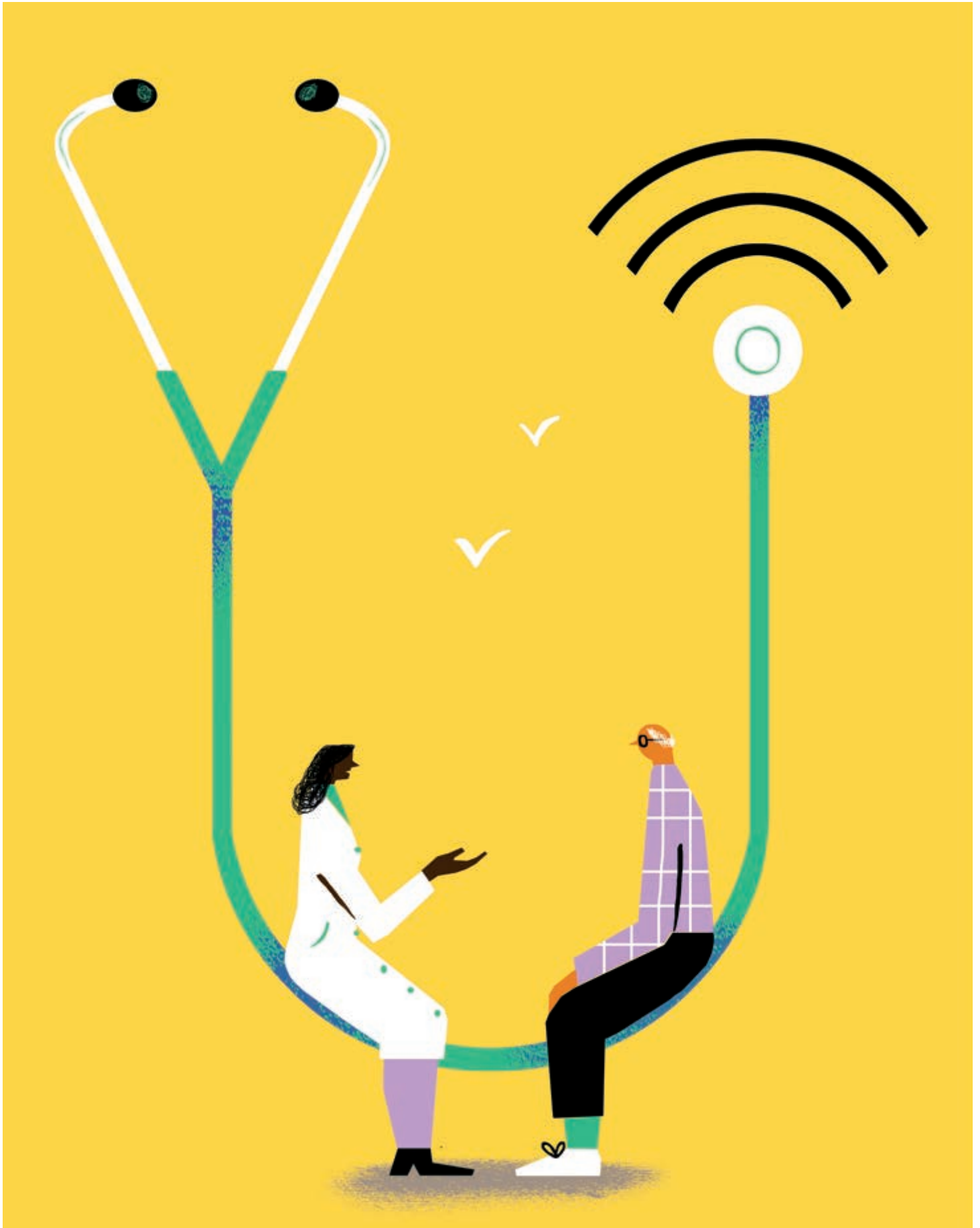
Overnight shifts are usually left to younger fellows and residents rather than attending physicians. Nurses vary in level of experience, and they can’t be everywhere at once. “So, it was for me to be constantly vigilant,” says Hanson, professor of Anesthesiology and Critical Care, Surgery, and Internal Medicine as well as Penn Medicine’s chief medical information officer.

One evening comes to mind. “A patient was getting sicker, just deteriorating, and needed a catheter placed in the neck,” Hanson recalls. “The situation required immediate monitoring and intervention

since the doctors were having some difficulty with the procedure. I remember that they had covered and sedated the patient, but were so caught up in what they were doing that they didn’t realize that the combination of draping and medication was impacting the patient’s ability to breathe. I turned on the mic. *Hey, your patient’s pulse oximeter is showing decreased oxygenation and the respiratory rate is dropping. You need to interrupt the procedure and access the airway—now.*”

**Hanson was practicing** an early version of what today we call connected care, or more familiarly, telemedicine. The concept has been around at least since 1879, when an article in the *Lancet* discussed using the telephone to reduce unnecessary office visits. In 1925, the cover of





*Science and Invention* magazine showed a doctor diagnosing a patient over radio.

Distance monitoring developed more fully during the Mercury space program when NASA's ground control captured medical information from orbiting space capsules. In recent years, telemedicine has been used mainly for doctor-to-doctor communications, and it's proven tremendously effective. New research from the Perelman School of Medicine and Independence Blue Cross, for example, examines data from a period in 2016–17 when primary care physicians transmitted photos over a secure application to a dermatologist instead of referring patients to make an in-person appointment with the specialist. The response time dropped from 84 days—the time frame between referrals, next available office appointment, and diagnosis—to under five hours, with no significant increase in medical costs.

Lauren Eberly is one clinician who's been engaging with local providers in places like Rwanda and Liberia to review patient data and telementor to help support patient care remotely across the world for years. "I've always thought that we should utilize this technology more to interact directly with patients and reach patients with barriers to accessing care," says Eberly, a fellow in cardiovascular medicine and an associate fellow at Penn's Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics with an interest in healthcare disparities and inequity.

"A lot of us have been wanting and waiting to move telehealth to the patient end for a long time. It can be such an asset for patients who find it really hard to get to a clinic and who can feel so much more comfortable in their own homes," she adds. "And for physicians, it offers the chance to see into their environments, to peek in their medicine cabinets or to invite family into the picture for insights on how everyone is doing."

"But there was no impetus until the coronavirus forced everyone to look more closely at how we could make it happen."

## The New House Call

By the end of March 2020, telehealth visits had increased by 154 percent compared to the same week the prior year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—which prompted an outpouring of *the future has arrived* studies and articles. One report last summer from McKinsey & Company predicted that "with the acceleration of consumer and provider adoption of telehealth and extension of telehealth beyond virtual urgent care, up to \$250 billion of current US healthcare spend [compared to \$3 billion pre-COVID] could potentially be virtualized."

Suddenly, a new term entered our lexicon, one which, broadly speaking, encompasses both synchronous care—like that first video call you took from your doctor during the pandemic—and asynchronous, which might involve, say, collection of your blood pressure or glucose levels from that smartwatch you're constantly checking. The common take: think of telemedicine as the new house call.

Hanson remembers his dad, an old-fashioned general practitioner, making old-fashioned visits to patients' homes. "That was the paradigm then—the doctor came to you," he says. "Then we got into a prolonged period where the patient came to the doctor, the service, the test. It didn't matter how far away or close it was. A lot of inconvenience and inefficiency entered the system." Just ask anyone who's taken hours off from work, driven in circles searching for a parking spot, and sat in a waiting room for 45 minutes—after scheduling an appointment weeks in advance.

While the benefits are clear, so are the questions. Among them: access, equity, inclusivity, patient and doctor comfort levels, insurer and regulator resistance, privacy and security concerns, and—more than a year into the pandemic—Zoom fatigue. "The shift isn't going to be easy," says George Demiris, a professor of informatics at the Perelman School of Medicine.

Hanson knows that. Since assuming the role of chief medical information officer

when it was created 11 years ago, he's been steadfastly pulling together the system's disparate telehealth threads, trying to get a handle on the limiting factors while attempting to expand Penn Medicine's efforts beyond doctor-to-doctor interactions and into patients' living rooms. When the pandemic struck, "we had pretty good foundations in place," he says. "Our experience with what we now call the Penn E-lert eICU was extremely helpful during that initial COVID-19 storm when the ICUs were overwhelmed. We were so impressed by the benefits that we now are covering upwards of 350 ICUs using the technology."

But supporting ICUs as they adjusted to an onslaught of patients deathly ill from a little-understood malady was just a part of the work. No matter how much experience they had under their belts, Penn and other healthcare providers had to ramp up hard—and fast. When cities went into lockdown, medical offices shuttered right along with restaurants, gyms, and hair salons. Not only would telehealth reduce patient demand on overwhelmed healthcare facilities, suggested the CDC, it could also expand access to care, reduce disease exposure for staff and patients, and preserve scarce supplies of personal protective equipment. As it adhered to those recommendations, Penn jumped from fewer than 1,000 telemed visits a month to 7,500 *a day*. "We went from a period of 'it's nice to have,' to 'it's absolutely essential,'" Hanson says.

The McKinsey report observed that American consumers' adoption of telehealth skyrocketed—from 11 percent in 2019 to 46 percent—in light of cancelled in-person visits. That growth was seen across all kinds of systems, with managed care consortium Kaiser Permanente reporting that more than 80 percent of its appointments were conducted by phone or video during April 2020 compared to 15 percent prior to the pandemic, and an ever-expanding breed of telehealth-only platforms with internet-ready names like iCliniq, Amwell, and MeMD experiencing similar leaps.



**“It’s like we raced through the awareness phase, almost skipped the adaptation part, and got to the point where this is the expected norm all at once.”**

The largest, oldest, and first publicly traded one in the bunch, Teladoc Health, for example, clocked a 100 percent increase in virtual visits from the first week of March to the first week of April last year. All told, in 2020 the company directly delivered 10.6 million virtual visits, and enabled another 3.9 million visits for the 600 hospitals and health systems that use its proprietary platforms. “If you think about consumer life cycles, it’s like we raced through the awareness phase, almost skipped the adaptation part, and got to the point where this is the expected norm all at once,” says Teladoc CEO Jason Gorevic C’93.

## A Long Time Coming

Teladoc was on an upward trajectory even before the pandemic. Founded as a service offering remote phone consultations in 2002, around the time when Penn was debuting its teleICU, the company grew slowly. “I actually thought it would move a lot faster,” recalls Gorevic, who became its CEO in 2009.

Gorevic was a senior at Penn when the Clinton administration’s ultimately unsuccessful push for healthcare reform inspired him. He didn’t want to be a doctor but wondered if there was another way he could help fix the system. After graduating, he landed at Oxford Health, where he was involved in the design, development, and management of a telephone medical advice service staffed by registered nurses. He then spent five years outside of the healthcare arena, working at early-stage tech companies like mail.com, which he helped take public in 1999.

He’d do the same for Teladoc in 2015, a pivotal year in which the company also embarked on a series of acquisitions that continues to this day and sued the Texas Medical Board for ruling that physicians had to personally meet patients before remotely treating them. (A 2017 bill allowed virtual care without prior in-person contact.) By the end of 2015, Teladoc notched its one millionth virtual visit ever; two years later it was hosting that many visits

*annually*, and in 2019 it reached that number in its first quarter. More than 70 million Americans now have access—primarily via their employers and insurers—to the 7,000 clinicians in the Teladoc Health Medical Group. “We’re not in the business of disrupting healthcare,” Gorevic says. “We’re in the business of transforming it.”

Hanson agrees. “I believe the model that Teladoc offers as a vendor—to help someone with a sore throat, a cough, a headache, reach a doctor quickly—is a modern paradigm that works,” he says. “We’ve spoken with them, but we’ve chosen to stay in-house.” That was achievable because the system already had a clinical informatics team established, as well as the tech chops in place. “But we had to develop things like virtual private rooms, messaging capabilities, and workflow systems on the fly,” he adds.

People like Srinath Adusumalli GM’18 Gr’18 Gr’21, who serves as assistant chief medical information officer in addition to teaching at Penn Medicine in his cardiovascular specialty, were ready to help. “Even two years ago, the tech wasn’t really there,” he says. “Plus there were barriers to an increased uptake when it came to reimbursement and regulation, plus the workflow was not to scale. So we started by figuring out who the patients are, who we should use this with; then, what about the patient preference; then on to making sure that patients and providers get into the room at the same

time; then after the visit, making sure they get all of the required follow-ups and testing” and more. Everything from booking appointments to staying in touch with patients in between visits (mostly by text), to sending and fitting patients with remote monitoring devices where appropriate, had to be worked out.

Adusumalli and the telemed team were also charged with delivering a training program for systemwide clinicians on how to use the video vendor platform BlueJeans and developing an overlay application, Switchboard, that connects the system’s electronic health record (EHR), sends text messages, and handles all of the other logistics. Security concerns governed the preference for proprietary software, adds Mary Elisabeth (Liz) Deleener, director of network telemedicine. “We hold privacy to the highest standard,” she says, “which is why we don’t allow any of the thousands of providers who use the system to go with any tech platform they want. Multiple platforms mean multiple risks.”

## Overcoming Obstacles

There were certainly bumps in the early days of the pandemic—Teladoc, for instance, scrambled to add new doctors to its networks, and some patients struggled with uncharacteristically long wait times for appointments. But for the industry in general, the “incremental improvements over time, not only from the tech standpoint but regarding regulations about state boundaries and insurance reimbursements, definitely helped,” observes Deleener. “The barriers were starting to come down, but COVID opened the floodgates.” The Trump administration quickly expanded access to and coverage of telemedicine—previously limited to virtual check-ins, on-site clinics (such as at a workplace), and rural populations—for Medicare members. Almost as immediately, many state licensing boards began issuing waivers to the restriction that doctors and nurses attend to patients based only in the states in which they practice. The Telehealth

Modernization Act of 2020, a bill now in the Senate, aims to permanently remove many of the regulatory restrictions on telehealth that were temporarily lifted.

Another obstacle that's been chipped away: the reluctance of both doctors and patients to try new things. Hanson remembers that hesitancy surrounding the teleICU. "There was some pushback, along the lines of *Big Brother is watching me*," he says. "But we were able to show that having this extra layer of oversight, or support, depending on how you looked at it, was associated with decreased mortality, fewer complications, lower costs, and shorter ICU stays."

Deleener, a clinical nurse by practice, says "it was brand new when I started, and I remember standing in front of a video monitor and thinking, *How am I going to use this thing to treat my patient?* It's no different than any other kind of change in methods clinicians have gone through—like moving from paper to the EHR and being intimidated. But now I think clinicians understand that virtual visits are meant to supplement treatment where appropriate and best for the patient. If you use it in the right circumstances, and the patients have access, and the technology is high quality, most clinicians find that they are able to do their work much more efficiently."

With familiarity has come comfort. "When it became basically mandatory and the only way to continue seeing patients, clinicians quickly adapted," says Demiris. "It was interesting to hear them say, *Why weren't we using this before?* It was forced compliance, which I think is sometimes the only way to go with these kinds of changes." Now, some Penn providers are even reserving their evenings and weekends to hold telemed clinics in order to free up their weekdays for patients requiring in-person visits.

Penn clinicians aren't alone in their embrace of this new world. More than 75 percent of clinician respondents to a recent survey by the American Medical Association and several other organizations

"said telehealth had enabled them to provide quality COVID-19-related care, acute care, chronic disease management, hospital or emergency department follow-up, care coordination, preventative care, and mental or behavioral health. ... Sixty percent reported that telehealth has improved the health of their patients, while more than 80 percent indicated that telehealth improved the timeliness of care for their patients. A similar percentage said that their patients have reacted favorably to using telehealth for care." In the McKinsey report cited earlier, 57 percent of providers said they viewed telehealth more favorably than they did pre-COVID and 64 percent were more comfortable using it; patient approval was even greater, with 76 percent indicating they were highly or moderately likely to use virtual healthcare going forward and 74 percent of telehealth users describing themselves as highly satisfied. And, says Gorevic, "we even have physicians who come to us because they want to dedicate the entirety of their care to the virtual market."

The scope of what can be done virtually has widened considerably beyond the call-a-pediatrician-at-two-in-the-morning "urgent care" that was the original modus operandi for enterprises like Teladoc. Offering access to practitioners in some 450 subspecialties, from dermatologists to dietitians, Teladoc says that despite the initial pandemic surge, less than 10 percent of its 2020 visits wound up being COVID-related. In some areas such as mental and behavioral health, adds Gorevic, "we've moved more and more towards creating longitudinal relationships rather than episodic ones." A relatively new Teladoc initiative, Primary 360, is another example, as it attempts to fill the void for the roughly 25 percent of Americans (and the 45 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds, according to Kaiser Permanente) who have no primary care physician.

Another demographic that can benefit greatly from virtual healthcare is older

adults and their caretakers, points out Demiris, whose research focuses mainly on designing and evaluating how technology can be used in geriatrics. "When you think about COVID, it was the elders who were told they should stay where they were," he says. "Telemedicine was of great help in bridging the distance and delivering care to people."

Demiris is interested in seeing the technology go much further, though. In partnership with the School of Nursing (where he also teaches) and with funding from the National Institute on Aging and the CDC, he's studying the efficacy of sensors that calculate escalating fall risk by assessing a wearer's gait and balance. Since those living in low-resource neighborhoods with poor housing conditions have twice the risk of falling, the study will consider refinements to the product based on feedback from low-income older adults, their caretakers, and clinicians.

## Easing Access

There's no overlooking that telemedicine's promise is tempered by a persistent digital divide. "There are plenty of older adults who don't own a computer or a smartphone or have internet access or experience with technology," Demiris says. "What happens to them—or people who are hard of hearing, or visually impaired, or who don't speak English? More needs to be done on designing systems that are flexible, intuitive, easily adaptable, and inclusive."

Eberly recently served as lead author of a detailed study looking at the experiences of nearly 150,000 patients who were scheduled for an in-person visit at Penn Medicine during the first two months of the pandemic. Just over half completed a telehealth visit instead (the rest were cancellations or no-shows), split fairly evenly between video and telephone.

The study noted various inequities: older, Asian, and non-English-speaking patients had lower rates of telemedicine use, and older, female, Black, Latinx, and poorer patients in particular were associ-



ated with less video (as opposed to telephone) use. As far as language goes, Eberly says “since we were able to notice very early on that non-English speakers were opting not to participate in remote visits, we started integrating a new program that reaches out right away in most major languages, as well as American sign language. With just one click, the user can choose simultaneous translation.”

To counteract some of the other barriers, Eberly and Adusumalli (who served as senior writer for the study) are part of a team trying to secure funding for a pilot program to develop, distribute, and provide training for Connected Care kits that would include patient-appropriate diagnostic tools or apps (such as a blood pressure cuff, EKG monitor, or glucometer) and an internet- and video-enabled tablet preloaded with access to the myPennMedicine portal.

## Into the Future

As hospital systems and commercial virtual health providers tackle these issues, they are also keeping an eye on the future to learn how they can expand their care options. “We are researching and piloting various virtual peripheral tools,” says Deleener. “But we’re proceeding relatively slowly.”

Gorevic seems antsy, his foot resting lightly on the brake while he waits at the yellow light. “There’s a boom in connected devices and self-diagnostic testing that’s going to expand the scope of what we can do without the consumer having to go to a medical facility,” he says. “We want to be prepared to take advantage of them when they receive approval and come to market.”

It’s tempting to think that devices such as these—which meld artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and algorithm technologies with traditional medical instruments like stethoscopes—“are all wonderful, with no downsides and nothing to complain about,” says Hanson. “That’s not appropriate—but neither is the Luddite philosophy that says this is a poor substi-

tute for an in-person encounter. These are improvements that can significantly affect the overall medical experience for the better. If someone can be seen sooner and diagnosed faster, if we can catch something earlier, if someone doesn’t have to move on to an ER or wait for a specialist, we’re saving lives and saving money.”

In one pre-COVID survey conducted at Penn, researchers found that even low-tech remote interventions can help. They saw a fourfold reduction in rehospitalizations of hip- or knee-replacement patients who enrolled in a program that collected data from wearable step counters and used conversational text messaging to “hover” over them and encourage them to meet milestones for recovery.

There’s a still softer, more holistic side to this, too, one that allows clinicians to gain a richer perspective about their patients’ lives. “Our providers are always telling me, *You know, I got really interesting insights from seeing Mrs. Smith in her kitchen or her bedroom. It was surprisingly organized, or I didn’t realize she had so many steps to climb,*” says Hanson. “We see our patients for such a limited time in our office and we miss what happens where they’re out in their own world. It’s a huge opportunity.”

But clinicians, just like the rest of us, will have to learn to improve their web-side manner. “Healthcare providers have to be trained how to deliver empathy over a video call,” observes Demiris. “We did a course at Penn Nursing on that, remembering to look straight into the camera, expressing agreement by nodding more than you might normally. The in-person element can never be fully conveyed online, but on the other hand there is some literature that says that some distancing can help with patients who feel embarrassed or reluctant to discuss private matters.” The AMA has produced several tutorials on the subject, advising clinicians to, among other things, dress professionally, make sure patients are set up technically, have a backup plan, and create in-depth conversation.

**“Healthcare providers have to be trained how to deliver empathy over a video call.”**

Today’s medical students are, almost by definition, a lot more comfortable with FaceTiming and texting and downloading apps, points out Allison Hare, who is taking a year out of her medical training at Penn to complete a clinical informatics fellowship with Hanson. She’s created a course, offered this spring, that examines the potential of clinical informatics. “The overall goal is to generate interest from the students in the tech-med space,” she says. “Among my peers, there’s a lot of excitement about creating smart health systems. The interpersonal dynamic is a huge component of what so many of us love about practicing medicine. Making technology another way to connect with a patient, to help them create a care plan that they’re comfortable with, is something that I and other medical students feel will be really big going forward.”

For Hanson, who’s had a year now to digest the transformation of an initiative that was “more or less a backwater into something that suddenly became front and center in the delivery of our mission,” the traffic light is already green to drive forward. “I spent at least 10 years trying to build up this capacity in our organization, so I’m not being Pollyannaish when I say that I’m confident that telemedicine has a significant role to play in traditional medical care—and it would have taken a lot longer to get where we’ve gotten without the pandemic forcing our hand. So that’s been a kind of ray of optimism and hope in the midst of what’s been a very challenging time for our providers and our patients.”

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JoAnn Greco is a frequent contributor to the *Gazette*.



# Writing Lives

Middle school memories.  
Meditations on motherhood.  
A prismatic accounting of the self.  
A long life well and furiously lived.







**I**t so happened that in recent months we received copies of new memoirs by four accomplished alumni writers—Jordan Sonnenblick C’91, Courtney Zoffness C’00, Beth Kephart C’82, and Nick Lyons W’53—all remarkable in their own way, and with remarkably different approaches. Their arrival, via the Gazette’s inbox or mailing address, came in close enough succession for coincidence to seem something like fate, so we decided to put them together for this feature.—Ed.

## Coming of Age

The year of being nine.

**N**ot every writer has a life worthy of a full-length memoir—and even fewer would try to make a whole book out of one year in elementary school, assuming they even remembered it.

That’s probably why, when he thought back to his troubles in school, the young adult (YA) fiction writer Jordan Sonnenblick C’91, who is also a former English teacher, initially planned to write a book for adults about how his experiences as the “bad” kid in class helped shape his teaching practices. But after laboring unsuccessfully over the manuscript for much of 2018, he abandoned that approach in favor of a memoir about his fourth-grade year targeted at young audiences—at which point he finished writing in six weeks. “I realized the parts I found the most universal [in the original manuscript] were those about the worst years of my childhood,” Sonnenblick says. “That was when I decided to write a series of memoirs about those particular rough patches.”

*The Boy Who Failed Show and Tell* (Scholastic, 2021) is narrated by “Jordan Sonnenblick” in first-person, present tense, and it reads as smoothly as a novel by Jordan Sonnenblick—though the author insists every word is true.

How does a writer squeeze nearly 200 pages out of a year of being nine?

In recent history, famed Norwegian writer Karl Ove Knausgaard expounded at length about the minutiae of his childhood in *My Struggle*, but some found the exercise tedious at times: “After a few hundred pages of this, I started to grumble: I understood that this was ‘My Struggle,’ but did it also have to be *my* struggle?” wrote James Wood in a mostly favorable 2012 review in the *New Yorker*.

The late Ned Vizzini—author of *It’s Kind of a Funny Story* and other YA novels, who, like Sonnenblick, attended New York’s Stuyvesant High School—in 2000 published *Teen Angst? ... Naaah*, a book of personal essays about specific years in grade school through high school. But those were couched as memories, written in a more mature voice.

Sonnenblick’s memoir, recommended for ages 8–12, is aimed squarely at kids like the narrator. His goal was to show those readers they could make mistakes and still turn out all right. “I was an absolute mess of a kid,” he says. “But I turned out to be a happy adult. I think the message of the book is ultimately hopeful: if I could be OK in the end, anybody can.”

On the second page, Jordan tells us, “I am a nobody. I am the un-legend. ... I’m the second smartest kid in the grade and the second-best singer, thanks to William Feranek, who is the smartest kid in the grade, the shortest boy in the grade, and the kid with the best voice in the school. He has three things. Three! ... I get in trouble at school a lot, but not in a cool way”

Sonnenblick and his publicists have compared the tone and themes to novels like *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*. He says that, while working in Houston for Teach for America after Penn, he taught the latter

book to his students—who related strongly to it, even though it took place in New York and concerned kids whose greatest struggles are dealing with an irritating sibling. “That universal feeling in childhood that you’re nothing,” he says, “and wanting to be something, that just transcends.”

Sonnenblick says that, when he began writing, it was easy to recall his childhood voice—and it shows. Jordan focuses on tiny details that adults forget, elevating them into huge problems, the way kids do.

The book is set in 1978–1979. The Three Mile Island partial nuclear meltdown makes an appearance, as students in Jordan’s class are told to “skootch your tushies into the wall” in a suddenly serious version of the school’s atomic fallout drills. But aside from that, and references to era-appropriate technology like records, the story is a timeless one—although the occasional arguments between Jordan’s overworked parents have a realistic, contemporary edge.

His fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Fisher, becomes his nemesis, singling him out for chastisement for lack of attention and other failings, telling him he’ll never amount to anything. One incident involves a class show-and-tell in which Jordan brings in his beloved pet snake (the only one he tells his worries to) that ends in disaster. Ultimately, believing he has deliberately remained seated during the Pledge of Allegiance (he’s actually experiencing paralyzing anxiety), she hauls him to his feet and slaps him—leading his parents to transfer him to a new school.

At that point, Jordan’s life begins to take a turn for the better. His new school is more diverse, both ethnically and intellectually, and he likes his new teacher, despite her name, *Miss Tuff*. There are some detours along the way, the main one being a possible cancer diagnosis for his father—the occasion for an embarrassing moment when he bursts into tears in front of Miss Tuff in the hallway, blubbering, “How am I supposed to just sit here



and do nothing when my dad has ... C ... c ... *cancer!*” (In this case, memoir is kinder than fiction, and the diagnosis turns out to have been a mistake.)

Sonnenblick grew up in Staten Island, New York, a middle-class Jewish kid who enjoyed summer camp more than school, like his narrator: he was smart but not the smartest kid, and asthmatic. He says he straightened out in high school for two reasons: One, he was goofing around in class one day and a girl he had a crush on turned around and called him on it. The other reason was a little less commonplace—Frank McCourt was his teacher in his senior year of high school. The acclaimed author of *Angela’s Ashes* “later blurbed my first novel,” Sonnenblick says. “He was a major shaping force in my life.”

At Penn, Sonnenblick majored in English but didn’t take writing courses, feeling he’d learned enough from McCourt. But he wrote jokes for the Penn Band, serving as announcer freshman year, and played drums for Mask and Wig. He also says his college English courses, in which he learned to “take literature apart,” were helpful with writing. He was particularly influenced by Paul Fussell’s class on the Age of Pope in his sophomore year, he says.

After Teach for America, Sonnenblick came back East and taught for 10 years at Phillipsburg Middle School in New Jersey. Among his eighth graders was a student named Emily whose brother had cancer. Sonnenblick looked for a book to help her and couldn’t find one. So he wrote his first novel, about a student whose sibling has cancer, called *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie* (Scholastic, 2005). It was translated into 15 languages, with 750,000 copies printed. Since then, Sonnenblick has published six more novels for teens and four books for middle-grade readers. Along the way,



**“That universal feeling in childhood that you’re nothing, and wanting to be something, that just transcends.”**

he and his wife—Melissa Soffa Sonnenblick C’91, whom he met senior year at a show at Irvine auditorium—had two kids, now 19 and 23.

In the new book, there are seeds of hope: Young Jordan discovers his passions. His parents get him drum lessons, and he believes the drums are “magic.” He loves his pet snake, crying when he has to release her offspring into the wild. And he likes to read. There’s even a hint of his future career.

Miss Tuff notices Jordan and his friends reenacting *Saturday Night Live* skits at school, and invites them to write and perform some of their own in front of the class. When one of his jokes (a play on the old Irish Spring soap ad, for “Jewish Spring—it’s kosher for Passover”) gets a laugh, “a feeling flows over me that I have never felt before,” Jordan says. “I feel powerful! My words are controlling my class! I almost feel like I am getting away with something. *This* is what I want to do with my life.” After the show ends in triumph, with Miss Tuff clapping, he adds: “I am a star. No, better than that: I am a *writer*.”

Sonnenblick says that response to the book has been positive so far. Among the first reviews, Carolyn Phelan of *Booklist* wrote, “Some memoirs record parts of the author’s childhood, but few offer such a vivid portrayal of a single year.”

Miss Tuff—to whom the book is dedicated—liked it, too. She “thanked me profusely for bringing back so many happy memories of that time in her life,” he says. “I shouldn’t have worried, because she is still, all these years later, the kindest and most gracious person on earth.” (The teacher who hit him is no longer living.)

The dedication reads: “To Elizabeth Tuff Duffy, the best fourth-grade teacher in the world, for understanding that sometimes the most difficult student is the one who needs love the most.”

What’s next? Sonnenblick says he’s working on the sequel, *The Boy Who Failed Dodgeball*, which takes place in sixth grade “and is mostly about my preadolescent love affair with trouble and danger. There’s also the death of John Lennon, the time my friends and I led a rebellion against our English teacher, several fights, and my first-ever date.”

Sonnenblick adds, “I think it should be a fun read.” —Caren Lissner C’93

## The Messiness of Motherhood

Nature and nurture.

**C**ourtney Zoffness C'00 is a fiction writer. It's the form she studied at Penn and the one that led her through two master's degrees. Fiction even won her £30,000 in an international short story contest, where her competitors included Curtis Sittenfeld and Miranda July.

So the fact that Zoffness's debut book is a memoir-in-essays comes as a curveball, including to the author herself. "I should make clear that this book sort of came together by accident," she says. "I was cheating on my fiction with what I thought were these one-offs. I didn't realize I was actually writing a book."

But now that book is scoring starred reviews (*Publishers Weekly*, *Booklist*, *Book Page*) and appearing on lists of the most anticipated titles of 2021 (*Publishers Weekly* again, *Lit Hub*, *The Millions*).

*Spilt Milk* (McSweeney's Publishing, 2021) opens with anxiety—a familiar state for Zoffness, but one she's just started to glimpse in her five-year-old son. As in most of the book's essays, she glides between time and space with ease, in this case building to a subtle examination of nature versus nurture. Could her son be exhibiting anxiety because of the genes she passed on, because of her parenting, or because, as she writes, "I am both his nature and his nurture"?

Further meditations on motherhood flow throughout the book, as Zoffness writes in lyrical prose about her own complicated mom; her friend's role as a gestational surrogate; and navigating her four-year-old's worshipful obsession with police officers at the same time the Black Lives Matter movement is accelerating. That and the surrogacy essay are the ones she's most proud of in the



**Zoffness isn't interested in coming off as a mom who has all the answers—or even “the most lovable and perfect person.”**

book, she says, because they didn't shy away from complexity.

As she writes in "Boy in Blue," her young son had noticed something while monitoring the NYC precinct station on their street every day:

*Most people we see in handcuffs, he says, have brown skin. He holds my gaze, scans it for something. Opinion. Emotion. He wants to know what this means, how to feel about it.*

*They do, I say, gut seizing. I sustain wide eye contact, an attempt to buy time. I think, This is how the association coalesces: the good/bad with the cop/criminal with the white/brown.*

*I mutter something about how Black and Latinx folks make up less than a third of the population but more than half of those imprisoned. That criminality and law enforcement are complicated, that people with white skin break just as many laws. Everything feels inadequate. Opaque.*

Zoffness isn't interested in coming off as a mom who has all the answers in *Spilt Milk*—or even "the most lovable and perfect person," she says. "I certainly cop to my own shame and my own flaws" in these essays, "and I hope that makes me a more credible narrator."

But what's it like to reveal these pieces of yourself to readers whom you'll never meet? To have them know so much about you? "They actually don't know that much about me," she says. "They certainly know the stories that I've shared, but this is a carefully curated book."

If you've only read *Spilt Milk*, you won't know, for instance, that Zoffness grew up in Westchester, New York, where she used to write her own songs and plays and perform them. You won't read about the thrill she got from binding her own book in fourth grade, the poetry contest she won in high school,



or how she drew editorial cartoons at Penn for the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

You will, however, learn about her first panic attack, suffered in the bathroom of Penn's fine arts building during a Drawing II class. "I held the stall walls as my breath thrashed and the world galloped and the tiles trembled under my feet," she writes. "I sweated through a pair of overalls. My teeth chattered all the way home."

You won't read about the A+ she landed for an advanced fiction workshop her senior year at Penn, though it was a landmark moment in her becoming-a-writer journey. "I literally wept," she says. "I didn't even know you could get an A+."

Zoffness counts herself among the founding members of Kelly Writers House, which formed during her Penn years. She hosted "Speakeasy" open mics there—a series that's still running today. Though she never presented her own work, she knew she'd keep writing after graduation.

At first she became a journalist, working for MTV Networks' internal magazine. When her journalism "kept getting more and more creative," she sent in a rant from her personal journal and was accepted to Johns Hopkins' Writing Seminars. "Once enrolled, I couldn't replicate what I'd done, nor could I explain why it had satisfied," Zoffness remembers in a *Spilt Milk* essay. "I spent the next six months working backward, taking stories apart, sorting out mechanics. The process was deflating. Painful."

But along the way she discovered writers like Lorrie Moore, who showed her that "you're allowed to be really funny and dark and very female in your writing," she says. She also began to find a balance between lyricism and narration. "Early on, my stories were either melodramatic and not beautiful, or like prose poetry where nothing happened," she says.

By the time she'd finished a second master's at the University of Arizona and returned to teach writing classes at Penn, Zoffness's stories were getting published and reaching the final rounds

of prominent fiction competitions. In 2012, she began teaching at Drew University, where she's now the director of creative writing.

The "biggest literary highlight of my life," at least so far, arrived in 2018, when she won the *Sunday Times* Short Story Award—a British competition launched in 2010. Aside from bestowing £30,000, the prize placed her in the company of past winners, including Pulitzer Prize alums Junot Diaz and Anthony Doerr. "I remain the only winner of that prize who didn't already have a published book," she says.

In Zoffness's winning entry, "Peanuts Aren't Nuts," you'll find shades of "Hot for Teacher"—the second essay in *Spilt Milk*. Through different framing, both dig into the experience of being a woman, the object of male desire, and the sometimes-blurry lines between creepy behavior, inappropriate advances, and assault.

Like some of her other work, "Peanuts" teeters between funny and tragic, occasionally hitting both keys at the same time. "I think those are my favorite registers to inhabit in both genres," she says. "I try to be in all those places at once because that, to me, feels like life."

Though she's been tinkering with personal essays for over two decades now, the ones in *Spilt Milk* all come from the past several years. "For the most part, these pieces were written as I became a mother and was seeing all things in new ways," she says. "Something would happen, and I would want to capture it and comment on it and question it. And the essay form really facilitated my ability to do that."

Still, "fiction is my first love," she says. She's working on several fiction projects at the moment while also teaching, book promoting (her spring calendar is stuffed with events, including a—virtual—return to the Kelly Writers House in May) and raising her two young sons. But when COVID-19 invaded her home earlier this year, asymptotically infecting both of her kids, it was the personal narrative to which Zoffness returned once again. An-

other meditation, this time on motherhood in the time of coronavirus.

Here she is, writing in the *New York Times* about the experience. She and her husband are in-home quarantining their asthmatic younger son, in an attempt to stop his virus from ripping through their family. But now he's just called for her:

*"Your highness?" I say, poking my covered face inside. He is upright on his bed, hair mussed. He stares at me. Then he opens his arms wide.*

*There is a flicker of panic in his face, a question mark, that I won't approach. Or maybe I'm projecting; for a blink, I hesitate. I worry he sees this. I am afraid of my own child.*

*I can't promise that I exuded calm in the moment my youngest reached out to me, as much as I wanted to. Tried to, Zoffness confesses a few paragraphs later. But what I could supply, without pretense, was comfort. Love.*

*On his warm bed, my son and I wrapped our arms around each other tight and did not speak a word.*

—Molly Petrilla C'06

## Beheld

On the search for selfhood.

**I**N 2015, better than a decade deep in the thickets of midlife, Beth Kephart C'82 woke up bewitched by a painter who'd been dead for 18 years. But that sentence harbors a double imprecision. The spell may have fallen at midnight, not morning. And *bewitched* is a freighted word to pin on a woman of any age, much less a formidably lettered one now tending an emptied nest. Maybe *entranced* comes closer to the truth, or *captivated*, or *mesmerized*.

Or *possessed*.

"I called her by her apostrophes," Kephart writes of Henriette Wyeth: "N. C. Wyeth's daughter. Andrew Wyeth's sister. Joseph Hergesheimer's extra-marital squeeze. Peter Hurd's wife. F. Scott Fitzgerald's

ald's neighbor. Paul Horgan's friend. Peter's and Ann Carol's and Michael's mother. I called her like this because I called myself the same. Father's daughter. Husband's wife. Son's mother. And only after that, for both of us: artist."

For Kephart—the author of more than 30 books spanning half a dozen genres—Henriette held out a tantalizing possibility: "finding myself inside another self, learning myself through her."

Chased over three thousand miles and how many canvases and letters and through a dozen drafts, Henriette Wyeth would prove elusive. "I'll be the only one I find," Kephart concluded. But by the end of *Wife | Daughter | Self* (Forest Avenue Press, 2021)—in which Henriette rears up in a single essay among many—it is hard to be so sure.

Early in this triptych essay collection Kephart hears her husband say "Happy anniversary" and looks up from the pages of Michael Ondaatje. "Is this how we discover the truth, evolve?" that genre-shattering writer asks. "By gathering together unconfirmed fragments?"

That is the mode of this stealthily provocative work, which begins with Kephart's incarnation as Bill's Wife. "We are not Zelda and F. Scott. We are not Georgia and Alfred, Frieda and Diego," Kephart declares, aiming less to telegraph humility than the deeper intention of this book. Some memoirs—most—recount a life, often an extraordinary one. This one examines life, unnarrowed by the singular article. It is a more intimate and ambitious undertaking.

Bill is a visual artist—a photographer and potter and illustrator whose woodcut-style monochromes grace the pages of this volume. A sinewy Salvadoran whose mother tongue remains foreign to Beth, who sometimes talks and sometimes doesn't, who travels in solitude and might contentedly forsake their



**Some memoirs—most—recount a life, often an extraordinary one. This one examines life, unnarrowed by the singular article.**

suburban home forever tomorrow afternoon, he is painted in this memoir as something akin to the author's photographic negative: a kind of reverse image inextricably tethered to its companion. But Kephart's essays delineate more than the contrasts and congruencies that comprise their marriage—that make up any marriage. It is the transformations that she's after. Holding a vase he has potted, inspecting a photograph he has taken, "I learn more about my own seeing. I change the conversation that I am having not just with him, but with myself."

Kephart can summon visions of herself with vivid detail. Kayaking across a smooth-topped lake on a puff-sky day, the yellow blades of her paddles are dragonfly wings, and her biceps prettily swell. But back at the dock she needs Bill's help to hoist the shell from the water—and it is not her own view of herself that intrigues her, but his. In "the glow of an abjectly dubbed TV show" he turns to look at her and she cannot imagine what he sees. "I kept watching the show; my husband kept watching me. What do you see? I wanted to ask him, but no translation is a good translation," she writes.

"What do you see?" she asks herself again, and here exposes her real plea: "As if my husband might do the work of knowing me."

As *Daughter*, Kephart primarily filters herself through the lens of her aging father. Helping him sell the house where he raised their family. Helping him through the pages of photograph albums: Thanksgiving in the Luray Caverns; a Shenandoah overlook; *Graduation Day, June 1952, University of Pennsylvania*. Helping him through the throes of ICU delirium. The caregiving in these pages is rendered with a tenderness to sting the eyes of any child who has carried a parent's burden, and



it is eloquent with emotional insight. Yet something unsettling lurks in the depths. After untold days at her father's bedside, after miles conducting nostalgic car rides in the Volvo he can no longer drive, after bringing him to see hot-air balloons in colors beyond counting float breeze-ward "like musical notes, like a harmony sung only in soprano," he tells her: *Go*. It is time that she come see him less. He wants time alone: "time," as she interprets it, "to harbor and protect his secrets."

And here the dilemma swings open like a trap door, for if so much of what we are is determined by what we are to others—not just how they see us, but how we understand the selves that emerge from our relationships with them—then who are we in their absence? This is a universal question, but also, in this volume, a gendered one. Because Kephart, like so many women, has woven her life into those of "two men, my husband and my father, who—most of the time in normal circumstances—are most comfortable alone."

So the book's third section, *Self*, is especially compelling. Delving into her adolescence, Kephart exhumes an early attempt at an answer: lying. After a childhood in the thrall of being "good" or even "perfect," lies became a means to conjure up charisma and attract attention. Lying about the intensity of a schoolboy's affection. Lying about how many hours she could keep a Hula-Hoop from falling off her waist. Lying actual fish stories, shifting her sister's catch to her own hook. Lying, eventually, on the page—in poems, in fiction. Yet some lies that are easy to tell turn out to be less easy to live with. She looks in the mirror and discovers that "the lies are changing, the lies are changing you."

Where then does her true self lie? As an undergraduate humiliated by peers ridiculing her poetry, Kephart retreats into "history, calculus, biology, economics, law, accounting." Writing a thesis on the dawn of engineering schools, she

takes stock of herself: "You don't know who you are."

She chases an answer in Henriette Wyeth—a standout essay—but is the self revealed by that journey any more definitive? The revelation of the *Self* section is the impossibility it presents. The harder Kephart presses inward toward herself, the more implacably her father and husband and son and mother come seeping in through the cracks. In every self there is "an infinitude," she concludes.

But are any of them truly and purely our own? That question—which Kephart does not spell out but purposefully skates around, inscribing it into the ice—beats at the heart of this elegant and evocative inquisition. As for answers, those are plural. But surely there is significance that the final essay culminates with Kephart frozen in the doorway of her mother's hospital room, resplendent in precisely the kind of red dress she never wore but which her mother found beautiful, standing still to elongate her mother's pleasure and her own: "not moving, not breaking the illusion of my temporary self." —Trey Popp

## Life's Call

"An aging man still in love with words and a handful of people."

**T**here's a problem with the subtitle of Nick Lyons W'53's memoir, *Fire in the Straw: Notes on Inventing a Life* (Arcade, 2020). It really should be *Lives*, plural.

In his going-on-90 years, Lyons has tried on—no, inhabited fully; he's not one to do things by halves—multiple identities: teacher, editor, entrepreneur, writer, lover of literature (all the more ardent for coming late to his passion), and (lifelong) fishing enthusiast. This brief but packed book finds room for all of them—plus his experiences as a student (fitful, then obsessed), soldier (a

fruitful "buffer zone"), and basketball player (better than he should have been).

As a writer, Lyons is best known for his "piscatorial" essays in books like *The Seasonable Angler* and *A Flyfisher's World*, and readers who only know him from that genre may be unprepared for the breadth and darkness in *Fire in the Straw*. He eloquently describes what fishing has meant to him from childhood: "Always, somehow, wherever I was and whatever I did, I leaned like a magnet to the numinous world of water, hungry for the mystery beneath the surface, the electric jolt when a fish takes the bait, a bobber dips under, the line tugs."

The book begins with a betrayal, when five-year-old Nicki is taken from the "labyrinthine apartment" in the Bronx he shares with two bachelor uncles, his grandparents, and his widowed mother and abandoned at a boarding school. It was a "perfectly decent place," not something "out of Dickens," he writes, but still scarring. It teaches him a general reserve, and leaves him with a permanent distance from and distrust of his mother: "I spoke to her increasingly with more caution and care and began to live more and more in the cave of my own brain."

(Many years later, in a harrowing passage that is one of the book's strongest, he writes of keeping vigil over his mother's dead body while waiting for the medical examiner to show up days after she had died suddenly in her apartment, his ruminations on their relationship interrupted by gruesome details about the growing stench and the difficulty of getting her stiffened corpse out of the bathroom.)

After his mother remarries, to a man named Arthur Lyons who wants to adopt him, Nicki balks at first, but agrees, thinking the alternative is a return to boarding school, "that mausoleum." It's Arthur who will eventually encourage him to go to Wharton, where he makes a few friends and gets to play alongside the great Ernie Beck W'53, but doesn't take away much else. (He calls—unavail-

ingly—on the memory of Beck in a later chapter about the end of his basketball days limping home from a city hoops court.)

Time in the army, stationed at a miserable but Paris-adjacent military outpost in France, turns out to be a pivot point, awakening a powerful desire in him to read and write. Reading Lyons' account of coming alive to literature is to truly understand the concept of a "voracious" reader. "Now I could not study hard enough, reading with the same thought that this was a meal for my brain, something I needed to live." And he goes at writing with the same furious energy, renting a tiny room in Greenwich Village, where he alternates long solitary walks through the city with marathon stints at the typewriter—though little comes of the effort at that point.

But a class at the New School, where a life-changing teacher tells him, "Remember. You're not dumb, Nicki. You're just illiterate," leads him to Bard College, then graduate school at the University of Michigan, and life as a literary man. In "Some Woodstock Summers," a version of which appeared in the *Gazette* ["Alumni Voices," May/June 2020], Lyons describes how, after laboring over fiction, poetry, and academic writing, it was by way of a fishing story that he hit on the prose style—"earthy, nimble, wry, full of wit and worms and celebration"—that would serve him in hundreds of essays and more than 20 books written or edited.

After graduate school, Lyons took a job at Hunter College, where he taught for close to 30 years. He is modest about his professorial career ("My only academic gift—a minor, narrow one—was a flair for taking this literature that I loved, which I knew had transformed my life and might transform other lives, and sharing it enthusiastically with others") and mordant in his description of campus politics and academic snobbery.



## Reading Lyons' account of coming alive to literature is to truly understand the concept of a "voracious" reader.

For a good chunk of that time, to make ends meet, he also worked in book publishing, and eventually became executive editor at a major house. When a tenure committee he chaired at Hunter is arbitrarily overruled, it comes across as a welcome escape hatch to set out on his next endeavor, building on his editorial contacts and experience, as the founder and publisher of what became the Lyons Press.

In financial terms, this seems like jumping from the frying pan—or the tepid-but-slowly-boiling academic pot—into the fire, but Lyons managed to both survive and put out work of which he is justly proud (though chagrined at bigger publishers stealing his authors). He's also bracingly honest about the near-constant financial struggles involved in keeping his business afloat and providing for his family while staying a half-step

ahead of creditors along the way.

Toward the end of the book, there's a lovely idyllic period after Lyons sells the press in which he and his beloved wife, the painter Mari Lyons, are able to concentrate on their respective arts, and to travel "every year to Paris, Madrid, Venice, Florence, and walked everywhere and spent long days in the great museums," and he "managed to fish intently again." It's cut short by her death from cancer, soon after their 58th wedding anniversary. "She had given me life. She had been my life," he writes.

But despite his losses—including the death of one of his four children—life still calls to him. Sorting through Mari's studio, his face is suddenly reflected in some darkened glass: "I see a runneled face, an aging man still in love with words and a handful of people, still with much work to do, important to him. The old fire I found in me, that sustained me, is banked low, but the orange coals are bright."

—John Prendergast





## Calendar

**Annenberg Center**  
[annenbergcenter.org](http://annenbergcenter.org)

### LIVESTREAM EVENTS

May 6: **Ayodele Casel**  
 May 7: **Eddie Palmieri Afro-Caribbean Jazz Quartet**  
 May 27: **Matthew Neenan**

**Arthur Ross Gallery**  
[arthurrossgallery.org](http://arthurrossgallery.org)

### SCHEDULED VISITS

Through Jul 25: **An Inner World:**  
 17th century Dutch Genre Painting

**ICA**  
[icaphila.org](http://icaphila.org)

### SCHEDULED VISITS

Visit the website for  
 exhibit information

**Kelly Writers House**  
[writing.upenn.edu/wh/](http://writing.upenn.edu/wh/)

Visit the website for links to  
 virtual events, archived programs,  
 PoemTalk podcasts, and the  
 PennSound poetry collection.

**Penn Libraries**  
[library.upenn.edu/collections/  
 online-exhibits](http://library.upenn.edu/collections/online-exhibits)

**Remarkable Figures:** Women in  
 the Art of Ashley Bryan

**The Jewish Home:** Dwelling on the  
 Domestic, the Familial, and the  
 Lived-In

**In Sight:** Seeing the People of the  
 Holy Land

**Red Etchings:** Soviet Book  
 Illustrations from the Collection of  
 Monroe Price

**The Midwest Experience:**  
 Ormandy in Minnesota  
*plus dozens more online*

**Penn Museum**  
[penn.museum/collections](http://penn.museum/collections)

### SCHEDULED VISITS

**Living With the Sea:** Charting  
 the Pacific

**Invisible Beauty:** The Art of  
 Archaeological Science  
 Through Jun 6

**Slought**  
[slought.org](http://slought.org)

### SCHEDULED VISITS

Visit website for exhibit information

**World Café Live**  
[worldcafelive.com](http://worldcafelive.com)

### PROVISIONALLY SCHEDULED SHOWS

May 15: **Ben Vaughn Quintet**  
 May 21: **Simrit**

*Woman Reading a Book by a Window,*  
 Gabriel Metsu, ca. 1653–54.

Courtesy The Leiden Collection

# Framing First Ladies

The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery presents presidential wingmates.



**T**wenty-one-year-old Abigail Powers had just begun a full-time teaching career in upstate New York when she met 19-year-old Millard Fillmore, an older student who was barely able to read. Soon they were falling in love, and when Fillmore's family relocated they kept up a correspondence. They eventually reunited and married in 1826, seven years after first meeting and more than two decades before Fillmore became the nation's 13th president. During her time in the White House, Abigail continued her interest in lifelong learning, installing a reference library in the mansion and inviting authors like Charles Dickens and Washington Irving to visit. Less than a month after Fillmore left office, she died of pneumonia.

It's a safe guess that most living Americans haven't retained all that much historical knowledge about Fillmore, and it's an even surer bet that we know less about his wife. The same could be true of women like fashionable Frances Cleveland, the young bride who joined the president while he was already in office and quickly became the Jackie Kennedy of her time. Or Helen Taft, the first presidential wife to ride with her husband during the inaugural parade. Or Caroline Harrison, who established the presidential china collection, initiated a restoration of the mansion, and most significantly, raised funds to create the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine on the condition that it open enrollment to women. Other first ladies, of course, have more decidedly etched themselves into the national memory, starting (almost) from day one when Abigail Adams implored her husband, John, to "remember the ladies."

"This group is filled with bright, ambitious women," says Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, the Class of 1940 Bicentennial Term Associate Professor of History of Art, who curated *Every Eye Is Upon Me: First Ladies of the United States* for the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery (scheduled to be on exhibit through May 23 and available online at [firstladies.org](http://firstladies.org)).



si.edu). The exhibition's title comes from a letter Julia Gardiner Tyler wrote to her mother after she became the first woman to marry a sitting president. Shaw adds, "I think it's fair to say that many of them were smarter than their husbands."

Shaw, whose research and teaching often emphasizes portraiture, says that she "wanted to focus on what made each of these women's lives singular and to examine their portraits for hints at the way she presented herself." As an example, she cites Ida McKinley, who suffered from terrible seizures. "In the miniature watercolor we have on exhibit, she's in profile offering a view of her cropped hair," says the historian. "It's a style she wore on the recommendation of doctors who believed that long, heavy hair constrained the cranial nerves. And so she's owning her disability. She's basically saying, *No, I don't have a huge bun of hair back here. This is how I look.* I was, like, wow, we can really get a sense of her strong attitude through this portrait."

Another of the curator's favorites is a reproduction of a sepia-toned, hand-tinted albumen silver print of Nell Arthur in which she wears a double-strand pearl necklace. Less than a year before her husband, Chester A. Arthur, was elected vice president, she died of pneumonia; after Arthur became president, he kept the photograph on his nightstand at the White House. "Some of these portraits are quite intimate," Shaw observes. "There are so many great love stories and family memories associated with them."

Other standouts are dramatically larger, including a trio of full-length depictions in oil. In one, Lucy Hayes stands regally draped in a crimson velvet gown. "It just blew me away when I saw it installed," says Shaw. "It reminds you of how infrequently we see women portrayed so boldly." The assemblage consists mainly of oils on canvas (including works by a few well-known names like Thomas Sully and Cecilia Beaux), but it also features photographs (including of Mary Todd Lincoln, since no verified painted portraits of her

Ellen Arthur by Charles Milton Bell, reproduction after the original 1870-1880 hand-tinted albumen print; Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis by Boris Chaliapin, 1960-1961.



Michelle Obama by Amy Sherald, 2018. Ida Saxton McKinley by Emily Drayton Taylor, 1899.



survive), watercolor miniatures on ivory, works on paper, and one marble bust. The latter is of Harriet Johnston, one of several women presented who were not spouses of a president; in this case Johnston served as first lady for her bachelor uncle James Buchanan.

The exhibition is the result of Shaw's recent 18-month stint as senior historian and director of research, publications, and scholarly programs for the gallery. In addition to tracking down the 60 or so pieces (depicting 55 women) that appear in

the show, Shaw also produced a companion book. Most of the works were drawn from the collection of the Portrait Gallery, but a dozen are on loan from the White House and several are from other libraries, including the National First Ladies Library in Canton, Ohio. "I was really surprised by how small it is," Shaw says of that last. "It's like a high school library. And when you think it's for *all* of the first ladies—what a contrast to how each president gets his own huge, architect-designed library." Even this small nod to the

significance of first ladies didn't exist, however, until Hillary Clinton helped bring the idea of a First Ladies National Historic Site to fruition. (See [www.firstladies.org/library/objective.aspx](http://www.firstladies.org/library/objective.aspx) for more.)

Incidentally, Clinton was the first presidential spouse to pose, in 2006, for a portrait commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery. (The National Portrait Gallery didn't actually begin commissioning portraits until 1994, after George H. W. Bush left office.) It's not surprising that when such recognition came, it began with Clinton, since no prior presidential spouse had been as involved in the day-to-day activities of the administration. But as one section of the exhibition notes, by the mid-20th century first ladies were clearly expected to advocate for issues they were passionate about.

Via her prolific writing and public speaking, Eleanor Roosevelt, depicted in a multi-portrait in poses that include thinking, writing, knitting, and removing her glasses, was the first presidential spouse to develop her own activist platforms. Later, Betty Ford (portrayed wearing a vivid blue top that echoes her cerulean eyes) gained attention for her advocacy for abortion rights and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, and Nancy Reagan (adorned in her signature red) famously encouraged Americans to "Just Say No" to illegal drugs.

The gig continues to evolve. For instance, the current first lady, Jill Biden, is the first who has chosen to keep her day job (as a college professor). And as we inch closer to a first gentleman (see Douglas Emhoff, our first "second gentleman"), chances are we'll be in for some more changes. "That individual will have to decide how he spends his unpaid labor and uses his bully pulpit, just as the women before him have," says Shaw. "But I think the things *we* focus on will be different. We'll be looking for other clues to his personality in a portrait—since not so much will be conveyed by appearance and clothing and hairstyles."

—JoAnn Greco

# The Building Is the Product

Architecture as marketing.

By JoAnn Greco



In 1932, architects George Howe and William Lescaze placed a very big, very bright neon sign on top of a new headquarters building in downtown Philadelphia. It read, simply: P S F S. With that gesture, advertising and architecture leaped light years into the future. In *Building Brands*, Grace Ong Yan Gr'10, assistant professor

**Building Brands: Corporations and Modern Architecture**

By Grace Ong Yan

Lund Humphries, 208 pages, \$69.99

of interior design at Jefferson University, explores those fields' intersecting trajectories by examining four corporate headquarters erected during successive mid-century decades.



It's a novel approach. If we even consider buildings as branding agents—along with, say, packaging and logos and print ads—our thoughts reflexively turn to store design, or that of restaurants and hotels. “We think of corporate modernism as mute imposing glass slabs,” Ong Yan says. “But each of these buildings actually communicates directly with a wide audience—whether through its sign [PSFS Building], architect [S. C. Johnson & Son Administration Building], form [Lever House], or material [Rohm and Haas Building]. Corporate headquarters are like going to the heart of the matter, to the source of the goods being marketed,” continues Ong Yan, who has worked as an architect in the offices of I. M. Pei, Rafael Viñoly, and Renzo Piano, and in interdisciplinary branding design for Gensler, an architecture, interior design, and planning giant. “They’re a way of branding the company behind the products.”

Her book begins with the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society, whose headquarters was poised on the brink between Deco and Modern. Highlights of its design include a masterful blend of vertical and horizontal banding; a swooping, corner-hugging lower façade; and ... that sign. More akin to a billboard, it's tasked with searing the corporate name into the public's consciousness. When the building's designers argued that initials were the way to go—since they took up less space than the cumbersome name and thus could be much bigger and more legible—they literally created a new brand. “Though ‘PSFS’ would not regularly be used in the [bank's] advertising until almost two decades later,” writes Ong Yan, “the acronym's association with the institution began with the audacious sign.”

In each chapter, Ong Yan sets up each project with a brief look at the building's location in time and space, then profiles the commissioned architects and their design choices. The corporation's history—focusing on its advertising before, during, and after the construction of the

new headquarters—rounds out each case study. Each chapter is illustrated with a plethora of architectural sketches and working drawings, as well as posters, brochures, and other advertising materials.

Ong Yan draws upon such ephemera—everything from a Corning glass advertisement to a *Milwaukee Sentinel* article—to illustrate how Frank Lloyd Wright's involvement in the 1939 headquarters for the wax and polish maker S. C. Johnson was viewed as a noteworthy selling point from the beginning. And, she writes, the Racine, Wisconsin, building was a good thing for Wright too. Coming just as he was emerging from a dry spell, it thrust him firmly into

company became, Ong Yan reproduces a pamphlet emblazoned with a graphic representation of the blob-like conical shapes of the columns.

Next, the 1951 Manhattan headquarters for another consumer products conglomerate, Lever Brothers, introduces the book's first truly modern building. The work of a large corporate design firm, Skidmore Owings and Merrill, its form of a “tower on a slab” would jumpstart a spate of similarly-styled office buildings that would soon frame America's downtown canyons. Swathed in striking green glass and raised on stilts, though, the building offered a little something extra and quickly achieved



the modernist era. Best of all, Ong Yan notes, Wright's democratic ideals found affinity with the company's progressive employment policies. With an open plan, skylit clerestory window, and organic dendriform columns, the building's interior spaces presented a dignified place to work and served as a manifestation of Wright's belief in an architecture that looked toward and embraced nature. To demonstrate how intrinsically linked the building and the

icon status. It needed no signs, no retail, no big-name design firm (although its lead architect Gordon Bunshaft would go on to gain individual acclaim). For Lever House, form most definitely did not follow function.

Ong Yan returns to Philadelphia for her last case study, the Rohm and Haas headquarters. Built in 1964, it offers at once the most subtle, and most direct, form of branding through architecture: the prominent use of a new material (plexi-

glass) invented by the chemical company. Credited to the Philadelphia firm now known as EwingCole, the building's exterior is largely the work of Pietro Belluschi, an Italian-born modernist and dean of architecture at MIT who was brought in as a consultant. Quoting minutes from a 1962 meeting, Ong Yan writes that it was Belluschi who advocated for incorporating plexiglass "in a manner expressive of its inherent qualities and not to duplicate other building materials." Used most extensively in the signature louvered sun screens hung on the upper floor windows, it also popped up consistently inside, from the doorknobs to the lobby chandeliers.

So, where do we go from this "apogee" of a "comprehensively branded environment," as Ong Yan terms it? As the marketing environment becomes increasingly cluttered with attempts to grab everyone's attention, is branding through architecture even relevant anymore? In her conclusion, the author says yes, contending that "[w]ith the growing virtual nature of corporate identities today, architectural branding ... is ever more important precisely because of the material presence of place."

But Ong Yan concedes that as the pandemic continues to make working-from-home an increasingly viable option, the case for the corporate headquarters has weakened. "Everything is being rethought now," she says. "Companies need to be fluid and recognize that even if they don't require as much workspace, they can still use architecture to brand." From the Woolworth and PSFS buildings to today's skyscrapers, many corporate owners have always occupied just a fraction of the towers that carry their names, she points out. And even in the case of, say, Philadelphia's two Comcast buildings, where the media company remains the majority tenant, the corporate name isn't brandished. "And yet, when you drive on I-76," she says, "you *know* who owns the buildings."

# Samaritans and Charlatans

Righteous commerce and holy hype.

By Dennis Drabelle

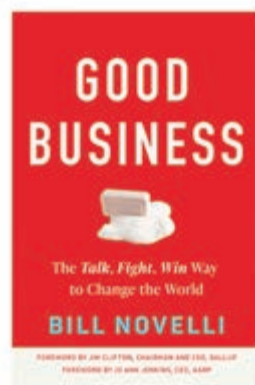
Sixteen years ago, I profiled Bill Novelli C'63 ASC'64 for this magazine ["Gray Is Good," Sep/Oct 2005]. But only now, after reading Novelli's new book, *Good Business*, do I fully appreciate what I took for granted then: his smarts and sanity.

Before writing about Novelli, I had once represented a federal agency on a task force whose chairman, the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, invariably said "antidote"

when he meant "anecdote," as in "Let me illustrate that point with an antidote." I'd also worked for a boss who couldn't get through the weekly staff meeting without humiliating at least one of his underlings.

In contrast, the CEO of AARP (as Novelli then was) spoke impeccable English, treated his subordinates as partners in problem-solving, and made sure that meetings ended with everyone aware of who would do what to achieve the desired goal. *Good Business*—a blend of autobiography and plea for corporations to have and heed a conscience—evokes the Novellian drive, clarity, and respect for coworkers that this reviewer didn't make enough of in 2005.

The accent in the book's title should be on *Good*. Novelli got his first taste of working for public betterment when he joined the Peace Corps in 1970, though not as a volunteer. Novelli's remit was to market the agency, and in doing so he



**Good Business: The Talk, Fight, Win Way to Change the World**  
By Bill Novelli C'63 ASC'64  
Johns Hopkins University Press,  
368 pages, \$27.95

ascertained what worried volunteers the most when their two-year stint ended: not whether they would fit in back home or find a job there, but the possibility that "sand would blow over their tracks and ... all their hard work in the country where they had served would disappear."

Novelli moved on to generate commercials for the reelection of Richard Nixon, and although his outfit was not technically part of the infamous CREEP (Committee to Re-elect the

President), the two entities worked together. A cynic might jump to the conclusion that Novelli has spent most of his subsequent career at nonprofits to atone for that proximity to burglary and cover-ups. But he portrays himself as a lifelong centrist, and before challenging that claim, you might want to consider his takedown of market-worshipping economist Milton Friedman, bombastic novelist Ayn Rand, and other apostles of everyman-for-himself capitalism. "No law mandates that shareholder interests supersede the long-term health of a company," Novelli writes in *Good Business*. Not only that, but "doing well by doing good actually accomplishes what Friedman advocates—*increase profits*."

As cofounder of a public relations firm, Novelli spent several years in his own corner of the private sector; eventually, however, he gravitated back to public but nongovernmental service. After serving



as acting CEO of CARE, a humanitarian organization, he accepted an offer to lead a campaign against tobacco ads pitched to kids. His account of this effort makes for the longest episode in the book, and Novelli is rightfully proud of the successes, including the euthanasia of Joe Camel, who embodied the alleged coolness of smoking in ads for Camel cigarettes. It took years—and Novelli had moved on to lead AARP by the time it was over—but the campaign paved the way for the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009 and contributed heavily to the transformation of smoking from a sign of sophistication to a mark of pitiable addiction.

Now approaching 80, Novelli teaches at Georgetown, where he started Business for Impact, a university center devoted to the principle that building “social and environmental strategies into [a firm’s] core business can improve financial performance as well as create greater good for ... society as a whole.”

Michael F. Schein C’99 shares Novelli’s disdain for Ayn Rand. In his *Hype Handbook*, Schein confesses to an early infatuation with Rand’s didactic novel *The Fountainhead*, followed by a grownup realization of “how little her characters resemble any human beings I have actually encountered.”

Yet Schein does not shy away from citing charlatans and rogues as exemplars of effective hype. Take Madame Helena Blavatsky, who got rich and famous by inventing a religion called Theosophy and pushing it in a bible of her own making, the exotic-sounding *Isis Unveiled*. You might want to do something similar, Schein suggests—not necessarily founding a cult but selling your

product or service by creating a matrix for it. As an example, he cites the sports promoter Mark McCormack, who did well for himself by whipping up “a comprehensive system of player rankings” for the game of golf.

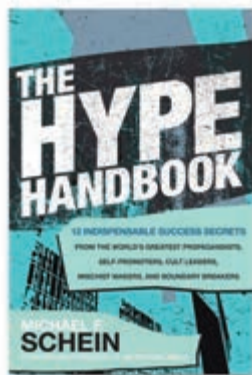
Many of the case studies Schein presents seem to rely more on clever sloganeering or strategic grandstanding than on “hype,” with its connotation of exaggeration to the point of overkill. While reading the book, I kept thinking of a song from the musical *Gypsy*, in which young Gypsy Rose Lee’s fellow stripteasers teach her that “You Gotta Get a Gimmick” to differentiate yourself and succeed. That’s essentially the Schein approach.

Toward the end of his book, Schein acknowledges that its appeal may be strongest for a certain type of reader. It’s pretty easy, he writes, for those who “grow up with the right educational opportunities, right background, right interests, right personality, and right race ... to make [their] way in the world using tried-and-true channels.” For those not so blessed, however, “creating a life full of opportunity requires more unconventional methods,” many of which fall into the category of hype.

That’s refreshingly honest, and it should be noted that not even the well-favored Bill Novelli has been above resorting to

hype-ish tactics. When Novelli and his anti-smoking colleagues decided to go after chewing tobacco, too, they restyled it “spit tobacco.”

Dennis Drabelle G’66 L’69 has a new book coming out this fall: *The Power of Scenery: Frederick Law Olmsted and the Origin of National Parks*.



**The Hype Handbook: 12 Indispensable Success Secrets from the World’s Greatest Propagandists, Self-Promoters, Cult Leaders, Mischief Makers, and Boundary Breakers**  
By Michael F. Schein C’99  
McGraw Hill Education,  
224 pages, \$28

## Briefly Noted



**RAVENOUS: Otto Warburg, the Nazis, and the Search for the Cancer-Diet Connection**  
by Sam Apple, faculty  
(Liveright, 2021, \$28.95.)  
Nobel laureate Otto Warburg, a biochemist and homosexual

of Jewish descent, ranked among the most despised figures in Nazi Germany. Longtime Penn writing instructor Sam Apple recounts how Warburg survived the Nazis and how his breakthrough cancer research was rediscovered in the 21st century—including via a number of key findings made at Penn.



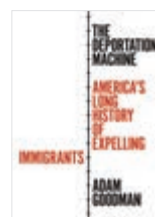
**THE COMPANY DAUGHTERS: A Heart-Wrenching Colonial Love Story**  
by Samantha Rajaram G’97  
(Bookouture, 2020, \$10.99.)  
This historical novel set in 17th-century Amsterdam

and Batavia (modern day Jakarta) tells the story of two women forced by circumstance to sign with the East India Company as Company Daughters. Sailing to a colonial Dutch outpost, they become the brides of male settlers and fall in love—with each other.



**PHILADELPHIA BUILDS: Essays on Architecture**  
by Michael J. Lewis G’85 Gr’89 (Paul Dry Books, 2021, \$24.95.) Architecture critic Michael J. Lewis explains why Philadelphia has produced so many extraordinary architects, including Louis Kahn, Frank Furness, and Robert Venturi. This collection of 22 of his best essays examines topics ranging from Kahn’s little-known project to design a memorial for Vladimir Lenin to a profile of Willis G. Hale, cult hero of Philadelphia hipsters.

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**THE DEPORTATION MACHINE: America’s Long History of Expelling Immigrants**  
by Adam Goodman G’15 (Princeton University Press, 2020, \$29.95.) Goodman, an assistant professor of Latin

American studies at University of Illinois at Chicago, examines how federal, state, and local officials have targeted various groups for expulsion, from Chinese and Europeans at the turn of the 20th century to Central Americans and Muslims today, in this sweeping and engaging narrative.

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Tessa Thompson, center right, films a scene with Aja Naomi King during the making of *Sylvie's Love*, produced by Gabrielle Glore W'91.

## Old Story, New Lens

Years in the making, this producer's film centers around Black elegance and romance in the 1950s and 1960s.



From canary yellow hats to office bar carts, *Mad Men* and *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* resurrect 1950s and '60s America piece by piece. But Gabrielle Glore W'91, who considers herself a fan of both shows, kept noticing what they left out.

"When you look at the Black characters in a show like *Mad Men*, for the most part they're assistants and elevator operators," she says. She saw the same thing in other contemporary fare set midcentury: Black characters were either consigned to shallow roles or framed through their trauma.

Where, she wondered, were the Black men and women who filled her own family albums? "Myself and many others I know can look through old photo albums and see this everyday elegance of the Black community and their Black families," Glore says. People who launched their own companies. Who attended prep schools and became debutantes. Who fell in love and cooked big family dinners and grooved to their favorite jazz albums.

And then one day she found them: inside the script of an old-fashioned love story, set in the late 1950s and early 1960s, that centered around Black characters who dwelled in those smaller, everyday moments. Glore became a producer on that movie, *Sylvie's Love*, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in early 2020 and launched on Amazon Prime Video last December—thanks to nearly a decade of her persistence.

With enthusiastic reviews from critics and viewers, the film marks her farthest-reaching—and, she says, most personally fulfilling—project to date. But narrative film producer is a role Glore has been inching toward ever since her days at Penn.

As her friend Jennifer Baltimore C'89, whom Glore met her second day on campus, notes, "It's interesting to see her on this journey of becoming a storyteller, because I think she's always been one to study relationships. She's fascinated by others' stories. That's what makes her such a good friend. Sometimes she remembers my life better than I remember it."

Glore came to Wharton from St. Louis in the late 1980s, already planning on a career in marketing. She didn't realize that most of her classes would focus on finance and accounting instead. "I had to be much more proactive around my job search," she says, "because at that time, entertainment companies weren't coming to Wharton for recruiting."

She turned down an offer from Procter & Gamble and went to HBO, where she helped promote the network's newest series and original films. After moving through multiple marketing roles within parent company Time Warner, Glore launched her own branding, marketing, and production LLC in 2002.

HBO became Glore's first client, and through that work, she met the founder of a fledgling film festival called Urbanworld. She's been involved ever since, and now

**"It's about looking at the Black experience through the lens of humanity as opposed to adversity."**



serves as the festival's director and head of programming. This year marks her 17th with Urbanworld, which is scheduled to run from September 29 to October 3.

"We're looking for the most interesting stories from around the world that are going to educate our audiences and move them in some way," Glore says. "It's also an opportunity to lean into content creators of color, women, and the LGBTQ community, so that all of these traditionally marginalized communities have an opportunity and a platform to share their work."

Working so close to films and the people who make them revved up Glore's own interest in storytelling. She executive produced a family dramedy called *Dirty Laundry* in 2006 and invested in ESPN Films' documentary *Through the Fire*. But the game-changing moment came in 2012, when she chatted with a writer/director who was debuting his first narrative film at a festival in Atlanta.

After Eugene Ashe outlined his vision for his next project—which became *Sylvie's Love*—Glore quickly signed on to help him make it happen. Neither of them expected it would take more than seven years to start filming.

"There were a lot of *no*'s along the way," Glore recalls. The same thing that made *Sylvie's Love* special—that it was a story not seen before—was also the reason that studios and financiers were wary. "No one really wanted to take a chance," she says. "A lot of what we heard was, 'There's no comparable film we can equate this to.'"

But she kept pressing forward. "It was Gabrielle who gave me the strength to persevere and believe that it would happen," Ashe says. "Just having a comrade in arms meant so much to me, and she was that comrade."

In the end, Glore had a hand in everything from script development to casting suggestions to landing financing. She was also on set for the entire filming process and ran point with Amazon when they acquired *Sylvie's Love* at Sundance.

"I call Gabrielle 'The Velvet Hammer,'" Ashe says. "She always tells me the truth, in a diplomatic way, which I appreciate." (Her friend Baltimore compares Glore to a cheetah: "She moves quietly but swiftly.")

Written and directed by Ashe, with a cast led by Tessa Thompson and Nnamdi Asomugha, *Sylvie's Love* follows the on-again/off-again love story between a jazz saxo-

phonist and a young woman whose dad owns a record shop. The soundtrack is transportive, the costumes and sets rival any episode of *Mad Men* or *Maisel*—but the cast is almost entirely made up of Black and Latinx actors.

“It’s about looking at the Black experience through the lens of humanity as opposed to adversity,” Glore says. “We wanted to center on these Black characters in a way that is aspirational and didn’t have any of the story rooted in trauma.”

The character of Sylvie (played by Thompson) felt familiar. Glore saw her late mother’s sense of style, elegance, and love of music in her. She also saw shades of her own career ambition. “Pursuing what I want to pursue and going after it is very much a part of who I am,” she says.

She hopes *Sylvie’s Love* marks a pivot in her career, with a focus entirely on storytelling—especially stories about the experience of Black women and other people of color. “That is very much a thread through everything that I do,” she says. In the next few years, she hopes to shift all her work to creative producing.

At the moment, Glore is already working on several new films and TV series. They range from animated to unscripted, narrative and episodic anthology, “but they all fit that architecture of: *How do we do something different? How do we see the unseen?*” she says.

“It feels like an exciting new chapter,” Glore adds, “and I’m all about new chapters.”

—Molly Petrilla C’06

## Finding Refuge in the Newsroom

This Pakistani American journalist adds “complexity and nuance” to a wide range of issues around the globe.



**A**mna Nawaz C’01 learned from her parents to “do what you love and throw yourself into it,” she says. “I always thought that would be law because I love to write, I love to argue, and I love learning new things. I thought every new case would offer that.”

But after graduating from Penn, she needed a break from school and accepted a year-long fellowship at ABC News’ *Nightline*. A few weeks later,

she was covering the 9/11 attacks. “That changed everything,” she says. “It changed our country. It changed our world. It certainly changed how I was perceived as a Muslim woman in this country. It really just pulled the rug out from under me.”

Amid rising Islamophobia, she felt scrutinized for “being a visible brown woman in America.” On the subway, she nervously turned her grandmother’s prayer ring around to conceal its Arabic script.

The newsroom became a refuge—“a place that was just in search of the facts,” she says. “And that kind of focus, I think, really grounded me.”

It still does. At difficult moments, she recalls the advice of one mentor, the late political reporter and analyst Cokie Roberts, to just “duck and file.” After stints with ABC News and NBC News, Nawaz is now a senior national correspondent and primary substitute anchor for *PBS NewsHour*, as well as host of *NewsHour*’s arts and culture series, *Beyond the Canvas*.

The PBS gigs capitalize on Nawaz’s diverse interests and ability to segue from charm to toughness. She can quiz singer Reba McEntire about the country music scene, then grill Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan about his mass imprisonment of journalists and political opponents. In December 2019, she became the first Muslim American to moderate a presidential debate, memorably asking Democratic contender Andrew Yang to react to being the only candidate of color left in the race. “I don’t see anything incongruent with being able to one day have a tough interview with an administration official, and then the next day turning around and interviewing Yo-Yo Ma or talking to Ray Allen about his NBA career,” Nawaz says.

At a *Fortune* magazine conference, Nawaz brought rigor and scarcely concealed outrage to her interrogation of former US secretary of homeland security Kirstjen Nielsen about the Trump ad-



## **“There are no good guys or bad guys, or good countries or bad countries.”**

ministration’s policy of family separation at the southern border. The encounter reflected Nawaz’s passion for stories about women and children, and especially immigrants and refugees.

Journalism is the family business, though Nawaz never expected to enter it. Her father, a Pakistani broadcast journalist, came to the US in the early 1970s to attend Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism and stayed. Her mother joined him soon afterwards, abandoning her medical studies in Pakistan and devoting herself to raising three daughters.

“We had kind of a dual upbringing,” Nawaz, the middle child, recalls. School years were spent in Alexandria, Virginia, and summers in Pakistan, “to see our family and learn our language and our culture and our history,” she says. “We grew up straddling both worlds and cultures, something a lot of first-generation kids can relate to.”

At Penn, she captained the field hockey team; majored in politics, philosophy, and economics; and spent the spring semester of her junior year studying abroad at the University of Zimbabwe. Researching her senior thesis on “the viability of democracy in fledgling states,” she saw, in the country’s descent into violence, “what happens when a democracy crumbles.”

After *Nightline*, Nawaz completed a master’s degree in comparative politics at the London School of Economics. Meanwhile, though, “the US war in Iraq started,” she says,

“and I immediately felt this pull, like I had to be there.”

She knew she had found her path. Still, she sometimes felt isolated. “One of the things I’ve always felt I was lacking was other women who look like me, and I think that’s been a challenge,” she says, “and it continues to be a challenge for a number of women of color. Because oftentimes you look ahead at the job that you know you can do, and that you think you need a chance to do, but there hasn’t been someone like you in the role.”

After working as a producer and investigative journalist, Nawaz became the Islamabad bureau chief and correspondent for NBC, reporting on Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the region. Her background, including her fluency in Urdu, “absolutely was an advantage,” she says. She covered the US raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound and the Taliban attempt to murder Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for female education who later won the Nobel Peace Prize.

During her first pregnancy, Nawaz relocated to New York City. She covered foreign affairs, oversaw a new multiplatform project aimed at the Asian American and Pacific

Islander communities, and shared an Emmy Award for an NBC News Special, *Inside the Obama White House*.

In 2015, ABC offered her a job anchoring its livestream coverage. “It was a chance to help build something,” she says. She joined the network seven months pregnant with her second child, and after a few weeks of maternity leave, plunged into anchoring election coverage and other breaking news. (Her husband, Paul Werdel, a fellow journalist and former product director for the *New York Times*, has since become the primary caregiver for their two daughters.)

At ABC, Nawaz reported a documentary from the Texas Panhandle, *Roberts County: A Year in the Most Pro-Trump Town*, and hosted a podcast, *Uncomfortable*, about issues dividing the country. When Donald Trump won the presidency, she says, “we knew it was going to challenge us, and I think that definitely proved to be true.” Forcing the press to confront the spread of misinformation and polarizing political rhetoric, she adds, “pushed us to be better.”

In 2018, she accepted an offer by *PBS NewsHour* to combine anchoring and reporting, along with “thoughtful storytelling and space for thoughtful conversations”—what she calls “the dream job for a journalist.”

For *NewsHour*, Nawaz followed the journey of an asylum-seeking three-year-old Mexican girl, Sofi, separated from her grandmother at the Texas border. They were reunited seven weeks later in

California, where Sofi’s mother also was waiting. “I lived every minute of that story,” Nawaz says. For another piece, she traveled to Brazil to report on the welcome extended to Venezuelan refugees fleeing economic and political chaos.

“There are no good guys or bad guys, or good countries or bad countries,” Nawaz says. “It’s our job to add the complexity and nuance. And the Brazil trip hit perfectly at the intersection of the things that I always try to guide my journalism with: you give a voice to the people who don’t have any power, and then you hold the people who do have power to account.”

During the pandemic, Nawaz has covered the experience of frontline medical workers and vaccine rollouts in Virginia and West Virginia, and hosted a podcast series, *America, Interrupted: The Longest Year*. She reported from the US Capitol grounds during the January 6 riots and, in March, traveled to the southern border to explore the plight of unaccompanied children and other migrants.

With the ongoing public health and economic crises and America’s attempt to redefine its place in the world, “there are so many problems that need urgent addressing,” says Nawaz, now back in her childhood hometown of Alexandria. “Anyone who thought things would slow down after the Trump administration was sorely mistaken. If anything, there are more stories that we need to be telling right now.” —Julia M. Klein



## Outside Track

How a retired intellectual property lawyer became NYC’s transportation commissioner.

**“H**ave I flunked retirement?” jokes Henry “Hank” Gutman C’72, responding to recent New York media grumbings about a 70-year-old “outsider” with “little experience” in the field taking over a critical city agency.

Postponing retirement pleasures like sailing and playing tennis with his family in Nantucket, Gutman in February

was named commissioner of New York City’s Department of Transportation, a \$1.3 billion annual operation with about 6,000 employees. A surprising choice for such a big job, he was tapped by a longtime admirer, Mayor Bill de Blasio, to replace Polly Trottenberg, who’d left to join the Biden administration as Pete Buttigieg’s deputy in the US Department of Transportation.

Now Gutman’s daunting mission—and he only has until the end of the year (and the mayor’s term) to shape it—is to help make the city’s streets safer and more accommodating for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users. His city-rethinking “to-dos” include adding multiple miles of new bike lanes and boulevards and 20,000 secure slots

to lock up those two-wheelers. He’s also being pressed to speed up bus service with exclusive lanes and aims to alter the way goods move through the city. And he’s pushing to make permanent the new car-free outdoor gathering zones and sidewalk dining locations that popped up during the pandemic.

“As an unexpected byproduct of the pandemic, we’ve discovered alternate uses of the streets with long-term benefits and can tap into stimulus money and infrastructure money to help us maximize our efforts,” Gutman says. “Thousands of people have



transitioned to healthy, pollution-free bike commuting. So now we have to make their rides safer with better planned lanes and give them more places to secure their bikes.

“Why should Rome and Paris be the only cities praised for outdoor dining with great food? New York now has that, too. And why can’t we also adopt the European model for moving goods around town in small pedal carts and electric vehicles that don’t clog up the streets, pollute, and disrupt life in the poorer neighborhoods?”

Gutman is an unlikely choice to solve these urban concerns. He made his mark as the chief intellectual property lawyer at the firm Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, tussling over the ownership rights to “microprocessor design, software programs, network interface cards, monoclonal antibodies, stereo isomers” and more in litigation that took him before the US Supreme Court and around the world. But he believes the problem-solving and storytelling skills he learned in his past career will help guide him in his new one. “I think it helps to be an outsider,” he says. “I’m someone who will ask the hard questions and not take the bureaucratic *‘That’s the way we’ve always done it’* as an answer.”

It’s an ideology and second calling that’s been gnawing at him since his freshman year at Penn, when he participated in a College Hall sit-in to protest the gentrification of University City. “It was an altogether tumultuous time of so-

cial and political upheaval,” he recalls. “The Vietnam War was a major concern, of course. I thought I would go to law school”—Harvard as it turned out—“and then use that knowledge to be a public service do-gooder, maybe get into politics. But then I got seduced by Wall Street, fell like Zelig into all these amazing opportunities with clients like CBS, Intel, Verizon, Apple, and Lotus. Now I’ve finally come full circle ... with my first paid government job since I was a law clerk in 1976.”

For 20 years, Gutman, a longtime Brooklyn Heights resident, has been voluntarily beating the drum, doing pro bono legal work and otherwise helping clear the way for the redevelopment of the borough’s downtrodden waterfront into the now impressive 85-acre Brooklyn Bridge Park, designed by the globally renowned Michael Van Valkenburgh (who also designed Penn Park). That’s where then-New York City Councilman de Blasio first saw Gutman in action, confidently unsnarling bureaucratic red tape, chasing off corrupt players, and working the room at neighborhood meetings.

Seven years ago, de Blasio began asking Gutman to take on more civic-minded roles—first as the unpaid chair for the nonprofit development corporation steering the Brooklyn Navy Yard, a gig Gutman still retains. More recently, he participated on the mayor’s expert panel helping to salvage the crumbling Brooklyn–Queens Expressway. That’s where Gut-

man started to understand the machinations at the Department of Transportation.

Those de Blasio appointments came during an auspicious time for Gutman, who was already into overtime at his law firm despite a mandate that partners retire at age 62. (He managed to squeeze out an extra two years to complete a huge global fraud case.) “There’s one good thing about a forced exit in your early sixties—you still have the energy and enthusiasm to start another career,” he says, adding that his 100-year-old father, William Gutman ChE’42 “has wisely counseled: ‘The angel of death has a hard time hitting a moving target.’ I think those are words to live by. We all know stories of people who retire and do nothing and end up dying soon after. So why go there, when there’s always stuff to do?”

Under his leadership and thanks to a “great CEO and management team,” the Brooklyn Navy Yard has doubled occupancy under Gutman’s watch to “bring quality manufacturing and creative jobs to the city when people said it was impossible,” he says. More than 500 tenants, collectively representing about 12,000 jobs, are spread over 300-plus acres, and businesses range “from the largest rooftop soil-based farm in North America to the leading maker of body armor for the military ... [to] the oldest continually operating spirits distiller in New York,” Gutman says. He also touted an on-site STEAM high school

“where kids study in what looks like a place of business and then get summer jobs at actual businesses in the yard,” as well as a graduate film school program that collaborates with Steiner Studios, one of the earliest tenants of the Navy Yard and the largest film and TV production facility outside of Los Angeles.

At his appointment, de Blasio hailed Gutman as “a visionary leader whose decades of civic life in this city have made New York City fairer, better, and more accessible.”

As for the ticking clock of accomplishing his goals before a new mayor is elected in November and sworn in on January 1, Gutman is thriving on it.

“Some might view this job as a lame-duck appointment. I see it as having a tight timetable for getting things done,” he says. “Some things we can get done in a year, others we’ll get underway or will be long-range projects where we have a good plan in place. So whoever the next mayor is will hopefully find it attractive and finish the work. A sense of urgency can be beneficial if you use it properly. At this stage of my career, it gives me the opportunity to make a contribution—hopefully a lasting contribution.

“There’s a whole different kind of satisfaction in helping to create things that make a difference in people’s lives and things that will outlive you. They won’t remember you, but it doesn’t matter. The satisfaction you get is from the doing.”

—Jonathan Takiff C’68

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# PennAlumni Regional Clubs

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For a full listing of clubs and contacts, please go to:

[www.alumni.upenn.edu/clubs](http://www.alumni.upenn.edu/clubs)

For questions, please call:  
(215) 898-7811 or

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

“We’ve recently authored a book together, ... published just a few days before we welcomed our ninth child. ... All eight siblings love the new baby and don’t yet care much about the book.”

—Kent Lasnoski C’05 and Caitlin Lukens Lasnoski C’05

## 1948

**Hon. Harold Berger EE’48 L’51** has been honored by a Special Philadelphia City Council Resolution recognizing his public service and contributions to academia and the national legal community. Harold is a World War II US Army veteran and serves Penn in multiple roles, including on the board of advisors of the School of Engineering and Applied Science, as chair of the Friends of Biddle Law Library, and as a member of the executive board of Penn Law’s Center of Ethics and the Rule of Law. In addition, he was the recipient of the inaugural Lifetime Commitment Award of Penn Law. Among items recognized were his service as chair of the National Committee on the Federal and State Judiciary of the Federal Bar Association, his service as a judge of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, and his receipt of the Special Service Award of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges. Harold also served as chair of the aerospace law committees of the American, Federal, and Inter-American Bar Associations, chaired the International Conferences on Global Interdependence at Princeton University and was elected to the International Academy of Astronautics in Paris. A cofounder and managing partner emeritus of Berger & Montague, Harold is a recipient of a National Achievement Award

from *Marquis Who’s Who in America* and *Marquis Who’s Who in American Law*. He is a lifetime honorary trustee of the Federation of Jewish Charities of Philadelphia and the recipient of the Children of the American Dream Award of HIAS for leadership in the civic, legal, academic, and Jewish communities.

## 1952

**John S. Thomas CE’52** has authored a new book, *Astronomical Weather*. From the book’s description: “Curtailling carbon fuels will cause economic chaos across the world as we have no economic alternative. *Astronomical Weather* informs the reader of the character of this global warming threat; and assesses its validity.”

## 1953

**Dr. Monroe E. Trout C’53 M’57** has been awarded the Winston Churchill Leadership Medal by America’s National Churchill Museum, which is located on the Westminster College campus in Fulton, Missouri. He was recognized for his community service and longtime contributions in the areas of education, healthcare, and the arts. Monroe is chair emeritus of American Healthcare Systems and Cytoc Incorporated, now known as Hologic.

## We Want to Hear from You

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

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

Please note, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gazette offices are closed until further notice and we cannot retrieve daily postal mail. Email is preferred.

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

**Celebrate Your Virtual Reunion, May 14–16, 2021!**

## 1961

**H. Robert Fiebach W’61 L’64** has been honored by the Pennsylvania Bar Association with an annual award in his name. Formerly known as the Promotion of Women in the Law Award, the Robert Fiebach Promotion of Women in the Law Award recognizes Pennsylvania law firms, solo practitioners, and other organizations providing legal services that have instituted programs that help women lawyers continue to advance their careers. Robert is senior counsel at the law firm Cozen O’Connor, in its commercial litigation department; and he is also cochair of the firm’s legal malpractice group.

## 1962

**Leon Lewis G’62** is editor of a new book of essays by filmmakers and film scholars discussing cinematographer John Alton. Published by McFarland, the book is titled *John Alton: Essays on the Cinematographer’s Art and Craft*.

**Steve Stovall W’62 ASC’63** writes, “Welcome to Denver. Not! Moved here after 24 years on a ranch in southwestern Colorado to be nearer to kids and better medical facilities. Not so sure what a good idea that was. Back in the country, I always knew where my keys were: in whatever car truck or tractor I drove last. Welcome to the big, bad city. Night before inauguration, thieves stole all four wheels off of our ancient BMW. Same night someone broke into the building where our mailboxes reside and stole all the mail from all of us in the complex.



Can't wait until we find a small suburban home outside the big, bad city. At least I don't have to plow snow. And leave the keys in the tractor."

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## 1966

**Phyllis Maletzky Fisher CW'66** and **Helene Hollander Lepkowski CW'66 GRP'78** write, "Dear 1966 Class Women: Don't miss our Women's Cross-Country Brunch Zoom Event, scheduled for Thursday, May 13, at 2 p.m. ET/11 a.m. PT. Our featured speaker will be classmate **Laurie Burrows Grad CW'66**. We'll also have time to connect and chat in smaller groups as well. Though we will miss being together in person, we look forward to this virtual event!" For questions and registration, email [phyllis.fisher@gmail.com](mailto:phyllis.fisher@gmail.com) or [helenelep@aol.com](mailto:helenelep@aol.com).

## 1967

**Robert Constable SW'67 GrS'70** writes, "I have been remiss in not keeping Alumni Notes current with my publications and other developments since my doctoral graduation. However, I owe a real debt to the School of Social Work and to my mentors, professors Lloyd Setleis, Harold Lewis, and Mollie Utkoff, for helping me to develop as a practitioner and scholar. Their insights and understanding of social work can be found in whatever I have done. I began an academic career in 1970 and retired as a full professor at Loyola University Chicago in 1997 to go back to my first love, which was social work practice with couples and families in my own private practice and in an inner-city parish. This direct contact with people's needs fed my further writing. I have written at different times about social work values and ethics, social work education, school social work, and social work with families. One of my books, *School Social Work: Practice, Policy and Research*, chronicles the development of school social work as a specialization through eight different editions from 1982 through 2015. Another, *Social Work with Couples and Families: Content and Process*, outlines what is the content and process of social work practice, with a heavy integration of the many developments in the parallel field of fam-

ily therapy. It is in its second edition (2015). From 1990 to 1997, during the collapse of the Soviet Union and its aftermath and while I was a professor at Loyola, I provided consultation to Polish university schools of social work, and spent much time developing and codirecting a social work program at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania. We (30 volunteers from universities and practice settings over the world) developed collegially what is now a flourishing bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level program, with a focus on social development and development of practice, appropriate for that part of the world with its history. It was the first social work university program in Lithuania."

**Bruce Rocheleau C'67** has published *Industry First: The Attack on Conservation by Trump's Interior Department*. The book is available on Amazon Kindle. Bruce is a professor emeritus in the department of public administration at Northern Illinois University and now resides in Delray Beach, Florida.

## 1969

**David Barudin W'69** writes, "I'm excited to announce that *Alternate Routes: Coming of Age in America's Largest Generation* is now available as a Kindle e-book and paperback. It's a true-life picaresque tale of a couple's adventures traveling America's squiggly, black, alternate routes on roadmaps. Set in the mid-1970s during a time of social upheaval, the trip is a treasure hunt of surprises and unexpected encounters with colorful characters. ... Readers of any generation will likely recognize in this true-life novel some of their own formative dilemmas and experiences." *Alternate Routes* is David's debut novel. He lives in Southwest Virginia with his wife.

**Dr. Richard W. Cohen C'69**, a psychiatrist practicing in Philadelphia, has been appointed to the editorial advisory board of *Clinical Psychiatric News*.

**Celebrate Your Virtual Reunion, May 14–16, 2021!**

## 1971

**Dennis E. Gale GCP'71** has written a new book, *The Misunderstood History of Gentrification: People, Planning, Preservation, and*

## Events



### ALUMNI WEEKEND

Alumni Weekend 2021 will not be held as an in-person event but will be reconceived with virtual programs held May 14–15, 2021. Please visit: [www.alumni.upenn.edu/alumniweekend](http://www.alumni.upenn.edu/alumniweekend).

### VIRTUAL

In light of ongoing global health concerns, visit [www.alumni.upenn.edu/clubs](http://www.alumni.upenn.edu/clubs) to find the latest information on Regional Club events in your area. And be sure to check out [www.alumni.upenn.edu/govirtual](http://www.alumni.upenn.edu/govirtual) for an abundance of virtual events and digital resources available for alumni.

*Urban Renewal, 1915–2020*. From the publisher's press materials: "[The book] provides a recontextualization of American gentrification, planning, and policymaking. He argues that gentrification must be understood as an urban phenomenon with historical roots in the very early 20th century."

**Dr. Arnold Meshkov C'71 M'75 GM'79** writes: "Disappointed that my 50th Reunion is postponed in person, but necessary. I am still practicing cardiology in Abington, Pennsylvania, after leaving an academic position at Temple University School of Medicine in 2015. Norma and I have now been married 50 years (after our wedding, we moved into the Grad Towers on campus—smallest apartment ever but it was great for us). We have two children, Adam and Karen, and four grandchildren, all of whom live near us. I think so often of my nine years on the Penn campus (college, med school, internship) as the true best and formative years of my life. I've had four best friends for over 50 years now, all classmates: **Ira Garr C'71**, **Dr. Bruce Kehr C'71**, **Dr. John Cullen C'71 V'75**, and **Rand Agins C'71 L'74**. I am proud to say that I have written a book that will be published in April, called *Chasing the Widowmaker: The History of the Heart Attack Pandemic*, telling the

story of the amazing advances that have occurred in the last 70 years to prevent the heart attack. Looking forward to an in-person reunion next year! Wishing good health to all.”

**Rev. Dr. Bill Nelsen Gr’71**, who has a PhD in political science, was recently selected by AARP Minnesota as one of its “50 Over 50” honorees for 2020. He writes, “I was recognized as one of the 50 most accomplished and inspirational Minnesotans (and one of 10 in the nonprofit sector), all noted for ‘courageous, compassionate, and selfless acts of service by Minnesotans over the age of 50.’ AARP noted my leading Scholarship America to become the nation’s largest private-sector scholarship organization and my entering parish ministry at the age of 66. I currently serve as interim pastor of First Lutheran Church in St. Peter, Minnesota.”

## 1972

**Deborah Willig CW’72** has been selected as a 2021 ‘Women Leaders in the Law’ by legal media publisher ALM. Deborah is managing partner of Willig, Williams & Davidson, a labor, employment, workers’ compensation, and family law firm in Philadelphia.

## 1973

**Dr. Jay Rabinowitz C’73** has retired after 40 years as founder and senior pediatrician at Parker Pediatrics and Adolescents in Parker, Colorado, where his associates include **Amy Hourigan Gensler EAS’89** and **Brian Stanga C’98**. He recently received the Career Teaching Scholar Award from the University of Colorado Medical School, where he is a clinical professor in pediatrics. During his career, he served as the first president of the medical staff at Parker Adventist Hospital, was a speaker at American Academy of Pediatrics annual meetings on the topic of integrating mental health into one’s medical practice, and wrote *Cute Kidbits: Funny Conversations Kids Share with Their Pediatrician*.

**Anita Sama CW’73** writes, “Looking well past a year some of us would like just to forget, a few of us got together one March afternoon for a Zoom chat to begin thinking about our 50th

Reunion in 2023. **Larry Finkelstein W’73 L’76**, **Wendella Fox CW’73 L’76**, **Bill Keller C’73**, **Mark Maas C’73**, **Robert Drumheller C’73**, and I traded memories of Penn days, past reunions, and wistful thoughts of those we’d like to see again. Lots of time to plan and perhaps to meet virtually for some class events in advance. We’re eager to be in touch with anyone who has 50th Reunion ideas and organizational energy. (Quite a few more have already signed on since to pitch in.) Most importantly—we need help finding contact info for those others in the Class of 1973 for whom Penn has no email address. Please send alumni news, and contact details, etc., to [reunion@ben.dev.upenn.edu](mailto:reunion@ben.dev.upenn.edu), and stay alert for plans as they unfold.”

## 1974

**Dennis J. Curran C’74 G’74** has been named Professor of the Practice in the political science department of Tufts University. Dennis was a Boston trial attorney for 23 years and later served as a Massachusetts trial judge for another 15 years.

**Walter E. Jospin W’74** was honored on April 13 at the Anti-Defamation League’s 2021 Virtual Jurisprudence Luncheon with the Elbert P. Tuttle Jurisprudence Award. The award is given in recognition of individuals in the legal community who best exemplify Judge Tuttle and ADL’s steadfast mission to secure justice and fair treatment for all people. Walter is a partner with the law firm Finch McCranie LLP.

**Brian B. Lambert PT’74** writes, “I retired recently after 44 years in private PT practice in the Springville, Utah, area. My practice emphasis was orthopaedic/sports medicine rehab. During my career, I built a successful private practice with three clinics and two hospital contracts.”

**Elizabeth Titus GEd’74 WG’82** see **Dominika Jaworski Turkcan SPP’12**.

**Brian T. Watson C’74 GAr’78** has written a new book, *Headed into the Abyss: The Story of Our Time and the Future We’ll Face*. He writes, “After graduation, I practiced architecture professionally until 2002, and then became a full-time journalist, writing columns for the *Salem News* in Massachusetts until 2017, when I stopped to write a book. I completed it in two

years. ... My book describes the current state of 10 forces—capitalism, technology, the internet, politics, media, education, human nature, the environment, population, and transportation—and how they are driving society in predominantly negative ways. I describe the salient features of each and, most important, how powerful and critically interconnected they are.”

## 1975

**Burton Nadler C’75 GEd’78**, the former director of the University of Rochester’s Career and Internship Center, has written a new book, *iCan Succeed Handbook: The Simple and Viable Guide to Internships, Careers, Admissions, Networking and More*. From the book’s press materials: “iCAN is an acronym that identifies techniques and requisite optimism related to internships, careers, admissions, networking, and related achievements. ... The guide includes time-tested steps and overviews how clearly expressed field, function, and firm-focused goals can be attained using comprehensive yet simple personalized strategies.”

**Jay Rogoff C’75** has authored a new book of poetry, *Loving in Truth: New and Selected Poems*. He writes, “With over 100 poems from my six previous books and over 40 new poems, it stands as a strong summation of my career as a poet.”

**Mark Silow C’75**, chair of the law firm Fox Rothschild LLP, has been named to the Power 100 list by the *Philadelphia Business Journal*. This list recognizes leaders who have helped expand and strengthen the Greater Philadelphia business community. Mark is noted for having “negotiated the only significant deal completed by a large Philadelphia law firm [in 2020] ... acquiring 21-lawyer San Francisco-based Greene Radovsky Maloney Share & Hennigh LLP,” which nearly doubled Fox’s presence in the Bay Area.

## 1977

**Bruce Curley C’77** writes, “Based on my 40 years of professional and volunteer American civil defense work, I’ve founded a company, Tactical Civil Defense, to prepare parents and grandparents to teach their children and



grandchildren survival skills. I am on the advisory board of the National Museum of Civil Defense, and I'm also the volunteer vice president of the American Civil Defense Association, where I've written civil defense articles for the *Journal of Civil Defense*. My latest article is 'Children and Civil Defense.' Please go to TAC-DA.org to read these articles and for free, practical, family-oriented preparation material to deal with natural and man-made disasters."

**Robert J. Walczel W'77** has been appointed director of sales for the northeastern US at SunMed, a manufacturer of respiratory and anesthesia devices. Robert writes, "SunMed has an advantage servicing the hospital and outpatient centers due to their North American-based production centers. With the recent acquisition on Westmed Incorporated, SunMed is now over \$180 million in sales. My responsibilities now include managing a sales force of six full-time reps and several distributors while also training and in-servicing medical staff and clinicians."

## 1978

**John A. Chatzky C'78** see **Phil Stekl C'81**.

## 1979

**Michael S. Hoffman W'79** writes, "I'm pleased to check in. Since 2018, when I moved from Cambridge to southern Vermont, I've embarked on my 'cherry' career. I've established HeartStorm Farmstead, an agritourism destination: 11 acres of beautiful meadows, farmland, and trails. Ahead of COVID, it's been an ideal setting to be free and host family and friends. We have 50-plus animals (alpacas, goats, hens, dogs, and cats). Southern Vermont is both American rural and culturally eclectic. My two sons are well established in their careers in health and with their families. I have a share in a grandson and granddaughter. After a career of travel and business, this is a healthy contrast of peace and hosting. Come find your way to [www.heartstormvt.com](http://www.heartstormvt.com)."

**Marc Platt C'79**, a producer whose projects include Broadway's *Wicked* ["Passion Plays," May/June 2016] and the movies *La La Land* and *Legally Blonde*, has been honored by the

Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore at the 2021 Baltimore Jewish Hall of Fame. According to the press release, this event "honors exceptional Jewish Baltimoreans who have made significant contributions to the local and global community through their life's work in fields such as science, education, business, medicine, law, politics, community service, sports and the arts."

## 1980

**Robert S. Greenvald C'80**, who is known professionally as Rabbi Reuven Greenvald, has been appointed director of the program for first-year rabbinical and cantorial students at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He writes, "First-year students begin their five-year graduate program in Jerusalem, and so I will be relocating to Israel in June, where I'm looking forward to connecting with many Penn peers who are already living over there."

**Dr. William B. Neusidl EE'80** was recently honored for 35 years of membership in the American Academy of Ophthalmology. He holds three patents and invented the Neusidl Corneal Inserter for corneal transplants. He writes, "My career has been a great combination of bioengineering and ophthalmology."

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## 1981

**David Cohen C'81 EAS'81 G'81 L'86 WG'86** has produced a film, *Space MOMs*, released by 1091 Pictures and Random Media. He writes, "*Space MOMs* is inspired by the true story of normal working moms who played crucial roles as engineers on India's 2014 Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM). It is an inspiring story of underfunded underdogs fighting to overcome impossible odds. The movie is now available on Amazon, iTunes, Google Play, Xbox, VUDU, and FandangoNOW, as well as on several cable and satellite systems."

**Niloofer M. Haeri C'81 Gr'91**, a professor of anthropology and program chair of Islamic studies at Johns Hopkins University, has written *Say What Your Longing Heart Desires: Women, Prayer, and Poetry in Iran*.

**Joe Jablonski C'81 L'87** has written his first novel, *A Thing with Feathers*, under the nom de plume J. John Nordstrom. From the book's press materials: "[The book] tells the tale of two troubled lawyers who find redemption in soulmate love, after they meet, quite unexpectedly, as coworkers in a county law library. ... Underlying the events in the novel is the fictive, and quintessentially romantic, dream of a modern-day Edgar Allan Poe meeting a modern-day Emily Dickinson in the 21st century. ... Based on a true story, this novel is fictional autobiography." Joe writes, "The University of Pennsylvania is mentioned numerous times throughout the novel."

**Kyra McGrath L'81** writes, "I'm joining the board of PRX (Public Radio Exchange), a media company specializing in audio journalism and storytelling, which distributes iconic public radio programs like *This American Life* and *The World* and also produces a growing list of podcasts including the Radiotopia network. Each month PRX reaches over 28.5 million listeners and generates in excess of 70 million downloads."

**Roy A. Seliber W'81** has written a memoir, *The Race Is Long: Life Fragments from Dorchester to Whidbey Island*. He writes, "*The Race is Long* follows my path from a working-class Dorchester neighborhood of triple-deckers in Boston all the way to Seattle's Whidbey Island. On the journey, I learned that life has been one long endurance effort. My decades of running have provided me much fulfillment, as well as the delayed gratification necessary to get me through everything from completing marathons to surviving lymphoma and the current COVID-19 pandemic."

**Phil Stekl C'81** writes, "Although my competitive rowing career did not begin or end at the University of Pennsylvania, it did benefit there in ways that only that program would yield. The singularity came courtesy of the man who led it: Theodore 'Ted' Allison Nash. As far as I am concerned, Ted and the other young men joining ranks to be guided by him are what made Penn 'Penn' to me. My strong hunch is that I am not alone in making that claim. Forty-plus years after my last race under Ted's leadership, I can still hear his commanding voice and feel the charge of passion that he infused into the sport and, in turn, into my

soul. I have recently published a book, titled *The Wondrous Sport of Rowing*, with a foreword by fellow Penn grad and cherished teammate **John A. Chatzky C'78**, which, although not a direct account of the man, was born of what he emitted: commitment, excellence, community. For me, no other person has embodied these messages—with as much energy and caring resolve—as has Ted A. Nash.”

## 1982

**Jody Ellant W'82 L'87** writes, “After nine months in self-imposed pandemic sequester, mostly here at my home in Connecticut, I was surprised and delighted to have been selected by *Managing IP Magazine* as one of the 50 most influential people in intellectual property in 2020. As a reformed complex real estate transaction attorney, it is truly a hoot to be honored for work that I stumbled into defending our family business.”

## 1983

**Shaun Eli Breidbart W'83** is a stand-up comedian and head of Liberty Comedy, an independent producer of stand-up comedy shows for theaters. He writes, “My corporate title is actually comedian, executive director, and chief chocolate officer. I toured in New Zealand, Australia, and Thailand just before the pandemic, bringing the number of continents on which I've headlined comedy shows to five. My plans to increase that number have been delayed by the pandemic, but I hope to resume international touring soon.”

## 1985

**Dr. Kieran Cody C'85**, an orthopedic shoulder specialist at Bucks County Orthopedic Specialists, was granted approval from Pennsylvania's Department of Health for a new shoulder replacement protocol. According to the press release, it is “the first and only total shoulder replacement program approved for an ambulatory surgery center in eastern Pennsylvania.”

**Stephen M. Cohen C'85** and his mother, Brenda H. Cohen, have published the second

edition of their book, *America's Scientific Treasures: A Travel Companion*. From the press materials: “[The book] takes readers to museums, homes of famous scientists, geological formations, botanical gardens, zoos, observatories... [It] contextualizes the historical significance and uniqueness of each site, in addition to providing information like addresses, telephone numbers, hours of entry, handicapped accessibility, dining, transportation, and the corresponding website. ... Whether you are planning a road trip or looking to engage with history from the comfort of your couch, [this book] is sure to satisfy your craving for scientific and technologic history.”

*Celebrate Your Virtual Reunion, May 14–16, 2021!*

## 1986

**Dr. David Biro C'86** has written his first novel, *This Magnificent Dappled Sea*. His first work was a book of nonfiction titled *The Language of Pain: Finding Words, Compassion, and Relief* [“Arts,” Mar|Apr 2011].

**John K. Fiorillo W'86** has been elected president of the Chester County Bar Association for 2021. John is an attorney at Unruh Turner Burke & Frees and serves as cochair of the firm's litigation department and chair of its creditor's rights department.

## 1988

**David Dwares L'88** and **David Perry L'89** write, “We are pleased to announce our cofounding of Stratagem Advisors LLC in Washington, DC. Stratagem is a boutique consultancy helping established and start-up property and casualty insurance companies, policyholders, law firms, agents/brokers, and other businesses that touch professional liability insurance mitigate risks and seize opportunities. Our website is [www.stratagemadvisorsllc.com](http://www.stratagemadvisorsllc.com).”

**Jeff Serota W'88** see **Jillian Wynn Pohly C'91**.

## 1989

**Dr. Sandra E. Brooks GM'89** has been promoted to executive vice president and

chief community health equity officer at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. She also serves in the university's health system as the chief medical officer of Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals.

**Dr. Amy Hourigan Gensler EAS'89** see **Dr. Jay Rabinowitz C'73**.

**Scott Krase W'89** see **Jillian Wynn Pohly C'91**.

**Lisa Niver C'89** is a finalist for a National Arts and Entertainment Journalism Award in the Book Critic category. She writes, “Cross your fingers that I am a winner! In February, I gave my first keynote speech (virtual) at a travel conference. I would love to connect with fellow alums in the book space as I am working on my memoir. More about my writing, awards and videos with over 1.3M views can be found on my website, [lisaniver.com/one-page](http://lisaniver.com/one-page).”

**David Perry L'89** see **David Dwares L'88**.

**Wendy Prager C'89** see **Jillian Wynn Pohly C'91**.

## 1990

**David J. Glass C'90**, a family law attorney and former therapist, writes, “I've been re-elected managing partner of my firm Enenstein Pham & Glass. My book, *Moving On*, about reinventing yourself in the first year after divorce [“Briefly Noted,” Jul|Aug 2019], remains a bestseller on Amazon.com.”

**Nihal Mehta Gr'90** writes, “My book *Quantum Computing: Program Next-Gen Computers for Hard, Real-World Applications* was just published and is available on Amazon and at fine bookstores around the world. Using a lot of visuals (over 450), I introduce an intuitive way to think about quantum computers and explain why they can solve problems in minutes that would take supercomputers thousands of years. For those who like math, there's lots of that too, but it's grounded in pictures to drive home the terrific beauty of this new way of computing.”

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## 1991

**Jillian Wynn Pohly C'91** is the development and marketing coordinator at one2one



USA Foundation, which was founded by **Scott Krase W'89**, and is where **Wendy Prager C'89** serves as executive director [see story on our website, dated Feb. 22, 2019]. Jillian sends this update about the foundation: "When COVID-19 hit in March 2020, one2one was perfectly poised to quickly create COVID-19 relief programs in communities across the country. One of the largest programs created came to us from fellow alumnus **Jeff Serota W'88** and his wife Peir, who wanted to help small businesses in their Manhattan Beach, California, community. Working together, the Serotas and one2one raised \$600,000 to award 47 grants to local businesses. Two other notable COVID-19 related programs that were created benefited individuals and businesses in Philadelphia: the Philadelphia Restaurant Workers COVID-19 Relief Program awarded over \$180,000 to 320 Philadelphia restaurant workers; and the Stay Strong Philly Program awarded over \$100,000 to small business owners in Philadelphia. Another program that was funded, the National Domestic Violence COVID-19 Relief Program, was created for the sole purpose of helping women experiencing domestic violence, which has increased sharply due to the pandemic."

## 1992

**Meera Joshi C'92 L'95** has been appointed by President Joe Biden Hon'13 as deputy administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, an agency of the US Department of Transportation. Prior to this appointment, Meera had been a principal and New York general manager at Sam Schwartz, a transportation consultancy firm founded by **Sam Schwartz GCE'70** ["Street Fighter," Mar/Apr 2016].

## 1993

**Stacy Sukov Blackman W'93** writes, "In early 2020, I launched Stryke Club, a new skin-care line aimed at teen boys. My partner is a pediatric dermatologist, and with her guidance we formulated a line of novel, effective, and clean formulas targeting boys' unique needs. A year later we rolled out in over 1,000 Target

stores and on Target.com. I am so grateful for the early support of many Penn friends and encourage all of my classmates to try it out!"

**Edward Palm Gr'93** writes, "I am pleased to report that Getty Images has accepted 100 photos I took in Vietnam while serving as an enlisted Marine with the Corps' Combined Action Program. As I reported before, I have published a book about the Combined Action Program and my life and times, including my experiences as a graduate student at Penn, called *Tiger Papa Three: Memoir of a Combined Action Marine in Vietnam*."

## 1994

**Menno Ellis W'94** writes, "I am currently executive vice president of healthcare solutions at 3D Systems. This is my third role with the company, and I am having a blast running an incredible portfolio of 3D printing and other leading technical solutions for the largest pure-play company in this space."

## 1995

**Debra Pickett C'95 Gr'95** writes, "I've launched a new publication delivering business news and analysis to law firm leaders. As publisher of DeNovo ([www.denovobrief.com](http://www.denovobrief.com)), I'm revisiting the role of columnist that I began at the *Daily Pennsylvanian* and continued at the *Chicago Sun-Times* from 2001 to 2005. I also continue to manage Page 2 Communications, the legal industry communications strategy firm I founded in 2010 after holding media consulting roles on multiple political campaigns. Both DeNovo and Page 2 are headquartered in Chicago, and I divide my time between my offices there and the Wisconsin home I share with my husband and three sons."

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## 1996

**Dawn Lanzaletti Luedtke C'96**, assistant attorney general for the state of Maryland, has been appointed to the board of trustees for Olney Theatre Center, an official state theatre of Maryland founded in 1938.

## ALUMNI IN BUSINESS

A guide for Gazette readers seeking to reach

For advertising information, email Linda Caiazzo at [caiazzo@upenn.edu](mailto:caiazzo@upenn.edu) or call 215-898-6811.

## 1998

**Rachel Ehrlich Albanese C'98 L'01**, a partner at the law firm DLA Piper, has received the New York Institute of Credit Women's Division's Executive of the Year Award. From the press release: "[The award] recognizes excellence and entrepreneurial spirit. ... [It] is presented to individuals who have achieved noteworthy success in business and have assisted other women in achieving their goals."

**Anthony B. Crawford EAS'98 L'12** has been promoted to partner at Reed Smith LLP in the firm's New York office. As a member of the insurance recovery group, Anthony's practice focuses on assisting policyholders in complex insurance coverage issues, and his clients range from banking and financial institutions to religious organizations.

**Dr. Brian Stanga C'98** see **Dr. Jay Rabinowitz C'73**.

## 1999

**Marlyn Attie W'99** writes, "In 2013 I started and now currently run the nonprofit Espacio Creativo ('Creative Space') and the program Enlaces ('Ties'). Enlaces is a program focused on transforming the lives of children and adolescents in at-risk situations through the practice of contemporary dance, strengthening their academic development, and offering psychosocial and family support. The participants develop abilities that allow them to improve their quality of life, grow as agents of change, and become responsible citizens. If you would like to learn more or support the organization, go to [fec.org.pa/en/enlaces/](http://fec.org.pa/en/enlaces/) or follow us on Instagram: @espaciocreativo and @programaenlaces. I look forward to hearing from fellow alumni and friends who are working with dance/education or vulnerable youth. Contact me at [info@fec.org.pa](mailto:info@fec.org.pa) or [marlyn@attie.com](mailto:marlyn@attie.com) or via my website, [marlynattie.com/en](http://marlynattie.com/en)."

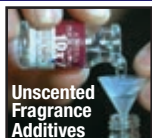
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**Victor Deupi Gr'99** has published two new books. He writes, "The first, *Cuban Modernism: Mid-Century Architecture 1940–1970*, was written with Jean-Francois Lejeune. It focuses on the modernist generation of architects active from 1940–1970 and extols the national and international importance of their architecture and urban works. Seen comprehensively, the projects embody the challenges that the architectural avant-garde faced to combine Cuban identity and traditions with the tenets of international modernism, in a country that was late to embrace modernity, increasingly under American influence, and on the verge of revolutionary changes. This book in particular highlights a great deal of work from the Penn Architecture professor and chair Mario Romaniach, whose drawings, projects, and photographs are in Penn's Architecture Archives. The second book, *Stables: High Design for Horse and Home*, written with Oscar Riera Ojeda, showcases beautifully designed stables by contemporary architects and designers around the world."

**Michael F. Schein C'99** has written *The Hype Handbook: 12 Indispensable Success Secrets from the World's Greatest Propagandists, Self-Promoters, Cult Leaders, Mischief Makers, and Bounty Breakers*. Michael is the founder and president of MicroFame Media, a marketing agency that specializes in turning consultants, entrepreneurs, and executives into celebrities by using the hype concepts detailed in his book.

**Jonathan Scheinberg C'99** writes, "I recently founded Outshine Properties—a real estate investment company focused on acquiring life science, lab, medical, and industrial assets across major markets in the US. I am very excited to continue to acquire first-class real estate assets in this new platform and hope to add one or two near Penn's campus in the near future!"

**Jarad Schofer C'99** writes, "I am currently walking across the US to raise money for cancer research. Cancer is a disease that touches all of us in some way, and as an educator I believe that funding research is the best way we can hope for better treatments, drugs, and cures. If any fellow Quakers would like to follow the adventure or donate to my cause, the information can be found on my Instagram account @jarad2112."

## 2000

**Daniel O. Jackson GEd'00** has written a new book that will be released in April, *Language Teacher Noticing in Tasks*. From the press materials: "This book provides an accessible, evidence-based account of how teacher noticing, the process of attending to, interpreting, and acting on events which occur during engagement with learners, can be examined in contexts of language teacher education and highlights the importance of reflective practice for professional development."

## 2002

**Sam Kressler C'02** has been named partner at the firm Skadden Arps in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with a focus on maritime law.

## 2003

**David Pacifico C'03**, an assistant professor of art history at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and director of its Emile H. Mathis Gallery and UWM Art Collection, is coeditor of a new book, *Ancient Households on the North Coast of Peru*. From the publisher's press release: "[The book] provides insight into the organization of complex, urban, and state-level society in the region from a household perspective, using observations from diverse north coast households to generate new understandings of broader social processes in and beyond Andean prehistory."

## 2004

**Owusu Akoto C'04** was interviewed for an article on the *New York Times's* website ("A look at the Covax program in Ghana, featuring refrigerated trucks and drone deliveries," March 4). His company, FreezeLink, operates temperature-controlled trucks that were used to distribute COVID-19 vaccines in Ghana. Read the article at [nyti.ms/30s1fhh](https://nyti.ms/30s1fhh).

## 2005

**Kent Lasnoski C'05** and **Caitlin Lukens Lasnoski C'05** write, "We've recently authored



a book together, *30 Days with the Married Saints*, published by Pauline Books and Media. It was published just a few days before we welcomed our ninth child on February 18. Our family resides in a small town in Wyoming, where all eight siblings love the new baby and don't yet care much about the book."

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## 2006

**Capt. Theclly H. Scott GNu'06** has been named commanding officer of the US Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command in Guam.

**Jamila Willis C'06**, a partner at the law firm DLA Piper, has been named cochair of the Consumer Goods and Retail subsector of the company's Consumer Goods, Food and Retail sector.

## 2007

**Marco A. Krcatovich II GEd'07** writes, "In 2019, I was elected as the national president of Kappa Kappa Psi, National Honorary Band Fraternity, at our Centennial Convention in Stillwater, Oklahoma, where our organization was founded in 1919. I presided over the Centennial celebration, followed soon by the COVID-19 pandemic and social justice movements that forced our organization to retool the experience at our more than 200 campuses nationwide for a virtual environment where collegiate band activities have been yet another thing relegated to Zoom. The Black Lives Matter movement has helped our organization look through our history and confront our own failings at serving our entire membership and treating our brothers of color differently. On July 16, I will no longer serve as national president, and in that time, we will have adopted a standing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee that our own membership determined its purpose, upgraded our systems and facilities, and invested in new training and development for our many volunteers and leaders nationwide to better meet the challenges that we will face on the other side of the pandemic. I look forward to the day when our organization can

return to Penn's campus and continue to grow from the great band members that our alma mater enrolls each year."

## 2008

**Olivier Adler W'08** and **Erica Nachamkin Adler W'10** write, "We welcomed our daughter, Aviva Sandra Adler, into our family in December. Her brother, Aryeh (two), was thrilled to meet 'Baby Viva.' We live in San Francisco where Olivier works for Checkr and Erica for YouTube."

**Daniel Kiczek C'08** writes, "Patty Riady and I are proud to announce the birth of our first child, Caleb Riady Kiczek, on January 18 in Pasadena, California. Patty is a senior manager in the Los Angeles nonprofit audit practice of Deloitte & Touche; and I am a director at the strategy consulting firm EY-Parthenon."

**Joseph J. Lee LPS'08** has been hired as an associate at the law firm White and Williams. He works in the commercial litigation, higher education, and labor and employment groups.

## 2010

**Erica Nachamkin Adler W'10** see **Olivier Adler W'08**.

## 2012

**Dominika Jaworski Turkcan SPP'12** writes, "I'm a PennPAC volunteer and I work as a pro-bono consultant for Mothers' Day Movement. We are kicking off our 2021 Mothers' Day campaign with DigDeep, a US based human rights organization that brings clean running water to Americans, with a focus on the Navajo Nation. Mothers' Day Movement grew out of a 2010 column in the *New York Times* by Nicholas Kristof, where he made the case for moving the apostrophe in Mother's Day so it honors not just one mother but underserved mothers everywhere. Since 2011, the group has raised over \$700,000 for women's health, education, infant and maternal mortality, clean water, and human trafficking. We will be featured in *Ms.* magazine in early May, with an article written by **Elizabeth Titus GEd'74 WG'82**."

## 2014

**Jasper Sanchez C'14** has published his debut novel, *The (Un)Popular Vote* (Harper-Collins). He writes, "This very queer political satire would not exist if not for my experiences with the queer community I found at Penn and in its Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies program."

## 2015

**George Li W'15** and **Pallavi Bakshi W'15** write, "We are excited to share our new consumer products venture with the Penn community. Rabble Media aims to redefine the at-home entertainment market through innovative consumer products. Our first product, a party game called Rabble, was released in 2019, with a second edition launched March 2021. Unlike other party games that rely on heavy drinking and raunchy humor, Rabble is modern, colorful, inclusive, gender-neutral, and mission-based. We partner with innovative retail concepts and boutique stores to elevate the brand's positioning. The newest version of the game is made completely with recycled paper and partners with female guest illustrators. We hope members of the Penn community will help us spread the word!" Learn more at [rabblegame.com](http://rabblegame.com).

## 2017

**Anna Carello GrEd'17** has been named associate head of school for academics at Collegiate School, an all-boys, K-12 school located on the Upper West Side of New York City.

## 2019

**Rephael Houston LPS'19** has been selected as the 2020-2021 RAND DHS Fellow. Each year, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and RAND Corporation select a senior DHS analyst to work and study for up to a year at RAND, a nonprofit global policy think tank. Rephael works within the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of DHS as the agency's CSAT IT program manager in the Office of Chemical Security.

## 1940

**Jean Martin McCorkle CW'40**, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Dec. 1.

## 1941

**Jacob S. "Jay" Siegel C'41 G'43**, Bala Cynwyd, PA, a social scientist; Oct. 26, at 99. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

## 1943

**Dr. Herbert Diamond C'43 M'47 GM'51**, Bryn Mawr, PA, a former Penn associate professor of psychiatry; Jan. 31. He joined Penn's faculty in 1952 as an instructor in the psychiatry department of the School of Medicine. Ten years later, he became an associate in psychiatry at HUP. In 1969, he became an assistant professor, and in 1975 an associate professor. He retired in 1987 but remained involved with Penn as an associate professor emeritus of psychiatry. His son is Dr. Steven D. Diamond M'84.

**Robert F. Walbridge W'43**, Decatur, IL, former president of the Humane Society of Decatur; Jan. 29, at 100. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Psi fraternity.

## 1944

**Roslyn Silvers Denard CW'44**, Skillman, NJ, retired general manager of the *Princeton Packet*, where she oversaw a group of 13 regional newspapers; Dec. 31.

## 1946

**Dr. Marvin H. Balistocky C'46 GM'54**, Philadelphia, an ophthalmologist in Montgomery County, PA; Dec. 11. He volunteered his medical services at state prisons, hospital clinics, and nursing homes. He served in the US Army, as well as the US Navy Reserve and the US Coast Guard Reserve.

**Jeanette Davidson Chestnut DH'46**, Hatboro, PA, a retired dental hygienist; Dec. 31.

**Gustine Kanarek Matt CW'46**, Highland Park, NJ, a former social worker; Aug. 17. One son is Jonathan P. Matt C'71.

## 1947

**Robert P. Bretherick C'47**, West Palm Beach, FL, a retired manager at a chemical

manufacturing plant; Feb. 4. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Chi Sigma fraternity.

**Mary Garrett Brown OT'47**, Hamilton, VA, an occupational therapist; Jan. 23.

**Catherine Lilly Gray Ed'47**, Batavia, OH, a former tax preparer and supervisor at H&R Block; Sept. 16. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority and the choral society.

**Hermine Wilson Kolsby CW'47 GEd'74**, Delray Beach, FL, a retired teacher for gifted children in the Lower Merion (PA) School District; Jan. 14. Her children are Dana Kolsby Edenbaum CW'72, Robert A. Kolsby C'75, and Paul S. Kolsby C'84.

**Kenneth R. Lewis ME'47**, Atlanta, a retired mechanical engineer at Vishay Intertechnology, where he developed the process to manufacture electronic components that were used in the first Mars probe launched by NASA; Dec. 13. He served in the US Army during World War II. One granddaughter is Brynne Goncher C'97.

## 1948

**Leonard I. Abel C'48**, Chevy Chase, MD, a former partner in a construction company; Jan. 8. He was a veteran of World War II. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity. His wife is Helen Shapiro Abel CW'51, who died Feb. 13 (*see Class of 1951*). His children include Jack W. Abel W'75 and Joy S. Abel C'77.

**William J. Devlin GEd'48**, Ambler, PA, retired first deputy prothonotary of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas; Jan. 9, at 99. He served in the US Marine Corps during World War II and the Korean War.

**John L. Gregory W'48**, Erie, PA, former manager at a manufacturer of water solutions, such as drains, faucets, and plumbing; Nov. 19. He served in the US Navy during World War II and the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

**Jessie Lois Veith Latimer CW'48**, Abington, PA, a homemaker; Oct. 26. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority.

**Thomas R. McCullough ME'48**, Warmminster, PA, a longtime employee at Unilever; Dec. 24. He later worked as a director at Best Foods Baking Group, makers of Arnold Bread. He was a veteran of World War II. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity.

## 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.

**Robert H. Stovall W'48**, Sarasota, FL, a retired Wall Street investment analyst who appeared on financial programs for TV and radio and wrote columns for *Forbes* and *Financial World* magazine; Dec. 3. He served in the US Army during World War II. At Penn, he was a member of the Glee Club, the choral society, the Army ROTC, and the heavyweight rowing team.

## 1949

**Paul E. Macht C'49**, Devon, PA, retired president of Sun International, an oil company; Jan. 7. He served in the US Army Air Forces. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity.

**Thomas C. Sayer EE'49**, Claymont, DE, a retired manager at General Electric; Jan. 5. He served in the US Army Air Forces.

**David M. Silverman EE'49**, State College, PA, a retired engineer; Feb. 5. He served in the US Army during World War II.

## 1950

**Linda J. Nelson Ed'50**, East Lansing, MI, a professor emeritus of family ecology at Michigan State University and former international civil servant in Latin America; Jan. 1.

**Mary S. Rieser Ed'50 GEd'56**, Wyomissing, PA, a retired director of staff development in nursing at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; Nov. 23. She served in the US Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II.

**Robert M. Sanow C'50**, Rochester, NY, an executive recruiter; Nov. 26. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity.

**Lawrence Shprintz ChE'50**, Havertown, PA, a photographer and retired chemical engineer; Oct. 23. The Lawrence Shprintz Award for Travel and the Lawrence Shprintz MFA Award are given annually to students at Penn's Weitzman School of Design. One grandson is Nathan E. Platnick C'16.



**Walter C. Sobers WG'50**, Atlanta, GA, a retired fiscal coordinator for the State of Georgia; Jan. 5. He served in the US Army during World War II. At Penn, he was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity.

**Josephine Woodward Zagieboylo Ed'50**, Walpole, MA, a retired occupational therapist; Feb. 17.

## 1951

**Helen Shapiro Abel CW'51**, Chevy Chase, MD, an artist; Feb. 13. At Penn, she was a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority. Her husband is Leonard I. Abel C'48, who died Jan. 8 (*see Class of 1948*). Her children include Jack W. Abel W'75 and Joy S. Abel C'77.

**Rev. Robert L. Adams C'51**, Norwalk, IA, an ordained minister and retired astronomy teacher at the University of South Dakota; Dec. 18. He served in the US Air force during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

**Charlotte Stein Braunstein Ed'51**, Haverford, PA, a retired law librarian and professional pianist; Dec. 27. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority, WXPn, and the choral society. Her brother is Burton K. Stein L'64.

**Jo-Ann Flynn Chaconas DH'51**, Silver Spring, MD, a retired dental hygienist; Dec. 7. Her husband is Dr. C. Peter Chaconas D'53, who died Feb. 13, 2017 (*see Class of 1953*).

**William B. Eagleson Jr. WG'51**, Lafayette Hill, PA, chairman emeritus of Mellon Bank; Feb. 5. He served in the US Navy during World War II.

**Dr. John W. Fague V'51**, Shippensburg, PA, a retired veterinarian; Nov. 23. He served in the US Army during World War II.

**George B. Kauffman C'51**, Fresno, CA, a retired professor of chemistry at California State University; May 2, 2020.

**William R. Schmalstieg G'51 Gr'56**, Lancaster, PA, professor emeritus of Slavic and Baltic linguistics and head of the department of Slavic languages at Penn State; Jan. 22. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

**Matthew Storm W'51**, Bristol, CT, a retired attorney who maintained a practice for more than 50 years; Jan. 2. He served as a codebreaker for the Armed Forces Security

Agency (a precursor to the NSA) during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity. One grandson is Matthew Jordan Storm C'94 WG'00.

**Samuel "Mort" Zulick G'51**, Hubertus, WI, a vaccine researcher for Merck; Jan. 19. He served in the US Navy during World War II.

## 1952

**Judith Krantz Altman Ed'52**, Midlothian, VA, Feb. 11.

**Patricia Ameisen Herdeg Ed'52**, Cherry Hill, NJ, June 8, 2018. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority. Her husband is Franklin David Herdeg W'52. Her sister is Denise A. Sheldon CW'47, and her brother is Richard A. Ameisen Jr. W'58, who died Sept. 6 (*see Class of 1958*).

## 1953

**Dr. C. Peter Chaconas D'53**, Silver Spring, MD, a retired oral surgeon; Feb. 13, 2017. His wife is Jo-Ann Flynn Chaconas DH'51, who died Dec. 7 (*see Class of 1951*).

**Robert J. Stewart W'53**, York, PA, a lawyer; Feb. 10. He served in the US Marine Corps. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

## 1954

**Lida K. Barrett Gr'54**, Knoxville, TN, a notable mathematician who retired as a professor of mathematics at West Point; Jan. 28. She served as the second female president of the Mathematical Association of America.

**Katherine Cutchins Billingham GEd'54**, Syracuse, NY, former office manager of her husband's dental practice; Jan. 30. Her husband is Dr. William A. Billingham D'54.

**William B. Boyd Gr'54**, Mount Racine, WI, president emeritus of the Johnson Foundation, a nonprofit that facilitates meetings and dialogue among leaders and changemakers; Dec. 16.

**Aims C. "Joe" Coney Jr. L'54**, Chagrin Falls, OH, a retired attorney for Pittsburgh's K&L Gates for more than 50 years; Jan. 9.

**Dianne Hawk Dunn CW'54**, Hanover, NH, a volunteer with many conservation and equestrian charities; Nov. 30. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Xi Delta sorority, the

choral society, the Pennguinnettes, and the synchronized swimming team.

**Hon. Morton I. Greenberg C'54**, Princeton, NJ, a former judge on the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; Jan. 28. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity. One granddaughter is Emily P. Blecker C'12.

**Jon S. Millenson C'54**, Niantic, CT, retired founder of a marketing research firm; Feb. 10.

**Joseph S. Moloznik W'54 L'57**, Philadelphia, a retired attorney who maintained a practice for more than 50 years; Jan. 8. A fixture in his West Philadelphia community, he established the Spruce Hill Community Association and was a founding member of the University Swim Club, which is believed to be the first private, integrated swim club in Philadelphia. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Chi Rho fraternity. His daughters are Beth A. M. Termini C'84 and Karen Moloznik Norton MTE'79 GMT'80 WG'81.

## 1955

**Dr. Daniel M. Lundblad C'55**, Bluffton, SC, a retired pathologist at St. Joseph's Hospital; Nov. 11. He served in the US Army and the US Army Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity.

## 1956

**Suzanne Mann Cohen CW'56**, Margate City, NJ, a former schoolteacher and advertising salesperson; Dec. 15. At Penn, she was a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority.

**John R. Haines W'56**, Downingtown, PA, former president of CMS Associates; Feb. 7. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity, Friars, Sphinx Senior Society, and the track team, where he won four consecutive national championships in the indoor sprint and was a three-time All American. A 1998 inductee of the Penn Athletics Hall of Fame, he was also a finalist in the 1956 Olympic Trials. One son is John R. Haines G'88 Gr'09.

**Donald E. Hasenfus WEv'56**, Woodbury, NJ, a longtime medical underwriter and manager at the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company; Dec. 11. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

**Harold G. Jacklin Jr. W'56**, Gloucester, MA, owner of an accounting firm and a precious metals electroplating company; Jan. 6. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

**Dr. Edward T. Mallinson V'56**, Silver Spring, MD, professor emeritus of veterinary medicine at the University of Maryland; Sept. 17. At Penn, he was a member of the Army ROTC.

**Herbert J. Sperger GEd'56**, Jamison, PA, a retired middle school math teacher; June 6, 2019. He served in the US Navy during World War II. One son is Michael C. Sperger C'74.

**Russell K. Tredinnick W'56**, Harleysville, PA, a retired corporate controller at Triangle Publications, a media company that owned the *Philadelphia Inquirer*; Sept. 30. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

**Dr. Donald R. Trilling CCC'56 Gr'69**, Alexandria, VA, a retired executive at the US Department of Transportation, where he worked on a number of policies for over 32 years; Oct. 22. He served in the US Army during the Korean War, earning a Bronze Star.

**Marilyn Meyer Wilde Ed'56**, Shaker Heights, OH, Dec. 20. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority and the choral society.

## 1957

**F. Wallace Gordon W'57**, Willow Street, PA, retired publisher of the *Beaver County Times*; Jan. 8. At Penn, he was a member of Theta Xi fraternity, the Penn Glee Club, and Sphinx Senior Society.

**John D. Woodland Jr. W'57**, Walnut Creek, CA, former president of a rubber company who later founded a business consultancy firm with his wife; Dec. 16. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity, ROTC, the Sphinx Senior Society, and the football, lacrosse, and heavyweight rowing teams. He served in the US Air Force. One brother is Thomas J. Woodland WG'65.

## 1958

**Richard A. Ameisen Jr. W'58**, Havertown, PA, a former divisional merchandise manager of menswear for Strawbridge and Clothier; Sept. 6. He later became a real estate agent. He served in the US Marine Corps Reserves. At

Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. His sisters are Denise Ameisen Sheldon CW'47 and Patricia Ameisen Herdeg Ed'52, who died on June 8, 2018 (*see Class of 1952*).

**Eileen Abrams Segal CW'58**, Cherry Hill, NJ, cofounder of PetPals, a nonprofit that helps medically fragile and poor seniors keep their companion animals; Jan. 13.

**Joseph A. Walton C'58**, Richmond, VA, a retired lieutenant colonel in the US Army, where he served as a Transportation Corps, Infantry, and Special Forces Officer in various command positions and earned several decorations for his service; Dec. 8. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of the men's lacrosse team.

## 1959

**Brother Andrew Bartley G'59**, Wyndmoor, PA, a retired director of public affairs at La Salle University; May 12, 2019.

**Arnold R. Beiles W'59**, New York, a retired CPA; Feb. 5. He later taught accounting at the College of Staten Island.

**Beverly Ann Brogan HUP'59**, Virginia Beach, VA, a retired operating room nurse; Feb. 8. Her husband is Dr. John C. Brogan C'57 M'61.

**James David Power III WG'59**, Westlake Village, CA, retired founder of the marketing research firm J. D. Power; Jan. 23. He served in the US Coast Guard.

## 1960

**Michael J. Henry ASC'60**, Lambertville, NJ, a retired lawyer; Jan. 5.

**Warren F. Link C'60**, Knoxville, TN, April 28, 2020. At Penn, he was a member of the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

**Wayne G. Sanborn WG'60**, DeLand, FL, a retired city manager of DeLand; Feb. 4.

## 1961

**David G. Boling WG'61**, Orange, TX, owner of an insurance company; Jan. 19, 2020. He served in the US Army.

**Richard H. Deitch MTE'61 GMT'67**, Worthington, OH, a materials scientist who specialized in crystal growth; Oct. 11. He developed a patented method of growing crystals when he worked for GTE Labs. At Penn, he was a member of Penn Players.

**Edith G. Gollub Gr'61**, Eastchester, NY, Jan. 1.

**Hon. Stewart J. Greenleaf C'61**, Huntingdon Valley, PA, a longtime Pennsylvania state senator; Feb. 9. At Penn, he was a member of the basketball team. One son is Christopher E. Greenleaf C'03.

**Hon. Jack K. Mandel L'61**, Fullerton, CA, a retired judge in the Orange County (CA) Superior Court; Dec. 24. He served in the US Air Force as a Judge Advocate General.

**Harry Scheuer GEE'61**, Lexington, VA, a retired electrical engineer specializing in radar control; Nov. 9.

**Dr. Douglas B. Stalb D'61**, Summerville, SC, a retired dentist; Feb. 4. He served in the US Navy Dental Corps.

## 1962

**Ann M. Brislin GEd'62**, Wilkes Barre, PA, a retired head nurse for what is now called the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center in Plains Township, PA; Jan. 14.

**Terence Grieder Gr'62**, Austin, TX, professor emeritus of art history at the University of Texas at Austin, Feb. 21, 2018.

**Dr. Keith M. Hutchings D'62**, Canandaigua, NY, a retired dentist; July 8. He served in the US Army as a dentist.

**Paul K. Kelly C'62 WG'64**, Westport, CT, a retired executive at an investment banking firm who also was on the board of advisors for Penn's School of Arts and Sciences, a University trustee emeritus, and the benefactor of Penn's Kelly Writers House; March 4. In 1997, he became a University trustee and provided a \$1.1 million gift to help establish the Kelly Writers House. In 2003, he endowed the Kelly Family Gates outside Addams Hall. Among his other contributions, he also funded the Kelly Writers House Fellows program, which brings several eminent writers and authors to Penn, and the Kelly Family Professorship of English; he helped found the US China Future Leaders Program at the Graduate School of Education to promote mutual understanding and respect between the two nations; he served as treasurer of his class; and he was also active in Penn Athletics. In 2010, he was named an emeritus trustee. He received the Penn Alumni Award of Merit in 2012. As a student at Penn,



he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity. One daughter is Brooke Kelly C'01.

**Jack H. Nusbaum W'62**, New York, a partner at the law firm Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP; Jan. 11. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity. His children are Lisa Nusbaum C'85 and Gary David Nusbaum W'88 WG'89. One grandchild is Andrew M. Dickerman C'19.

**Dr. Samuel V. Pellegrino GD'62**, Melbourne Beach, FL, a retired oral and maxillofacial surgeon; Dec. 17. He served in the US Navy.

## 1963

**Elizabeth Marvin Cecil GED'63**, Lafayette Hill, PA, Dec. 4.

**H. Corbin Day WG'63**, Birmingham, AL, a retired partner at Goldman Sachs; Jan. 10. He was also a retired chairman at Jemison Investment. At Penn, he was a member of Psi Upsilon fraternity.

**Thomas P. Foltz Jr. WG'63**, Fort Smith, AR, a retired insurance executive; Jan. 3.

**Rosalind "Ricki" Hirsh Goodblatt CW'63**, White Plains, NY, a chemist who also worked as a data processor for IBM; Jan. 21. Her husband is Jonathan B. Goodblatt C'60 EAS'61.

**Herbert S. "Herb" Riband Jr. L'63**, Fort Washington, PA, a retired senior partner at what is now called Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP, a Philadelphia law firm where he specialized in trusts and estates; Jan. 9. His grandchildren are Michelle Riband C'16 and Daniel H. Riband C'14.

**Donald B. Stott WG'63**, West Palm Beach, FL, a longtime Wall Street executive; Dec. 25. During his tenure, he was a director of the New York Futures Exchange and a governor and director of the New York Stock Exchange.

**Arlene Kirschenbaum Zide G'63**, Chicago, a poet and professor of humanities and women's studies at City Colleges of Chicago; Jan. 8. Her husband is Norman H. Zide Gr'60.

## 1964

**George F. Bass Gr'64**, Bryan, TX, a former curator of the Penn Museum's Mediterranean section; March 2. He briefly worked as a student assistant at the Penn Museum

from 1959 to 1960, and served on the faculty as lecturer, assistant, and associate professor from 1962 to 1973. He left Penn to found the Institute of Nautical Archaeology, which is devoted to bringing history to light through the scientific study of shipwrecks, and he remained an adjunct professor at Penn. He retired as professor emeritus of nautical archaeology at Texas A&M. In 2001, he was awarded the National Medal of Science by former president George W. Bush. In 2010, the Penn Museum awarded him its Lucy Wharton Drexel Medal, honoring exceptional achievement in excavation or publication of archaeological work. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

**Hon. William R. Drescher C'64**, Amherst, NH, a retired attorney and district court judge; Dec. 30. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and the track team.

**Curtis C. Gunn Jr. WG'64**, San Antonio, founder of Gunn Automotive; Feb. 2. He served in the US Navy and the US Navy Reserve.

**Theodore J. Kozloff C'64 G'64 L'67**, Sheldon, SC, a lawyer; Feb. 14, 2020. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity. His siblings include Philip H. Kozloff C'62, Dr. Louis Kozloff C'65 M'69, David M. Kozloff L'66, and Susan Kozloff Bilsky CW'75 GED'75 WG'81.

**John V. Murray L'64**, Richmond, VA, a retired lawyer; Feb. 5.

**Dr. Ronald J. Schindler C'64 Gr'78**, Jenkintown, PA, a professor of philosophy and political science at Arcadia University, Temple University, and Rutgers University-Camden; Dec. 21.

**George D. Wolf Gr'64**, New Cumberland, PA, emeritus dean and professor of American studies at Penn State University; Feb. 14. He served in the US Army during World War II.

## 1965

**David D. Hagstrom L'65**, Red Hook, NY, a retired partner at the Poughkeepsie, New York, law firm Van DeWater & Van DeWater and a former town attorney to the Town of Poughkeepsie; Dec. 20.

**Richard L. Kadish C'65**, Rockville, MD, founder of a real estate firm; July 9. At Penn, he was a member of the choral society and the Army ROTC. One son is Andrew S. Kadish C'01.

**Dennis T. Kelly L'65 G'67**, Philadelphia, a retired attorney for the Defender Association of Philadelphia, where he worked for 54 years; Jan. 7.

**Stanley Mills GME'65**, State College, PA, a retired senior engineer involved in helicopter design at Boeing; Feb. 4. He served in the US Naval Air Reserve.

**Paul Thomas "Tom" Scull Jr. WG'65**, Hamilton, NY, a retired labor relations executive at the National Gypsum Company in Charlotte, NC; Nov. 13.

**Dr. Richard Duane West M'65 GM'72**, Virginia Beach, VA, a retired surgeon; July 12. He served in the US Navy.

## 1966

**Vincent P. Dole III C'66**, Boynton Beach, FL, an entrepreneur and venture capitalist; Oct. 25. His son is Alexandre Dole G'13, who is married to Renee Kovick Dole WEv'03 G'10. His sister is Susan Dole CW'68 GED'69 SW'72.

**Harry T. Hare G'66**, Philadelphia, a retired partner at an investment firm; Dec. 5. He served in the US Navy.

**Robin Maisel C'66**, San Diego, a former attorney; Sept. 17.

**Joel H. Sachs L'66**, White Plains, NY, an attorney and adjunct professor of law at Pace University; Jan. 24. His wife is Roslyn Carol Sachs CW'65.

**Albert M. Shields WG'66**, Portland, OR, Jan. 6.

## 1967

**Dr. Laurence E. Carroll C'67 M'71 GM'77**, Lancaster, PA, a retired nephrologist and founding partner of a hypertension and kidney care center; Jan. 18. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Penn Pipers and the Glee Club. His wife is Janet Taylor Carroll Nu'69 GNU'77, and his sons are Andrew T. Carroll EAS'94 and Bryan T. Carroll C'96.

**Dr. F. Forrest Lang C'67**, Johnson City, TN, a retired professor and director of medical education at East Tennessee State University; Dec. 20. At Penn, he was a member of the sprint football team. His sister is Abigail Lang C'77, who is married to Timothy P. Wade C'76.

## 1968

**David H. Fiske L'68**, Rehoboth Beach, DE, a retired director of media relations at the Federal Communications Commission; Dec. 15. He served in the US Navy.

**Dr. Robert P. Gordon M'68**, Chicago, a psychiatrist; Jan. 10.

**Olive Stonebreaker Holt GNu'68**, Indiana, PA, a professor of community health nursing at Indiana University of Pennsylvania; June 19.

**Dr. David K. M. Hsiao GrE'68**, Mountain View, CA, professor emeritus of computer science at the Naval Postgraduate School; July 21.

**Richard B. Kelson C'68**, New York, a retired chairman's counsel at ALCOA, an aluminum company; Feb. 13. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity. He served in the US Army Reserve. His wife is Ellen S. Kelson CW'68, and his children are Carolyn A. Kelson C'93, Melinda Kelson O'Connor C'96, and Adam F. Kelson C'98.

**Julie Mackey Reich Gr'68**, Philadelphia, a retired dean of Moore College of Art; Dec. 29.

## 1969

**Dr. C. Joseph DeSalvo GD'69**, Bonita Springs, FL, a retired oral and maxillofacial surgeon; April 1, 2020.

**James M. Hughes Gr'69**, Oakwood, OH, professor emeritus of English at Wright State University; Nov. 7.

**John G. Kuhn III Gr'69**, Ocean City, NJ, a writer and professor emeritus of English and theater at Rosemont College; Jan. 22.

**Christopher P. Monkhouse C'69**, Brunswick, ME, former chair of the European decorative arts department at the Art Institute of Chicago; Jan. 12.

**Jo Ann Morton Nu'69**, Silver Spring, MD, a retired nurse for the US Navy; April 7, 2020.

**James M. Neeley L'69**, a lawyer who spent several years working for USAID in Ukraine and Kazakhstan; Nov. 10. He served in the US Navy. His wife is Marcia P. Neeley G'78.

**Jerome D. "Jerry" Williams C'69**, Belleville, NJ, the former provost and executive vice chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark; Jan. 29. At Penn, he was a member of the Sphinx Senior Society, and a captain and

prolific middle-distance runner for the cross country and track teams. In 1968 he broke a program record that had stood since the 1930s when he clocked a 4:06.4 mile. He went on to complete 39 marathons. One grandson is Cameron H. Williams W'24.

## 1970

**Barry Schwartz Gr'70**, Athens, GA, professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Georgia; Jan. 6. He served in the US Army.

## 1971

**David B. McGrail Gr'71**, Hopewell, NJ, a retired teacher at Trenton State College; Jan. 3.

**William W. Reynolds Jr. GrEd'71**, Moorestown, NJ, retired founding director of the Center for Management and Entrepreneurship at Rutgers University School of Business; Jan. 4. He also served as mayor of Haddonfield, NJ, from 1973 to 1977.

**Dr. A. Hunter Wilcox V'71**, Lumberton, NJ, a veterinarian and retired co-owner of Cherry Hill Animal Hospital; Jan. 5.

## 1972

**Dr. Edward P. Johnson D'72**, Charlotte, NC, a retired dentist; Jan. 26. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War.

**Susan A. Leidy GNu'72**, New Freedom, PA, a former director of the Greater Baltimore Medical Center; Dec. 10.

**Greg C. Mansfield GEE'72**, Belen, NM, March 26, 2020.

**John P. Minneman WG'72**, Peachtree City, GA, a longtime employee at Chase Manhattan Bank; Jan. 12.

## 1973

**Dr. Charles R. Fitz GM'73**, Pittsburgh, a pediatric neuroradiologist and retired professor of radiology at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh; Feb. 22, 2019.

**Helen K. Shanley SW'73**, Lake Hiawatha, NJ, a retired social worker for a nursing home; Jan. 9.

## 1974

**Edward F. Grusheski G'74**, Philadelphia, a Philadelphia Water Department manager

who was instrumental in turning the Fairmount Water Works into a top attraction and center of environmental education ["Rebirth on the River," Jan/Feb 2000]; Dec. 23. He served in the US Army.

**Steven A. Rothenberg W'74**, Washington, DC, a retired attorney for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Feb. 1.

## 1975

**Ilene C. McCaffrey W'75**, Sarasota, FL, a CPA; Jan. 19.

**Sheldon S. Pavel GrEd'75**, Elkins Park, PA, a longtime principal of Philadelphia's Central High School; Feb. 7.

## 1976

**Dr. Allen Gaisin GM'76**, Silver Spring, MD, a dermatologist; July 21, 2019.

## 1977

**Barbara Fine Bazilian CGS'77**, Philadelphia, a musician, artist, and fashion designer; Jan. 15. Her son is Eric M. Bazilian C'75, and two grandchildren are Simon Bazilian C'18 and Maia Bazilian C'23.

**Janis T. Johnson SW'77 GrS'85**, Eastham, MA, a retired professor of sociology at Immaculata College (now University); Jan. 25.

## 1978

**Dr. Charles M. Achenbach D'78**, Bethlehem, PA, a retired professor of anatomy and physiology at Northampton Community College; Nov. 17. One brother is L. Robert Achenbach Jr. SW'74.

**Robert A. Brennan Jr. EE'78**, Mercerville, NJ, an engineer for Johnson & Johnson; Dec. 20. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

**Dr. Jane A. Curtis M'78**, New York, a pediatrician; Aug. 27, 2019.

**Albert M. Greenfield III W'78**, Villanova, PA, a real estate developer and corporate bond trader; Feb. 7. He was instrumental in the development of Dilworth Park in Center City Philadelphia and was an early promoter of Chestnut Street as a pedestrian-friendly commercial zone. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, and the baseball and football teams. His wife is Wen-



dy Marcus Greenfield W'78, and one son is Jason L. Greenfield C'04.

**Robin Fisher Solis C'78**, Trevoze, PA, Jan. 21. Her mother is Eloyse Chosiad Fisher CW'54, and one brother is Stephen P. Fisher C'81.

**Robert E. Yantorno Gr'78**, Englewood, FL, a professor of electrical engineering and investing at Temple University; Oct. 14. He served in the US Navy.

## 1980

**Lynne D. Dalla CGS'80**, Klamath Falls, OR, Oct. 19, 2019. Her son is Christopher John Dalla GED'87.

## 1981

**Dr. Marc H. Zisselman C'81**, Philadelphia, a geriatric psychiatrist and professor at Albert Einstein Medical Center, Temple University, and Thomas Jefferson University Hospital; Dec. 30. At Penn, he was a member of the track and cross country teams. He remained an active distance runner and served as a longtime volunteer official and chief timer at the Penn Relays. His wife is Pamela Mattoon Zisselman GNu'89.

## 1982

**Rebecca Supplee Lundgren GNu'82**, Saint Cloud, FL, a retired clinical nurse specialist; Dec. 22.

## 1983

**Michael Brown C'83**, Las Vegas, an executive at several corporations, including Nevada State Bank and Caldwell Banker; Dec. 4. At Penn, he was a two-time All-Ivy League player on the basketball team, leading the Quakers to three Ivy championships and a Big 5 title. He was also a member of the Sphinx Senior Society. His wife is Jacqueline Butcher Brown C'87.

**Herbert J. Hopkins WG'83**, Moorestown, NJ, former CEO of a printer supply company; June 2.

**Elizabeth "Debby" Entine Malissa GEd'83**, Huntingdon Valley, PA, a former speech pathologist and teacher who later directed education courses on Jewish culture and history; April 26, 2020. Her son is Samuel A. Malissa C'04.

### School Abbreviations

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

## 1984

**Kevin L. Murphy C'84**, Brentwood, TN, managing partner of an investment bank; Nov. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity and the football team.

## 1985

**Charles H. James III WG'85**, Downers Grove, IL, chairman and CEO of CH James and Company, a wholesale foods distribution company; Jan. 7. One son is Charles H. James IV W'08.

**Dr. Bridget Nassib GrD'85 CGS'07**, Newtown Square, PA, a retired teacher; Dec. 23.

**Timothy K. Ravey ChE'85**, Essex Junction, VT, a retired executive at IBM; Oct. 22.

**Michael E. Seltzer C'85**, Lakewood, NJ, July 5. His siblings include Sharon Seltzer Ross W'82 and Larry J. Seltzer C'83, who is married to Sharon Seltzer Ross W'82.

## 1988

**Matthew M. Gutt W'88**, Narberth, PA, assistant general counsel for Exelon Business Services; Feb. 10. At Penn, he was a member of Theta Xi fraternity and the heavyweight rowing team.

## 1992

**Gavin C. O'Connell C'92**, Cockeysville, MD, Jan. 17.

## 1993

**Paul Steven Thurk W'93**, Minneapolis, managing director at ARCH Venture Partners; Jan. 15. He also cofounded several start-ups, such as InnoVaLight, which was acquired by DuPont.

## 1996

**John A. Jordan G'96**, Sewell, NJ, a former accountant for Crozer Keystone Health System; Dec. 24.

**John E. McGowan G'96**, Camden, NJ, an actor; Nov. 18. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War.

**Adam L. Tepper W'96**, Brooklyn, NY, chief strategy officer at a digital marketing company; Sept. 16.

## 1997

**Leon B. Glover Jr. GEd'97**, Lancaster, PA, an educator and administrator who served in numerous capacities in the School District of Lancaster (PA); Feb. 11. He was also the first Black principal in Lancaster County.

## 1999

**Joanne C. Letwinch GEd'99**, Middletown, DE, a retired elementary school teacher; Jan. 18.

## 2000

**Nelly S. Toll GrEd'00**, Old Bridge, NJ, a writer, artist, and teacher; Jan. 30. A Holocaust survivor, she published a memoir based off of the diary she kept while hiding with her mother during World War II. She also served as an adjunct professor at Penn.

## 2001

**Juergen F. Habichler WG'01**, Neuheim, Switzerland, Jan. 16.

## 2002

**Charles M. Peterson III WMP'02**, Erdenheim, PA, Nov. 15.

## 2004

**Michael Masch G'04**, Philadelphia, former executive director of Penn's Office of Budget and Management Analysis and later a lecturer at the Fels Institute of Government; Feb. 7. In 1996, he came to Penn as executive director of the University's Office of Budget and Management Analysis, serving until 2003, when he became Pennsylvania's secretary of the budget. From 2004 to 2006, he lectured at Penn's Fels Institute of Government. He worked in Governor Ed Rendell C'65 Hon'00's administration until 2008, and subsequently worked as chief financial officer of the School District of Philadelphia; Manhattan College; and most recently, Howard University.

## 2020

**Gregory A. Nesmith W'20**, Philadelphia, a director of marketing at Campbell Soup Company; Jan. 28.

## Faculty &amp; Staff

**George F. Bass.** *See Class of 1964.*

**Dr. Herbert Diamond.** *See Class of 1943.*

**Lawrence Otis Graham**, an author, activist, and member of Penn Vet's Board of Advisors; Feb. 19. He practiced corporate and real

estate law at Cuddy & Feder, and taught in the African and African American studies department at Fordham University. His work on exposing the racism that even upper-class Black people face made him widely admired. In 2014, he joined Penn Vet's Board of Advisors, helping to bridge Penn Vet with the community beyond campus.

**Dr. Prabodh Kumar Gupta**, Humble, TX, a professor emeritus in Penn Medicine's department of pathology and laboratory medicine; Dec. 23. He started his Penn career in 1988 as a professor and director of cytopathology and cytometry, and he stayed in the department for over two decades. His leadership put the department among the top 10 cytopathology departments in the country on multiple occasions. He also established the Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA) services at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. In 2005, Penn recognized him with the Peter C. Nowell Award for outstanding teaching. He retired in 2013.

**Waheed Hussain**, Toronto, ON, Canada, a former lecturer and assistant professor at Wharton who most recently served as associate professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto; Jan. 31. He joined Penn's faculty in 2004 as an instructor in Wharton's department of legal studies and business ethics, eventually rising to assistant professor. In 2014, he became an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto. His central research focus was political philosophy, and he also made important contributions to business ethics. His work earned him several honors, and he was also a member of the American Philosophical Association, the American Political Science Association, and the Society for Business Ethics.

**Paul K. Kelly.** *See Class of 1962.*

**Michael Masch.** *See Class of 2004.*

**Dr. Robert "Robin" L. Post**, Haverford, PA, a former instructor and visiting scholar in physiology at the School of Medicine; Jan. 26, at 100. He joined Penn's faculty in 1946 as an instructor in physiology. After two years, he joined the faculty of Vanderbilt University Medical School, where he served as a professor of physiology until his retirement in 1991. In retirement, he returned to the

Philadelphia area and became a visiting scholar and consultant in Penn's department of physiology.

**Mary S. Rieser.** *See Class of 1950.*

**David Shakow**, Merion Station, PA, professor emeritus of law in Penn's Carey Law School; Jan. 16. He joined the Penn faculty in 1982 as associate professor, becoming full professor five years later. His specialty was taxation, and among his accolades, he won a University Research Foundation Award in 1999 for a paper he cowrote, titled "A Comprehensive Wealth Tax." He retired in 2000, though he remained a lecturer at Penn until his death.

**Jonathan Steinberg**, Philadelphia, professor emeritus of history in Penn's School of Arts and Sciences; March 4. In 2000, he came to Penn, where he was appointed the Annenberg Professor of Modern European History. He also held appointments in the Jewish Studies Program and the College of Liberal and Professional Studies. He was the chair of the history department from 2001 to 2004. He published several books on European history and the Holocaust, and his 2011 biography of Otto Von Bismarck was described by Henry Kissinger as "the best study of its subject in the English language." He retired from Penn in 2015 but continued to teach. He served in the US military.

**Nelly S. Toll.** *See Class of 2000.*

**Robert Yongue Turner**, Haverford, PA, professor emeritus of English at Penn's School of Arts and Sciences; Jan. 16. In 1958, he was hired as an instructor in the English department. After several promotions, he became a full professor in 1974. He also taught courses in the College of General Studies (now the College of Liberal and Professional Studies). During the 1960s, he taught one of Penn's earliest "television courses," the precursor to remote learning. In 1963 he won Penn's Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching. He specialized in Renaissance drama, with primary emphasis on Shakespeare. His research earned him a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1974, the same year that he wrote the book *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship*. He retired from Penn in 1996.

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# The First of Many Firsts

**A**lthough she descended from two distinguished Black families, Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Ed1918 G1919 Gr1921 L'27 Hon'74 still encountered racism, sexism, hatred, and bigotry to get her Penn education. In a 1977 interview with oral historian Walter M. Phillips, she recalled her first year as an undergraduate in the School of Education: "Not one woman spoke to me in class or when I passed [them] on the walks to College Hall or the library. Can you imagine looking for classrooms and asking persons [along] the way, only to find the same unresponsive person you asked for directions seated in the classroom, which you entered late because you could not find your way?"

"Such circumstances made a student either a dropout or a survivor so strong that she could not be overcome," she said.

By the end of her freshman year, Alexander finally made a friend in Mary Stewart, "the first thaw in the ice that covered my freshman year," she said. The two were interested in the subject of economics, but none of the courses were open to women. Boldly, they decided to sit in on a Wharton class. When the professor spotted them, he immediately announced that he did not teach women and ordered the two to leave. But this encounter only fueled Alexander's determination to study the subject.

One hundred years ago this June, Alexander became the first Black woman in the US to get her PhD in economics. She was also among the nation's first three Black women to get a doctorate in any subject.

Her dissertation was titled "The



Standard of Living Among One Hundred Negro Migrant Families in Philadelphia, 1921."

But this "first" was not her last. Alexander went on to become the first Black woman to graduate from Penn Law, in 1927. (Her father, Aaron Albert Mossell L1888, had been the first African American to graduate from that institution, while her uncle, Nathan Mossell M1882, holds that distinction for the School of Medicine ["A Principled Man," Nov|Dec 2014].) She was the first Black woman admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar, the first woman to serve as secretary of the National Bar Association, and the first Black woman to be appointed assistant city

solicitor for the City of Philadelphia, among other accomplishments.

In 1923, she married Raymond Pace Alexander W1920 ["Old Penn," Sep|Oct 2020]. Together, they managed a private law firm, until he became a judge. She then held an independent practice for over 15 years.

In November 1989, after a life of breaking down barriers, Alexander died of complications due to pneumonia and Alzheimer's disease, at 91.

In recalling the obstacles she faced, Alexander once noted, "I never looked for anybody to hold the door open for me. I knew well that the only way I could get that door open was to knock it down, because I knocked all of them down." —NP



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