THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

MAY | JUN
2025

Matt Selman C'93 and *The Simpsons*

Michael Horowitz on PWH, AI, and China

J. Larry Jameson Appointed Penn's 10th President

Justin McDaniel's Literature for Life

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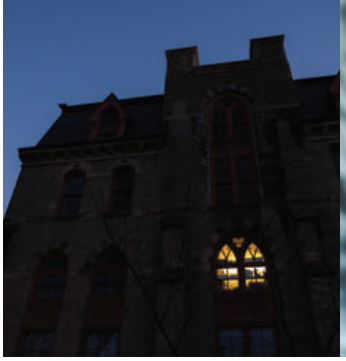

Features

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Departments

Staying Power

As noted in Jan|Feb's cover story, "Course Corrections," at some point the *Penn Course Guide* sadly abandoned including student comments in its ratings. If that was still the practice, I'm pretty sure Justin McDaniel would rival the faculty favorites of the past. That's judging by this issue's cover story by associate editor Dave Zeitlin C'03—in which some students sound positively giddy about being in a course McDaniel teaches titled Existential Despair. Other offerings by the religious studies professor—in particular, Living Deliberately (aka the "monk class"), which involves a vow of silence—sparked similar enthusiasm.

Existential Despair is a "more digestible" version of Living Deliberately, as one student put it, built around engaging intensively with literary texts that take on a variety of profound subjects. McDaniel has a very high opinion of literature's ability to serve as a guide and support in life's inevitable challenges and tragedies.

McDaniel has a very high opinion of literature's ability to serve as a guide and support.

McDaniel handpicks students—41 for this spring's class, out of a pool of 400 or so—by a process he describes as "Breakfast Clubbing it." The class meets once a week for seven hours straight, 5 p.m. to midnight. During that time, they all read a book of McDaniel's choosing, and in the last hour discuss it in a darkened classroom. Oh, and he impounds their phones for the duration. For some tech-distracted, multitasking, achievement-focused Penn students the combination has proved revelatory.

In addition to interviewing McDaniel, Dave spoke with students in the current iteration of the course as well as alumni who describe the lasting influence it has had on their personal relationships, approach to their work, and (admittedly fitful) attempts to disengage from screens in their lives. McDaniel told Dave that he loved one student's description of the course as an exercise in "the art of single tasking."

I first remember encountering political science professor and Perry World House director Michael Horowitz on Zoom during the pandemic, hosting some of the most informative and thought-provoking panel discussions on COVID-19 and other subjects. In 2022, Horowitz, whose own work focuses on international security, went to Washington to work as a deputy assistant secretary of defense, returning to campus in 2024.

In "Rules of Engagement," Alyson Krueger C'07 traces Horowitz's background as a top high school debater, his interest in military history and the impact of technology adoption, his stint in government service working on artificial intelligence and robotics technologies, and his thoughts on China as the US's principal global competitor. He remains optimistic that the academy and government can work together on issues like AI. "It isn't always easy to bridge that gap," he says, "but I think if you do, there is a real opportunity there."

Few entertainment products have had the staying power of *The Simpsons*, which premiered in 1989. Back in 1992, Matt Selman C'93 wrote a student column in the *Gazette* about the show's hold on campus. And as Molly Petrilla C'06 writes in "Stewarding *The Simpsons*," he has played a key role in maintaining the show's cultural presence and popularity—and stretching its boundaries—since first latching on as a writer in 1997 and eventually rising to head showrunner in 2021.

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What Do Penn Alumni Remember?

Sharing individual stories can counterbalance criticism of higher education.

By President J. Larry Jameson

When I last wrote to you here in the *Gazette*, I was preparing for a trip abroad to meet with our international alumni, families, and institutional partners. Hands down the best part of these and any alumni engagement is the conversation. I learn so much from our alumni—about their Penn experience, their careers, their families, and how they stay connected. All of this informs my thinking about current students and how we create a learning experience to prepare them for life after graduation.

I'll ask alumni, "What do you remember from your time at Penn?" One person may talk about how meeting a new friend sparked a business idea or a new artistic project. Another might mention how a lightbulb moment steered them toward a surprising calling in life. At a recent dinner with Wharton graduates, they each highlighted the humanities, recalling specific professors and classes that were most memorable—an excellent reminder of the value of a well-rounded, interdisciplinary curriculum. I also know this from personal experience.

As an undergraduate at my alma mater, I initially focused on English and the social sciences. When I reluctantly took a required science course, that's when it happened. I fell in love with biology and ended up with a degree in chemistry. This would turn out to be a recurring theme: I'll never forget my first brush with doing original research and, later, chance encounters with Nobel laureates and brilliant mentors while I pursued advanced degrees.

For me, the path from such moments in college, graduate school, and medical school to this present moment is not so much a dotted line as a blend of serendipity driven by purpose. I look around now and think, without those pivotal student experiences, I would not be where I am, doing what I am doing, today. I am still on a university campus, curious and excited to learn.

I point this out because in the US in recent years, popular narratives and public debates concerning higher education routinely miss this critical part of the picture. The focus is less about opportunity and impact and more about challenges.

It is an exceptionally rare privilege to be a part of this University, which is why I believe hearing from our alumni about their campus experiences firsthand is a rare and powerful thing.

That is not to say that places like Penn are perfect. Far from it. One of our foundational University values is constant self-improvement, which we're doing by listening carefully to criticism and working hard on what we can do better.

Still, few headlines or commentators devote similar attention to all the individual lives changed by college, or how they go on to make a substantial difference for their families, fields, businesses and institutions, communities, and countries. The same is true of how universities like Penn partner with neighbors, states, and the nation to buoy the economy, create jobs, increase knowledge, and fuel life-improving and lifesaving innovation.

So, here is what I would wish: that everyone could enjoy a conversation with a Penn alum. Every time a person reads a news story or hears a public pronouncement critical of higher education, I'd also want them to talk to one of you and ask, "What do you remember from your time at Penn? How did it impact your life decisions and career?"

Especially for our graduates who benefited from financial aid, an alum might talk about how Penn's commitment to access and affordability opens unimaginable doors of opportunity.

Consider this: In 2005, for an undergraduate with the average financial aid package at the time, the net cost of a Penn education was $19,000 a year. This year, thanks to Penn's historic commitment to financial aid and the visionary philanthropy of our alumni, the average financial aid award is more than $70,000. In constant 2005 dollars, that means the current average net cost to aided students and their families is nearly 30 percent less than it was two decades ago.

We now educate and graduate more exceptional students who are the first in their families to go to college or come from low-income backgrounds than ever before in Penn's history. With our new Quaker Commitment, we will also guarantee full tuition financial aid for families earning $200,000 or less, making a Penn education more affordable for middle-income students.

Or perhaps an alum who was raised locally (our admitted Class of 2029 has the largest cohort of Philadelphian students ever) might reflect on how Penn bolsters economic opportunity, public education, and community health in the region and the state. One in seven jobs in

the city and 155,000 jobs in Pennsylvania stem from Penn's world-class teaching, research, and patient care. Through a vast range of initiatives, we partner with local schools, civic groups, and businesses to help our neighbors thrive.

Or maybe an alum would think back on working closely with a faculty member, participating in the live arts, experiencing basic research firsthand, and learning how translational discoveries get made. Such experiential learning and innovative research define a Penn education, and we continue investing in the campus to foster those experiences and breakthroughs.

For example, in April we launched the Penn AI initiative with a terrific faculty panel discussion in our new Amy Gutmann Hall, where students, faculty, and staff collaborate across disciplines on data science and artificial intelligence. Nearby, on Walnut Street, at our new Vagelos Laboratory for Energy Science and Technology, the same dynamism will help Penn shed new understanding and create new knowledge in our efforts to respond to climate change. Our new Student Performing Arts Center, located at the eastern gateway to campus, is underway.

Or maybe an alum would relive an exhilarating season on the field, water, or court—like members of our men's squash team with their perfect season and second national championship in two years [“Sports,” this issue].

Of course, even with Penn's global alumni community more than 360,000 members strong, the sum of all people who have learned and worked on our campus or will do so in the future is a vanishingly small percentage of the total population. Most people will never experience what you have experienced. It is an exceptionally rare privilege to be a part of this University, which is why I believe hearing from our alumni about their campus experiences firsthand is a rare and powerful thing.

So, as you reminisce on your Penn experiences and how they've helped shape your life, I also encourage you to share those compelling stories more widely. In your social circles, workplaces, and other spaces and networks, when discussions about higher education veer toward criticism, your Penn experiences are an important counterbalance—one that our society and institutions need more of right now.

Trust that I will be doing the same. Whenever someone asks me what's most memorable about my time at Penn, I'll lead with the inspiring stories I've heard time and again from you.

Organ transplants and animal rights, postcard journeys, car talk, "infantile machismo," and more.

We Welcome Letters

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

Transplant Teamwork

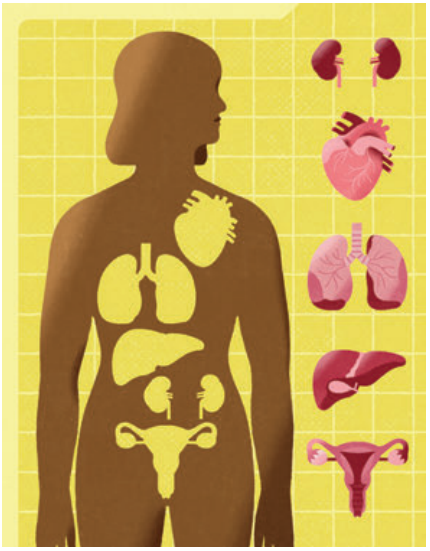
I read with great interest the feature article by Mary Ann Meyers on the "New World of Organ Transplantation" [Mar|Apr 2025]—partly because it was informative and partly because I was a clinical director at HUP for Medical Nursing, Emergency Services, and Dialysis from 1985 to 1991 and lived through part of this period.

The article's stated premise is: "Penn's latest advances and future hopes for saving and improving lives through transplant technologies build on a foundation laid down by pioneering surgeons and scientists going back to the 1960s." This is true—and yet totally inadequate to explain the success of the program if the contributions of the dozens of members of the clinical team aren't also included in this calculus.

I'm referring to senior nursing leaders and the dozens of nursing staff who were with these patients 24/7, for weeks or months, checking vital signs, preventing complications, making sure that those kidneys were passing urine, and dealing with family issues and crises; the many pharmacists who guided the pharmacology protocols and ensured that the right drugs in the right dosages were dispensed; the social workers who coordinated transitions of care, financial planning, and social support; and the list goes on. These people are every bit as much a causative factor in the success of the program.

I would suggest that a companion piece be developed, highlighting that more than a village, it takes an entire team of professionals with diverse yet complementary areas of expertise, pulling together in the same direction to achieve such landmark success.

Joanne Disch, former staff, Minneapolis



"It takes an entire team of professionals with diverse yet complementary areas of expertise, pulling together in the same direction to achieve such landmark success."

Animal Rights Will Be the "Next New Frontier"

In "The New World of Organ Transplantation," James Markmann, Penn's vice president for transplantation services, suggests that "organs from animals, or xenografts, represent the 'next new frontier' in organ transplantation's future."

I believe the next new frontier is animal rights, with animals having self-determination and the right not to be bred by humans, and the right to hold onto their own organs.

David Sauder SW'81, Blackwood, NJ

The writer is president of Animal Rights Activists of New Jersey, Inc.—Ed.

NOTAble Connection

Permit me to add another University of Pennsylvania connection to your article "The New World of Organ Transplantation." In 1982–83 while on sabbatical as a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow, National Academy of Medicine, I served on the staff of the House of Representatives Science Oversight Subcommittee, headed by then Democratic Representative Albert Gore of Tennessee, and organized the congressional hearings on organ transplants that led to the passage of the National Organ Transplant Act (NOTA) in 1984. The hearings attracted national attention, including a two-part Health Policy Report in the *New England Journal of Medicine* by John Iglehart in which I was explicitly noted: "The broader issues concerning transplantation were raised by Dr. Myron Genel, a professor of pediatrics at the Yale University School of Medicine."

Once the congressional hearings were completed, I assisted in drafting NOTA—the basis for the organ procurement system that continues to serve the US organ transplant system—and for a few years participated in a number of national meetings devoted to the issue.

Myron Genel M'61, Woodbridge, CT

Kennedy Captured the Crowd

The photo of Robert Kennedy speaking at the Palestra that was included in the article "On Highway 67 (and Beyond)" [Mar|Apr 2025] brought back memories. I was in the audience when Kennedy spoke. Most of the students supported Eugene McCarthy at the time and were chanting,

Illustration by Gracia Lam

"We want Gene." Kennedy leaned into the microphone and said, "Well, you're stuck with me." By the end of the speech he had the audience eating out of his hand.

Elliot B. Werner C'67 M'71, Wayne, PA

Postcards' Power

Reading Lisa Greene's wonderful piece "Postcard Time Machine" ["Alumni Voices," Mar|Apr 2025] on the joys of postcards connected me with a kindred spirit. My family also used postcards heavily to keep in touch from the road and briefly bring someone up to speed. They were long enough to convey a brief message, communicate that you cared, and brighten someone's day, but short enough to not be a burden or require delving into simmering issues. Even in this age of rapid communication with texting and email, people still like a picturesque, tangible expression of real mail in the form of a postcard.

When my mother began facing her courageous but inevitable spiral into dementia, I developed the habit of sending her a daily postcard, giving her a reason to visit her mailbox to pick up a stimulating image and an update on her grandchildren. As we cleaned out her apartment after her passing, the postcards were everywhere. The daily ritual worked so well that it became a habit for my son after he left for boarding school. Cards of the Grand Canyon, Northern New England, and European capitals were reminders of exciting adventures. A few of the more risqué art postcards initially raised an eyebrow or two, but a drawn in school uniform or swimsuit eliminated any potential source of embarrassment. Over time, he became good friends with the team in the mailroom.

But now, the tradition is set to take a new turn as he starts his freshman year at Wharton this fall. I will memorize a new address and use it to remind him that, though physically he may be a few states away, he still is ever present in our thoughts.

Andrew T. Jay D'86, Charlestown, MA

Worth the Wait

I read with interest Lisa Greene's "Postcard Time Machine."

As an inveterate postcard writer, I would like to relate my own postcard adventure. I was in Antarctica in February and March of 2020, oblivious to the surging COVID-19 health crisis (we had no internet or phone). En route, I took up pen and card and wrote missives to friends and to myself about penguin encounters. I dutifully posted the cards from the onboard "Penguin Post." Returning in mid-March to Ushuaia, Argentina, I made my way back to Buenos Aires, to board one of the last flights back to the States, before everything shut down in the face of the pandemic.

Two years later, to the day, my self-addressed postcard arrived! I have no idea of the details of its voyage, and assume it traveled to South Georgia, to Ushuaia, to the UK, and on to my New Jersey home. The next day, I received emails from several friends whose cards were in the same batch, asking if I had returned to the White Continent—they had failed to notice the year on the cancellation stamp!

I will certainly continue to scribble those mini journals, never knowing if they reach their destinations, and how long the journey.

Perhaps Lisa and I share a snippet of postcard DNA.

Art Gertel C'75, White House Station, NJ

Quite a Car!

I read the essay "Sweet Chariots" with great interest ["Rabbit Hole," Mar|Apr 2025]. I remember when I needed to move from one side of Zurich to the other, someone from my group brought a 2CV to help me. I looked askance at the car and suggested we would need to make several trips, as I had a single bed to move and other furniture. *No, no*, he replied, and proceeded to move all my boxes and furniture into the back of the car. Amazingly, we still had space up front for both of us to sit. Quite a car!

Catherine Schein CW'74, Friendswood, TX

Offensive Caricatures and Stereotypes

As a longtime affectionate reader of the *Gazette*, I am writing to you wondering how Noah Isenberg's essay "The Milan Affair" ["Elsewhere," Mar|Apr 2025] could receive space for publication in this esteemed magazine.

The article is full of offensive caricatures and stereotypes mostly about Italians. It portrays them as thieves, racists, non-proficient in English, "pranksters," habitually engaging in "little love [affairs]" during lunch shifts, and encouraging "promiscuous night life." The article does not spare a stereotype of "very tall models from Sweden" [women].

The pervasive infantile machismo of the article is perhaps highlighted in mentioning that the pensione where he was staying only had one rule: no guests. Did the rule of not urinating out of the window need to be stated?

Indeed, as Isenberg states: "my underdeveloped brain clearly hadn't evolved any in Milan," so one should not give him space for his puny exhibitions.

Carla Locatelli, faculty, Philadelphia

Warning: Dangerous Cuts Ahead

The same day I received the Mar|Apr 2025 *Gazette*, the US president signed an executive order eliminating the Institute of Museum and Library Services as "unnecessary."

"Museums and Acquisitions" ["Gazetteer"], about the Penn Cultural Heritage Center's latest initiative funded by IMLS, seemed to have been written on another planet.

What will happen to the Penn Cultural Heritage Center under the Trump regime? The *Gazette* should include a warning with every article about university programs funded directly or indirectly by the federal government: "This program (or initiative or department or study) is in danger of termination because of federal cutbacks."

Readers should be made aware of the real damage the Trump administration is doing to our University.

Linda Rabben GPS'74, Baltimore

For more on the impact of federal cuts to research funding, see "Gazetteer." —Ed.

Penn Solved the Humanities-STEM Debate in the 1960s

Jonathan Zimmerman's letter, "Humanities Have (More Than) Market Value," in the Mar|Apr 2025 issue resurfaces the timeless STEM-Humanities discussion, although I did not see it explicitly addressed in Peter Struck's comments in the article the letter was commenting on ["Course Corrections," Jan|Feb 2025].

Penn had a solution for this dilemma in the 1960s that was called the "3/2 Program." I took advantage, upped the ante, and eventually earned Penn MS degrees in both engineering and anthropology (archaeology concentration). Zimmerman is correct about educating the humanistic spirit and promoting a "good life." It certainly does. The engineering component of my education followed my dad's advice, and he was right too. Thanks to Penn for their solution 60 years ago. Together the degrees made for a rich and productive life.

Both were relevant throughout my career. As CEO of the Greek company Attiko Metro I needed both skills in almost equal measure to construct two metro subway lines, to oversee major archaeological works, and to create museums in many of the stations. In retirement the humanities education and how that passion evolved is priceless.

William G. Stead CE'69 GCE'70 G'81, Chambersburg, PA

Course (Title) Corrections?

Thanks, Trey Popp, for informing us of changes in undergraduate course choices and requirements starting in 1959 ["Course Corrections," Jan|Feb 2025]. I graduated one year earlier, having majored in American Civilization, an interdisciplinary approach to American culture (not mentioned in the article). Included in the broad umbrella of that major were courses in American literature, history, art, architecture, politics, and the essential Am Civ 1 and Am Civ 2. Some years later, Penn dropped American Civilization as a major. But I am forever grateful to Professors Anthony Garvan and Murray Murphey for challenging me to think in new terms of an American sociological perspective.

I had no idea that a year after I graduated, Fidel Castro would question my major.

In April 1959, having just taken over Cuba, Castro came to the United States. Even though President Eisenhower had not yet determined how our country would accept the revolutionary leader, the *Harvard Law Review* invited him to speak. I was then a student in Harvard's Graduate School of Education and was invited by a *Law Review* member to the Castro cocktail party and speech. At the party, I considered myself an observer, just a guest of one of the hosts. So I was stunned when Castro turned to me and asked bluntly, "What are *you* studying?" Wanting to make clear I was not a law school student, I stammered, "Oh, I'm in the Graduate School of Education."

Despite Castro's very limited English (a khaki-uniformed translator stood at his side the entire evening), he calmly but quickly followed with, "And what will you teach?" Truthfully, at that time I really didn't know what, or even if, I'd eventually teach. But I was on the spot. I had to say something.

"American history," I blurted. At least it was an answer. I hoped he wasn't going to follow through more specifically.

His quick retort surprised me: "Do you mean American history or United States history?" In the following seconds of startled silence, I realized that through all my American Civilization studies I had not considered, or been presented with, that question.

"You're right," I admitted, sensing a bit of either guilt or embarrassment. "I guess I should say 'United States history.'"

I don't remember that Castro actually smiled, but it was clear he had made his point. "Ah," he responded, "why *don't* you teach American history—including Central America and South America too?" It was a rhetorical question that has stuck in my mind all these years.

Judith G. Zalesne CW'58, West Palm Beach, FL

Another Traveler to Knock

I may have inadvertently played a walk-on role in Martha Cooney's delightful and engaging account of her brief visit to Knock Airport, "Lying to the Irish" ["Elsewhere," Jan|Feb 2025].

My own visit to Knock Airport was even more brief than Martha's, though thankfully less eventful.

After leaving Penn I had followed the obvious career path for anyone with a graduate degree in 16th-century music and literature—I became an airline pilot, flying out of airports in the United Kingdom. One of my first flights was to Knock Airport with a planeload of exactly the same white-haired pilgrims with rosaries as described by Cooney.

Knock is possibly the smallest airport I have flown into. The long approach path carried us over miles of green fields with little sign of an airport, until finally it appeared as a speck in the distance. Sadly I didn't even leave the plane as I had to prepare the return flight and 30 minutes later, we were away again. So I wonder if the rosary-carrying pilgrims in Cooney's account had alighted from my airplane. Small world!

(Footnote: that 30 minutes remains the only time I have spent on Irish soil, despite my apparently having 90 percent Irish DNA).

Mike Chalmers G'77, Bath, UK

Unlikely Camper

The summer after my mother died, I was sent to a camp I could hardly have imagined.

By Charles Lattimore Howard

Illustration by Jonathan Bartlett

After my mother passed away when I was little, my older sister, Ami, 12 years my senior, took me in. She, along with my other siblings, Chucky and Trinah, and my cousin Joe, are in many ways the heroes of my childhood. There was never a day that I didn't know that I was loved. That doesn't mean that there weren't difficult days—in fact, most of the days were difficult—but love finds a way.

My sister was 23 years old when she became my guardian. She was working and taking classes, so there were many nights that I would come home to an empty apartment. After figuring out something for dinner, I would either meet up with friends or find a basketball hoop to pass the time and get my mind off of things. Hours can go by when a kid is just getting up shots, playing against imaginary opponents, pretending to be dribbling down the court with just 10 seconds on the clock and then taking the final shot . . . "for the win!"

Basketball helped keep me sane. It was a friend during lonely evenings. I had not at that point played organized basketball or had any formal coaching, but I still dreamed of one day either playing for John Thompson at Georgetown or Mike Krzyzewski at Duke.

At the beginning of that first summer after Mom had died, with the hope of keeping her little brother out of trouble during the months when I would not have school to keep me occupied, my sister found an overnight sports camp for me to attend.

When she first told me, I was intrigued. An all-boys camp where we play sports all day? And at each meal they serve kid food like chicken nuggets, pizza, or hamburgers? This sounded amazing. She then told me that the camp wasn't in Baltimore where we lived, or even another city in Maryland. The camp was in Maine.

Leaving my sister felt like another loss to me, and this grief followed me to the camp, which was by far the farthest away from home I had ever been, and I arrived with tears in my eyes. It was not an easy start for a new kid who wanted to seem cool to his bunkmates. And yet it wasn't just my crying that made me stand out on that first day. I quickly realized that I was the only person in the camp who was Black, including campers, counselors, cooks, and groundskeepers. My sister somehow forgot to mention the racial demographics of the camp. But that's not all she forgot.

My sister somehow forgot to mention the racial demographics of the camp. But that's not all she forgot.

The first Friday evening rolled around, and we made our way to the rec hall, which was a multipurpose building that served as a cafeteria, theater, and auditorium for gatherings. When I walked in, several guys put on their heads what I described in a letter to my sister as "little caps." They then began to sing songs in a different language, and it finally dawned on me that this wasn't just a predominantly white camp. It was in fact a *Jewish* camp.

I was shocked, to say the least. My only previous exposure to the Jewish community had been mediated through my father. My father was a good man. A strong, groundbreaking African American attorney who was a great dad to me and my siblings. I don't remember a lot of our conversations as it has now been many years since he passed away, but I do remember him from time to time talking about "those Jews." He spoke with derision and with what I'd now call antisemitism.

He was responding to the discrimination and hate that he and others in the Black community felt from their Jewish neighbors, a sad, paralyzing circle of distrust that dissolved what was at times an important alliance in Baltimore and in American history.

I couldn't help but hear his loud baritone echo from the past as I sat surrounded by my Jewish bunkmates. *Would they discriminate against me too?* I wondered. *Would I dislike and hate them?*

One afternoon during that first week, I was at the basketball court during a free play period finding solace in an activity and space that was familiar. Alone and holding back tears, I was putting up a lot of shots, but found that I was missing most of them. I was big and fast, which usually brought me success in sports, but my shooting form was off, and I had never received the guidance that proper coaching can bring. So, I stood alone on that blacktop court feeling bad about my inability to play ball well and feeling awkward about my inability to fit in.

The director of the camp was a man named Lee Horowitz. A tall, kind man who had coached basketball and lacrosse most of his life, he approached me, in the gracious grandfatherly way that he was known for, and asked if he could give me a "few tips" about how to shoot the ball.

Sometimes small adjustments can completely change the trajectory of the shots we take and the trajectory of our entire lives.

It wasn't lost on me that Lee was not working with the standout players who had started a pickup game at another basket or doing whatever it was that camp directors did all day. Instead, he was with me, a homesick Christian Black kid with bad shooting form. A homesick Christian Black kid who ended up going back to that camp, summer after summer, for 10 years, eventually becoming the head basketball counselor.

Every Friday of those 10 years I would participate in the Friday night services,

often helping to lead the congregation in singing the *Shema* and picking up just enough Hebrew to pass a language requirement years later in seminary.

My bunkmates and many others at that camp became family to me and we shared each other's journeys. They shared with me what it was like to be one of a very few Jewish students in a school with friends trying to convert you, the difficulty of being in Christian-normative communities and enduring ongoing questions and jokes about what you can't eat, and the sting of antisemitism. I provided them with a window into what it was like to be one of a very few Black kids in a school with people thinking you are less intelligent, are going to steal something, or only got in because of sports or affirmative action. We played ball together, got in trouble together, went to bar mitzvahs and birthday parties with one another. I even officiated the weddings of some of those guys. They were and remain family to me.

Those guys welcomed and loved "the foreigner living among them," as Torah commands. They were brothers and allies across racial and religious differences and continue to be so amid time and distance. So much happened during the 10 minutes or so that Lee Horowitz spent with me on the court that night. He really did improve my shot. He also began the healing of a generational interracial/interfaith distrust that I had inherited. He also planted a seed that would grow into a lifelong love of mentoring and coaching basketball.

Charles (Chaz) Howard C'00 is the University Chaplain and Vice President for Social Equity & Community at Penn. Excerpt from *Uncovering Your Path: Spiritual Reflections for Finding Your Purpose* by Charles Lattimore Howard (Morehouse Publishing).

Illustration by Hadley Hooper

Close Your Eyes

None of my new friends at Penn knew I lived in a car each summer.

By Caren Lissner

Three weeks after my freshman year of college ended in 1990 and I said goodbye to my new friends at Kings Court—after we'd hugged and packed up turntables, newfangled CD players, personal computers, and a few typewriters—I was sitting in the back of my mom's Plymouth Duster in a strip mall parking lot in Woodstock, New York, watching heat lightning silently flash green and blue across the sky.

The radio said a tornado watch had been issued for Sullivan and Ulster counties. I waited for the sky to open up. A few wet spots appeared on our windshield.

"Try to get some sleep," my mom said, up front.

My brother, dog, and I were crowded into the back seat amid boxes of our belongings. Just like the past three summers, we were sleeping in her car.

Ever since she'd gotten divorced when I was in junior high, my mom had rented a slew of cheap places for us to live, sometimes month to month while searching for a more permanent arrangement. The last one had been in a Jersey Shore town, but the rent was about to spike for summer. My mom thought she might find a cheap bunga-

low in the Catskills, where the resorts were dying.

But she hadn't started looking for a new place until days before the last lease ended—a constant source of frustration for me. During high school I kept a calendar and repeatedly reminded her of deadlines, but we still often ended up in our car or cheap motels. I started school assignments well in advance and handed them in days before the due date in case emergencies arose, and I was a stickler for deadlines as a student newspaper editor. I'd been in enough desperate situations to avoid them any way I could.

Most of our furniture was in storage in New Jersey, but many of my dorm belongings were beneath my feet: notebooks, clothes, the stereo that had kept me sane. As heat lightning flickered, I wore my Walkman headphones, listening to tapes I'd made from friends' records freshman year. I hoped to distract myself from the possibility that I could be sleeping in the car for three months.

Music was one of the main things my floormates and I had bonded over freshman year. The defining dynamic of 1980s radio was that Top 40 stations would play a hit song over and over until everyone got sick of it, then never play it again. If you didn't buy the record when it was out, you might go years without catching an old favorite on the radio.

By the time my peers arrived at the University in the last months of 1989, we furiously passed around tapes of tunes we hadn't heard since our adolescence and admired the guy on our floor who had a multiple-bay CD player.

Freshman year was in fact a year of constant sharing, but there were some things we held back. On the third floor of Kings Court English College House, we talked about relationships or the lack thereof (some of us had never been on a date, be it because we were shy or sheltered), our class ranks and SAT scores (nerdy but true), and our parents' divorces. Yet there was much about classmates' families I only found out years later. I certainly didn't tell them, as the year wound down and they talked about summer jobs in their hometowns, that I had no idea where I was going.

And I didn't have the language yet to explain what was happening. For years, my mom had told me the FBI was out to get her—but sometimes they wanted to hire her. She would land a new job and be excited about it, then quit because someone was talking about her. She bought things we couldn't afford and often ran out of money before the end of the month. I didn't understand the reasons behind her decisions. I'd try to argue, but a funny smile would cross her face and she'd say I knew what was going on.

I loved my little room in Kings Court. I loved the clink of my own key in the lock.

It pained me that I wanted to be a writer but never could find the words to dislodge her ideas.

If there was an upside, it was my realization during high school that studying could lead to college and four years of stability. While teens can't control much, studying was something I could control. If I could find a quiet corner of a motel room to memorize English vocabulary words, I took it. I applied to Penn, got an acceptance letter along with financial aid, and said yes.

For all the rhetoric about college being "elitist," I met many people who similarly saw it as a way out of a confusing or unstable situation, who used it as a goal to keep them going through high school. I met kids freshman year whose parents worked in minimum wage jobs or hadn't finished high school. But at some point they'd connected with that one teacher or adult who told them that if they focused on their strengths, college might expose them to new opportunities.

I loved my little room in Kings Court. I loved the clink of my own key in the lock and loved my phone number: 573-TUKI. I called myself "Tuki Typing" based on the number and stuck flyers on campus offering to type people's papers for a buck a page. Many people took me up on that (amid the obligatory prank calls). And I loved my work-study job doing dorm publicity. In fact, I applied to be dorm publicity manager for sophomore year and got the job. That meant I would stay in Kings Court for another year, but first I had to get through the summer of 1990.

On that June night in the parking lot, I wrote letters on lined paper to floormates in Maryland, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

"Stop moving around," my mom told us. "Close your eyes."

I didn't mention my situation in my letters, since homelessness carried a huge stigma in the 1980s. Once, while returning to school on a train after a break, I heard a man sitting behind me tell his adult children, "There's no reason for anyone to be homeless. They have all these programs for them." I wanted to turn around and suggest that the situation was more complicated, but I didn't.

And my year at Penn had also opened my eyes to how lucky I was. Two of my floormates and I had volunteered each week at the "Friday Night Meal," a soup kitchen inside a church on 43rd Street. The crack epidemic was in full swing, and I saw poverty and illness all around. One time I watched a man freeze in place as he brought his fork to his mouth. At least my situation was temporary, I thought—although I wasn't sure about my mom. (Years later, she'd end up sleeping on the streets and subways of Manhattan, but that's for another day.)

In the back of the car I yearned for stability, and I yearned for a shower, but what I wanted most desperately was to

go back to being the helper—the soup kitchen volunteer—instead of the person needing help.

My dad lived with his new wife and kids a few hours away, and I could stay there briefly, but there wasn't much room for me, and it carried other complications. It wasn't a long-term solution.

The radio announcer told us in her quiet voice that the tornado watch had been extended until 8 p.m. I didn't see much happening. But we were in a strip mall and I noticed a glowing light from the used record store. I asked my mom If I could go.

Her decisions could be unpredictable.

"Fine," she said.

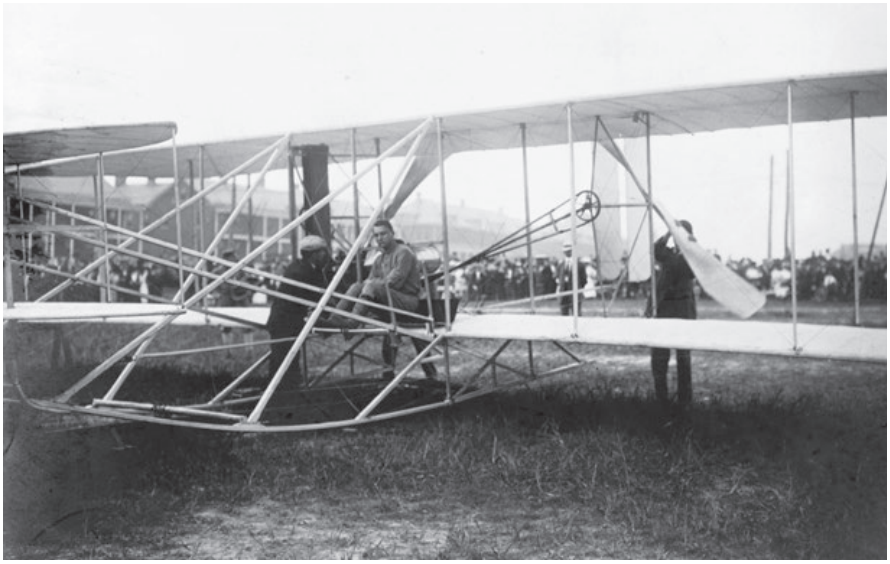
I weaved through the store, relishing my freedom. The albums had three price tiers: 29 cents (usually scratched), 59, and 99. I bought albums I remembered from elementary school: Michael Jackson, the Clash, even Devo.

Three months, I told myself as I paid with change. In three months I'll be back in Kings Court, playing the records in my room. Maybe next spring I'd apply for one of those Residential Living jobs that allowed you to stay in the dorm a few weeks longer. Maybe I'd earn extra money to help my mom, I thought.

A week later, Mom found a crumbling bungalow colony near the town of Liberty, New York. I slept on a mattress on the floor and the felt cool mountain air shoot through a broken screen. A new song topped the charts that month, "Hold On" by Wilson Phillips, and I tried to memorize the lyrics: *Hold on for one more day…*

September came and I returned to Kings Court. I put my stereo on the desk and finally played the records I'd picked up that summer. I was ready to learn about Shakespeare and economics and politics. But mostly, I wanted to learn while knowing I had a stable place to come home to.

Caren Lissner C'93 is working on a memoir, *How We Became Homeless: A Cringy Chronicle Of Downward Mobility*. Find more of her writing at carenlissner.com.



Lt. Selfridge and Mr. Wright stepping into the Wright aeroplane at Fort Myer, Virginia.

Uh-oh

"When you invent the plane, you also invent the plane crash."

By Randy Malamud

The first fatal airplane crash was piloted by Orville Wright (of all people!) in his eponymous Wright Model A. The cofounder of aviation survived but his passenger, Signal Corps Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge, did not.

Demonstrating a military prototype of the Model A, Wright's flight on September 17, 1908, carried a heavier load than ever before: the men's combined weight was 320 pounds. Four minutes into the flight, as they circled Fort Myer, Virginia—adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery, where Selfridge would be interred a few days later—one of the wooden propellers broke off. A new elongated design, it had never before been tested.

The propeller dislodged a wire bracing the rear vertical rudder, sending the plane into a dive from its altitude of 100 feet. It crashed nose-first into the ground, throwing both men forward into the tangle of wires connecting the biplane's top and bottom wings. Biographer Fred Howard describes the original debris field:

> The skids [undercarriage] collapsed, the wings turned up, the motor tore loose and struck the ground with a thud like a small earthquake. For a second or two the Flyer and its occupants were entirely concealed in a boiling cloud of dust. … Gradually the extent of the damage became visible. The Flyer's wings were knocked out of shape, its skids smashed to kindling. The left propeller was intact but both ends of the right propeller were broken off. One of the broken pieces dangled by a shred of its fabric covering. Orville and Selfridge were pinned beneath the upper wing, their faces buried in the dust.

Wright was hospitalized for weeks: a fractured leg, broken ribs, and damaged hip caused him pain for the rest of his life. Although he continued flying after the crash, it was always physically uncomfortable.

Selfridge—like the Wright brothers, an airplane designer—hit one of the framework's wooden uprights, fracturing his skull. He underwent surgery but died without regaining consciousness. He was not wearing protective headgear; had he been, he might have survived. It's common protocol to identify and rectify safety lapses after a crash, to ensure the same problem doesn't recur, a practice aviators adopted

Photo by P.F. Collier & Son courtesy Library of Congress

from the start. When the US Army began flying planes in 1909, soon after Selfridge's death—the accident happened on a flight trial during the Wrights' bid for the contract—pilots and passengers wore heavy head protectors resembling football helmets. The Wrights also modified the defective propeller after the crash: "The blades were redesigned and made heavier at that point and canvas was added down their concave sides," writes Richard Stimson. "The tubes supporting the propeller axles were braced so that any vibration would not cause the propellers to reach the wires bracing the vertical rudder in the tail."

But if such trial-and-error safety fixes were on point in the wake of that crash, one aspect was well below par: the victim's final words. According to Wright, Selfridge's last utterance was "Uh-oh"—an extremely understated ejaculation, perhaps reflecting the absence of a tradition in this trope. Today, final words have become a florid and fetishized feature of plane crashes, but Selfridge could not have known that he was supposed to expire on a more dramatic note, something along the lines of "That's it, I'm dead." (the pilot's last words on Surinam Airways Flight 764, which ran out of gas, hit a tree and crashed during a foggy third landing attempt in 1989, killing 176 out of the 187 people aboard), or "United 173, Mayday! The engines are flaming out—We're going down!" (the aircraft ran out of fuel while the crew was distracted with landing gear problems in 1978, causing 10 fatalities out of the 189 on board), or "Brace yourself. Ma, I love you!" (Pacific Southwest Airlines Flight 182 collided in midair with a small Cessna in 1978, killing all 135 on that flight as well as both people in the other plane and seven more on the ground). Then again, as the Model A had only 100 feet to fall, perhaps there just wasn't enough time for a grandiloquent farewell.

Media coverage of that ur-crash anticipated what would become the template for reporting on such disasters. The lead story in the next day's *New York Times* began by describing the moments before the tragedy:

Selfridge Enjoyed It Keenly

As the aeroplane dashed off the rising track Lieut. Selfridge waved his hand gayly to a group of army officers and newspaper men and threw back some laughing remarks that were drowned in the whir of the propellers. As he swept around Selfridge evidently was enjoying himself thoroughly. When the machine sailed above the heads of the crowd at the head of the field it could be seen plainly that he and Wright were holding an animated conversation. Selfridge interrupted this for a moment to wave a greeting to his friends.

Irony, which is frequently the central premise of plane-crash journalism, flourishes in the genre's inaugural example. Selfridge was having a "gayly" animated time up in the air—until he wasn't.

Selfridge's expertise with the precise mechanism that failed—another poignant irony—was an angle that current crash stories, too, would undoubtedly highlight:

> It is a singular thing that Selfridge designed the propeller of the Baldwin airship [a dirigible produced that same year], which was considered a marvel for efficiency, and yet met his death by the breaking of a propeller.

"And yet": the ironic reversal, the last thing in the world we would've expected. On some level (ground level!), every plane-crash narrative is written in the key of "and yet." How interesting—but also, how inevitable—that the first news story about the first fatal plane crash presented all the tropes and tones, bits and bobs, that would comprise so many other crash narratives to come. It was breaking news: it's not as if the writers and editors could have met to strategize about the genre's rhetorical components.

Mary Winter, who was there "when that horrible accident occurred to Mr. Wright's aeroplane & poor Mr. Selfridge was killed," wrote to her friend Eleanor Bliss: "I saw it & I can't get the picture of it & the horror of it out of my mind. The machine moved with the freedom & ease of a bird & I had seen it so often that I had gotten no feeling that there was any danger in it—so much so that I was really crazy to go up in it myself." The letter captures her dramatic astonishment, and empathy, and shock, and the persisting trauma of witnessing the crash—alongside, strikingly interwoven, the flight's beauty, its aura of natural grace. Winter conveys her sense of the miracle these aviators experienced in their newfangled mobility, and her dismay at how in an instant, before her eyes, their transcendent performance failed. Her churning emotions eloquently set the stage for the angst that would be written, spoken, filmed, sung, painted, tweeted over the coming generations, as aviation got better and better, more expansive, serving ever greater numbers of travelers with ever greater convenience, while airplanes continued to crash again and again.

Some believe President Theodore Roosevelt was supposed to be on this flight instead of Selfridge, though the evidence is historically skimpy: it may be true, or it may be merely truthy, one of those close-shave anecdotes that crashes regularly precipitate. Roosevelt purportedly expressed a desire to accompany Orville on a test flight; Wright supposedly said he thought it too risky for the president to take such a chance. Roosevelt did finally fly, without incident, in 1910, becoming the first US president (though out of office by then) to take to the air. His pilot, Archibald Hoxsey, crashed two months after that flight, plummeting from 7,000 feet while attempting a new altitude record. The Wrights paid for his funeral.

"When you invent the plane, you also invent the plane crash," writes cultural theorist Paul Virilio. Theoretically this is a logical, if unsettling, assumption. But just because things are theoretical doesn't mean they won't actually happen, as Orville Wright and Thomas Selfridge demonstrated all too literally. Uh-oh.

Randy Malamud C'83 is the author of *CRASH! Aviation Disasters and the Cultural Debris Fields*, from which this essay has been adapted with permission from Bloomsbury Academic.

Trustees Name Jameson Penn's 10th President

Jonathan Epstein's appointment as head of Penn Medicine was also made permanent.

The *interim* is gone from Penn President J. Larry Jameson's title following a unanimous vote by the board of trustees in March appointing him the University's president—the 10th individual to hold the office on a permanent basis since it was established in 1930. (Until then, the provost fulfilled both the roles of chief academic officer, as now, and chief executive.) Jameson had been serving on an interim basis since December 2023 following the resignation of former president Liz Magill ["Gazetteer," Jan|Feb 2024].

Photo courtesy Office of the President

Jonathan Epstein has been named the head of the Perelman School of Medicine and the Penn Health System.

"The challenges facing higher education today are among the most significant ever encountered by American universities. Given Penn's complexity, size, location, and visibility, these issues have profound implications for our community," trustees chair Ramanan Raghavendran EAS'89 W'89 LPS'15 said in a statement. "In such a moment, there is nothing more important than leadership. Penn has been very fortunate to have Larry Jameson at the helm during this time. I am pleased that our board can recognize his exceptional performance, and acknowledge his inspirational leadership and vision, by formally extending his appointment to June 30, 2027."

Jameson, who as interim had agreed to stay on through the 2025–2026 academic year, said he was "deeply honored" by the board's vote of confidence. "I look forward to continuing the vital work of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members to uphold Penn's mission of utilizing knowledge for the greater good," he said. "I am confident that our University's future is bright as we prioritize our core values of excellence, freedom of inquiry and expression, and respect."

In an interview with the *Gazette* shortly after his own election as chair of the board of trustees in January 2024 ["Gazetteer," Mar|Apr 2024], Raghavendran commented on Jameson's approach to the interim appointment: "Larry's not a caretaker—he is an action-oriented human being, and he's taking lots of actions I feel good about."

In his 15 months as interim president, Jameson navigated Penn through continuing campus unrest over the war in Gaza and last spring's pro-Palestinian encampment on College Green, dismantled after 16 days; the release of final reports from the University Task Force on Antisemitism and the Presidential Commission on Countering Hate and Building Community; and the launch of Penn's Office of Religious and Ethnic Interests (Title VI), described as the first of its kind nationally.

"I am confident that our University's future is bright."

Jameson's tenure has also seen the University offer a restatement of its core values and articulate a new policy of institutional neutrality limiting comments by leadership on public events "except for those which have direct and significant bearing on University functions." And his administration has overseen the relaunch and first steps toward implementation of the University's strategic plan, *In Principle and Practice*, including the appointment of new faculty leaders in the arts and climate, the establishment of Penn Washington to center the University's engagement in the nation's capital, advances in AI research and education, and the creation of "Draw Down the Lightning" grants designed to advance the plan's goals for Penn, the first round of which were awarded in March. (Readers can find more information on many of the above developments in past issues' "Gazetteer" sections on our website.)

Further challenges await Jameson's administration, as the University confronts the impact of executive orders issued by President Donald J. Trump W'68 (see page 18).

Before his move to College Hall, Jameson had spent more than a dozen years leading Penn Medicine as executive vice president of the University of Pennsylvania for the health system and dean of the Perelman School of Medicine. Jonathan Epstein, then executive vice dean and chief scientific officer of the School of Medicine and the health system's senior vice president and chief scientific officer, was named as his interim replacement—and following a "comprehensive selection process" that appointment was also made permanent as of March 1.

In a statement, Jameson called Epstein "an eminent physician-scientist, a visionary leader, and a dedicated institutional citizen" and said he had "played an integral role in shaping Penn Medicine's excellence across research, education, and patient care."

He cited Epstein's integrity, passion, and "commitment to the highest standards of patient care and medical education" as factors in choosing him for the position. "Above all," Jameson added, "I sought someone with an ambitious vision for Penn Medicine's future and immense respect for its culture—someone who will build on our tradition of excellence while forging new opportunities for interdisciplinary research, clinical innovation, and global impact."

A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Medical School, Epstein came to Penn in 1996 and has earned international recognition for his research in areas including mRNA-based therapeutics and cardiovascular regenerative medicine.

"Leading Penn Medicine at such a critical time in the evolution of medicine and health care is a profound privilege," Epstein said. "Penn is a place where scientific discovery, patient care, and education are seamlessly integrated, creating an environment of unparalleled excellence. It is the honor of my life to take on this role and to work alongside our extraordinary faculty, students, trainees, and staff to advance Penn Medicine's mission and to shape the future of health and medicine." *—JP*

Photo by Kyle Kielinski courtesy Penn Medicine

Kate Griffo Chosen as New VP for DAR

Penn Medicine's chief advancement officer will lead the University's overall development and alumni relations efforts.

Kathryn "Kate" Griffo—previously chief advancement officer for Penn Medicine—has been appointed the University's vice president for development and alumni relations (DAR) as of April 1. She replaces James Husson, who left for a similar position at Harvard University after a bit more than two years at Penn ["Gazetteer," Nov|Dec 2022].

Griffo, who has spent nearly two decades at Penn, raised more than $4 billion for Penn Medicine over the University's *Making History* and *Power of Penn* fundraising campaigns, shepherding major naming opportunities—including the Perelman School of Medicine, Abramson Cancer Center, Smilow Center for Translational Research, Jordan Medical Education Center, Roberts Center for Proton Therapy and, most recently, the Clifton Center for Medical Breakthroughs—as well as advancing research across a broad range of fields and increasing financial aid for medical students.

"Kate Griffo is a highly respected leader whose strategic vision, dedication, and ability to build strong relationships have redounded to Penn Medicine's and the University's lasting benefit," said Penn President J. Larry Jameson. "I am confident that in this new role, Kate will continue driving Penn's fundraising success and deepen connections within our alumni and donor community."

A first-generation college student, Griffo graduated from Dickinson College, where she had a work-study job as a prospect researcher—her first exposure to advancement work. After a brief stint as a substitute high school English teacher, she worked in development and alumni relations at Bryn Mawr College, which gave her "a chance to rotate through kind of every aspect of a development program," she says. After seven years there, she joined Penn as a major gifts officer.

At Penn Medicine, she worked both with Arthur Rubenstein, who was dean of the medical school and vice president for the health system from 2001 to 2011, and with President Jameson throughout his tenure in the position. The chance to team up with Jameson again was a major attraction, she says. Another was "the opportunity to work more broadly with alumni across all the schools because they are a powerful force for good. They bring so much to Penn's future, and I think it's a really important time to tap into that network in new ways."

Griffo says she is also looking forward to better understanding the "financial aid picture for students across the University" and to furthering the Quaker Commitment (see above) by bringing "some creative strategies to support our alumni volunteers and Larry in raising money for financial aid"—an "evergreen" priority that is especially important now, with higher education under increased scrutiny and concerns rising over access and affordability. And she wants to look at ways to foster and recognize support for more cross-school collaborations "to tie some of those threads together in a way that really supports the entire University."

One lesson from Penn's successful past capital campaigns is the importance of establishing clear priorities. For now, those are coming from *In Principle and Practice*, the University's strategic plan, which could form the

Photo courtesy University Communications

EDUCATION COSTS

Financial Aid Upgrade

The University has announced a new financial aid initiative, called the Quaker Commitment, designed to support middle-income families. Beginning in the 2025–26 academic year, Penn will raise the income threshold for families eligible to receive full-tuition scholarships from $140,000 to $200,000 and will no longer factor a family's primary home equity into its financial aid eligibility assessment.

These initiatives will affect all aid-eligible undergraduate students, not just entering freshmen. Of Penn's approximately 10,000 undergraduates, 45.4 percent currently receive financial aid, with an average aid package of $70,552. In February, Penn's board of trustees approved a total undergraduate financial aid budget of $328 million for 2025–26, a 6.4 percent increase driven largely by the Quaker Commitment.

The Quaker Commitment builds on a financial aid program that eliminated loans in 2008 ["Gazetteer," Mar | Apr 2008] and, more recently in 2023–24, allowed students whose families earned $75,000 or less (up from $65,500 in 2022–23) to have their tuition, fees, housing, and dining fully covered—the total cost of which will surpass $90,000 in 2025–26.

"Access to affordable higher education is part of our national conversations," Penn President J. Larry Jameson said in a statement, "and the Quaker Commitment offers a compelling model for how higher education institutions can support more families."

Tuition and Aid for 2025–26 Academic Year

Undergraduate tuition	**$63,204**
Housing	**$13,132**
Dining	**$6,744**
Fees	**$8,032**
Total (3.7 percent annual increase)	**$91,112**
Total undergraduate financial aid (6.4 percent annual increase)	**$328 million**

basis for "mini campaigns" over Jameson's announced tenure, which runs until June 30, 2027, in advance of "a potentially larger campaign effort in the future," says Griffo. "So we want to be very intentional about putting building blocks in place that we can continue to build on with our alumni and our friends."

Doubts over the extent and reliability of federal funding are putting even more pressure on universities—and development offices—to raise money. "I'm not sure that philanthropy can make up for the entire picture of what might be happening at the federal level," Griffo says. "I think philanthropy is one piece of how we look at sources of revenue in the future," including expanding partnerships with foundations and corporations as well as alumni supporters.

"This is a time when we see many of our alumni stepping forward to say, 'How can I help?' And that is always a good thing, because we need their advocacy as we make sure that Penn's message remains true to our core values and our mission statement," Griffo adds.

"I think Penn has a really important role to play in people's lives, and that we need to keep our focus on making sure alumni know what's happening here, have access to information and programming, and have the chance to gather together, because I think that is such a crucial part of the experience that people are looking for." —*JP*

Universities Targeted

A flurry of destabilizing executive orders has hit Penn and other institutions.

As the *Gazette* was going to press in mid-April, the University was facing the loss of $175 million in federal research funding over the participation of transgender woman swimmer Lia Thomas C'22 on the women's swimming team three years ago, and hundreds of millions of dollars more were at risk in the wake of executive orders issued by President Donald J. Trump W'68. Although ongoing lawsuits or other circumstances could restore funding, in early March the University announced a series of proactive moves—including hiring and salary freezes, reductions in graduate student admissions, and other cost-cutting measures—to prepare for the possible repercussions of extensive cuts.

A number of schools have been singled out by the administration for suspension of grant funding over alleged violations of Title IX or Title VI guidelines, including fellow Ivy League institutions Columbia, Princeton, Brown, Cornell, and Harvard universities. In Penn's case, media reports emerged on March 19 that the White House was "pausing" $175 million in grants from the Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services because Penn had allowed Thomas to participate on the women's swimming team in the 2021–22 season, during which she won a NCAA championship in the 500-yard freestyle ["Sports," May|Jun 2022]. Separately the University had also been notified in February that it was under investigation by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) for Title IX violations in regard to its athletic participation policies.

In a March 25 statement Penn President J. Larry Jameson told the University community that Penn has never had its own policy on transgender athletic participation but has consistently followed Title IX guidance and NCAA rules for Division I sports. From 2010 until the day after Trump's executive order "Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports" was issued on February 5—at which point the NCAA revised its policies—those rules "required that transgender student-athletes be permitted to participate on college teams."

In response to an inquiry from the OCR on February 13, 2025, Jameson continued, "we affirmed that during the 2021–2022 season, we followed NCAA rules and applicable law as they existed then, and that we now comply with the NCAA policy and the law as they exist today. We expect to continue to engage with OCR, vigorously defending our position."

Despite Penn's compliance, stop work orders totaling about $175 million on federally contracted research had been received by faculty in seven schools, Jameson added, including "research on preventing hospital-acquired infections, drug screening against deadly viruses, quan-

Illustration by Rich Lillash

tum computing, protections against chemical warfare, and student loan programs." He went on to note that these orders have come on top of the previous cancellation of several federal grants and delays in the awarding of grants. "We are actively pursuing multiple avenues to understand and address these funding terminations, freezes, and slowdowns."

While higher education institutions have been blindsided by the freezing, slowdown, and continuing uncertainty over federal grants, another order directing the National Institutes of Health to impose a 15 percent limit on allowable indirect costs for grants could have an even more far-reaching impact, endangering the whole infrastructure of higher education and US leadership in science in the post-World War II era. Penn currently receives around $1 billion in federal funding annually, and such a change would translate into a yearly loss of $240 million, according to University estimates, rising to $315 million if other federal agencies followed suit.

"NIH-funded research at Penn has enriched the world in innumerable and lifesaving ways," Jameson wrote in a February 11 message to the Penn community following the announcement, "whether combatting cancer with CAR T therapy; developing vaccines with mRNA technology; creating gene editing tools and advancing gene therapy cures; developing drugs that treat a range of maladies, including those that combat macular degeneration and rare forms of congenital blindness—the list is long and powerful in its impact. The reduction in funds announced by the federal government would blunt this critical, lifesaving work."

Previously, the allowable percentage for indirect costs was negotiated between schools and the government "using a rigorous review process," Jameson wrote. Penn's agreed upon rate of 62.5 percent still only covers half of costs for things like specialized lab construction, utilities, technical equipment, regulatory compliance, and other infrastructure items.

On March 25, Jameson wrote: "Federal funding freezes and cancellations jeopardize lifesaving and life-improving research, the loss of which will be felt by society and individuals far beyond our campus for years to come." Beyond the scientists directly affected, such actions profoundly affect students and younger faculty just starting their research careers, he added.

"We value the long-standing partnership with the federal government to carry out research that makes America stronger and healthier. Robust federal research support for more than 75 years has made America's higher education system the envy of the world. I hope we can restore trust and refocus on creativity, innovation, and training."

Further cause for concern over revenues comes from proposals to increase the excise tax on university endowments and reduce student loan programs and eligibility. Endowment funds, which cover about 20 percent of Penn's annual budget, mostly can't replace lost revenue from other sources, since their use is restricted to particular purposes and they are supposed to last in perpetuity.

On March 10 Provost John L. Jackson Jr. and Senior Executive Vice President Craig Carnaroli W'85 announced the implementation of a set of measures designed to "pro-

ADMISSIONS

Penn Restores SAT/ACT Requirement

After a five-year break from requiring applicants to submit standardized test scores for undergraduate admission, the University is reverting to the pre-pandemic norm. Beginning with the 2025–26 admissions cycle, students must submit SAT or ACT scores.

Penn pivoted to a test-optional policy in 2020–21 to accommodate applicants whose access to testing had been curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the admissions office has reassessed the policy on an annual basis. In a blog post explaining the change for next year, Penn Admissions portrayed the decision as a way to make the application process clearer and kinder to applicants.

"The flexibility of a test-optional policy has escalated decision-making stress in an application process that is already stressful," the post stated. "Requiring submission of SAT or ACT results removes the 'submission choice' stress and allows students to focus their energy on preparing the components of the application that are personal and provide breadth and depth for our review."

Penn's test-optional policy coincided with a dramatic rise in undergraduate applications, from 42,205 in 2020 to more than 72,000 this year. The question of whether to submit scores has grown increasingly fraught for applicants amid the inflation of reported median scores. Last year Peter Struck, the Stephen A. Levin Family Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, told the *Gazette* that the median SAT score of incoming College students who'd chosen to submit it was a perfect 1600—but that only 41 percent of matriculants had reported their scores.

The admissions office has consistently portrayed standardized test scores as just one data point—and not necessarily the most important one—it evaluates. In a 2024 interview with the *Gazette* ["Admissions in Transition," Mar|Apr 2024], Vice Provost and Dean of Admissions Whitney Soule emphasized the primacy of high school performance and writing skills in Penn's application-review process. "The primary assessment," she said, "is dependent on the curriculum that's available at a student's high school, what the students chose to take, how well they were doing with those courses, and the ideas that they've conveyed in their writing and how their teachers describe them, and so forth. Testing was present [before 2020], but it was separate. So when Penn had to pivot to test-optional during COVID, that primary fundamental approach to academic assessment didn't have to adjust."

Penn Admissions conveyed a similar message in its announcement of the restoration of mandatory SAT/ACT submission. "Penn's practice has been, and continues to be, considering a student's school-based academic record on its own merit, with testing as part of Admission's broad and comprehensive assessment," the office said in a February statement. "With this approach, testing complements a student's existing accomplishments and can offer additional relevant information in our comprehensive and holistic admission process."—*TP*

tect our institution's core principles and support existing people and programs."

These included a review of spending for new buildings, renovations, and other capital projects that are not fully funded or deemed essential; freezes on most staff hiring and mid-year salary adjustments and reclassifications; a review of faculty hiring; an overall five percent cut in non-compensation expenses for the current and next fiscal year; and a review of restricted funds to ensure that they're "used for permitted purposes and maximize support of current operations." Graduate admissions for next year have also been reduced over funding concerns.

The University is also managing compliance with an executive order issued on Trump's first day in office to dismantle "illegal" diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, and meanwhile working to find ways to support international students and scholars who may face possible deportations, travel bans, and other hostile measures. A running theme in Jameson's communications—all of which can be read on the Office of the President's homepage or a new website that University Communications launched to track federal government updates—is that, in meeting current challenges, Penn would hold fast to its core values, which "like our University motto, have served Penn well for centuries and through many societal shifts."

"I have heard from many that while we must remain agile, we must foremost protect Penn's soul," he wrote on February 24. "I passionately agree and reaffirm Penn's enduring values and principles. Among these are:

- "**Our essential missions:** Everything we do must be grounded in advancing Penn's world-class teaching, research, clinical care, and service. This focus is especially important in times of turbulence and uncertainty.
- "**Academic freedom:** Everything we do must support freedom of inquiry and thought, open expression, and the rigorous pursuit of truth. These elements are essential to how we contribute to the world.
- "**Opportunity, Access, and Support:** Everything we do must be anchored in principled non-discrimination, expanding access, and embracing diversity in all its form—all while following the law, which we will continue doing. These commitments to our culture have made Penn a pioneer in higher education for more than a century. We are stronger for it. A commitment to inclusive excellence has advanced research, scholarship, and patient care in profound ways."

In his first message on January 28, Jameson concluded: "I ask every member of the Penn community to come together and do what we must: take care of one another, seek help when needed, and ensure the continuation of our critically important work. Together, we will protect and preserve what defines us as Penn." —*JP*

Milestone

Urban Legends

The Penn Institute for Urban Research celebrates 20 years.

Luke Campo C'24 and Eugenie L. Birch sliced through the bay in a water taxi, heading toward a hulking container ship off the Galápagos Islands.

Then a junior international relations major from the Bay Area, Campo had never been to South America before, let alone conducted research there. Now he was shooting photos and jotting notes right alongside Birch, the Lawrence C. Nussdorf Professor of Urban Research and Education. "I was amazed," Campo remembers, adding that the experience "felt like we were making an important contribution."

International research trips may not be the norm for spring-breaking college juniors, but when you're an undergraduate who's linked up with the Penn Institute for Urban Research, memorable moments abound. One day you may be meeting with a big-city mayor or talking to senior state department officials. Another you're on a water taxi in Bogotá, next to Penn IUR's codirector, tracking how shipping and tourism are threatening the fragile environment there.

It isn't only undergrads who feel IUR's impact, either. Since its launch in 2004—making it 20 years old this academic year—the interdisciplinary center has sponsored dozens of conferences and events, published more than 50 books, and affected countless students, scholars, and practitioners from across Penn and beyond. Through it

Illustration by Melinda Beck

all, the focus has remained on understanding urban areas and striving to improve them.

Cities are, after all, growing faster and housing more people than ever before. More than half of the world currently lives in urban areas, and the United Nations predicts that number will reach 68 percent by 2050. Even in countries where "the numbers may not be that high now, they are urbanizing at a hugely fast pace," Birch says. And because cities are such large, multifaceted places, "a lot of disciplines contribute to the understanding of what urbanization is and how cities operate," she adds.

That's obvious when you look at any lineup from the center's past events. A webinar on "greening" cities, for instance, included the president of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, a Penn criminology professor, an expert on statistics and data science, and a social scientist from the USDA Forest Service. A conference on sustainable urban development rounded up professors of law, real estate, design, and international affairs, plus leaders from UN-Habitat, Habitat for Humanity, and South Africa's Federation of the Urban Poor.

"In addressing urban issues, we really need to have all hands on deck, from all different backgrounds," says Susan Wachter, the center's codirector.

The idea for Penn IUR bubbled up in the early 2000s. Judith Rodin CW'66 Hon'04, Penn's president at the time, had been focused on revitalizing West Philadelphia for nearly a decade. Along the way, she'd clocked "the passion that so many of our faculty had around urban issues," she says now. "We felt that creating an institute for urban research would really consolidate that faculty interest and expand it and allow it to grow."

Birch and Wachter, Wharton's Albert Sussman Professor of Real Estate and professor of finance, became codirectors of the new center—and they're both still at it today, 20 years later. "There was no doubt in my mind that this was needed," Wachter says. But she also knew a cross-university institute might not succeed. "I was not feeling as though this was a slam dunk at all," Wachter says, "but I was very heartened by the fact that Genie and I would take it on together."

Wachter and Birch were both newer faculty members at the time, and each had a longstanding interest in cities. A specialist in real estate economics, Wachter had recently worked at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Birch had joined Penn's Urban Studies department a few years earlier as an expert in global urbanization and city planning.

After quickly assembling two boards—one of Penn faculty and staff and the other of outside urban experts—"we set about figuring out what to do," Birch recalls. They knew research would be a major piece of Penn IUR's work, but how could they make sure people took notice? In under a year, the center launched its book series, "The City in the 21st Century," which released its 53rd installment (and counting) with Penn Press in 2024. (The titles have covered a wide range over the years—from how urban living impacts women's health, to how New Orleans rebuilt post-Katrina, to the urbanization of China, and how to grow greener cities.)

Next they strategized on reaching students, since a center can't offer its own courses the way a department does. They landed on the Urban Undergraduate Research Colloquium, which pairs undergrads with faculty who are conducting urban-focused research. It's spawned numerous collaborations ever since—and brought Campo and Birch to Bogotá together in 2023. Today there's also a Fellowship in Urban Leadership for undergrads, a Master of Urban Spatial Analytics degree, and an urban-focused network and symposium for doctoral students.

"Regardless of what students do in their life after they finish their work here, they're likely to live in or be involved in cities," Birch says. "We want them to understand the importance of cities—particularly the importance of urban leadership—and how they can participate no matter what their profession is."

The center also engages with around 75 faculty fellows from across the University. "It is at the heart of Penn's values and priorities," notes Provost John L. Jackson Jr., adding that Penn IUR has been "essential" to his own urban ethnography research through the years.

"Penn IUR has led the way for what an interdisciplinary research center can be," says William W. Burke-White, a Penn Law professor and one

ECONOMIC IMPACT

How the University Drives the Economy

As higher education faces increasing criticism and scrutiny, the University released its latest economic impact report, showing that Penn and its health system helped drive approximately $37 billion through the region's economy for the fiscal year 2024—contributing to the circulation of $30.4 billion in Pennsylvania, including $25.2 billion within the city of Philadelphia.

The independent analysis, conducted by the consultancy firm Econsult Solutions, identifies four areas where Penn's influence is most felt: as the city's largest private employer; through campus and neighborhood development projects; as a leader in research and innovation; and through its purchasing power with local vendors and suppliers.

"US higher education is a key driver of American competitiveness in the world. This is especially true of excellent research universities such as Penn," Penn President J. Larry Jameson said in a statement. "Educating, innovating, and providing outstanding clinical care: Penn's transformative discoveries grow the economy, improve lives, and increase opportunity for people far beyond our campus." Jameson added that with one in seven jobs in Philadelphia and 155,000 jobs in Pennsylvania stemming directly or indirectly from Penn, the University "takes enormous pride in contributing to our city, state, and country in such significant ways."

The entire economic impact report can be viewed at the Penn & Philly website (pennandphilly.upenn.edu), which was launched last year to also measure the University's *social* impact via community partnerships ["Gazetteer," May|Jun 2024].

of the center's faculty fellows. "I've been most impressed with how it has been able to link cities to global networks and global conversations that matter."

It's been a busy year as the center celebrates its first two decades. It held events for Climate Week at Penn in the fall, and in January hosted a conversation with Enrique Peñalosa Londoño, the former mayor of Bogotá who wrote *Equality and the City* from Penn IUR's book series. "Beautiful public spaces make everyone happier," Londoño said at the event, "but for the poor they are crucial."

The center was scheduled to hold its 20th annual Urban Leadership Forum on April 25 (after this issue went to press), with a theme of urban leadership for the 21st century, nods to its milestone anniversary, and awards for standout leaders in the field.

As these 20 years have passed, change has been inevitable. New faculty arrive; students graduate. Issues like climate change and resilience, which didn't get much airtime back in 2004, are now major concerns. But Birch says the center's focus has always remained on sustainable urban development and anchor institutions—places like Penn that are deeply rooted to their cities.

"Twenty years seems like a really long time," Wachter adds, "but it's not nearly enough to accomplish all we potentially could. Penn is a very long-lived institution. Hopefully Penn IUR will be as well."

—Molly Petrilla C'06

From left to right, Salman Khalil, Malak Khafagy, and Omar Hafez are among the best college squash players. Khalil defeated Hafez in January to win the individual national championship.

Jewels of the Nile

Fueled by its star Egyptians, Penn squash continues to reach new heights.

Penn junior Jana Dweek watched intently as her brother, senior Abdelrahman Dweek, pranced across the hardwood floor, swatting balls deep along the side walls, off the glass behind him, and into the crevices just above the "tin" line marking out of bounds that stretches across the front wall. After Abdelrahman, known simply as Dweek to his teammates, lost the first game of the practice match against his teammate, junior Omar Hafez, he sat on the bleachers at the Penn Squash Center, put his head down, and muttered to himself in Arabic.

"He's telling himself what he did wrong, how he should hit short when his opponent is caught behind him," Jana translated. "They're not allowed to be coached during practice matches, so he coaches himself. And it's always in Arabic."

The Dweek siblings are two of nine Egyptians on the Penn men's and women's squash teams. Five of the top 10 men hail from Egypt, as do four of the top 10 women. That includes the Quakers' No. 1 male, sophomore Salman Khalil, and No. 1 woman, sophomore Malak Khafagy, as well as Hafez and freshman Marwan Abdelsalam (Nos. 3 and 4, respectively) and sophomore Sohaila Ismail, who plays No. 3 on the women's side.

The men's squad, which also includes senior stalwarts (and non-Egyptians) Nick Spizzirri, Nathan Kueh, and Dana Santry, is the most successful in Penn history. In March, they won their second consecutive College Squash Association (CSA) Potter Cup national team title, capping a perfect 20–0 season. And in the final of the CSA individual championship, played at New York's Grand Central Station in late January, Khalil defeated Hafez for the title. In the process, Khalil—a two-time All-America selection and this year's Ivy League Player of the Year—became the first Quaker to win the Pool Trophy since Ned Edwards C'81 beat his teammate, Jon Foster C'79, for the crown back in 1979.

The Quaker women, meanwhile, finished 15–4 and reached the semifinals of the Howe Cup for their best result since losing to Harvard in the 2017 final.

"The team championship was so much more important than the individual," said Khalil, whose win at No. 1 clinched the men's national title for the Quakers in a 6–3 victory over third-seeded Yale. "It doesn't even come close. Playing as a team is more fulfilling because you have something to fight for."

Men's squash head coach Gilly Lane C'07 G'14 LPS'20 said the Egyptians have been "instrumental in building the program," which began to establish itself as a national powerhouse three years ago ["Squashing the Narrative (and Competition), May|Jun 2022] before capturing its first national championship last year ["Sports," May|Jun 2024]. "When we won last year, it was pure joy winning it for the group that came before them," Lane said. "This year was about winning it for each other. This year was a legacy championship."

The first standout player to travel the 5,550 miles from Egypt to West Philadelphia was Haida Lala C'16, who helped the women's team to a perfect Ivy record in 2015, and then a runner-up finish at the Howe Cup the next year.

Photos courtesy Penn Athletics

"Those of us who pay attention to squash saw Egypt rise up," said Jack Wyant, Penn's director of squash and head coach of the women's team. "But most of them weren't interested in coming to college in the US." That began to change after the 2011 Egyptian revolution and the 2013 Egyptian protests, according to Wyant, who said that "parents of top Egyptian players were investing a percentage of their income in squash, and if their kids weren't going to become world champions, at least they could be world class and still get a top education in the US."

The Dweeks were caught in the middle of the upheaval in Egypt. Their father, Tamer, a pharmacist, was trying to protect his store in the middle of the night when he was nearly shot by friendly fire. That scare prompted the family to emigrate to Calgary, Canada, in 2012, fleeing on one of the last flights allowed out of the country at the time. Abdelrahman and Jana honed their skills in their adopted country, but both say their work ethic was established in Egypt.

Abdelrahman credits Egypt's culture for its squash prowess. The country has been producing top players since the 1930s and today boasts more than 2,000 courts, including at popular government-sponsored clubs like Heliopolis in Cairo and the Sporting and Smouha clubs in Alexandria. "We're so competitive from a young age," he said. "The clubs are very big, half the size of the Penn campus. You train there, study there, and stay there till late at night. Your friends are your competitors. If you break bread and butter together, you are brothers. On the court you want to kill each other but then you go home and play some PlayStation."

The Dweeks, Hafez, Abdelsalam, and Penn senior Roger Baddour all developed their skills at Smouha, which is thought to be the largest sports club in the world, featuring everything from soccer fields and tennis courts to a golf course, equestrian range, and working racetrack. Squash is a popular attraction. "We have only two big cities in Egypt where squash is prevalent, so the juniors are in close proximity to the top pros," said Baddour, who was sidelined with a knee injury for much of his last two seasons. "You get to learn from them and hear their stories, get advice. From a young age we have someone to look up to."

The current Professional Squash Association rankings exemplify Egypt's dominance, with several of the top players hailing from the Middle Eastern country. Among them are former Penn star Aly Abou Eleinen C'22 (ranked No. 12 nationally as of mid-April) and current Penn student Khafagy (ranked around 30 on the women's side). Many of them are expected to compete in Los Angeles in 2028 when squash becomes an Olympic sport for the first time.

Khafagy admits that she has at times had a love-hate relationship with the sport. At one point while growing up as a star youth player in Alexandria, she considered quitting. But a conversation with Wyant drew her to Philadelphia and back to the game. "My body was fragile, and I wanted a backup plan," said Khafagy, who went 13–3 in team competition this year, losing an especially brutal match to a fellow Egyptian, Zeina Zein of Princeton, during which she was hit in the face by Zein's racket. "At Penn I realized that I could play on the team, play pro tournaments, and study at the same time."

Transitioning to college life thousands of miles from home is sometimes challenging, especially when culture, religion, and even language can be a barrier. But Penn squash players lean on each other. Never was that more apparent than when tragedy hit the men's team just after the New Year holiday.

Hafez was preparing for the most critical part of the season when he learned that his 51-year-old father, Said, an obstetrician, had died of a heart attack while assisting surgeons in Libya. It was Baddour, a longtime family friend, who delivered the shocking news and then stayed by Hafez's side as he decided to make the 16-hour journey home. "It was so hard," Hafez said through tears. "My dad convinced me to give up soccer for squash. He used to support me and watch every match online. I just wanted to make him proud. I never felt that feeling before, so broken and alone. But I felt the love from my teammates."

Hafez had barely arrived in Alexandria when Lane received a text from him at 4 a.m. Wednesday morning local time. It simply said, "I'm in for the match on Saturday." Hafez indeed returned to Philadelphia in time for Penn's matches against No. 4 Trinity and No. 2 Yale (with an assist from Lane, who picked him up at Newark Liberty International Airport and dropped him home after midnight) and won both of his tilts, including a grueling five-set tri-

GIFT

Pavilion Becomes Clifton Center

Penn Medicine recently received a $120 million gift from Catherine Roberts Clifton CGS'72 GCP'74 and her husband Anthony Clifton, thus renaming the Pavilion at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania the Clifton Center for Medical Breakthroughs.

The largest capital project in the University's history, the cutting-edge $1.6 billion facility officially opened in October 2021 in the heart of Penn Medicine's campus ["Gazetteer," Jan|Feb 2022]. With 47 operating rooms and 504 private patient rooms, the Clifton Center has already cared for hundreds of thousands of patients through emergency department visits, lifesaving organ transplants, and surgical procedures.

Penn President J. Larry Jameson said the Cliftons' "extraordinary generosity will leave an indelible mark on Penn Medicine, accelerating innovation in patient care, research, and medical education."

Photo courtesy Penn Medicine

umph over Yale during which Hafez rallied for a 13–11 victory in the final game.

"After I lost the first game 11–1, I was all turned around—but I had to turn that fear into hunger," said Hafez. "I felt like mentally I was done, but I had to adapt and recover. My teammates and coach were helping me. They believed in me."

Daily prayer and the support of his peers has also helped Hafez—who, less than two weeks later, found himself in the final of the CSA Individual Championships, where he lost in straight games to Khalil after beating opponents from Harvard, Yale, and Trinity.

Muslim culture emphasizes frequent prayer, so Lane ends practices by 1 p.m. on Fridays so that the Egyptian players can attend services. After Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, and war erupted in Gaza (which borders Egypt), both coaches worried as tensions escalated around campus. Wyant, who has several Jewish student-athletes on his team in addition to the Egyptians, called both groups together and asked if they wanted to talk. Everyone agreed that there's never been any issues on either squad and that team camaraderie supersedes any conflict.

This year Ramadan began just days before the start of the CSA team championships, a particular challenge for athletes competing while fasting from sunrise to sunset and refraining even from drinking water. Some of the men and women slept from 4 a.m. until just before match time to conserve energy and avoid feeling hungry. Khalil, who was down 2–1 in games and survived five match points in the semifinals against Trinity before rebounding to win 3–2, cramped during dinner after the match. He came back the next day to beat his Yale opponent in four games. Neither Hafez nor Abdelsalam lost a match during the team championship run, despite fasting throughout.

"These guys are so clutch in tough positions because in Egypt they have to be the best to win," Lane said. "They're warriors."

Both teams insist that having multinational rosters—other players come from Croatia, Malaysia, South Africa, Hong Kong, India, the United Kingdom, and Connecticut—has helped, not hurt, their efforts to form a cohesive unit. "I've never seen a bit of hostility on either team," Wyant said. "We try to be a safe place every day."

In the end, they all agree, it's about the squash.

"This men's championship isn't solely about Egypt," said Lane. "It's about a blending of brotherhood. It's about a group of alphas coming together and playing for something bigger than themselves. They had a goal, their cultures blended, and they won everything they could possibly win."

—Cindy Shmerler C'81

Cindy Shmerler played for the Penn women's squash and tennis teams and is an award-winning print and broadcast sports journalist, with a particular emphasis on tennis.

Hoops Homecoming

Fran McCaffery, a former Penn player and accomplished veteran coach, takes over at the men's basketball helm.

Back in the early 1980s, Fran McCaffery W'82 stepped onto the Palestra court expecting to beat everyone, as he once told the *Gazette* ["Profiles," Jan|Feb 2011].

About 45 years later, he returned to the Palestra, his college playing days long behind him, but bearing a similar message during an emotional early-April press conference introducing him as the next head coach of Penn men's basketball.

"The landscape has changed. College basketball is different than it's ever been," acknowledged McCaffery, who spent the last 15 years coaching in the Big Ten at the University of Iowa after previous stints as the head coach of Lehigh, UNC Greensboro, and Siena. "Yes, my main focus is on the health and welfare of our student-athletes and maintaining the academic integrity of this institution—but not without losing sight of what the tradition of Penn basketball is and how I want to be a part of it."

Growing up outside of Philadelphia, McCaffery—hired in March to replace Steve Donahue, who was dismissed after nine seasons in charge—had a front-row seat to the glory days of Penn basketball, watching Big Five games throughout the 1970s with his father (who worked security at the Palestra) and brother Jack (who later became a local sports columnist). McCaffery went on to suit up for the Quakers between 1979 and 1982, winning three Ivy League titles and leading the conference in assists and steals as a senior in 1981–82. (He was also there for Penn's fabled Final Four run in 1979, though couldn't play in games because of NCAA transfer rules; he had transferred from Wake Forest, where he played his freshman season.)

Photo by Tommy Leonardi C'89

McCaffery didn't expect to get into coaching at the time but credits his college coach, Bob Weinhauer, for "giving me the purpose to enter this business and follow his lead." Weinhauer joined several of McCaffery's former teammates in attendance for the press conference, and McCaffery choked back tears when he acknowledged what the 85-year-old Weinhauer has meant to him. "The thing that made him special to me is we knew he loved us," McCaffery said. "We knew he cared about us, and our health and welfare was at the forefront of everything he wanted for us. Yeah, he wanted to win. He wanted to win badly, and so did we. But it was that example that propelled me to this journey."

McCaffery's journey has taken him around the country—and back to the NCAA tournament many times. After starting his coaching career at Penn as an assistant under Craig Littlepage W'73, he went to Lehigh to be an assistant before ascending to become the nation's youngest Division I head coach there, in 1985 at the age of 26. After leading Lehigh to the 1988 NCAA tournament, he spent 11 years as an assistant coach at Notre Dame. Then he enjoyed enormous success as the head coach at UNC Greensboro (1999–2005) and Siena (2005–2010), taking both mid-major programs to the NCAA tourney and leading Siena to memorable March Madness upsets in 2008 and 2009. Those accomplishments landed him a power conference gig at Iowa, where he became the program's all-time winningest coach with 297 victories over the last 15 years, including wins in four of seven NCAA tournament appearances.

One of just 14 Division I head coaches to take at least four different programs to the NCAA tournament, McCaffery will now try to bring Penn back to the Big Dance, where the Quakers had been a fixture for decades, with 22 appearances between 1970 and 2007. After a long drought, Donahue worked his own magic to get them back there in 2018 after a dramatic Ivy championship ["Sports," May|Jun 2018]. But the program fell on hard times amid the pandemic and a shifting college sports landscape, losing top players to the transfer portal and sputtering to 4–10 and 3–11 records in the Ivy League the last two seasons, prompting athletic director Alanna Wren C'96 GEd'99 GrD'15 to make a coaching change.

"Just so you all know, and I hope that you didn't doubt it, this is a university that's committed to success in this program," Wren said at the Palestra press conference. "We have done and will continue to do everything we can to get us back to a place where we're competitive year in and year out. We're all excited for a future filled with Ivy League titles and NCAA tournament appearances, and I trust that Fran's the guy to get us there."

McCaffery said he wasn't shopping himself upon getting fired by Iowa four days after Donahue was let go by Penn. But the pull of his alma mater was strong, and he quickly made it known he was interested in the opening. "There's jobs open every day," McCaffery said. "This is where I want to be, right here."

"We're all excited for a future filled with Ivy League titles and NCAA tournament appearances."

Although it will certainly be a change to move from the Big Ten, which these days more closely resembles professional sports, to the Ivy League, which is clinging to the amateur model, the 65-year-old said he's up for the challenge. He pointed out that the conference "stands up pretty well" to other leagues around the country—Princeton and Yale have won NCAA tournament games in the last three years—and hopes to return Penn to the top of the Ivy heap. "We have some challenges with regard to being a need-based institution in a world where guys are getting paid," said McCaffery, acknowledging the fact that the Ivy League declined to join the NCAA antitrust settlement that will allow schools to pay their players directly. "But that doesn't mean we're going to stop competing. It doesn't mean we don't expect to do whatever we can to beat those teams."

McCaffery promised to play a fast and up-tempo style, as he has at his other stops, and "encourage my guys to trust their talent and make plays." With Penn's returning players looking on, McCaffery also said he believes big crowds will once again pack the Palestra, as they did during his playing days. "We will compete in a way that was expected of us when we played here," he said, "and we will compete in a way that honors anybody that ever wore that jersey."

After the press conference ended, as McCaffery mingled with his wife and four children, longtime friends like former Penn head coach Fran Dunphy, and Penn President J. Larry Jameson, Penn's basketball players looked excited about the transition.

Rising senior Ethan Roberts, who led the Quakers in scoring this past season, decided not to enter the transfer portal in part because of McCaffery's arrival. "I'm just ready to be a sponge and soak up his wisdom," said Roberts, noting that when he was coming out of high school, people told him he should find a place with a "McCaffery style" since it suits his offensive game. "It's crazy how things align, because I couldn't pick a better coach."

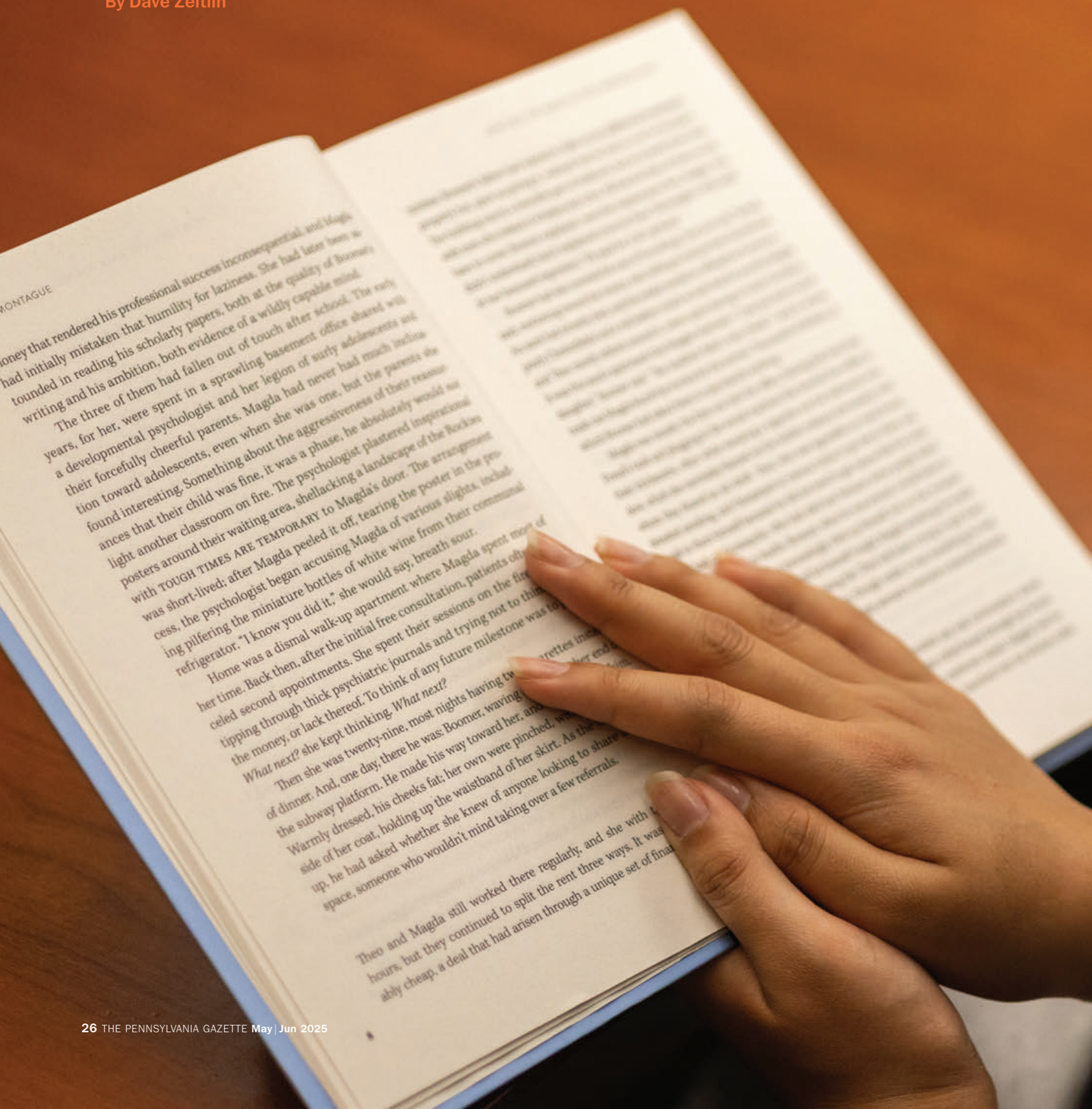
"This is the best thing ever," Roberts said, adding that he believes the hiring of McCaffery can start a "chain reaction" that can "ignite" Penn basketball.

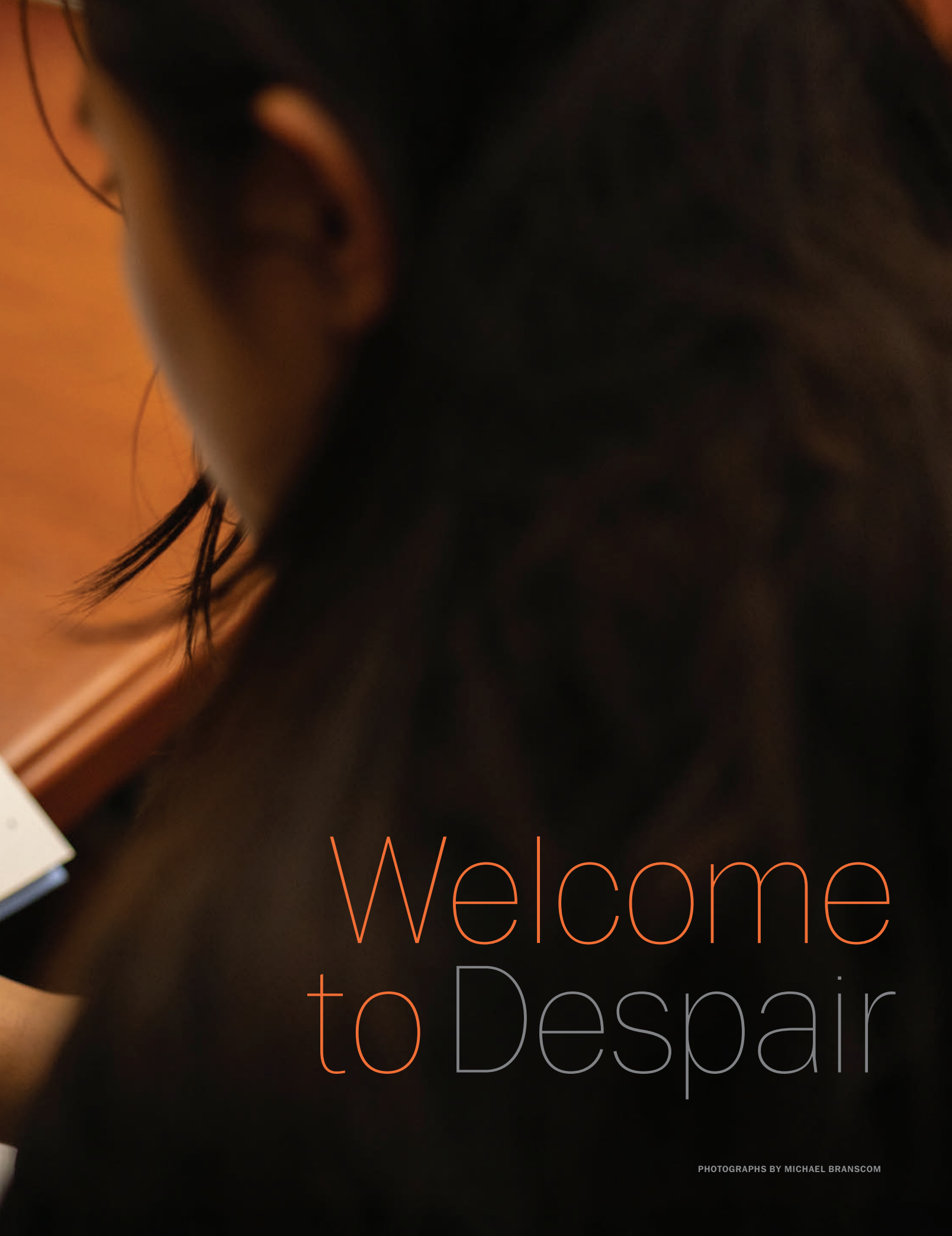
How much McCaffery can reignite the alumni base, offset some of the program's biggest challenges, and recruit national-caliber players remains to be seen. But with the start of a new season—and a new era of Penn basketball—still months away, the good vibes are palpable.

"I could not be more excited, more proud, more emotional to be standing here today, in the cathedral of college basketball," McCaffery said. "There could be no prouder moment." —*DZ*

Through his unorthodox courses, religious studies professor Justin McDaniel is training Penn students how to immerse themselves in literature, disconnect from their phones, build lifelong bonds with classmates … and prepare for the inevitable emotional pain life will bring.

By Dave Zeitlin





Welcome to Despair

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL BRANSCOM

Wharton senior Ryan Ghose was hanging out with friends at the Mill City Museum in his hometown of Minneapolis over winter break when he glanced at his phone and saw an email. He read the subject line, "Welcome to Despair," and immediately had one thought.

"Oh, fuck."

His next instinct was to text people the news but, since he was about to go inside a museum exhibit, had to put his phone away. "And I was like, *Great, the class has already started, I guess*."

The class—a religious studies course called Existential Despair ["Gazetteer," Mar|Apr 2018], taught by Justin McDaniel, the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Endowed Professor of the Humanities—is "kind of like this mythological part of the Penn education," Ghose says. The select few who get in—41 this semester, out of more than 400 applicants—enter Cohen Hall at 5 p.m. on Monday evening and don't get out until midnight, sometimes later. Upon arrival, they trade their phones for a book, which McDaniel introduces to the students with a lecture, exercise, or skit. They then spend the next five or so hours silently reading the same book in its entirety, spread out in small groups across five different rooms in the building. Once they're done, the final hour is reserved for a deep discussion of the book, in a pitch-black classroom, "to encourage intellectual reflection and emotional vulnerability through an in-depth study of the way people cope with existential despair," as the course description puts it.

The course satisfies no core curricular requirements. There are no grades. No syllabus. No tests. No outside reading. No homework. No phones or computers. No research papers—though most students end up writing personal reflections of the literature in an online discussion board during the week. "I have no learning outcomes," McDaniel says. "I do not care what they learn. All I know is that they're reading about 3,900 pages, on average, of really good literature and having intense conversations about it."

Ghose, naturally, was apprehensive. What exactly had the marketing major, bound for a New York consulting job after his May graduation, gotten himself into? "There was definitely the concern that I really hadn't sat down and read a book for four years," he says. "If I'd gotten through any books, it was piecemeal and very slowly. So the fact that we were going to be stuck in these books, I was not confident in my reading comprehension or my speed reading. My brain was built for spreadsheets over these past four years."

He wasn't alone. His classmate Daniel Babalola had been an avid reader in middle school and high school, particularly of fantasy series, before being "swept up by the pre-professionalism" of Wharton and focusing instead on books on private equity and consulting. "So making that shift to reading books purely about the human experience has been interesting for me," says Babalola, who had been initially nervous about his ability to keep pace in the class. He's also involved in several clubs, including one that he founded that recruits Penn students to provide tax services to Philadelphia residents, so giving up a phone "that's always buzzing" for seven hours was another source of trepidation. But that part of the experience has been "surprisingly liberating," he says, and he's since adopted the habit of going dark at other times. Ghose agrees, noting how he "wanted to train my brain to get less addicted to my phone."

Like Ghose, Babalola is following a traditional Wharton path after college, with a product management job lined up at a financial services company. But both wanted to experience something new before graduating—and had time in their schedules during their final semester of college. "I thought it was quite eccentric and unique, because I've never heard of a seven-hour class before," Babalola says. Ghose, who's minoring in theatre arts and is a member of the Mask and Wig Club, adds that he's always had the desire to "explore an unconventional education" at a University that allows him such a privilege. "And this is certainly different from my Finance 101 class," he says.

Ghose and Babalola aren't the only ones coming to Existential Despair from finance class. Other Wharton students are taking the course too, as are undergraduates from Engineering, Nursing, and the College of Arts and Sciences. McDaniel has no criteria for acceptance into the course, other than "being different from the last person I interviewed," the professor says. "I want some really reticent people. I want some serious readers. I want some engineers and nurses and [students studying] finance and philosophy. I want it all over the place." In his interviews with students hoping to get a spot, he doesn't ask about their background. Instead, he has them read a poem in his office, because "I want to see how you read," he explains. "I want to see how you talk about it. And I want different personalities. What you say about the poem doesn't matter." Students also fill out applications in the hallway, answering offbeat questions like "What's the difference between a bell and a whistle?" and "What's the funniest thing you ever said?"

Babalola had no idea what to expect when he emailed McDaniel about the course and was invited for an interview, where he immediately clocked the professor's "amazing office" in Cohen Hall, filled wall to wall with books (and a couple of bottles of liquor). Looking at the application questions, Babalola felt like "you were meant to spend a tiny bit of time being the most impulsively creative person you can think of," he says, adding that "something about interviewing for a class definitely makes it feel more rewarding when you get in."

Ghose recalls "being very open and not shielding my thoughts" during his chat with McDaniel, at one point veering into a tangent about the TV show *Futurama*. "I think he was more fascinated by my willingness to just say what was on my

A student sits in the hallway to read during Justin McDaniel's Monday night Existential Despair class. That's also where students answer the professor's offbeat application questions to try to land a coveted spot in the course.

McDaniel has no criteria for acceptance into the course, other than "being different from the last person I interviewed," the professor says. "I want some really reticent people. I want some serious readers. I want it all over the place."

mind and how I was feeling," says Ghose, who after the initial shock and fear of getting a spot in the course, felt his nerves dissipate when he read the first few pages of the book that was assigned the first class in January: *In the Dream House* by Carmen Maria Machado, the former Abrams Artist-in-Residence at Penn. "The moment it mentioned queer trauma on the fourth page, I was like, *This is gonna be great*," says Ghose, a queer student who holds a leadership position at the Wharton Alliance, an LGBTQ pre-professional organization. "From there, I could not tell what time it was. I was just really invested in the book."

Now, Ghose has learned to appreciate even the most challenging aspects of the course—like sitting in a chair for several hours straight on the days his reading group doesn't snag the "most coveted" reading spot on a comfy couch in a lounge. (Sometimes, he'll "stand up and lean against a doorway to keep myself awake and engaged in the book.") He also appreciates how the discussion in a dark room "makes it feel like you can say anything," and that listening to classmates is like "uncovering a mystery behind how people think and react to the books." And the bonds he's forged with classmates has been a bonus—from pre-class happy hours to continuations of the classroom conversations on their post-midnight walks home up Locust Walk. "It feels like you're almost in a big ocean of darkness, and no one's really active on campus," he says. "And you kind of just walk through it and you feel a little special. You're like, *No one in these buildings knows that I just had this life-changing experience*."

More than anything, Ghose has grown to appreciate his "very candid and very challenging" professor, who's a "funny character to watch in class" yet continually challenges his students to "rethink how we've approached our education at Penn, our involvements at Penn, what we care about in life, and how we feel when things don't go our way and we experience these bouts of despair."

"I feel like every class," Ghose says, "is a study of the books, a study of yourself, and a study of him."

Photo by Michael Branscom

Facing page: Justin McDaniel sits by a window in his office—in what his students call the "crying chair" because if they need a break from the world they can ask to sit in it, no questions asked, and McDaniel will leave the room.

Standing in front of a packed audience in Irvine Auditorium's Cafe 58, it's easy to see why Justin McDaniel captivates a class. He's introspective, funny, self-deprecating, and prone to tangents—including an unexpected digression, during an Arts and Sciences' Knowledge by the Slice talk in late January, on fencing.

While making a point that high school students today are more interested in building an extracurricular-laden resume for college admission than reading a book for pleasure, McDaniel exclaims, "Do you really think there's actually this many people interested in fencing? Fencing is the only sport in the Olympics that's never had an injury—and it's the only one with swords! If it wasn't for the Ivy League, fencing would not exist."

The religious studies professor, who teaches courses on Buddhism and Southeast Asian studies and has written several books on those subjects, had a similar bout with anger and frustration years earlier when he lit into his students for giving him blank stares when he mentioned authors like Carson McCullers and Toni Morrison. If even Ivy League students "aren't reading these books—and I'm not talking obscure authors here—then what are they doing with their time? We're training them in so many things extremely well—from linguistics to biology to mechanical engineering to nursing. That's awesome. But there has to be more. There has to be a kind of wondering and a wandering, a kind of pulling apart, a kind of struggling."

Other professors across the country have noticed a shift in students' reading aptitude. An October article in the *Atlantic*, titled "The Elite College Students Who Can't Read Books," opens with an anecdote about an Ivy League freshman telling a professor that she had never been required to read an entire book in high school.

For McDaniel, it's an alarming trend that goes beyond reading—and includes a lack of knowledge about "art and film and just basic stuff." The professor says he rarely sees students at any of the museums on campus, or taking in a show at the Annenberg Center, or attending a talk by a Nobel Prize winner. "American college kids are the only consumer group in the world that wants less for their money," he says from his office a few weeks after his Knowledge by the Slice talk. "I know you have time. I see you lingering at lunch. I see you sitting in the library, texting." McDaniel doesn't want to sound like he's up on a high horse. He wants students to have fun and party and understands the addictive nature of technology. "I've wasted a ton of time myself," he says. "It's so easy to reach for a cell phone to play a game or to look at YouTube or Instagram or whatever you do. And that makes it that much harder to read a book."

Powerful literature can be an "instruction manual," a way to cultivate the "emotional sophistication" people need to gird themselves against despair and help a loved one through tragedy.

After going on his literature rant a little less than 10 years ago, a pair of students came into his office to make sure he was OK—and asked for a list of great novels to read. McDaniel was reluctant because he figured they might do what he'd seen other students do: "read the first three pages, google the rest of it, and then use it as a bludgeon against friends to show how relevant you are." Or maybe they'd read it over the course of a semester, dividing it into small bits until "the emotional resonance is gone, eaten up by all the distractions that have happened in between the pages of the book."

But when the students insisted they were after a different experience, McDaniel hatched a plan. He'd take away their phones and they'd have to read a book in the Cohen Hall library, for about eight hours on a Saturday. He handed them each a copy of the 1961 novel *Revolutionary Road* by Richard Yates, went back to his office to do work (while checking in on them from time to time), and "just assumed there'd be drool on the pages," he says. "Absolutely not." They finished and what followed was the "single best conversation I've ever had about a book in my life."

That's how he came up with the idea of Existential Despair as a course. But he knew he needed some ground rules. He determined that students could never know in advance what they'd be reading each week (to rein in the "blowhards" prone to googling and blustering throughout a class discussion) and that there would be no autobiographies or self-help books, "because students already read inspiring stories about business leaders and tech leaders and medical leaders," he says. "I'm not against them but I don't want a book club where you're told how inadequate you are. I didn't want to feed this mentality here of '*achieve, achieve, achieve*.'" Instead, he wanted his students to "read for the sake of reading—not to learn how to be better than the person next to you." And he wanted the books to be about grief and heartbreak, parenting and childhood, sickness and emotional pain, addiction and faith.

Around that time, McDaniel roughly calculated that something like 16 percent of a person's life is spent at work. And while elite schools at Penn are adept at training students for that portion, "what are we doing with the other 84 percent? How are we going to deal with a family member getting sick? How are we going to deal with loss of jobs? How are we going to deal with personal failure? How are we going to deal with loneliness? These are the things that will actually take up more time in your life." Powerful literature, he insists, can be an "instruction manual," a way to cultivate the "emotional sophistication" people

Photo by Michael Branscom

need to gird themselves against despair and help a loved one through tragedy.

"There's something about slowly reading a book over five hours, cover to cover with no distraction—that I didn't know before but now I really do," he he adds. "Sitting-with those emotions or sitting with boredom or sitting with stress or sitting with sadness, it helps you work through it. It's almost like a physical exercise. And I think there's a difference between that and a film clip or a podcast or an article when you can be doing so many other things."

McDaniel launched the experimental course in 2017, before petitioning a University course committee to approve it on a permanent basis. He met a little resistance, mostly regarding how to assess an almost entirely participation-based class, "but I think I argued it well and it was approved," he says, adding that he's always gotten latitude to build nontraditional courses from an "administration that has been so supportive."

"We have intensive writing courses, so why can't we have an intensive reading course?" says McDaniel, noting that the 17 novels students read in his class is "maybe 10 years of literature" for most people. "I've made lifelong readers," he says of his students who've continually impressed him with how they "connect the books together and pull out quotes in a really beautiful way" in their discussions and writings. McDaniel—who's writing his own book about the course, called *This Will Destroy You: Learning to Face Existential Despair Through Literature,* set to be released in summer 2026—has been equally charmed by how they "cannot wait to shut that phone off" when they get to class each week.

"They're amazing," he says. "You unleash these kids … and they are bright, actually. They're just not given the chance."

Several years before launching Existential Despair, McDaniel created an even more unconventional course designed to help students detach from technology and become more mindful and aware of others: RELS 3560 Living Deliberately ["Gazetteer," Sep|Oct 2012]. Known colloquially as the "monk class," the Penn Global Seminar concludes with a trip to Thailand, after students "experience monastic and ascetic ways of living … involving restrictions on dress, technology, verbal communication, and food," per the course description.

The course spawned from McDaniel's own experiences living like a monk during his 20s, in a remote Buddhist monastery in Thailand, where he had gone to volunteer and teach English. "It was a beautiful life," he says today. "You know, I ate about 400 calories a day. I slept less than three hours a night. And I was happy every day. You think I'm happy every day here?"

Rather than try to explain how slowing down and limiting his choices "made the world seem smaller and more manageable and more welcoming and more beautiful," he aimed to recreate some aspects of it. Or put another way: "Can we not just learn *about* religion? Can we learn *from* religion?" He initially created a version of the course at Ohio University almost 25 years ago and then brought it to UC Riverside, where he taught before joining Penn's faculty in 2009. At Penn, the "monk class" has grown in stature and lore, only being offered every two or three years to 14 students out of a waiting list that can top 300.

Kamber Moss C'17 had heard "random whispers about it" throughout his time at Penn but only applied when his girlfriend (and now wife) Sarah Pilger C'17 brought it to his attention. Out of the hundreds to apply, he got in but she did not—which meant they couldn't touch or talk to each other for the final month of the semester when students gave up their phones and were instructed not to speak or touch others. Before that, students in the course must limit the number of words they speak each day, instead writing letters to loved ones and journaling every 30 minutes from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed.

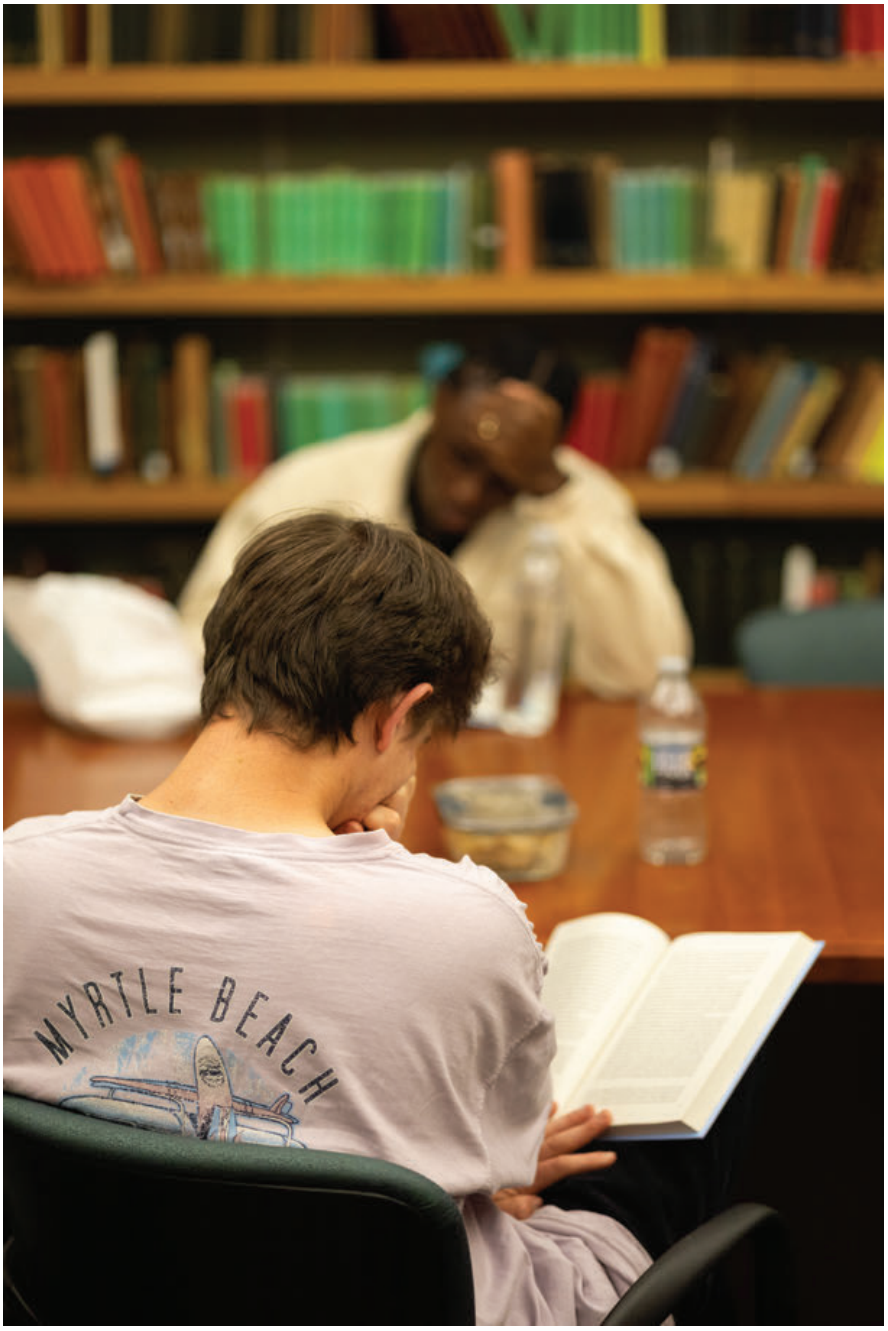
Moss recalls McDaniel reading his journal and determining that he needed more music in his life. So the professor instructed him to take a taxi down to a jazz cafe and just listen to music for two hours. McDaniel also thought Moss needed more female friends, so he had him walk around the Philadelphia Zoo with a friend of his girlfriend just to listen to her and take notes. "I think it's probably easier to open up with somebody who can't say anything back," says Moss, who found more "depth" in the relationships he forged without the distractions of external stimuli.

As for giving up his phone for a full month, that "became the most freeing and easiest thing," says Moss, who today works in software sales at a tech company in Los Angeles. "The first two or three days, you're kind of patting your pocket and reaching into your pocket, but after a couple of days, you honestly stop thinking about it. And it just forces you to be present. It's honestly really, really pleasant." Moss still has the occasional urge to throw his phone away and he recently ordered a Light Phone, which is designed to be used as little as possible. But "it's a constant battle," he says. "We're all addicted to this shit."

McDaniel knows that locking students' phones in his office and telling them not to speak for a month can be considered extreme. Because they can't even talk in other classes, they need permission from all their professors, whom McDaniel says have been "99.9 percent fully supportive." And sometimes, he'll need to remind students that it's OK to break their silence vow—like the one who wouldn't speak to a nurse despite spiking a 104-degree fever, and the two who were approached by police when McDaniel sent them to an unfamiliar neighborhood to draw what they saw. "Cops thought they were casing the place," he laughs. "I got a call from the police station saying, 'They gave me this number and you'll vouch for them.' And I was like, *Talk to the cops*. Students take this very seriously."

McDaniel proudly notes that almost all his Living Deliberately students have

Students make use of several rooms throughout Cohen Hall to focus on reading during the seven-hour class.



She enjoyed even the "grim and bleak" part of the discussions on despair that "shook my being," sometimes staying past midnight or recounting that week's class with her roommates until the sun came up.

either maintained straight A's, or improved their grades across the board, and that some professors have told him that the silent students become more engaged in class as a result. And when they move on from Penn, McDaniel says they "gain so much more satisfaction in their jobs because they know why they're doing it" and have learned to "start to pay attention to others."

Yet given the limitations to how many students he can take for Living Deliberately, it made sense for him to develop Existential Despair, which is "more digestible for the masses," as Moss puts it. Beatrice Karp C'22 had heard about McDaniel when she was applying to Penn, from a cousin who told her about "some monk dude that teaches cool courses." She would have loved to take Living Deliberately had it been available to her (because of the travel component, it was paused during the pandemic), pointing out that she tried in college to fast and break away from her phone on Sundays. Instead, she settled for taking a Buddhist film course with McDaniel and Existential Despair in the fall of her senior year—which had a huge impact on her and, she says, "wiped [the] slate clean" regarding her career trajectory.

Calling McDaniel "the counterculture to the hustle culture at Penn," Karp appreciated how his course reintroduced her to the "lost art" of reading novels and how "one of his main points was that you don't have to read things just to extract information and better your life—it's OK to get lost in a story and not learn anything new but just ingest something beautiful." She enjoyed even the "grim and bleak" part of the discussions on despair that "shook my being," sometimes staying past midnight or recounting that week's class with her roommates until the sun came up. And she came away from the experience "ready to take on the world as a young person"—which for her meant deferring a corporate consulting job in cybersecurity to travel solo to Hawaii and then to Tuscany, Italy, where she ended up starting an olive oil company (see sidebar).

The big lesson she took away from Existential Despair was indeed bleak—but unexpectedly liberating. "I just felt like, *Wow, life is nothing, and it doesn't matter what I do*," she says, echoing one of the

Photo by Michael Branscom

conceptual underpinnings of Buddhism. "But upon graduation, it was awesome, because I felt, *OK, nothing matters. What do I do if there's no inherent roadmap?* And it actually became a very empowering, uplifting message, because the question was: what do you do in the face of nothing? And I think the answer is that you love. So that was my takeaway—that nothing matters but we should love one another anyway, and your life should be about uplifting others."

When McDaniel was seven or eight years old, he was at a bar with his father, doing his homework and minding his own business. Suddenly, his dad came over and angrily asked why he hadn't greeted or said hello to the man sitting alone at the next table. "No one goes to a bar to drink alone," McDaniel remembers his father telling him. "It is much cheaper to drink at home. You go to a bar to be recognized." That moment stuck with McDaniel, whose dad would continue to drive home that lesson throughout his childhood, often to the point of embarrassment by striking up conversations with strangers any time they were in a bar, or on a bus, or traveling. "He hated loneliness," McDaniel says of his late father—a large man with a gentle heart who he notes didn't have much schooling or any kind of career. "He just found people fascinating. He never talked about himself. He used to say, 'I give people the gift of my own mediocrity. Around me, they seem really impressive.'"

McDaniel also learned about the importance of compassion, kindness, and friendship growing up religious. "I was largely raised by priests and nuns," he says. And later, when he lived in the monastery, he discovered that for Buddhist monks, "mindfulness is something that is done in the community" and "your individuality becomes less important than your awareness of others." Now he tries to pass on those lessons about fostering community, often in unexpected places, to his own children and to his students. When he selects the roster for his courses, "I'm kind of Breakfast Clubbing it," he says, betraying his vintage via a 1980s movie reference. He looks to bring together opposites to forge lasting bonds, people who he thinks might need each

From Existential Despair to Unlikely Entrepreneurship

Beatrice Karp came to Penn aiming for a career in computer science, but also bent on taking full advantage of the University's liberal arts offerings. So the Science, Technology & Society major was open to a class like Justin McDaniel's Existential Despair. Its countercultural credo was part of the appeal. "I realized early on in my Penn career that there was a lot of interesting energy on campus, and everyone was super bright—and I noticed that a lot of people were channeling it into things like finance or accounting," she recalls. "And that's great, but I sort of had these questions. I felt like I had the golden ticket: I'm at this amazing university, and I feel like I can do a lot of things, and I want to just take a second to figure out what that may be." In short, Karp was trying to answer a thornier question than which programming languages to learn or how to land her first job. What she wanted to know was: "How should I live my life?"

McDaniel characterized Existential Despair as "the class for people in their 50s going through their midlife crisis, but taken now when you're 21 and deciding things," she says. "Wouldn't we rather be aware of the possible fears and regrets now?"

Karp plunged into that murky realm with abandon, and emerged with an unexpected revelation: existential uncertainty, even existential meaninglessness, could be a catalyst for self-realization.

"A lot of our studies with Buddhism focused on the nature of reality itself, underscored by the book *Self-Portrait in Green*, where a single character was a different person in every chapter, and no one was quite sure which perspective was correct," she says. It was an unsettling thought. "In everything I do, I could argue against myself and be aware of five different ways they could have been done," or even perceived—and the ultimate meaning of any of them was unknowable if not illusory. Yet if reality was so malleable and contingent, then creating a new one was only a matter of will. At least that's how it seemed to Karp. "The intense questioning and despair ignited a life of action taking and no regret."

After graduation she deferred a cybersecurity consulting job for one year, and ended up in Tuscany, where she worked a six-month stint in agrotourism. Then she lived in a communal house in Hawaii overseen by an ex-Silicon Valley entrepreneur who reinforced much of what she'd absorbed from McDaniel. "There were many monastic features, such as ringing a bell at the start of a meal, eating in silence, and waking up at 5 a.m. every day to meditate together," Karp recalls. "And his message to me was: 'Do things that make sense. If you think an idea is not possible, you are just not creative enough.'"

After returning to New York and giving corporate cybersecurity consulting an honest go for a year, she followed a hazy intuition back to Italy to take part in the autumn olive harvest. That's where something clicked. When the farmer began pressing the olives she'd helped pick the same day, Karp was enraptured by the oil that spilled into his vat.

"It was bright green. I'd never tasted anything like it. It felt alive. And I said, 'Why is it so green? And how much are you selling this for?' And he laughed at me and said, 'Bea, we are not selling this oil. We live in a small village and everyone makes the same oil, and we don't have the money or the infrastructure to get it to a city like Florence—never mind the United States."

That only spurred more questions. What if she could help him and his neighbors get FDA approval? What if she could navigate exportation and importation? Karp's father was a chef and her mother had helped launch a luxury

other in their lives. One example is Nery Rodriguez C'23 and Christina Volpe C'24, who have become best friends despite being "completely different from each other," says McDaniel. "It makes me feel good because it's so easy to slip into our myopic silos of news listening and conversation having. We generally seek out what is comfortable, which is understandable. But universities should be about uncomfortable conversations and intellectual challenges." He's been thrilled to see many more Living Deliberately and Existential Despair alumni remain close (one couple who met in a class even got married) and he believes the bonds formed in his classrooms—across schools and majors and backgrounds—will "sustain them through the inevitable tragedies of life and that they will have always have someone they can turn to."

Volpe calls her relationship with Rodriguez the "purest form of friendship" in part because she didn't even know her name until a few months after they met (silently) in Living Deliberately in the fall of 2022. (McDaniel assigns monk names to students, who in turn call him "Ajahn," a Thai and Lao term that means "teacher.") Volpe was the only junior in the course, taking it during the first semester she was actually on campus. When she started at Penn two years earlier, campus was closed due to COVID-19 and in her first year she took a virtual Happiness and Despair course through the Integrated Studies Program for Benjamin Franklin Scholars. That's where she first encountered McDaniel, who taught the "despair" portion of the course (which Volpe describes as a "smaller version of Existential Despair") and changed her college trajectory.

"What McDaniel does is he teaches you how to be a person, which I think is becoming a more and more important function of college these days," Volpe says. "It's how to be a person first and not just a bot in the industry of the society that we've created. He always says, 'I'm not concerned about teaching you facts. I'm trying to teach you how to deal with when your parents die because that's when people break.'"

Volpe was particularly inspired by one of the books assigned, *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* by Ottessa Moshfegh, and

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water brand. She had sources of knowledge and help. What if she broke the traditional mold of olive oil marketing—notorious for dilution, counterfeiting, and overstretched shelf lives—and went direct-to-consumer with single-grove extra virgin olive oil pressed the day of harvest and delivered within weeks?

The upshot is Bea Olive Oil (beaoliveoil.com), whose first two batches—450 bottles of unfiltered *olio nuovo* from the Siena hills, and 1,200 filtered bottles from an estate in Chianti—were air-freighted to New York shortly before Christmas 2024. Each label bears an inked fingerprint of the farmer who raised the crop, and Karp feels invigorated by a mission to support them by introducing American customers to the authentic article that captivated her.

She regards the product and the process as inseparable. "It's a three-week turnaround time because I'm there picking, pressing, bottling, and labeling alongside the farmers, literally giving it to the Milanese truck drivers, and then picking it up with a U-Haul myself at 2 a.m. back in the US. I take a huge hit on cost from expedited air freight from Italy. But if the offer really is the highest quality olive oil straight from the farm, as I experienced and was inspired by, then that's what we're doing."

In a blind tasting of five extra virgin olive oils—ranging from a basic Bertolli to a special cuveé from the French producer Nicolas Alziari—Bea's filtered Chianti bottling stood out for its assertively herbaceous aromatics and peppery finish. Its freshness was indeed striking. It was hard to avoid thinking that coaxing customers to pay $75 for 500ml would depend on getting them to regard olive oil in a totally different light than most are accustomed to doing. But Karp is energized by the challenge. And recently she actually revised her prices—upward, to $85.

"I'd never tasted anything like it. It felt alive."

"We're doing things like selecting olives that are more expensive because they're higher in polyphenol content. And when I said that to the farmers, they laughed at me, and they said, 'Bea, don't do that! This is a waste of your money, and Americans don't know the difference! And I said, 'You know what? I know the difference, and I'm going to teach them.'"

"I'm aware that in selling very high-quality olive oil, the margins are not going to deliver, probably ever, what a corporate job would," she concedes. But having dedicated herself to the enterprise full-time, she adopts a simple attitude: "I have to get creative, and I have to find a way."

However it works out, she's grateful to the professor whose unconventional course set her on an unpredicted but soul-satisfying path.

"Justin McDaniel single-handedly has changed the course of my life more than any other human outside of my parents and immediate family. That guy rewired my mind. He made me look at the nature of reality and understand that nothing is quite real, and everything is a system that you can see through and change—and everything is a creation.

"I'm not sure that he knows how much his students really run with what he says," she adds. "But wow, best class I've ever taken in my life."—*TP*

Photo courtesy Bea Olive Oil

took time off Penn as a sophomore because of it. McDaniel's advice to her during her sabbatical: Do nothing. Don't try to gain knowledge. And, when you return, consider taking Living Deliberately.

Volpe, a STEM-focused student who will begin medical school later this year, recalls the confusion of her other professors when she explained the speaking restrictions of Living Deliberately. "My molecular biology teacher was like, *OK, just do your work, I guess. But this is going to be hard for you.* And I was like, *Yeah, that's the point.*" Although living like a monk while adjusting to campus life for the first time was indeed a challenge, it also helped her experience the world in a new way. When you walk down Locust Walk without listening to music or a podcast on your phone, she says, you notice little things. The trees. The squirrels. The classmate who looks like they're having a bad day. "Instead of living inwardly," she says, "you start to live outwardly. You get good at actually listening to people."

Soon, Volpe and Rodriguez began to listen to each other. After emotional conversations during their trip to Thailand, where the students explored temples and monasteries in Bangkok and more remote parts of the country, she and Rodriguez talked about "deep grief" in her high-rise dorm when they got off the plane—"the moment our friendship began," Volpe says. The two friends, who also took Existential Despair and two other McDaniel courses during their time at Penn, continue to have long talks, with Volpe often jotting down ideas into the Notes app before calling Rodriguez.

Rodriguez has similar discussions over FaceTime with Beatrice Karp and another former classmate. "We just speak about aimlessness and boredom and nothingness," Karp says, "which is hard to come by in a world of young hustlers in the city." For Rodriguez, who has a finance job at Microsoft in New York, "the friendships cultivated" was the most valuable thing she got out of the four classes she took with McDaniel. It's not something she expected when she started college, when she was focused on her economics major and statistics minor and mostly scared to step too far out of her comfort zone—until registering for McDaniel's Gods, Ghosts, and Monsters religious studies course. "Religion isn't something that I grew up with, so I wanted to explore it while I had the chance in college," she says. "I didn't think my brain would have been able to function at its most optimal level if I was just always taking econ and stat."

Still, Rodriguez was nervous about taking both Existential Despair and Living Deliberately, the latter of which especially terrified her. McDaniel, though, helped put her at ease, at one point saying that "people think that taking this class is hard when in actuality, it's the things we do every single day that are much harder," Rodriguez recalls. "It is so much harder to talk constantly, to feel like you always have to input your voice and insert yourself into something. It's so much harder to be constantly worried about the five classes you're taking and multitasking."

A student once told McDaniel that his course is about "the art of single tasking," which he loves. Rodriguez, though, says that one of the "most shocking pieces after taking Living Deliberately was how easy it is to just fall back into the same routines" of madly toggling between competing priorities and mindlessly scrolling on your phone—which she tries to avoid, having learned to embrace the concept of boredom. She's also been reading more—50 books per year is her goal, despite the long hours she spends at work—thanks to the Existential Despair course, which also taught her that she doesn't always have to strive to do the next best thing or get the best jobs out of college. Echoing the sentiments of her classmates, she says McDaniel "was more concerned about when we reach an age when we're lonely and we have many more things to think about that are more serious."

Now almost a decade removed from his undergraduate days, Kamber Moss thinks about McDaniel's teachings often. "I never had a class where a teacher or professor spoke so openly and freely," he says. "We should have more of these classes that challenge us and our own behaviors, versus just the traditional education. I really feel the core of what he does is make an impact on people's lives—and what more could you really ask for from going to college?"

Beatrice Karp agrees and notes that with all the negative rhetoric currently surrounding higher education, "the point of college for me was to expand my mind and have access to some of the greatest minds in the world"—like McDaniel, who she says pours all his emotions into his lectures. "He'll cry and he'll yell and he'll sweat and he'll pace around."

Christina Volpe calls McDaniel "the definition of the perfect teacher" because of how available he is to his students and how "he will make time for anyone that needs it." Now taking time off before starting med school, she's harnessed McDaniel's lessons into giving her mind a break and doing random acts of kindness for friends—and she believes his teachings will be "invaluable to patient care" as she pursues a career in medicine. "He's not just a good teacher; he's a good person," she says. "And he actually cares. He acknowledges that he's only in your life for a short time, but in the time that he is with students, he's trying to get them to a place where they'll be able to cope with these huge things later in life. And that is the best gift that I think anyone could give someone in college."

McDaniel downplays his own role, noting that he's "hardly teaching anything" and, aside from picking good literature for Existential Despair, tries to remove himself and let students reach their own epiphanies. But he certainly spurs them on. When a student came to him after her father had died (not long after McDaniel's own father died), the professor walked with her to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, propped her in front of his favorite

The light in McDaniel's Cohen Hall office remains on long after other professors have gone home for the night.

Photo by Michael Branscom

painting (a Frederic Edwin Church painting of the mountains of Ecuador), and told her not to move for the next two hours. On the way back to campus, he told her she didn't have to say anything—but she did anyway, opening up about her dad. "For the rest of her life, when she's at a bad moment—and she'll have many bad moments in her life—she'll know the museum's there," McDaniel says. Another time, to prove a point about how "overwhelmed by choice" we can be, he asked students to go home and count all the shirts they owned. When one student was shocked to find out he had 300, he ended up giving away "like 90 percent of his clothes," McDaniel says. And then there was the student who surprised him perhaps more than any other—a cocky, muscle-bound guy who put his feet up on McDaniel's desk during an interview and complained about not being able to go to the gym every day while taking Living Deliberately. Having more time to fill, the student started doing math on paper, something he had loved in high school but had pushed to the side while studying at Wharton. By the end of the semester, he switched to become a math major, got a PhD at Yale, and now does cybersecurity—all because he had to occupy his emptied hours. "Sometimes students will continue meditation or the eating restrictions, but that's not really my concern," McDaniel says. "My concern is if they find something in silence that they lost, or that they never would have discovered."

> "In the short time that he is with students, he's trying to get them to a place where they'll be able to cope with these huge things later in life. And that is the best gift that I think anyone could give someone in college."

For the current students taking Existential Despair, they aren't sure yet how McDaniel might shape their lives once they move on from Penn. Daniel Babalola, who calls the course a "once-in-a-lifetime, one-of-a-kind experience," hopes to become "purely and uniquely authentic," which he will carry on into a "business world where authenticity is often manufactured."

And Ryan Ghose believes that the special camaraderie that's already forming with his classmates will last forever. "There's a certain element of allure that being in the class has, and you can't really explain it to other people who haven't been through it," he says. "And so, I'm sure I'll be trying to explain it and understand it for the rest of my life."

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Following a stint advising the US Department of Defense on warfare's AI-inflected future, political science professor and Perry World House Director Michael C. Horowitz is back at the helm of Penn's "home for global policy engagement."

By Alyson Krueger

 PHOTOGRAPH BY TOMMY LEONARDI C'89

In February 2023 the United States issued a declaration outlining how militaries should develop and deploy autonomous and artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities ethically, responsibly, and effectively. The idea was to use these new technologies to enhance international security, not undermine it.

The US endorsed the rules for its own forces and asked other countries to do the same. "We invite all states to join us in implementing international norms, as it pertains to military development and use of AI," said Bonnie Jenkins, the undersecretary of state for arms control and international security in the Biden administration, when the announcement was made at the Hague. As of November 27, 2024, according to the US Department of State website, some 58 countries had signed on, including the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Israel, and Germany (but not North Korea, Iran, China, or Russia).

This document—the *Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy*—was written by Michael C. Horowitz, who at the time was serving as the deputy assistant secretary of defense for force development and emerging capabilities. He was on loan to the Pentagon from Penn, where he is the Richard Perry Professor in the Department of Political Science and director of Perry World House, which bills itself as Penn's "home for global policy engagement," connecting scholars and students with non-academic experts in areas encompassing climate change, democracy, security, and human rights and global justice.

In fact, the declaration was originally conceived on Penn's campus, says Horowitz. "One of the sources of the document was an article that I coauthored at the Perry World House with a former Penn undergraduate."

"That is real world impact," he adds with a laugh.

Horowitz studies international security issues, focusing on how emerging technologies such as robotics and AI change and affect global politics. His work explores how countries develop certain military capabilities and why some countries innovate in that realm while others fall behind.

In 2022 he was tapped by the Biden administration to set up shop in the Department of Defense's Emerging Capabilities Policy Office (ECPO). "His office had two jobs," explains Stanford political scientist Colin Kahl, who hired Horowitz while serving as the undersecretary of defense for policy during the Biden administration. "Look over the horizon at the technologies that could be relevant for the United States military, and think about how to integrate those innovations." Not only did Horowitz make great headway with these goals, says Kahl, he created a blueprint for how the US military could use autonomous weapons (that can identify and engage targets without human intervention), artificial intelligence, and robotics.

"It sounds super bureaucratic to write documents like this, but it's essentially an instruction to the entire Department of Defense about the guidelines around how the US military can innovate, and maximize speed, in pulling in AI and autonomy," Kahl says. "It's super important as a government document especially at a time when a lot of people believe the future of warfare will increasingly involve autonomy and semiautonomous machines. You want a moral, ethical, and strategic framework around that."

Sasha Baker, who served as deputy undersecretary of defense for policy at the Department of Defense, which made her Horowitz's direct boss, says his achievements were also more practical: he helped the military procure new technologies that will be deployed in the near future.

"There is this consensus in DC—that I think is true—that the military and Pentagon are not moving fast enough to put new technology into the hands of those fighting wars," she says. "Part of it is because we have lots of rules and bureaucracy, and it makes it hard for new startups and new companies to get their products into the system. Everyone agrees it's a problem, and nobody is sure how to solve it."

Horowitz, she adds, dealt with the issue head-on by building relationships up and down the military procurement chain, from the budget team to the strategy team to acquisition professionals. "He helped our professionals identify which options out there would be best suited for our needs as a military," she says. "We evaluated these technologies and figured out which ones would solve an operational problem for men and women in uniform."

It's not an easy job. Some emerging technologies, for example, are interesting in theory but don't hold up in a rugged environment or can't withstand salt water, cold, or heat. Others may be so expensive it isn't practical to buy them, particularly if they have a good chance of getting shot down.

"It can take some time for things to go from being a budget idea and being in a strategy document … to showing up in the hands of a war fighter, but I do think over the next few years and beyond we will see the systems Mike advocated for to show up in the force," says Baker. "Ultimately I think that puts the US military in a stronger position in what is a very complicated world." One project he worked on was the Department of Defense's Replicator Initiative, which aims to deliver large numbers of drones (ones that are cheap enough to be expendable but effective enough to save lives on the battlefield) into the hands of American soldiers by August 2025.

She believes the current Trump administration will carry these initiatives and recommendations forward. "The need for the military to move faster in adopting new technology quickly is a bipartisan issue. Everyone from J. D. Vance to Elizabeth Warren is talking about the need to

do this," she says. "I am pretty confident that the Trump administration, when they get their senior officials confirmed, will discover they want to keep a lot of what Mike and his team put in place."

For as long as he can remember Horowitz has had a passion for politics. "I'm from Lexington, Massachusetts—as we like to say, 'the birthplace of American liberty,'" Horowitz says. "I am basically a Boston guy who is obsessed with the Revolutionary War and that period of history." (These interests have also helped him fit in while living in Philadelphia, home of the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. "I've always felt extremely comfortable in Philadelphia. It is one of the reasons I've been a faculty member at Penn.")

Horowitz was a top high school debater, winning the national debate championship with his partner in his senior year and being recruited to Emory University for his skills. It was also through debate that he first crossed paths with Kahl, who was his instructor at a debate camp when Horowitz was 15. "He was a brilliant high school kid," Kahl recalls. "He was already into public policy issues as a teenager. He self-selected into a group, at a very young age, of people who care a lot about the world when most teenagers were focused on different things."

Horowitz debated topics including US foreign policy towards China, Iran, and North Korea, and immigration reform. "I think participating in policy debate was the single most impactful thing I did as a young person," he says. "It taught me how to research and see both sides of the argument." At the same time, "I am very, very, very efficiently trained not to talk about debate—because nobody cares about it," he adds, laughing. "Also it's weird to bring up stuff you did in college and high school."

At Emory Horowitz took classes in international relations and coauthored a paper with one of his professors. He also interned at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington, DC–based think tank where he worked on topics related to homeland defense and US nuclear strategy.

"Whether you were talking about the use of the longbow on the battlefield, or the debut of an aircraft carrier, or the debut of suicide bombing, military innovations play a critical role in international politics."

He considered going to law school, but the September 11 attacks pushed him "back to international security," he says. He ended up getting his PhD in government at Harvard University, where his dissertation advisor had written a book on military innovation. "The topic stuck with me," he says. "Whether you were talking about the use of the longbow on the battlefield, or the debut of an aircraft carrier, or the debut of suicide bombing, military innovations play a critical role in international politics. How they spread seemed like a very important question to me."

Fortunately, Penn was interested in the same questions, he says. "There was this period in between the invasion of Iraq and the financial crisis where there was a realization in academia that war wasn't going anywhere, and that we needed to build a new generation of scholars to help us understand not just things like 9/11 but broader questions of war and peace."

Horowitz joined the Penn faculty in the fall of 2007. Since then, he's taught classes on American foreign policy and on war and strategy, often focusing on the relationship between military and civilian leaders. In 2010 he published *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics* (Princeton University Press). Drawing on examples ranging from the Ottoman Empire's siege of Constantinople in 1453, to the German *blitzkrieg* of World War II, to 21st-century conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the book examines how the ability of countries to adapt to new technologies can influence the international balance of power through the lens of what Horowitz calls "adoption-capacity theory." The theory "posits that variations in the financial and organizational requirements for adopting an innovation govern both the system-level distribution of responses and the way individual actors make decisions, as well as the subsequent implications for international politics." He's also a coauthor of *Why Leaders Fight* (Cambridge University Press), a 2015 examination of how leaders' life experiences shape the decision to go to war, as well as dozens of scholarly papers.

A former student, Lauren Kahn C'19 GEng'23, recalls that Horowitz was known for tapping students to do meaningful research for projects he was working on. Kahn, whose two Penn degrees are in international relations and computer and information science, did research on precision strike capabilities, or smart bombs. "He had a giant cohort of research assistants, and he gave us a lot of flexibility to do really cool and fun research," she says. "You don't often get that opportunity as an undergraduate." A senior research analyst at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology, currently on assignment to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Development and Emerging Capabilities, Kahn has since coauthored several papers with Horowitz.

She recalls making what turned out to be an important connection when she met US foreign policy advisor Derek Chollet when he was a visiting fellow at Perry World House, becoming his research assistant. Later, when she was working at the Pentagon and Chollet became chief of staff to Lloyd Austin, the secretary of defense under President Biden, "I would go

and catch up with him in the Pentagon building," she says. "Everyone was like, 'How do you know the secretary's chief of staff?' I was like, 'I met him through Penn and the Perry World House.'"

In September 2016 Perry World House opened on Locust Walk with much fanfare ["Perry World House," Nov|Dec 2016]. Navanethem Pillay, a former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, gave a keynote address explaining how academic cooperation of the type being promoted by Perry World House had helped her as an anti-apartheid activist. The opening events also included a conversation between then Penn President Amy Gutmann Hon'22 and former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who talked about what it was like to serve under five presidents.

Horowitz was associate director of Perry World House at the time and took over the director position in July 2020, maintaining a robust schedule of remote events sponsored by Perry World House through the pandemic and continuing in a hybrid in-person/virtual mode once the Penn community was able to return to campus. He's used his personal network to bring in even more speakers, from filmmakers to journalists to policy advisers.

"Mike is a serious, rigorous scholar, but he is also someone who has conversations with leaders in Washington who are making decisions," says Penn Provost John L. Jackson Jr.

"Michael is amazing at bringing people together to have hard and meaningful conversations," adds Wendell Pritchett Gr'97, former provost and the University's interim president in 2022, who is now the James S. Riepe Presidential Professor of Law and Education at Penn Carey Law School. "Certainly high on my list is when we hosted Ambassador [to the United Nations] Susan Rice at Perry World House. Michael facilitated a series of great meetings where we all learned so much from her."

Under Horowitz's leadership, Perry World House has also become a welcoming community for students, says Kahn. "At Penn there are a lot of resources if you are into business or nursing, but it is a little harder for social science people. To have this physical space where you can engage with other students and faculty members who care, it was incredible."

During Horowitz's absence, Michael Weisberg, the Bess W. Heyman President's Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, served as interim director, and in February 2024 Marie Harf—a former senior advisor to US Secretary of State John Kerry and a political commentator for the Fox News Channel—joined Perry World House as executive director, with oversight over programming, administration, and management.

Horowitz's return to the directorship followed a turbulent time for Penn and the world, and Perry World House has emerged as a space where Penn students can look for insight, having "hosted a number of events over the last academic year and into this year to try and help all stakeholders on campus grapple with the momentous events on October 7 and the aftermath," he says. More recently, days after the fall of the Assad regime in Syria in December, Horowitz organized an online panel with experts to explain "what happened and what comes next."

The next day a White House climate advisor spoke to another crowd about work the Biden administration was doing to combat climate change and how it could potentially be advanced during the transition to the Trump administration. Horowitz also points to Perry World House's involvement—through the work of Weisberg and colleagues—in the annual United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP) meet-

Photograph by Greg Benson

ings on climate change ["Gazetteer," Mar|Apr 2024]. The most recent conference (COP29), which was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, led to a climate finance agreement that set a goal of providing developing countries with $300 billion annually (up from $100 billion) by 2035 to help them reduce their emissions and make other changes needed to combat climate change. "Through a whole set of conferences and meetings we had at the Perry World House, if you look at the text that came out of this climate conference, you will see our house's footprints and handprints all over it," Horowitz says.

In November and January, Horowitz took part in two panels examining the foreign policy of the new administration of President Donald Trump W'68. Shortly after the presidential election in which Trump defeated Joe Biden Hon'13, Horowitz and Marie Harf shared their thoughts on the potential foreign policy priorities of the Trump White House regarding China, Russia and Ukraine, the Middle East, and Europe, and how they might differ from those of Biden. He also introduced a January 15 panel discussion where past and present Perry World House visiting fellows offered the incoming administration advice on a variety of national security issues. (Recordings of all Perry World House events are available on its YouTube channel.)

"If you think about a lot of the technologies that are changing the world—quantum computing, AI, certain technologies that have military relevance like hypersonic—we did not have a policy office focused on those," Kahl says, explaining his invitation to Horowitz to head up such an effort. "I needed someone who was a deep thinker on the relationship between emerging technologies and contemporary warfare. The first person to come to mind was Mike, because his scholarly work focused on the causes and consequences of military transformations."

"My biggest concern going into the government was that it was resting on its laurels. Because we were focused on the war on terrorism, we had taken our eye off the ball when it came to strategic competition."

It helped that during an earlier Pentagon stint in 2013, on a fellowship from the Council of Foreign Relations (of which Horowitz is a life member), he helped draft one of the first Department of Defense directives on autonomous weapons, Kahl adds. "It was how to think about integrating AI and autonomy into weapons and how to make sure we do that ethically, responsibly, but also effectively from a war-fighting perspective."

The new Emerging Capabilities Policy Office had the goal of accelerating the Department of Defense's ability to respond to events in a rapidly changing global environment. "My biggest concern going into the government was that it was resting on its laurels. Because we were focused on the war on terrorism, we had taken our eye off the ball when it came to strategic competition," Horowitz says. "Every day I woke up, I focused on the question: *How do we ensure that the American military is the best in the world and especially ready to deter China, if necessary*?"

Adopting new technology is particularly important in today's global landscape, Horowitz emphasizes. "The United States had a generation-long lead in those capabilities, but those advances have eroded," he says. This has occurred "because of capability advances by China, but also because of the spread of knowledge, advances in manufacturing, and advances in AI and technology that everyone from Iran to military groups now have access to."

Although he is shy about sharing details regarding his Pentagon progress, Horowitz points to the challenge "for any military—especially the leading military in the world—to transform itself on the fly. We made steps in the right direction, and I am cautiously hopeful that that work will continue in the next administration."

Now that he is back at Penn, Horowitz is looking forward to pursuing and expanding his research interests. "I am going to continue to work on defense innovation to try to understand the ways that organizational changes are shaping the future of war," he says. "I want to do behavioral science work on what influences trust and confidence in the adoption of AI and robotics."

According to Provost Jackson, Horowitz's expertise couldn't be timelier. "Mike is an incredible leader around AI and using it in ways that are ethical and responsible," he says. "It's a time when a larger and larger percentage of the world is trying to understand the impact of it in society, politics, and culture. We really want to prioritize those conversations in the research we do."

Horowitz also hopes to continue the connections he's pursued in his work between the academy and the government. "It was a huge honor to be able to serve my country and take a lot of the ideas I had worked on outside of the government and try and leverage them to have impact," he says. "The next step forward is to just keep the ball moving within the government—but also working with other smart people to try and figure out what we should be doing next. I think there is real synergy between the research and analysis that academics do and the work of the government. It isn't always easy to bridge that gap—you have to be willing to communicate with both worlds—but I think if you do, there is a real opportunity there."

Alyson Krueger C'07 is a frequent contributor to the *Gazette*.

STEWARDING *THE SIMPSONS*

In 1997, Matt Selman landed his dream job writing for *The Simpsons*. He's still there today as head showrunner, striving to keep the 35-year-old animated series vital and surprising while also hanging on to its humor and heart. But how long will the show go on?

By Molly Petrilla

In the fall of 1992, somewhere in West Philadelphia, 21-year-old Matt Selman C'93 sat in front of a boxy little Macintosh computer, tapping out his homage to early-90s TV.

"Life at Penn shuts down for half an hour every Thursday at 8 p.m.—and with good reason: it's cartoon time," he wrote. A moment when students of all stripes "swarm around the glowing box," he continued, "to absorb the genius of Matt Groening and pals as manifested in *The Simpsons*."

Those lines launched his student essay, published in the *Gazette*'s November 1992 issue. Four years later, to his own shock, Selman would actually become one of those Groening pals, plunked inside an LA writers' room, dreaming up misadventures and quips for America's favorite bright-yellow family of Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie. And in 2021, he would assume the highest post there: running the show, which he's still doing today.

"I love the challenge of keeping the show vital," Selman says. December marked 35 years since *The Simpsons* debuted on Fox, making it America's longest-running primetime series by a landslide. Its 36th season, currently airing, has nudged it past 780 total episodes. "How do I keep this show fresh and good and original and crazy after 35 years?" he says. "That's the hardest part of the job, but that's also the main reason why I do the job."

Somehow that job sounds almost normal, at least when Selman describes it. You go into an office and come up with the best ideas you can. You manage small groups. You write, you edit, you goof around with your coworkers. "I look forward to coming in every day," he says. "People think that it's just fun and games all day here with the funniest people in the universe—and it is sort of like that. But it also is like any other job."

Still, when you're showrunning *The Simpsons,* that job you're doing is under an extreme microscope. Millions of people will see your work. It will spawn think pieces, prompt countless Reddit posts, win (or lose) Emmys and Golden Globes. Some people will insist that you can predict the future. Others will say that what you're doing isn't good anymore; it sucks now, in fact. Or maybe that it's getting better. Best it's been in decades, actually.

Selman doesn't seem too bogged down by any of that, though. As a *Simpsons* fan from the very beginning, he knows that the show has evolved and will continue to—and he's okay with that. In fact, it's what he's been working toward for years.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ETHAN PINES C'92

On December 17, 1989, *The Simpsons* premiered with a Christmas special. (It's the one where Homer, trying to raise money for gifts, bets his pay from working as a mall Santa at the dog track, loses, and ends up adopting the dog, "Santa's Little Helper.") From its first moments, the show looked and sounded unlike anything else that had been on TV before.

Selman was watching from his dorm, three months into his freshman year at Penn—and he was immediately hooked. "It was a revolution," he remembers, "and I was the perfect age to get caught up in it."

When he wasn't parked in front of the nearest TV each week at *Simpsons* o'clock, he was trying his hand at journalism. He joined the *Daily Pennsylvanian* as a beat reporter in 1991 ("I wasn't good at it"), then found a better fit at *34th Street* magazine, where he became editor-in-chief his junior year. Although he now regrets using his reign to copycat *Entertainment Weekly*, he says it was "the most formative, fortunate thing that ever happened to me in terms of beginning this journey—times a million."

Today he heads up *The Simpsons'* 16-person writing team, helping to shape every episode as it evolves from idea to finished product. Each day, he works alongside his writers to "break" stories, finetune scripts, and sometimes lead them in offshoot projects—like shorts for Disney+ or a *Monday Night Football* simulcast with *Simpsons* characters that aired in December.

Wrangling all those comedy-writing creatives requires an unusual mix of expertise, which Selman says he honed at *34th Street*. "I really began to develop the skills of collaboration and teamwork, and of being a fun, goofy, creative leader of a bunch of fun, goofy people all trying to make something fun and goofy together," he says.

Roxanne Patel Shepelavy C'93 remembers Penn-era Selman as "weird, neurotic, wickedly smart, bashful—and the only person we knew who went to the gym." They met as beat reporters at the *DP* and stayed close all through Penn, sharing a house with a handful of other friends their senior year.

"I basically giggled my way through college as Matt's friend," she says, recalling his "hilarious, brilliant turns of phrase" that, in a heavy stroke of foreshadowing, felt straight out of a sitcom. He read comic books and "sat around watching a lot of *Simpsons*," she adds.

TV critic Alan Sepinwall C'96, who's written about *The Simpsons* for decades, remembers meeting Selman during his own freshman year at Penn. Selman was in his final semester and still hanging out in the *Street* office. He'd written a spec script for *Seinfeld* and passed it around, soliciting input.

"I was amazed that Matt knew exactly what he wanted to do when he graduated, that he was aiming so high, and that he was already putting in the work to make it happen," Sepinwall remembers. But when Selman asked if he had any feedback on his script, "I froze and gave a completely garbled nonanswer," Sepinwall says. "All these years later, I would say we are both better at our respective side of things."

THE *Simpsons* was in its ninth season when Selman arrived, 25 years old and terrified.

He'd snagged a writing gig on *Seinfeld* just a few years out of Penn, but it didn't last long. "I couldn't have been less qualified," he told an audience at the 2024 Austin Film Festival. "I really didn't know what story was. I really didn't know what character was. I'm not even sure I really knew what a comedy idea was."

So when he joined *The Simpsons* in 1997, he proceeded with caution. He still remembers which writer pitched each individual joke that season because he was tracking it all so carefully, afraid of losing his top-comedy-show dream job (again). He successfully hung on to his spot in the writers' room but admits that his early contributions weren't wowing anyone. Then he saw the 1999 movie *Go*—a frenetic crime comedy with interlocking plotlines—and dreamed up a *Simpsons* version.

"WHAT'S A BIG, CRAZY IDEA THAT ONLY WE COULD DO, OR THAT WE COULD TAKE FROM ELSEWHERE AND APPLY TO *THE SIMPSONS*?"

It became "Trilogy of Error," a Season 12 episode that weaves three distinct tales (Homer's severed thumb, Lisa's science fair entry, and Bart's illegal fireworks find) into a single, interconnected tale. It's complex storytelling for a full-length film—and especially for a 22-minute animated comedy.

"That's what I try to do with every episode now: What's a big, crazy idea that only we could do, or that we could take from elsewhere and apply to *The Simpsons* and keep the show fresh and original?" Selman says.

So far this season, the show has parodied *The White Lotus*, turned Marge and Smithers into wine counterfeiters, and—in a *Venom* spoof from Selman—zipped Homer into a pair of sentient, stop-motion-animated jeans ("Denim").

The Season 36 premiere, "Bart's Birthday," claimed it was the show's series finale, hosted by former *Simpsons* writer Conan O'Brien and written by an AI bot programmed to craft the perfect last episode. "I'm very proud of that one," says Selman, who proposed the idea himself. "What other show could do a fake finale that tries to end itself but also keep itself alive?"

And what other showrunner could have come up with it? After proving himself with "Trilogy of Error," Selman continued turning in strong scripts and eventually began assisting longtime showrunner Al Jean. By 2011, he was showrunning (or as it's billed in the closing credits, executive producing) a couple episodes on his own, then more in ensuing seasons, until taking over as *The Simpsons'* head showrunner in 2021.

Not every episode or every season has been beloved. Critics and viewers often call Seasons 1–10 the show's "Golden Era."

In *Vulture*'s ranking of the best *Simpsons* episodes ever, "Bart's Birthday" is the only one of the top 10 written after 1997.

"Look, no one is more aware than me of the narrative around the show's quality," Selman says. "I am the biggest fan in the world of the classic *Simpsons* years. That's when I fell in love with the show.

"[But] our goal is not to write and produce the show in the exact same style as it was in the classic years," he adds. "Our goal is to do—for better or for worse—a modern version of the show. We're not trying to revolutionize comedy [anymore], because the revolution has already happened."

He's heard all the critiques, which grow louder at some times than others. *The show isn't as funny. It's relying on tropes. Repeating plots. Trying too hard. Why aren't there more jokes?!*

"*The Simpsons*, when it first came out, was really a joke-delivery machine," Selman said at the Austin event. "My aspiration now is to make it a story-delivery machine … to just tell good stories about good people that are making terrible choices because the world is so hard and full of things that make you stupid. That's a good goal for our show in 2024."

In his quest for fresh stories, Selman's been infusing the writers' room with new talent. The earliest *Simpsons* team was almost exclusively men. Even when Selman arrived in Season 9, all 25 episodes had male writers (with a lone woman cowriter credited in one episode).

Compare that to the current season, where half of the first 12 episodes were written by women—including one from Christine Nangle C'02, a fellow Penn alum whom Selman hired in 2019.

Nangle came from the sketch and improv comedy world, starting at UCB Theatre in New York and continuing through writing jobs on *Saturday Night Live, Kroll Show,* and *Inside Amy Schumer*. When Selman asked her to join the staff, Nangle told him that she didn't have encyclopedic knowledge of the show. "Great," he told her. "Love that." Then she admitted that she hadn't actually watched it much lately. "He's like, 'Great, even better,'" she remembers.

"We've always hired the funniest people," Selman says, but in recent years, "we wanted to cast a wider net for where the funniest people were."

"I think he wanted to bring in people who had other experiences on other types of shows," Nangle adds. "Under his leadership, we've been venturing into new format-breaking episodes and playing with more experimental stuff."

Like Nangle's "Women in Shorts" episode, which aired in November. It's composed of 12 sketch-comedy-style vignettes about Springfield's female characters and packed with references: *The Nanny*, the *Barbie* movie, and even a tampon-shopping parody of *West Side Story*'s "Gee, Officer Krupke."

"*The Simpsons* on Matt's watch is a lot more structurally adventurous than the show was in its most celebrated period," says Sepinwall, who was shocked to see himself name-dropped in a *Fahrenheit 451* parody episode this season. "The range of influences is also broader," he adds, "and it often tries to be more emotionally sincere than it once was."

Post-Season 10 criticism accused the show of losing its emotional core and

A Career in Five Episodes

Selman shares the *Simpsons* installments that trace his journey with the show.

"Natural Born Kissers" (1998)

Season 9, Episode 25 (Season Finale)

Homer and Marge discover that public sex puts the zing back in their relationship—until it becomes a problem. **Why he chose it:** This was the first *Simpsons* episode Selman wrote. "My draft needed a lot of work," he says, "but the rewrite by Mike Scully, George Meyer, and the other geniuses on staff made the show into a classic."

"Trilogy of Error" (2001)

Season 12, Episode 18

Selman's script weaves three separate stories into a clever, interconnected tale of a severed thumb, a grammar robot, and an illegal fireworks stash. **Why he chose it:** This was Selman's first time concocting a format-breaking episode. "I borrowed (stole) the plot structure of the movie *Go* and made it a thousand times sillier," he says.

"The Food Wife" (2011)

Season 23, Episode 5

Marge and the kids stumble their way into foodie culture and even start a food blog. But then a fancy dinner out turns into a perilous misadventure for Homer. **Why he chose it:** This one marks Selman's first time showrunning an episode—and he wrote it, too. "I figured if I was only going to have creative control of one episode, I'd go all in on the foodie culture I was enamored with at the time," he remembers.

"Treehouse of Horror XXXIII" (2022)

Season 34, Episode 6

The "SimpsonsWorld" segment that Selman wrote for this Halloween episode is stuffed with *Simpsons* references and catchphrases—even the Springfield monorail makes an appearance. The spooky twist? Homer's not a human; he's just intellectual property trapped inside a *Simpsons* theme park. **Why he chose it:** Its annual Treehouse episodes are a huge deal at *The Simpsons*, and this was Selman's first time showrunning one. He describes "SimpsonsWorld" as "a love letter to *The Simpsons* fans and the classic era of the show."

"Bart's Birthday" (2024)

Season 36, Episode 1 (Season Premiere)

Selman wasn't its main writer, but he did coin the idea for a fake series finale episode. Brimming with celebrity cameos, it pokes fun at all the usual finale cliches—like perfectly wrapped-up storylines and characters flicking off the lights while saying "I'm gonna miss this place." **Why he chose it:** "The craziest format-breaker I showran," Selman says. "It showed that *The Simpsons* could still be audacious after 36 seasons."

narrative drive. In 2003, a *Slate* critic wrote that *The Simpsons'* characters had all become "empty vessels for one-liners and sight gags." But two years ago, a *Vulture* article announced—in a statement it felt was headline-worthy—"*The Simpsons* Is Good Again." The creative team is "putting out some of the most ambitious, poignant, and funny episodes in the show's history," Jesse David Fox wrote. He gave Selman significant credit for that renaissance.

"He always wants us to be focused on the characters and the emotion of the story," Nangle says. "Some people might think those things are too corny to care about, but I think that's one of the things that makes his episodes so good and powerful."

Shepelavy can picture Selman's own kindness trickling down into the show he runs. She describes him as bighearted and "really sweet." At Penn, she says, he was the friend who'd make sure everyone got home safely after a night out. "It's not surprising to me that the show is more emotionally rich" under his leadership, she says.

"On the outside, it is this smart, funny show that's kind of ridiculous," Shepelavy adds. "But underneath that there's a sweetness to it. That is very much like Matt."

With Selman in charge, *The Simpsons* writers' room "doesn't feel like a competition," says Nangle, who suspects that may not have always been the case. When the group is batting around ideas for gags and punchlines, she says the undertone is always collaboration and making each other's work the best it can be.

"It's not a negative space, and no one shits on people's pitches or puts down ideas," Selman says. "Without the freedom to be dumb, you're not going to be funny … [and] everyone here knows we're so lucky to have this crazy job."

But in the same breath that she's describing Selman as kind, warm, and personable, Nangle says he's also "quirky and anxious." In fact, "he has the most endearing anxiety I've ever seen," she says. "He seems to be as worried about what we're ordering for lunch as he is about the table read the next day."

Selman's job requires a lot of juggling: writers, story ideas, scripts, media interviews, brand collaborations, public appearances on behalf of the show.

We had our first call in mid-December, during which he glanced at a writer's outline ("These millennials, I tell you, they don't love page numbers") and received a holiday gift ("Is that a present for me? Ooh, alright!").

The next night, he was on stage at El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood, introducing a screening of the show's new holiday special, "O C'mon All Ye Faithful." It aired on December 17, exactly 35 years after *The Simpsons*' 1989 debut.

Wearing a baseball cap and glasses (*Vulture* writer Fox once described him as looking "a tiny bit like Krusty [the Clown] managing a Little League softball game on his day off"), he stood between show creator Matt Groening and the episode's writer, Carolyn Omine.

"Tonight's amazing Christmas episode is all about miracles," Selman told the audience. "It asks the question, *Are miracles real*? … To me, the real miracle is that after 35 years, *The Simpsons* still exists, and it's as good as it's ever been."

But it's also different—and not just in the stories he's shepherding on screen. The new holiday episode didn't run in *The Simpsons*' usual Fox Sunday night timeslot. It was only available on the streaming platform Disney+, as were three other episodes in Season 36.

"This sounds like a bullshitty thing people say, but Disney has been so terrific to us since they bought *The Simpsons* in 2019," Selman tells me. "Being bought by Disney was like a rebirth for the show in many ways." New generations of kids have been discovering it. It's opened up brand partnerships (like the *Monday Night Football* endeavor) and lets the show be even more experimental in streaming-only episodes.

At this point, *The Simpsons* is much more than a (very large) collection of episodes. It's spawned a movie, video games, board games, action figures, and theme parks at both Universal Studios' US locations. Its impact ripples across many other beloved TV comedies—*Family Guy, Bob's Burgers, South Park* and even *The Office*.

"*The Simpsons* reinvented the entire style of comedy as we know it today, to the point where it's hard to find a contemporary comedy that doesn't have some degree of *Simpsons* DNA in it," Sepinwall says. "But that also means that there is less focus on the show itself, even when it does stunts like the fake finale."

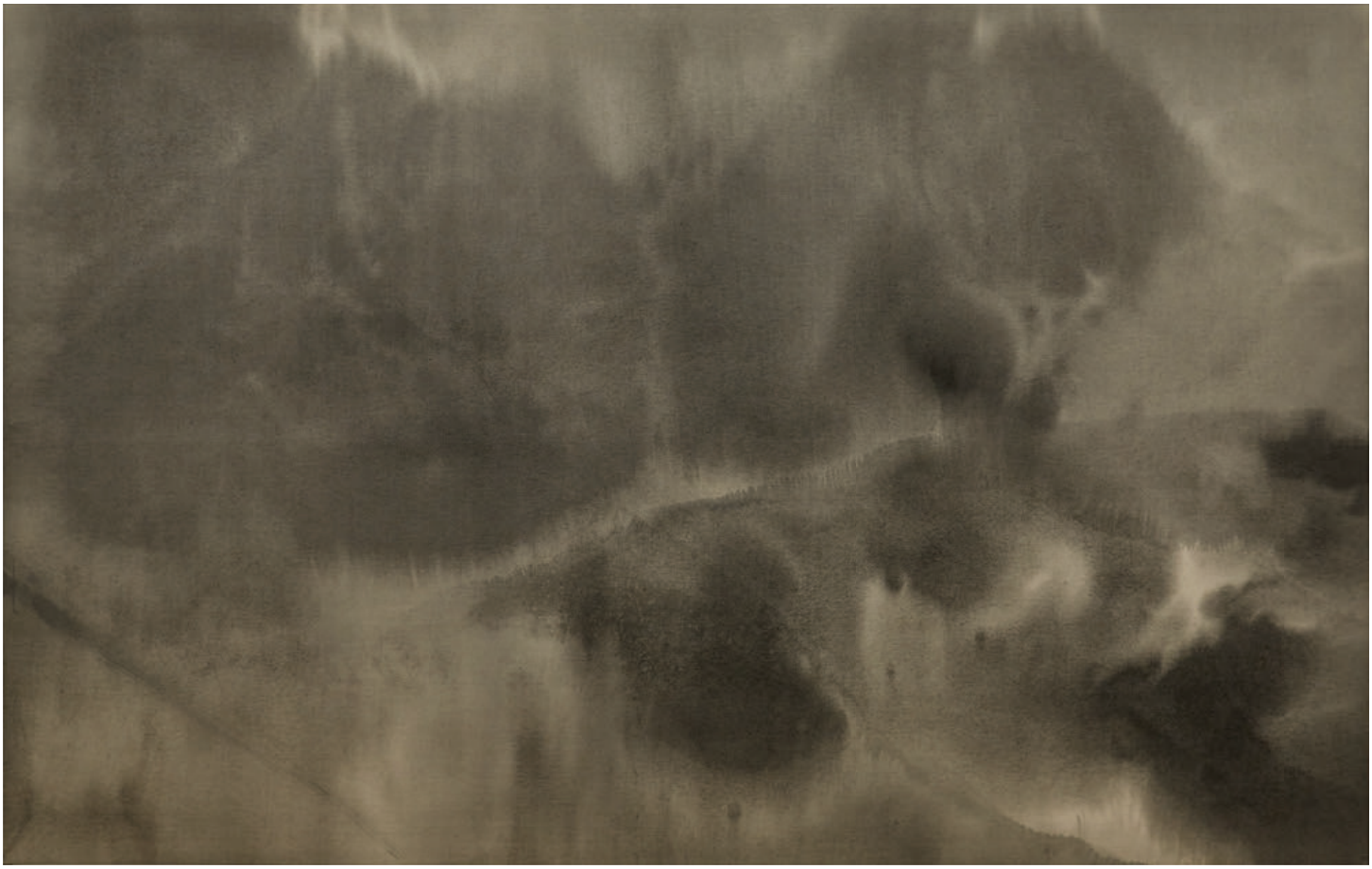
He predicts that it may eventually become a straight-to-streaming show for Disney+ (though not yet—in April it was renewed for four more seasons on Fox). But "my main question is what happens when one of the main actors is no longer available," Sepinwall says. Hank Azaria—who voices several characters and at 61 is the youngest of the show's main longstanding voice actors—recently wrote a piece for the *New York Times* predicting that AI will soon be able to recreate his *Simpsons* voices, which could be one answer. (Unsurprisingly, he hates the idea.)

For anyone under 35, *The Simpsons* has always been on TV each week, no questions asked. Most of the world would easily recognize their distinct shade of yellow, their bulgy eyes, their silly catchphrases. It's hard to imagine the family ever just disappearing from pop culture—which prompts me to ask Selman whether he thinks this show, the one he's spent tens of thousands of hours working on, will end someday, and what might cause it to.

"That's a problem for future everybody, not a problem for today," he says.

"I could definitely see a scenario where some version of it continues forever," he adds, "but I'm more worried about the next table read than I am about the existential future of the show."

Molly Petrilla C'06 writes frequently for the *Gazette*.



Calendar

Annenberg Center
pennlivearts.org
Malandain Ballet Biarritz May 2–3
Children's Festival May 4–6
Lakecia Benjamin May 9
The Lady Hoofers Tap Ensemble May 10
Old Crow Medicine Show May 22
Parsons Dance May 30–31
Makoto Fujimura Through Jun. 1
Toll the Bell Jun. 6

Arthur Ross Gallery
arthurrossgallery.org
Open Tues.–Sun.
Scattered Earth, Sounded Depth: Penn Fine Arts MFA Thesis Exhibition
May 1–30

ICA
icaphila.org
Mavis Pusey: Mobile Images
Jul. 12-Dec. 7

Kelly Writers House
writing.upenn.edu/wh
Food Writing: A Panel Discussion with Hannah Filreis Albertine, Betsy Andrews C'85, Lolis Eric Elie W'85, Sanaë Lemoine C'11, Louisa Shafia C'92, and Pete Wells C'85
May 17

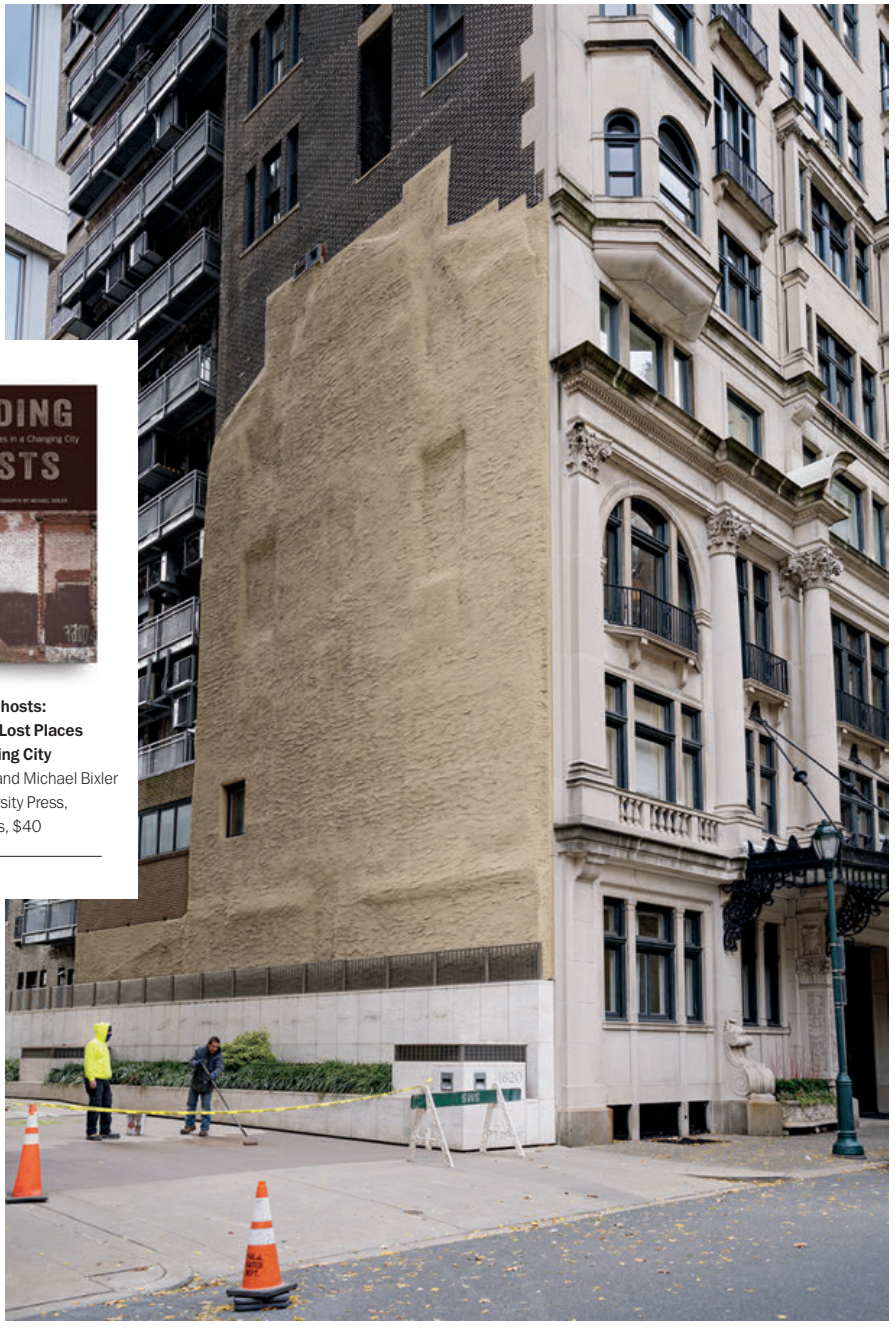
Morris Arboretum and Gardens
morrisarboretum.org
Open daily, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Garden Railway: World Pollinators
Through Sep. 30

Penn Libraries
library.upenn.edu
Vanitas: Still Life Photographs of Audrey Flack
Through May 19
From Manuscript to Manga: Ainu Representation in Media
Through May 19
Revolution at Penn?
Through July 11
"My Soul is Anchored in the Lord": Marian Anderson and Florence Price
Through Dec. 15

Penn Museum
penn.museum
Preserving Assyria
Through February 2026
Connecting Warriors Across Time Through Archaeology May 7
Penn Alumni Weekend Events
May 16–17
Pioneering Research in Thailand and Laos Jun. 5

World Café Live
worldcafelive.com
The Steel Wheels May 1
Jensen McRae May 3
Audrey Nuna May 9
Madeleine Peyroux May 12–13
The Moth Storyslam: "Only in Philadelphia" May 20
Carsie Blanton May 23
BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet May 28
Mei Semones May 29
Heartless Bastards May 31
The Moth Storyslam: "Hospitality" Jun. 1
Lights Jun. 4
Dean Wareham with Escape-Ism Jun. 10
Suzanne Vega Jun. 11
Mary Fahl Jun. 14
Gin Wigmore Jun. 17
Pub Choir Jun. 18
Loving Jun. 20
Bettye LaVette Jun. 25
Bria Skonberg Jun. 26

Above: *Transfiguration* (detail), 2017, sumi ink on Belgium linen, 84 x 396 in., triptych.
 On view in the lobby of the Annenberg Center through June 1.



***1828 Rittenhouse Square* by Michael Bixler.**

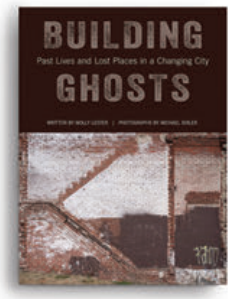
Architectural Afterlives

A new book explores buildings that have vanished—with a trace.

By JoAnn Greco

All that really remains of the row house that once stood stoutly at 1828 Rittenhouse Square is its outline, forever etched onto the exposed side of a regal Beaux Arts apartment building. Its only distinguishing features are a double chimney and the vague impressions—like thumbprints in cookie dough—of several upper floor windows. "There's something visceral whenever I see one of these," says Molly Lester GFA'12, as she peers up at the wall.

And while architectural ephemera like the jagged profiles of torn-out interior staircases or the faded remnants of flocked wallpaper can be visually striking, Lester, a historical preservationist and author of the new *Building Ghosts: Past Lives and Lost Places in a Changing City*, finds true magic elsewhere. "A wall like this makes me want to know more about who was here and how they lived," she says. "It goes beyond the idea of whether it's an iconic building that was designed by a famous architect or a place where something noteworthy happened."



Building Ghosts: Past Lives and Lost Places in a Changing City
Molly Lester GFA'12 and Michael Bixler
Temple University Press,
202 pages, $40

By revisiting their heydays in this richly photographed volume, Lester reveals that vernacular buildings like the four-story brick Rittenhouse Square row house—or, more accurately, its ghostly outline—contain multitudes.

"This building witnessed the early stages of the careers of two different artists who lived here, sculptor Katherine Cohen and architect Edgar Viguers Seeler," Lester says. Both were native Philadelphians who spent time in Paris, and achieved some success—particularly Seeler, who designed Penn's Hayden Hall, the Curtis Center, and the Penn Mutual Life Insurance headquarters on Washington Square. For her four-page examination of this building, Lester cites 16 sources, ranging from the Philadelphia City Archives to a Penn course catalogue for 1894–95 to the *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*.

Photo by Michael Bixler courtesy Temple University Press

***2546 N. 28th Street*, and *5247–51 Whitby Avenue* by Michael Bixler.**

The imprints and impressions of building ghosts "juxtapose the solidity of the wall and the void of the vacant lot left behind, the tangible and the missing, the past and the present and the pending (or suspended) future," she writes. "We look at [them] … to confront the ghosts we've inherited and the ghosts we've made." In capsule essays, Lester examines the presence of these ghosts in seven broad neighborhoods across the city, placing them in the context of each area's changing political and economic fortunes, demographics, and mix of building uses and materials. In North Philadelphia, for example, where some 3,000 buildings were knocked down between 2010 and 2020, she observes that wrecking balls have been unleashed at social problems unlikely to be solved by demolition alone. "There is more to condemn than merely the structures," she declares. "We did this."

Photographer Michael Bixler, editorial director for *Hidden City*, an online publication that explores Philadelphia's built environment, offers careful documentation, shooting from a variety of vantage points to include adjacent stores or El lines, idle demolition equipment, or the signature mowed grass and white split-rail fencing that defines lots left behind by the city's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative anti-blight program.) Bixler says he tried to "dignify each ghost and not treat them as objects of ruin. These are architectural remains of homes where real people lived, loved, celebrated, mourned, dreamed, and hoped. They embody loss, for sure—but they are also very poignant reminders of the cycle of life and the history of underrepresented people whose stories would otherwise go untold."

Their resulting book presents the backstories and images of 40 demolished buildings, and recognizes another 41 through photographs only. This June, the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia will presents its Young Friends Award to the team.

The project began in late 2020, when the duo spent four months driving, walking, and biking up and down just about every block in town hunting for these ghostly architectural traces. They found 194 in all—though some of them vanished almost as soon as Lester and Bixler recorded their locations. In North Philadelphia, at 2546 N. 28th Street, Bixler was taken by swatches of lime green wallpaper and a poster of the rapper 50 Cent that offered a palimpsest of particularly modern sensibilities. For Lester, one standout was 5247–51 Whitby Avenue in Southwest Philly, where a scrawled tag reading RENT STRIKE offered a telling marker of the pandemic era.

Along the way, Lester hit the books, city directories, and maps, fleshing out the various personalities who once lived in the demolished buildings even as she encountered roadblocks and dead ends—like sussing out relationships between parties and keeping tabs on white women and Black Philadelphians whose fates, addresses and professions were not as carefully tabulated in census tracts and daily newspapers as those of white men.

Photos by Michael Bixler courtesy Temple University Press

In her preface, the author remembers the moment she first really *saw* a building ghost. It was 2013 and her eye was caught by a wall in a vacant Northern Liberties lot with "a stair that snaked its way up the wall; the outline of a former foyer; a series of lines in the attic gable, clearly left over from a set of shelves." Mesmerized, she felt inspired to "draw on all the same detective skills that I need for my higher-profile research subjects." But she was never able to find the site again, because when she went searching for it a second time, it was gone, replaced by new construction.

Intent on capturing the images (and stories) of these fleeting ghosts before they vaporized, she began an Instagram account, which garnered submissions from other volunteer ghost-spotters, including Bixler. Securing a grant from Penn's Sachs Program for Arts Innovation to produce a book, Lester invited him to be her photographer. "There is so much neighborhood demolition and private construction happening in Philadelphia, that it was often a race against the clock to document building ghosts before they were covered up," Bixler observes. "However, in some economically challenged areas where gentrification and the often-exploitative real estate market have yet to gain a foothold, there are building ghosts that often remain exposed for years, especially if the adjoining building is vacant or abandoned."

In their book, Lester refers to these most persistent of memories as "legacy ghosts." As with other long-term placeholders of the urban streetscape, such as community gardens and murals, city dwellers are apt to romanticize them in the face of future development. Lester, though, is quick to emphasize that ghosts of any sort are by definition evanescent. "The intent of the book is not to say let's freeze them forever," she says. "It is a reminder, though, that they offer an opportunity to pause and consider what we're replacing them with."

Historical Fiction

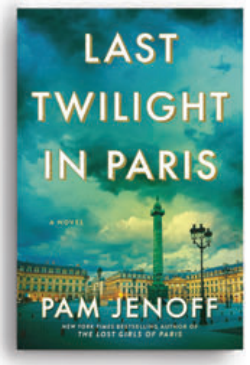
Department of Plunder

A novelistic exploration of the Nazi store in Paris where Jewish prisoners were forced to sell stolen possessions.

By Julia M. Klein

As a US State Department diplomat in Poland, Pam Jenoff focused on Holocaust-related issues, a remit that has influenced much of her fiction. In an author's note at the end of her latest novel, *Last Twilight in Paris,* Jenoff says that she always looks for "a piece of history that is so untold that it makes me gasp."

In this case, she found it in the story of Lévitan, a Parisian furniture store that the Nazis converted into a work camp for Jewish women. The women sorted merchandise plundered from Jews and sold it to Nazi officers. A site of hunger, grief, anxiety, and forced labor, Lévitan also functioned as a refuge from even worse dangers—a place where prisoners, if they were lucky, could survive.



Last Twilight in Paris: A Novel
By Pam Jenoff L'01
Park Row Books,
336 pages, $28.99

Cleverly constructed, swift-moving, and often poignant, *Last Twilight in Paris* tells the story of two women leading parallel lives that eventually converge. In form and content, it leans heavily on the metaphor of a puzzle. At the center of the tale is a heart-shaped necklace, a lover's keepsake designed to split in two. The plot also features an actual jigsaw puzzle, intersecting mysteries, and a narrative that deftly interweaves multiple time frames and characters.

A third-person prologue, set in 1943, introduces readers to Helaine, a Jewish woman arrested in Paris by the Nazis and on her way to some fearsome destiny. The tale then jumps forward to 1953, to the first-person narration of Louise, a woman trapped in a troubled marriage in the stiflingly small English town of Henley-on-Thames in a house with "cracks at the foundation." It then backtracks again, to Helaine's difficult childhood.

After she recovers from a near-fatal bout of influenza, Helaine's overprotective parents, fearing for her health, essentially imprison her at home. (Confinement is one of the novel's recurrent motifs.) Helaine escapes via her imagination, by reading and writing stories.

Eventually, at her insistence, her mother allows her to take walks. On one such excursion, she meets a (non-Jewish) musician, Gabriel, and, over time, falls in love. Against her shocked parents' wishes, she marries him, creating a painful familial estrangement. When Gabriel departs, under duress, to play his cello in Germany, she is left alone amid the Nazi occupation and mounting anti-Jewish restrictions.

Meanwhile, in England, Louise's boyfriend Joe splits up with her when he goes off to war, hoping to spare her grief. The break-up leaves her, too, sad and alone, but also free. She volunteers for the International Red Cross, becomes enamored of her supervisor, Ian, and befriends an actress, Franny. While Ian and Louise distribute care packages at German POW camps behind enemy lines, Franny (a character inspired by Édith Piaf) sings for the prisoners and their captors. At one point, tragedy strikes. Franny, who has been aiding the resistance, dies in what Ian insists is a hit-and-run accident.

Years later, Louise is still haunted by her friend's death, as well as her attraction to Ian. These unresolved emotions imperil the postwar life she has built with her two children and now-husband Joe, who returned to her when the fighting ended. Despite their love, the war "lies silent and unspoken between us, a dark divide," Louise thinks. Both husband and wife, it seems, are nursing lingering trauma.

The narrative's inciting incident is Louise's discovery, in the thrift shop where she works part-time, of a gold link necklace with "a charm shaped like a heart with a jagged edge, as though half is missing." It is familiar to her; she believes she has seen it before, during the war. The only other clue she has is the name etched on the crate where she finds it: Lévitan. Louise decides to return to France to learn more, and Ian (rather improbably) joins her for the caper.

Jenoff, who teaches law at Rutgers University, is not an elegant or inventive stylist. Her skill is in constructing suspenseful, propulsive narratives against the backdrop of history. And the history she plumbs here is as compelling as it is little-known. Lévitan, a department store of stolen goods, emerges as a distinctive prison, a not-quite-gilded cage within the larger prison of occupied Paris. There Helaine and other women try to stay busy, healthy, and as inconspicuous as possible to avoid deportation to someplace worse.

The novel's mysteries are straightforward: Will Helaine find her way to freedom? Will Louise unearth the secrets she seeks? At what cost? What will become of their families, friends, and the men they love? And, finally, can a Holocaust story have a happy ending? The answers Jenoff ultimately provides aren't terribly surprising. But readers will likely enjoy piecing together her narrative puzzles along the way.

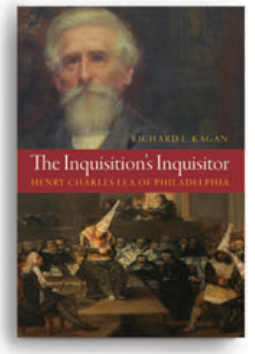
Julia M. Klein is a frequent contributor to the Gazette.

The Gilded-Age Medievalist

A new biography of Penn benefactor Henry Charles Lea paints the Philadelphia publisher, activist, real estate investor, and amateur historian as an exceptionally well-tutored man.

By Dennis Drabelle

First-rate scholarship by amateurs used to be a common feature of American intellectual life. Constance Rourke did not have a PhD in history or any other field; her 1931 book, *American Humor: A Study of the National Character*, has been republished as a New York Review of Books Classic. Bruce Catton never completed his undergraduate work, but *A Stillness at Appomattox* (1953), the final volume of his Army of the Potomac trilogy, won both a Pulitzer Prize in History and a National Book Award for Nonfiction. The degreeless polymath Lewis Mumford wrote some of the 20th century's most trenchant social criticism.



The Inquisition's Inquisitor: Henry Charles Lea of Philadelphia
By Richard L. Kagan
University of Pennsylvania Press, 392 pages, $69.95

Henry Charles Lea, the subject of Richard L. Kagan's astute new biography, was a precursor to those worthies ["Lea's Legacy," Mar|Apr 2014]. Though educated entirely at home by a tutor, Lea wrote such a comprehensive history of the Spanish Inquisition that, in Kagan's opinion, virtually all subsequent treatments are "best seen as a gloss on this foundational work."

Born in Philadelphia in 1825, Lea was the child of a mixed marriage—Quaker on his father's side, Catholic on his mother's. The adult Henry married his Episcopalian first cousin Anna C. Jaudon; he ended up a Unitarian. The couple's consanguinity had riled their parents less than their ages when they first tried to wed: he was 17, she a year younger. Bowing to familial pressure, they waited seven years before tying the knot.

Young Henry had dabbled in conchology, the study of mollusks, and written poetry that, judging from the samples provided by Kagan, was derivative and bland. Again complying with his elders' wishes, Henry reluctantly joined the publishing house founded by his maternal grandfather, Mathew Carey. Lea went on to run the firm and make the profitable decision to specialize in publishing medical books and journals. His shrewd investments in Philadelphia real estate made him one of the city's richest men.

He wanted something more, though—recognition as an intellectual—and suffered periods of despondency exacerbated by overwork and frustrated ambition. In his spare time, he read voraciously, notably in medieval history, and began reviewing books for learned journals. He found himself drawn to accounts of the era's brutal jurisprudence, an interest that culminated in his first book, *Superstition and Force: Essays on the Wager of*

Law, the Wager of Battle, the Ordeal, Torture (1866). Eight more books were to follow—a remarkable record for a writer whose career was interrupted by a decade-long hiatus in which he recovered from his worst bout of depression. Partly responsible for that withdrawal was Lea's friend Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, a Penn trustee who prescribed his vaunted rest cure—a period of near-total inactivity—to patients whose nerves failed them during the roaring Gilded Age ["The Case of S. Weir Mitchell," Nov|Dec 2012].

Back at full speed, Lea handicapped himself by refusing to travel to Europe, where most of the archives he needed to consult were located. Instead, he bought hundreds of books and documents and had them shipped to Philadelphia; inveigled librarians into sending him precious holdings on loan; and kept copyists busy transcribing pages he couldn't otherwise have gotten hold of. These techniques inspired UK Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli to quip, "If Mr. Lea is not stopped, all the libraries of Europe will be removed to Philadelphia."

Kagan, professor emeritus of history at Johns Hopkins and a specialist in Spanish history, has nice things to say about the previous biography of Lea, written by Edward Sculley Bradley C1919 G1921 Gr1925 and published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1931—but also notes some reservations. Supervised by Lea's children, Bradley produced a book that is "far from complete," writes Kagan, who quotes a contemporary reviewer's description of it as a "panegyric." With Lea and his progeny long gone, Kagan is free to contend that Lea's claim to historical objectivity flowed from a non sequitur: time and again, he insisted that he was impartial simply because he based his conclusions on original sources.

In Kagan's analysis, Lea was a son of the Enlightenment who could write that the Catholic Church exposed by his research exerted "an evil influence" and was "a political system adverse to the interests of humanity" without realizing

> "If Mr. Lea is not stopped, all the libraries of Europe will be removed to Philadelphia."

that he might be painting with too broad a brush. It's as if a more recent historian were to segue from criticizing the communist-hunting House Committee on Unamerican Activities of the 1950s as a farrago of unfairness and paranoia to dismissing the House of Representatives itself as "adverse to the interests of humanity." One can't help wondering if Lea's disdain for the Church was traceable in some way to his half-Catholic heritage, but relevant evidence is apparently too meager to be of much help.

Nonetheless, Kagan speaks highly of Lea's seminal *History of the Inquisition of Spain*, which points out that the Spanish branch of the Inquisition was "technically . . . a royal institution, not an ecclesiastical one" and that it thrived at a time when Spain's rulers put a premium on religious uniformity and were rattled by "the emergence of a large, prominent class of converted Jews, *conversos*, suspected of secretly practicing Jewish rites." The tragic consequences of this mindset were the expulsions of Jews from Spain in 1492 and Muslims starting in 1609.

However we come out on Lea's judiciousness, his and his children's generosity to Penn was lavish: an endowed chair in history; most of the books from his extensive personal library; a striking reading room to shelve them in, now on the sixth floor of the Van Pelt Library; and a fund for acquiring new books in Lea's fields of interest. *The Inquisition's Inquisitor* will make a welcome addition to the room's holdings.

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

Briefly Noted

TOMORROW WILL BRING SUNDAY'S NEWS by Beth Kephart C'82 (Tursulowe Press, 2025, $17.95.) In 1918, as influenza ravages a Philadelphia already reeling from a race riot and the Great War, young Peggy Finley takes work at the Fleisher yarn factory, joining a community of women determined to make a difference in a world beyond their control.

KATY FAMILY *by Gemini Wahhaj MTE'93* (JackLeg Press, 2025, $20.00.) This collection of stories set in Katy, Texas, an oil-rich suburb of Houston, weaves together the experience of Bangladeshi immigrants in America and those still in Bangladesh, fixated on the American dream.

ON RAISING A DIGITAL HUMAN: A Personal Evolution *by Norman I. Badler, faculty emeritus* (Springer, 2025, $44.99.) Badler, a computer graphics pioneer and founder of Penn's Digital Media Design program ["The Cult of DMD," Sep|Oct 2003], mixes autobiography and intellectual history in this account of building digital human models for computer-aided simulation.

FEATHER TRAILS: A Journey of Discovery Among Endangered Birds *by Sophie Osborn C'88* (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2024, $32.50.) Osborn, a wildlife biologist and birder, reveals how the harmful environmental choices we've made—including pesticide use, the introduction of invasive species, lead poisoning, and habitat destruction—have decimated peregrine falcons, Hawaiian crows, and California condors.

Visit thepenngazette.com for more *Briefly Noted*.

When in Rome

This media-savvy archaeologist thinks about the Roman Empire a lot—and is ensuring that others do as well.

Photo courtesy Darius Arya

Long before TikTok made it a thing (circa mid-2023) for women to ask the men in their lives how often they think about the Roman Empire, Darius Arya C'93 knew that social media could be harnessed to tap into such a fascination.

"It's because of Vesuvius and the preserved city of Pompeii, it's because the Romans left so much stuff around the whole world, it's because we have all the literature and texts," says Arya, a Rome-based archaeologist and educator. "If you look at any other ancient society, there's nothing that comes close to the graffiti on the wall, the humor, the sports heroes. It's all so compelling that I realized that it was a great learning opportunity. But I also saw that people were consuming information differently. They wanted it instantly."

Whether offering his own simple iPhone footage or taking advantage of the high-tech tools afforded to him by big-budget media partners like PBS, *Smithsonian, Discovery Channel,* and *National Geographic,* Arya's goal is to "draw you in and open you up to a larger conversation." His secret sauce: parsing thousands of years of history into digestible chunks and backing them with a blend of academic gravitas and relatable enthusiasm. Less droning voices, more drone footage—presented by an amiable scholar with a telegenic grin and a penchant for Indiana Jones–like bomber jackets.

Part tour guide, part fanboy, and definitely part ruins nerd, Arya has been amping up his mission to bring ancient culture to the masses since 2000, when he relocated permanently to Rome. He's created 100-plus YouTube videos, with the most popular ones—like one on the Pantheon's rarely-accessed *grottoni* behind the building's distinctive barrel-shaped rotunda—garnering hundreds of thousands of views.

Tracing his interest in the ancient world to his junior high school days in Huntington, West Virginia, Arya remembers a pivotal moment when he chose Latin classes over French. "It seemed like a great opportunity to read the classics in the original language," he says, "and, as an Iranian American, a way for me to learn more about all ancient cultures." A few years later, he entered Penn as a classics major, taking some graduate courses and studying for a semester in Rome. "It was enlightening, and it gave me the will to continue in a field that I was already interested in." Deciding to pursue archaeology, he stayed for a fifth year at Penn in a post-baccalaureate program before moving on to the University of Texas at Austin for his PhD in classical archaeology. Fellowships from Fulbright and the American Academy in Rome gave him more time in the Eternal City, where he discovered two things: "Academia isn't for everybody, and I wanted to stay in Rome and see if I could get something else going."

He got to work quickly, cofounding the American Institute for Roman Culture (AIRC), a nonprofit that offers seminars, livestreams, tours, and funding for archaeological research projects.

"If you look at any other ancient society, there's nothing that comes close to the graffiti on the wall, the humor, the sports heroes."

Arya continued with a mix of teaching and working on archaeological digs until about 10 years ago, when his wife Erica Firpo C'94, a freelance journalist who had fallen under the thrall of Twitter, encouraged him to check out the social media platform. At first, he wasn't so sure. But as he built relationships with users there and later on Instagram, he started getting noticed. Outfits like *The History Channel* inquired whether the AIRC had an expert they could use. "I'd say, *Hmm, why, yes, we do*," he laughs.

Arya has since worked on French, German, and British television. "It's fun to be talking to large audiences in countries where culture is central to everyday life," he says. "I feel like I'm with my people—all through Europe, they love this stuff."

Day to day, he concentrates on growing his YouTube channel, *Darius Arya Digs*. "I have hundreds of drafts of ideas, I've secured the permissions, I have an online team in another country, which keeps costs down and allows me to scale up," he says. The roughly 10-minute YouTube videos offer unusual looks at familiar attractions—capturing a rapt crowd in the Pantheon as rose petals rain down from its famed oculus on Pentecost—or peeks at new developments in town, like a walk through the Mausoleum of Augustus as it undergoes restoration.

Occasionally Arya widens his scope beyond Rome's seven hills. In a 2018 PBS miniseries, *Ancient Invisible Cities*, he explored the archaeology of Cairo, Athens, and Istanbul; on his podcast *Rome & Empire* (get it?), a few episodes center on far-flung outposts of the Romans, like Tunis and Split. Other times, he tightens the lens. Pulling back from the grandeur of Carrera marble and flying buttresses, *Life in Ancient Times*, his most recent project for PBS, presents seven 10-minute episodes on aspects of daily life in the Empire, from baking bread to bathhouses.

But Arya has not entirely removed himself from academia; for instance, he's looking forward to a consulting project for the Getty Conservation Institute that will convene experts to examine the adverse effects of climate change on heritage sites.

More than ever, though, he appreciates his decision to stay on the ground in Europe. "I work for myself, and I can say, *This looks interesting, this could be productive, we can make a difference in this particular area,* and enjoy the flexibility to pursue these opportunities," he says. "Best of all, is that I'm in Rome. It's a beautiful reality that I want to share in every way possible." —*JoAnn Greco*

Crown Jewel

Taking the risk to become a fine jewelry designer has been a gem of a decision for this architecture-trained Puerto Rican.

Last summer, Marcia Budet GAr'10 GFA'10 made a "touching, full-circle" trip to her favorite building on Penn's campus. Fourteen years after earning her diploma from the Weitzman School of Design just outside the Fisher Fine Arts Library, Budet returned to the iconic Frank Furness–designed building to drop off the book *Women of Jewelry* to add it to the library's permanent collection.

The book, authored by Linda Kozloff-Turner, features interviews and works by 100 female jewelry designers from all over the world—including Budet, who proudly notes that she is the "only Puerto Rican included."

"It is going to be there forever, available to every person, from Penn faculty to alumni to students," she says. "Maybe it will encourage them to take risks like I did."

Budet's risks began early. She was the only person in her family to graduate from college, continuing her education to get a master's degree at Penn, where she studied architecture. She pivoted to start a fine jewelry business, despite no experience or connections. But a decade later, her pieces have been on display at the Met Gala and New York Fashion Week, published in *British Vogue*, *Elle*, and *WWD*, and garnered awards from all over the world, including in 2023 from the prestigious American Gem Trade Association. "Sometimes I still think, *What is happening*?" she laughs.

Budet always had a passion for jewelry. Growing up in Puerto Rico, she loved going to a kids' educational store filled with books and experiments. One day she took home a kit packed with gemstones, which led to a hobby of collecting stones. The kit remains in her office to this day. "It's very precious to me," she says. "I can still tell you the type of gemstones that were my favorites back then. Coming full circle, I now integrate them into my collections."

She decided to go to school for architecture, first as an undergraduate at the University of Puerto Rico and then as a graduate student at Penn. "My 17-year-old brain said, 'Pick something that would give you opportunities,' and you see architects designing jewelry, furniture, interior design, all these other fields," she says.

Budet's mother said to her, "You can design buildings. Why wouldn't you take a stab at designing a ring?"

Her three-year course at Penn was particularly challenging because she had to learn in English, her second language. "It was kind of hard to learn these words related to construction," she notes. "I had to learn how to communicate." She took classes in calculus, structure, and urban design. Much of her work was practical. For example, for a studio class she traveled to Mexico to help design an addition to a museum. "It was very demanding," she says. "We would often sleep in the studio."

Part of Puerto Rican culture involves receiving heirlooms and special gifts to mark different stages of life,

Photos courtesy Marcia Budet

says Budet, noting she still has pearls from her first communion. So, after graduation, when she wanted a piece of jewelry to mark the transition between student and professional life, her mom suggested she try to make something herself. "She said to me, 'You can design buildings. Why wouldn't you take a stab at designing a ring?'"

The piece she made, a two-finger ring with three asymmetrically cut diamonds, ended up winning an award from a design competition in Italy that a fellow Penn student suggested she enter. "It was a very powerful, very big cocktail ring, a conversation piece," she says. "It's like a mini sculpture."

Budet won the same competition a year later after submitting earrings she made for a friend's wedding. That's when she got serious about pursuing a career as a fine jewelry designer. "I thought, *I need to try this out, because if not I will regret that.*"

In 2013 Budet moved to New York City, where she took business classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). She was also selected for Design Entrepreneurs NYC, a program that helps promising designers create business plans. "That was a defining program, giving me the confidence to commit to this full time," she says. "I was like, *I think I can do this.*" She launched her own collections and started doing private work for clients.

In 2014 a makeup artist connected her with a politician who was attending the Met Gala, and she couldn't believe it when she saw her jewelry being worn on the prestigious red carpet. "It's the magic of New York," she says. A year later she collaborated with a friend she knew from FIT to create looks for a runway show during New York Fashion Week.

After starting to source diamonds and deal with "super expensive stones" for her bridal collections, Budet decided during the pandemic to enroll in the Gemological Institute of America in New York City. The program was rigorous. "I had to learn the chemical composition of every single stone," she says. "It is super complex, and you also have to know the origins and the history. I had the time of my life, and I loved every second of it, but it was hard."

It also changed her jewelry designs. "I discovered my love for the emerald, which is now my favorite precious stone," she says. "I started doing a bunch of pieces with diamond and emerald and yellow gold." One of her works (a pair of Colombian emerald and diamond modular earrings she designed for a private client) won an American Gem Trade Association Spectrum Award, one of the most prestigious in the industry.

Budet now hopes her story—and others that are featured in the *Women of Jewelry* book—will motivate other aspiring artists. "I had no idea what I was doing when I started my jewelry business," she says. "I took the risk anyway."

—Alyson Krueger C'07

Jen Liao C'12

The Proof Is in the Dumpling

A thriving frozen Chinese food brand began as "kind of an accident."

In 2018, when Jen Liao C'12 started MìLà, a modern Chinese food company that sells dumplings, noodles, and other treats that customers can easily prepare at home, it was supposed to be a side hustle.

She and her husband, Caleb Wang, who split their time between Seattle, San Francisco, and New York, had trouble finding some of the niche Chinese foods they loved growing up. So, they set out to make them on their own—in the scant time left over from their full-time jobs in health tech and finance, respectively. "If anything, we thought we could maybe create a night market stall or something," Liao says.

Fast forward to today. Backed by more than $30 million in venture capital funding, MìLà products can be found in more than 2,500 stores across the country, including Whole Foods, Target, Sprouts, and Costco. The company has shipped more than 30 million dumplings nationwide and has expand-

Photo courtesy MìLà

ed its offerings to include sauces, ice cream, dipping bowls, and chopstick sets. Delivered frozen, the best-selling pork soup dumplings are made with restaurant-quality ingredients and can be steamed in 11 minutes.

MìLà even has a celebrity employee. Last year the company tapped actor Simu Liu, who played a Marvel superhero in *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* and a Ken doll in the movie *Barbie*, as its chief content officer.

Liao still can't believe it. "It was all kind of an accident," she says.

Liao, who grew up in Seattle, must have had some early interest in food because in one of her college-application essays she "described Penn as being like a Starbucks because you can customize your education journey with so many different programs."

Indeed, at Penn she participated in activities ranging from ballroom dancing to being a photo editor for the *Daily Pennsylvanian*. Coming from a medical family—her dad is a doctor and her mom is a research scientist—she studied biological basis of behavior (now the neuroscience program) with a minor in healthcare management. "I knew in the back of my mind that somehow being a doctor wasn't exactly what I wanted, but I didn't know what else to do," she says.

She liked some of her science classes, including "one lab course where we dissected a lobster and probed it with electrodes," so after graduation she became a research technician in a Columbia University lab that was studying ALS using mice.

"Somebody brought a cooler and bought 30 bags of our soup dumplings and flew it to Alaska to give to their friends and family."

The process of scientific research fascinated her. "I started to think about all the inefficiencies of science research, how I was repeating a lot of the same things that someone else had also done experiment-wise," she says. "I thought a lot about improving the system and about how funding works, how data capture works."

She then moved to San Francisco and joined Evidation, a digital platform that allows users to track their health data through an app. There she worked with Apple and Johnson & Johnson to study data collected from Apple watches to discover if there were any signals or predictors of cardiac events. She also worked with the government of Singapore to pilot a program that sent notifications via wearables to improve people's health. For example, during flu season it would remind people to get a flu shot. If someone was showing early signs of diabetes it would alert them to see a doctor.

She was content in her job when she and her husband started talking to a high school friend about adding to the food scene in Seattle, the city where she grew up and still visited regularly. The more they talked, the more they realized that while they could eat some of their favorite Chinese foods at their relatives' homes, there weren't any restaurants serving them. "My mom has always been a very good cook. She cooked every night, and interestingly my dad had been trying to convince her to start a restaurant for a very long time," Liao says. "She thought it sounded like too much work."

In 2018 she, her husband, and her high school friend opened Xiao Chi Jie, a small, fast-casual restaurant inside a food court in the Bellevue neighborhood. It specialized in Sheng Jian Bao, a fluffy, pan-fried bun filled with soup. "We made it in a cast iron pan with 70 at a time, and it had to sell out in 30 minutes for it to taste good," she says. "People really liked it, and because it didn't really exist anywhere else, people traveled to come get it."

The restaurant was open for a year-and-a-half before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Liao and her cofounders then pivoted to selling frozen dumplings, opting to make more traditional varieties because they were easier to prepare at home. After posting ads on Facebook and WeChat groups, they were inundated with orders. "Somebody brought a cooler and bought 30 bags of our soup dumplings and flew it to Alaska to give it to their friends and family," Liao remembers. "It was like, *What is happening?*"

By January 2022 they had a large enough clientele to raise funding, at which point Liao and Wang quit their other jobs to focus on this full time. They rebranded the company and named it MìLà, which means honey and spice in Chinese.

One of the most challenging parts of second-generation Chinese Americans running a Chinese food brand during the pandemic was overcoming stereotypes. "We got comments on social media like, 'Is there COVID in this? Are there bats in this food? Is there dog meat?'" Liao says. "We tried to be very calm and say, 'These are the ingredients. This is how we make this.' We tried to be as educational as possible, and slowly the comments stopped."

They brought in Liu partly to help educate the public about Chinese culture in a fun, engaging way. The brand now has more than 260,000 followers across TikTok and Instagram, where it posts videos on topics ranging from Lunar New Year resolutions to creating festive bento boxes at home.

Now sharing her culture is one of the most rewarding parts of Liao's job. "Our philosophy is welcoming people to the table, inviting them in, having them try it," she says. "The goal is for Chinese food to just become regular food, an option anybody can have" and easily prepare in their kitchen rather than always ordering takeout or going to a restaurant.

"It's really crazy that this is what I am doing now," she adds. "But it really matters to me, and that is really fun."

—Alyson Krueger C'07

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"This year marks the 40th anniversary of Without a Net."

—*Risa Sang-urai Harms C'00*

We Want to Hear from You

EMAIL gazette@ben.dev.upenn.edu
Please include your school and year, along with your address and a daytime telephone number. We include email addresses only when requested or obviously implied.

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

1955

Dorothy Mitchell Huber CW'55, of Devon, Pennsylvania, writes, "Many classmates who went on to be mothers may appreciate a poem I wrote in 1963. My baby carriage, taken on many Penn Alumni Days and events, showed off **Thomas C. Huber W'83 C'83 CGS'04** and then **Michele Huber EAS'87 W'87**. My late daughter Michele is remembered on campus at a mini-park with benches outside the Towne Engineering building entrance. Dedicated in 1992, the park pays tribute to her and her late fiancé **Bryan D. Giles EAS'87 W'87** ["Alumni Profiles," Jan|Feb 2009], plus two distinguished engineering notables." Dorothy's poem "Sweet Fate" follows: "In days gone by, I reminisce, / I'd walk the campus wide / In skirt and socks, with wind-blown locks, / My true love at my side. / I'd scoot to class, this shy young lass, / My arm with bracelet jangling / My books, my world, clutched eagerly / With Math and Shakespeare tangling. / Now years have fled, and lo I find / The picture's changed with marriage / I briefly stride o'er campus wide / And push a baby carriage. / The bracelet's gone, replaced by watch / To check on time for feeding. / The book I carry for when I tarry / Is Dr. Spock for reading. / The world, the then and now, combined, / Each mirrored through life's glass. / Knowledge's patron becoming a matron, / Ah yes it's bound to pass. / But wait, sweet fate, there is no loss / Of learning time for me / The baby grows on Brahms and prose / In our Penn nursery." She notes that "true love" here referred to the children's father, the late **Michel T. "Mike" Huber W'53 ASC'61**, Penn's former director of alumni relations and publisher of the *Gazette* ["Obituaries," Sep|Oct 2015].

1962

James Edward Jones GFA'62, a painter and printmaker, exhibited his work during the month of February at the Charlestown Retirement Village in Catonsville, Maryland. This is the third year that James has exhibited as "artist of the month" for Black History Month. James, who turned 88 in January, was also recently recognized with a named scholarship at Morgan State University, where he taught for over 30 years.

1964

Stuart Resor C'64 writes, "In the fall of 1959 my friend and fellow high school classmate Glen Taylor and I traveled from Indian Hill, Ohio, to Cornell by bus in the cold and explored that campus carefully, then went down to Penn to do the same. [A Penn admissions representative] interviewed us both at the same time. Later that fall I showed up, and [the rep] remembered me and welcomed me into the University. I had the best architecture starting classes, learning drafting penmanship, lettering, and perspective drawings from Professor House! I still prefer to use all that as computer drafting is not so fun." Stuart adds, "I think Grace Kelly came to Penn in 1960 or '61. She walked just behind our Alpha Chi Rho fraternity house at 219 S. 36th Street. I saw her from a side view as she passed the Van Pelt library with her family, I think. Can anyone help get more info on this? She grew up in Philadelphia, and her mom [Margaret Majer] once taught physical education at Penn. Her dad [Olympic rower John Kelly Sr.] might have been at the University Hospital at about that time." Stuart can be contacted at stuartresor@gmail.com.

1965

Fredric M. Blum WG'65 writes, "After nine years as a systems analyst in operations research consulting, then four years founding and operating my own firm in residential design and construction, by good fortune I've been a forensic mechanical engineering consultant for the last 40-plus years. Recently, I published a book entitled, *Principles & Practice of Forensic Mechanical Engineering*. Avocationally, I've been a sculptor, fine art photographer, and more recently a professional woodworker. My sculptural training included studying at Penn's Graduate School of Fine Arts and mentoring with noted Philadelphia sculptor Bernard Brenner. My photographs have been shown in private exhibitions. As a woodworker, I founded my own firm, Fredric Blum Design, 12 years ago and since then have created custom tables for clients all over the country. My MBA has contributed to success in all of my entrepreneurial endeavors."

David R. Kotok W'65 G'01 G'07 is the author of five books, most recently *The Fed and the Flu: Parsing Pandemic Economic Shocks*. The book, coauthored with Michael R. Englund, Tristan J. Erwin, and Elizabeth J. Sweet, has been called "a well-researched, engaging economic history of pandemics" by *Kirkus Reviews*. In addition to writing, David cofounded the investment management firm Cumberland Advisors, where he serves as a strategic advisor.

Rick Williams C'65 is the author of a new book, *Create the Future: Powerful Decision-Making Tools for Your Company and Yourself*. Drawing upon his expertise as a former management consultant, company founder, and CEO, he lays out five steps to "creating the future: 1) Define the challenge; 2) Imagine success; 3) Create options; 4) Evaluate barriers; and 5) Choose the future."

1968

W. Dennis Keating L'68 was the recipient of the 2024 Award for Contributions to the Field of Urban Affairs from the Urban Affairs Association. From the press release: "His scholarship advancing the idea of the right to housing has national and international reach; and he is an exemplar of a locally rooted researcher, contributing significantly to community development organizations, equity in urban planning, and advancing fair housing in Cleveland, Ohio." Dennis is a professor emeritus of urban studies and law at Cleveland State University, and he retired in 2015. His most recent book is *Cleveland and the Civil War* (The History Press, 2022).

Lawrence E. Kramer C'68, a professor of English and music at Fordham University, has authored a new book, *Experiencing Sound: The Sensation of Being*. In it, he explains how paying attention to sound can transform how we make meaning out of experience.

1970

Bob Anthony W'70 was recently honored by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners for his 36 years of service as an Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner. When he retired in January, he was the longest-serving utility commissioner in the United States.

Morris A. Nunes C'70 W'70 has published his seventh book, *Mnemonic Trivia: Book #1—The New Way to Play Trivia*. In this workbook, the first letter of each answer helps spell out a message. Questions cover all kinds of topics, alphabetically indexed from Accounting to Zoology. The book, available on Amazon, is based on the first 25 of the 121 Mnemonic Trivia Nights he has conducted to date over the last 10 years in the community where he lives in Georgia. He plans to publish at least four more in the series.

1972

Sandy Snitow Gorman CW'72 GEd'73 writes that although she is no longer involved in her educational consulting practice, she continues to be extremely busy with other pursuits and interests. She and her husband moved from Stamford, Connecticut, to Manalapan, New Jersey, where they currently live. She would be glad to hear from any alums who would like to say hello, and she can be reached at COED7777@aol.com.

1973

Ken Kahn C'73 writes, "After retiring as a senior researcher at the University of Oxford, I began exploring how children could creatively use chatbots. This led to me publishing a book on my research. *The Learner's Apprentice: AI and the Amplification of Human Creativity* is a non-technical book for teachers, parents, and children who want to cocreate apps, adventures, and stories with chatbots."

1974

Carrie Menkel-Meadow L'74 and Andrea Kupfer Schneider are coauthors of *International Conflict Resolution Processes*. From the book's press materials: "This interdisciplinary text presents the major forms of conflict resolution used in international disputes in a wide-ranging variety of topics." Carrie is a law professor at the University of California, Irvine School of Law.

Lennox E. Montrose W'74 writes that he has "contributed to and provided support to Scotland's tree planting initiative and forestry cultivation program," allowing him, thanks to a quirk of Scottish law, to use the title of Lord (or Laird). Lennox continues, "Further research showed that the honor of such title was bestowed upon 'Lord Lennox Everton Montrose' during the reign of HM Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and was ratified during the reign of HM King Charles III of the United Kingdom."

Linda Rabben CGS'74 self-published her 12th book, *Book of Changes*, a collection of poems spanning 50 years, many incarnations, and four continents. In late 2023 she published her 11th book, *Through a Glass Darkly: The Social History of Stained Glass in Baltimore*. Her other 10 books are about human rights and related subjects. She gives presentations about her work at community groups, colleges, and senior centers.

1976

Stephen Hochheiser C'76 has been elected chair of the board of directors of HOPE Center (hopecentermn.org), a nonprofit that works to prevent domestic and sexual violence. Since retiring after a 30-year career in academic publishing, Stephen has volunteered in leadership roles in higher education and in local community organizations in Northfield, Minnesota. He and his husband have also funded libraries at HOPE Center and at The Key, a local safe space for youth. Stephen writes that he makes "an annual trip to Philadelphia to visit friends, check out old haunts, and walk around campus."

Chris Jennewein C'76 G'76 writes, "My 53-year career in media that began at the *Daily Pennsylvanian* continues with another university affiliation. TimesOfSanDiego.com, a local news website I launched in 2014, is now part of NEWSWELL at Arizona State University, home of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. We're developing

an innovative business model to support newsrooms in local communities across the country. And with four student interns working for our San Diego newsroom, it's an echo of the old *DP* experience."

1977

Dr. Walter Brodis C'77 M'81 writes, "I started out as an internist in a small town, where, within a few years, I was completely disabled by bipolar disorder. For 18 years, I received electroconvulsive therapy and stabilization, but without remission." During this time of disability, he says, he worked as an artist. "When I was at Penn in pre-med, I took painting courses with Rackstraw Downes. That was the beginning of a painting career that lasted several decades." Walter has recovered and continues to work as both a physician and artist now. His work can be viewed at Rockymtnart.com.

Joanne Burke Mulcahy C'77 Gr'88 is the author of a new biography of Marion Greenwood, an artist well known for her murals in the 1920s. *Marion Greenwood: Portrait and Self-Portrait—A Biography* is the first book about this feminist pioneer who made a living as an artist in a time when few women could and catapulted to fame when she became the first woman to paint a public mural in Mexico. Joanne has taught creative nonfiction at Lewis and Clark College, and in prisons, libraries, and other community settings for over 30 years.

Kevin Vaughan C'77 has been appointed to the Pennsylvania Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial (America250PA), which is planning the state's celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Kevin has also been serving as a trustee of Lincoln University for the past 18 years, and for the last nine years, he has chaired the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority, which provides financial oversight to the Philadelphia budget.

1979

Dave Lieber C'79 is author of a new book, *Dandy Don Meredith: The First Dallas Cowboy*, a biography of the 1960s-era American football player, sports commentator, and actor. Dave has worked for more than 30 years as a newspaper columnist. This is his 10th book. More information is available at DonMeredithBook.com.

Jill Howlett Mays OT'79, an occupational therapist and leader of garden groups, has written a clear guide for people of all ages and abilities who want to start gardening. In *Nurturing Nature: A Guide to Gardening for Special Needs*, she explains how gardening can strengthen a myriad of physical and mental skills, such as fine motor skills and sensory exploration. Temple Grandin, a prominent speaker on autism and animal behavior, says the book "provides lots of practical, fun gardening activities for children. They will learn that nature is much more interesting than electronic devices."

1980

David H. Laufman C'80 has joined Caplin & Drysdale as senior counsel in the firm's Political Law Group. His expertise is in white-collar investigations, congressional investigations, national security matters, and counseling clients on compliance with the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

1981

Joe Feldman W'81 retired from his career as a corporate development executive at the end of 2022 and a year later launched Cover My Mental Health (covermymentalhealth.org), a nonprofit supporting patients, families, and clinicians to overcome health insurance obstacles to care. Before retiring, Joe began advocating for access to mental health care after overcoming denials for his daughter's residential care, including with a successful federal lawsuit. His advocacy work has included "policy-driven discussions with legislators and regulators, a board role with the Kennedy Forum Illinois, presentations to parent groups, and publication of actionable guidance such as a 2021 article in the *Journal of Psychiatric Practice* on medical necessity letters," he writes. Joe and his wife Jan live in suburban Chicago. Their son Henry lives in San Diego and daughter Alice in Evanston, Illinois. He also serves on the board of Thresholds (a Chicago-based firm providing support to those living with mental illness) and Acadian Kitchens (a for-profit seasonings business in Louisiana).

Katrin Kandel C'81, CEO of Facing the World, was honored with Vietnam's 2024 National Volunteer Award for her work with children with facial deformities. She was the only foreigner to receive the award from the Central Youth Union. Facing the World, a charity established in 2002 in the UK, sends medical teams to Vietnam and other developing countries to assist children with facial deformities and also runs training programs for doctors and raises funds for surgical equipment. It has helped thousands of children since its founding.

Jeff Lobach L'81, an attorney at Barley Snyder, is being honored, along with his wife Cindy, with the 2025 Distinguished Humanitarian Award from Penn-Mar Human Services, a nonprofit that provides services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The award recognizes "individuals who have courageously dedicated their lives to community service and shown unwavering support for Penn-Mar's ongoing mission and to the region."

1982

Beth Kephart C'82, an adjunct teacher of creative writing at Penn, has released her 40th book and debut novel for adults, *Tomorrow Will Bring Sunday's News*. In a story inspired by her own mysterious grandmother, she introduces 16-year-old Peggy Finley, coming of age in Philadelphia during World War I. From the book's description: "Ultimately, *Tomorrow* asks this question: How do the stories we imagine become the truths we won't forget? It offers history as commentary on the world we live in now."

1983

Thomas C. Huber W'83 C'83 CGS'04 see **Dorothy Mitchell Huber CW'55.**

Lisa Learner GFA'83 exhibited two of her landscape paintings in a tree-themed show at Old City Jewish Arts Center in

Philadelphia during the month of February. Examples of her work can be found on her website, lisalearner.com.

1986

Dave Polsky C'86 see **Risa Sang-urai Harms C'00.**

1989

Robert Alpern W'89 writes, "I'm pleased to share that I retired last year and am relishing having more time to engage in a myriad of interests (sailing, cycling, guitar, piano, volunteering, camping, and more). After a couple of years with Morgan Stanley Realty and a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin, I enjoyed a 31-year career with a large insurance company in Cincinnati. I worked in many areas of commercial real estate, peaking with my role in the development of the Great American Tower at Queen City Square, Cincinnati's tallest and largest building. I enjoyed my job and the work we did, yet it was time to turn attention to my hobbies. I'm gratified for 27-plus years of marriage, two adult children, and good health. I'd love to catch up with Penn Band, Ware, Sphinx, and other friends: robalpern@yahoo.com."

Vicki Rothbardt Oswald GEd'89 has published a new book, *Prose Poetry 1971–2024*, through Xlibris, which includes a lifetime of her poems that she wrote from age 13 up until now.

1991

Rob Murdocca W'91 writes, "At age 55 and a half, I finally decided to run my first marathon. After a 17-week progressive training block, I ran the Houston Marathon on January 19 while the polar vortex reached down there too—finishing 23rd out of 266 in the men's 55–59 age group, plus also achieving a 'BQ' (a Boston Marathon qualifying time) of 3:28:12 (needing to beat 3:30:00 for M55–59)."

1993

Jim Garver C'93, an attorney specializing in workers' compensation, has joined the office of Pond Lehocky Giordano. He leads the firm's Altoona, Pennsylvania, office.

1994

Christophe Charlier C'94 W'94 has published a book, *La Motte-Feuilly, un château de familles en Berry, son histoire, son architecture et ses secrets*, about the medieval château in France that he bought 20 years ago. Christophe writes, "It has been a passion project for me to research the history of the château and the lives of the families that have left their imprints on it before me. I encourage everyone to look at our website, chateaudelamotte-feuilly.com, to read more about the château, the book, and the possibility to visit and rent the château."

Justin Foa W'94 has been appointed executive vice president of Alera Group and national practice leader for the firm's Property & Casualty practice.

Lauren Francis-Sharma C'94 and **Airea Matthews C'94,** former poet laureate of the city of Philadelphia, were featured presenters at the Philadelphia Free Library's Author Events Series on March 6. The two discussed Lauren's latest book, *Casualties of Truth*, a literary novel about the legacy of South African apartheid.

Michael Gomez C'94 WG'99 see **Brian Terp W'98.**

1995

Dr. Aly Cohen C'95, a rheumatologist and expert in integrative medicine and environmental health, based in Princeton, New Jersey, has published *DETOXIFY: The Everyday Toxins Harming Your Immune System and How to Defend Against Them*. She writes, "*DETOXIFY* connects the dots between everyday chemicals and the epidemic rise in immune disorders and autoimmune disease ... and what we can all do to reduce exposures, manage immune disorders, and prevent illness." You can follow Aly's health and wellness tips and disease prevention information on her social media pages and podcast, *The Smart Human*.

Donna S. Pearce G'95 is coauthor of *STOP! Shift the Energy at Work: A New Approach for Leaders & Teams*. From the book's description: "By engaging with teams through sensing their energy, and

supporting them to do the same, you can create the conditions for forward movement and breakthrough results. Unlike traditional business guides, this book explores the dynamics of energy in the workplace and offers an inspiring approach enriched with real-world examples and original artwork."

1996

Steven Pizzo GEx'96 writes, "I achieved a 40-year milestone of supporting research, development, testing, engineering, and production of radio frequency–based systems as a systems engineer, technical director, program manager, and project manager, with the last 13 as the chief engineer/vice president for electronic warfare for Aspen Consulting Group/Technology Lab in Sea Girt, New Jersey. In 2023 I was inducted into the C5ISR Hall of Fame (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) at the US Army Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland; and in 2024 I was inducted into the InfoAge Wall of Honor at Camp Evans (formerly Fort Monmouth) in New Jersey. My Penn education has been invaluable in helping me to innovate, execute, manage, lead, and build teams."

1998

Geoff Passehl C'98 is a private wealth advisor and founder of Passehl Financial, a financial planning firm based in Mickleton, New Jersey.

Shawn Seaman GAr'98 GFA'98 has been appointed as chief development officer at The Fallon Company, a commercial real estate development firm headquartered in Boston.

Brian Terp W'98 shares that he had "another off-site reunion in Park City (UT)" with **Grant Geisen C'98, Michael Gomez C'94 WG'99, Robert Horton W'98, Adam Kellogg WG'99,** and **Josh Thimons W'98 WG'99** "to ski, gamble, eat, drink, and watch the Super Bowl together in early February. The gang would love to see more peeps join next year."

1999

Adam Kellogg WG'99 see **Brian Terp W'98.**

2000

Risa Sang-urai Harms C'00 writes, "This year marks the 40th anniversary of Without a Net, Penn's premier improvisational comedy troupe. On March 1, alumni from across the country gathered with current members at Platt Student Performing Arts House to celebrate. Attendees learned Net's origin story from cofounder **Dave Polsky C'86**, pored over vintage show memorabilia, and honored the memories of **Jamie Lichtman C'87** and **Mike Young C'89**. Alumni also took part in an improv jam, playing games from all eras of Net, including: 'Pet Peeves,' 'Jeopardy,' 'Pan Left, Pan Right,' and 'Sex with Me' (I am blushing as I write this). The celebration continued at Houston Hall's Class of '49 Auditorium, where alumni enjoyed the hilarious closing performance of Net's Spring Show, *Gooney Tunes*. Attendees included: **Jim Carpenter C'86 L'89, Dave Polsky C'86, Greg Elin C'87, Carolyn Ikari-McCarthy EAS'87, Dana Herman Covey C'88, James Stahl C'88, Peter Burton C'89, Marci Chapman W'89, David Hilder C'89, Roberta Kastelic C'90, Brad Krumholz C'91** and his photocopied headshot of **Colin Campbell C'91, Stephanie Brown C'92 CGS'04, Gideon Evans C'93, Larry Wagner C'93, Charlie Wells C'94, Avish Parashar EAS'95, Katherine Minarik C'98 L'06, Manlio LoConte C'99, Jessica Tkacs Way Nu'99, Paul "Paco" Elsberg C'00, Risa Sang-urai Harms C'00, Peter Schell C'00, Jeff Koleba C'01, Brian "Gerald" Levy C'06, John Swierk C'08 EAS'08, Artem Nurlat C'16, Sofia Demopolos C'17, Luke Clements C'19, Carson Kahoe C'19, Brent Weisberg C'20, Sabrina de Brito C'21 GEd'23, Ellie Hoffman C'21, Lulu Lipman C'22 L'26, Simon Stephanos C'22 WG'24, Daniella Clayborn C'25, Jarod Rejonis W'25, Jacob Ross C'25, Colleen Shanahan Nu'25 GNu'27, Ted Kwee-Bintoro C'26, Ashwin Laksumanage C'27, Paris Ye W'27, Perry Hingsbergen C'28,** and **Lihini Ranaweera EAS'28.** We would love even more alumni at the next Without a Net reunion! To join the mailing list, please send your contact information (including graduation year) to penn.withoutanet@gmail.com."

Lynn Ortale Gr'00, president of Maria College, a private Roman Catholic college in Albany, New York, attended the 10th annual Yale Higher Education Leadership Summit in January. "Higher education is at a crossroads, and we must come together to strengthen our collective mission," Lynn said in a press release. The release continued, "A highlight for Dr. Ortale ... was seeing Dr. Amy Gutmann [Hon'22], former president of the University of Pennsylvania, receive the Legend in Leadership Award for her transformative contributions to higher education."

2004

Lauren Rogal C'04 has been promoted to professor of law at Vanderbilt University. Lauren developed and teaches at Vanderbilt Law's endowed Turner Family Community Enterprise Clinic, which provides transactional legal services to nonprofit organizations, underserved entrepreneurs, and social ventures. In the 2024–25 school year, Lauren was a visiting professor at Georgetown University Law Center.

Elizabeth Todd-Breland C'04 is the coauthor of a new memoir of Karen Lewis, former president of the Chicago Teachers Union, titled *I Didn't Come Here to Lie: My Life and Education*. From the press materials: "In 2012, Karen Lewis led the Chicago Teachers Union to a historic strike, challenging the city's powerful mayor and paving the way for an unprecedented wave of teacher strikes in the decade that followed."

2005

Eric Hintz G'05 Gr'10 and **Arthur Daemmrich C'91** are the coauthors of a new book, *Inventing for Sports*, which can be downloaded for free at scholarlypress.si.edu/store/all/inventing-for-sports. They write, "*Inventing for Sports* pulls back the curtain on the inventors who transform how sports are played, watched, and officiated. Through a series of case studies, the authors trace sports technologies from

initial frustration or inspiration through testing and regulation to global use."

2006

Brenda Harkavy C'06, a trial attorney, has joined the Crime Victim Team at the Philadelphia-based personal injury law firm Laffey Bucci D'Andrea Reich & Ryan. Prior to her civil work, she was a Special Victims Unit prosecutor in Maryland.

Dan Kaplan EAS'06 and **Telai Deng Kaplan W'09** are thrilled to announce the birth of their daughter, Charlotte, in February. She joins them and their three Welsh Corgis at home in Melbourne Beach, Florida. Telai works as a creative manager for New York City–based Vibrant Emotional Health, and Dan is a programs director at RTX Corporation, overseeing a portfolio of secure communications products.

Stephanie Gantman Kaplan C'06 has been promoted to vice practice group leader of the Labor & Employment Group at Blank Rome LLP. She concentrates her legal practice on labor and employment litigation and counseling.

2009

Telai Deng Kaplan W'09 see **Dan Kaplan EAS'06.**

Jennifer Snyder Prior LPS'09, a labor and employment lawyer, has been promoted to partner at Kaufman Dolowich LLP. Jennifer practices out of the firm's Philadelphia office and represents employers in all areas of employment litigation, including defending against discrimination and retaliation claims.

Jeffrey M. Rosenfeld L'09 has been promoted to vice practice group leader of the Tax, Benefits & Private Client Group at Blank Rome LLP. He concentrates his practice in the area of business tax law.

2012

Lauren Hall LPS'12 has been named chief development officer of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. From the press release: "Lauren was diagnosed with MS in 2017, which makes her connection to the Society's mission a personal one and drives her commitment to advancing breakthroughs for people affected by MS."

2015

John Zazzera WAM'15 has been named president and CEO of Florida Bancshares and First National Bank of Pasco Florida. He writes, "My son, Chase Zazzera, will graduate from the University of Alabama in May with a degree in finance and accounting and a minor in economics and computer science. Chase plans to attend Wharton for his MBA. My daughter Gianna Zazzera graduates in May from the University of Florida College of Nursing with an RN-Master of Science in nursing and is looking to advance her medical career. Gianna graduated from the University of Alabama in 2024 with a BS in public health and health professions. I became a first-time grandfather as my daughter Nicole Zazzera gave birth to a beautiful son."

2016

Nick Cherukuri LPS'16, founder and CEO of ThirdEye, was invited to deliver a TED Talk in Philadelphia discussing the transformative impact of AI and AR on society last fall. The talk can be viewed at youtu.be/5gxkl7RKzYg. In addition, Nick was awarded *Forbes*' 30 Under 30 designation for his work in enterprise technology. He holds five AI/AR patents currently published by the US Patent and Trademark Office, and his company, ThirdEye, has recently surpassed a $1 billion valuation.

Jackie Dunayevich Raab GNu'16 GrN'24, a clinical director at Penn Medicine, was a guest on *Next Steps to Leadership*, a podcast hosted by Dr. Stephen Oliver. The episode, which aired on February 18, is titled "Achieving Equitable, High-Quality Patient Care," and is available on all podcast platforms.

2018

Aurora Kripa LPS'18 has been appointed president and CEO of KenCrest, a nonprofit that supports adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Previously, she served as the charity's chief operating officer.

2022

Céline Apollon GCP'22 is an inaugural John Lewis Civil Rights Fellow and a Fulbright Scholar based in Congo-Brazzaville. She writes, "My research is focused on codesigning safe spaces of healing with survivors of gender-based violence in Brazzaville. In addition to Brazzaville, I have been galvanizing multidisciplinary coalitions in Botswana and South Africa (with the National Shelter Movement) to galvanize action to improve existing shelters and design trauma-informed spaces moving forward across Africa."

2023

Selina Li C'23 is the cofounder of a new nutrition tracking app, gymii.ai. She explains, "What sets our app apart is its innovative AI technology that allows users to simply snap a photo or record a video of their meals to automatically track their nutrition. Additionally, we've incorporated social features that make the nutrition journey fun and engaging by connecting users with friends." Selina, former co-captain of the women's golf team at Penn, says she understands "the importance of proper nutrition and the challenges that come with tracking it. This app was born out of my passion to simplify this process while making it enjoyable."

2025

Harry Cicma WMP'25 recently became a Six Star Marathon medalist, a Tokyo Marathon medalist, and a Major Marathon Hall of Famer, after medaling in all six major marathons: Boston, New York, Berlin, London, Chicago, and finally, Tokyo, which he completed on March 2. Each race was 26.2 miles. Harry writes, "Wharton and Penn are truly home to me, and the valuable life lessons and business lessons that I learned at Wharton have continued to inspire me in work and athletics. The professors have been amazing mentors." Harry is president and CEO of Harry Cicma Productions LLC, a full-service TV and media production company, and is also an Emmy Award–winning sports anchor on CBS News TV in Miami.

1945

Catherine "Rena" Wilson Knox DH'45, Bethesda, MD, Dec. 10, 2023.

1946

Anthony J. Pepper W'46, Deerfield, FL, cofounder of a restaurant supply store; Jan. 10, at 99. He served in the US Army during World War II.

Frances Skorol Zikaras DH'46, Bridgeport, CT, a retired dental hygienist; Dec. 27.

1947

Thomas A. Burke WEv'47, Street, MD, retired president and CEO of a property and casualty insurance provider; Jan. 14. He served in the US Navy, the US Army, and the US Army Reserve.

Magdaline Prodromou Fanaritis CW'47, Warren, PA, a former social worker; Jan. 20.

Amelia Galares Lawton CW'47, Waretown, NJ, a retired library director; Jan. 14, at 99.

1948

Gertrude Selnick Helfand Ed'48, Boca Raton, FL, Jan. 13.

Elizabeth "Betty" Hutton MacDonald FA'48, Narberth, PA, an artist, designer, and art teacher; Jan. 17. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority.

1949

Jean Wilson Martin Spangler HUP'49 Nu'52, Greensboro, NC, a former nurse; Jan. 14. At Penn, she was a member of the choral society.

Bernard P. Spring C'49, Boston, former president of the Boston Architectural College; Jan. 2. He served in the US Navy during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

1950

Luba Kaufman Baird CW'50, Plymouth Meeting, PA, a retired paralegal; Dec. 15.

Jon Grossman C'50 L'53, North Branford, CT, an executive at a car dealership; Jan. 29. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity. One daughter is Linda Grossman C'92.

Mary Wiacek Hodges CW'50 GEd'53, Bend, OR, June 21, 2023. She worked for the National Institutes of Health. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Xi Delta sorority. Two children are Jeffrey R. Hodges W'77 and C. Douglas Hodges ME'82.

1951

Dr. Cloyde L. Fausnaugh M'51, Maitland, FL, a retired surgeon; Aug. 25. He served in the US Army during World War II and the Korean War.

Dr. Lawrence T. Freedman C'51 M'55, Philadelphia, a retired obstetrician-gynecologist; Jan. 9. One son is David A. Freedman W'86, and two grandchildren are Rebecca F. Neustein C'12 and Benjamin L. Freedman C'14.

Hon. Samuel M. Lehrer W'51 L'54, Philadelphia, a former Philadelphia judge and of counsel for a law firm; Dec. 25. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

Mary Cheston Hancock McAdoo CW'51, Bryn Mawr, PA, Feb. 4. Her children include Morris C. Hancock C'74 and Mary Hancock Rippel GEd'79 (Mark L. Rippel C'77 W'77).

Luis E. Mogollon W'51, Cartagena, Colombia, production manager of his family's company, JV Mogollon & Company; Sep. 14. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity.

Ruth West Neville CW'51, Douglassville, PA, a homemaker and volunteer; Jan. 6. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Delta Delta sorority.

David A. Shulman W'51, Scarsdale, NY, an accountant and former finance commissioner for Westchester County, NY; Jan. 22. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity. One daughter is Ellen Shulman Judson C'87.

George P. Warren Jr. W'51, Kennett Square, PA, an accountant and adjunct professor of accounting at the University of Delaware; Oct. 18. He served in the US Army Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Psi Upsilon fraternity, the choral society, and the lacrosse and soccer teams. His wife is Jane "Trudy" Mack Warren CW'54.

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.

1952

Jerome H. Buff W'52, Tampa, FL, a retired financial analyst; Jan. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity and Penn Players.

Marvin S. Fish W'52, Malibu, CA, a retired attorney and faculty member at a number of colleges; Jan. 31. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity and the Penn Band. One daughter is Pamela Fish Zingeser C'77.

Sanford H. Goldberg W'52, Sarasota, FL, a retired tax attorney; Dec. 3. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity. His son is Daniel S. Goldberg W'81, and one grandson is Jonathan L. Goldberg C'17.

Dr. Dorothy A. McGinty Kinney D'52, Scottsdale, AZ, a retired pediatric dentist and professor at the old University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and Bergen Community College; Feb. 21. Two daughters are Claire Kinney Berg W'82 WG'86 and Dr. Lisa A. Kinney GD'86, and two grandchildren are John P. Berg EAS'21 and Douglas J. Eckhardt W'10.

Clifford B. Lord Jr. WEv'52, Palmyra, PA, a retired vice president of sales for a trucking company that mainly transported mushrooms; Feb. 9, at 100. He served in the US Army during World War II.

Barbara Brown McClenahan CW'52, Haverford, PA, a real estate agent; Jan. 18.

Alexander L. Pugh III EE'52, Concord, MA, a retired computer scientist; Feb. 7. At Penn, he was a member of Theta Xi fraternity and the ROTC.

Edward L. Timberlake W'52, Raleigh, NC, a former manager at IBM; Dec. 22. He served in the US Coast Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity.

1953

Herbert Bromberg Ch'53, Boston, a retired professor of management at Assumption University; Feb. 9. He served in the US Army.

John S. Carver C'53, Springfield, VA, Jan. 23. He retired from the CIA. He served in the US Army Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity. One brother is William W. Carver C'54.

John B. Knox WG'53, Readfield, ME, a former senior policy analyst for the State of Maine; Dec. 28. He served as an officer in the US Navy.

Albert J. Schmidt Gr'53, Washington, DC, a retired professor of history and law at the University of Bridgeport; Jan. 18, at 100. He served in the US Army Air Forces during World War II.

Robert A. Spatola W'53, Harpers Ferry, WV, a jumpmaster in the skydiving industry; Dec. 11. He served in the US Army and the US Army Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and the cross country team.

Robert J. Stritzinger C'53, Grand Rapids, MI, a retired financial planner; Jan. 30. He served in the US Marines during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of the ROTC.

1954

Eugene T. Ichinose Jr. W'54, Pearl City, HI, a retired financial planner; Dec. 15. He served in the US Air Force.

John T. McCahon W'54, Elverson, PA, a former accountant for the US Army Corps of Engineers, and other companies; Feb. 5. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of WXPN.

Iris Comens Rotberg CW'54 G'55, Potomac, MD, a former research professor of education policy at George Washington University; Jan. 1. At Penn, she was a member of WXPN. Her husband is Eugene H. Rotberg L'54.

1955

Ronald B. Koenig W'55, Jupiter, FL, a retired CEO of an investment bank; Dec. 30. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity. His daughter is Lori Koenig Schepps C'83, and one grandchild is Katie L. Schepps C'15.

Callirrhoe N. McCrocklin WG'55, Louisville, KY, a retired surgical nurse and practice manager at a hospital; May 21, 2024.

Margaret Kohler Milner Ed'55, Glen Mills, PA, a retired teacher; Jan. 23.

Dr. William A. Sweeney C'55 M'59, Skillman, NJ, a retired radiologist; Jan. 11. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of the choral society, the orchestra, and Penn Players.

Robert L. Zullinger Jr. W'55 WG'60, Newtown Square, PA, a retired real estate executive; Dec. 22. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. His wife is Diane Schnauffer Zullinger CW'66, and his son is Robert L. Zullinger WG'97.

1956

Arthur M. Blum C'56, Cary, NC, former president of Point Park University; Jan. 1. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Alpha fraternity and Phi Delta Epsilon fraternity. Two children are Katie J. Berryhill C'90 and Sherry Ruth Blum Gr'91 (Donald E. Becker Gr'89).

Robert Curry W'56, Hamilton, MA, Dec. 22. He retired from GE Aerospace. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity and the ROTC.

Clinton N. Ely G'56, Bryn Mawr, PA, a retired schoolteacher; Feb. 9. He was also a hospital clown known as Dr. Jolly Bean. He served in the US Marine Corps during World War II.

Harvey R. Fleishman W'56, Boca Raton, FL, retired founder of an accounting firm; Sept. 26. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity. One daughter is Susan E. Fleishman C'83.

Dr. Paul J. Goldstein D'56, Peabody, MA, a retired dentist; June 28, 2024. He served in the US Air Force as a dentist.

Rev. Jackson P. "Jack" Hershbell G'56, Lexington, VA, an Episcopal priest and former professor of Classics at the University of Minnesota; Jan. 8. His wife is Anne Snyder Hershbell WG'77.

Eugene Kendall "Ken" Lorenz W'56, Potomac, MD, a retired accountant and commercial real estate developer; Jan. 30. He served in the US Army Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

Dr. Bernard M. Mechlowitz D'56, Toms River, NJ, Oct. 27. One grandchild is Brandon T. Krieger C'15.

Audrey Stein Merves CW'56, Haverford, PA, Sept. 10. Two daughters are Elizabeth Lubart Bein C'79 and Jennifer Merves Robbins C'92 SW'95.

Elizabeth S. Puffer DH'56, Plymouth, MA, a retired dental hygienist; March 27.

1957

K. F. Achenbach Jr. W'57, Quakertown, PA, a retired manager at Verizon; Sept. 29. He was also a township supervisor for Warrington Twp., PA. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

Dr. Robert B. Daroff C'57 M'61, Beachwood, OH, professor emeritus of neurology at Case Western Reserve University; Jan. 12. He served in the US Army Medical Corps during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, and Sphinx Senior Society. His wife is Jane Abrahams Daroff CW'60, and his brother is Stephen G. Daroff C'64.

Samuel W. Fleisher Gr'57, Cornwall, PA, March 10. He retired from the US Food and Drug Administration.

Walter D. "Pete" Hastings Jr. C'57, East Sandwich, MA, a retired reinsurance industry executive; Jan. 30. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity.

Dr. Maurice J. "Shep" Lewis C'57, Camp Hill, PA, a retired physician; Jan. 13. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of the fencing and rowing teams. His daughter is Karen Schmitt WG'02.

William G. Malkames L'57, Allentown, PA, a retired attorney and former solicitor for the Allentown School District; Jan. 23.

Bettie Bassett Roundtree SW'57, Philadelphia, a former supervisor for Philadelphia's Health and Human Services department; Dec. 14.

1958

Peter A. Benoliel G'58, Wayne, PA, the longtime head of Quaker Chemical and a leader in the Philadelphia arts scene; Feb. 17. He served as board chair of the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1995 to 2000 and was involved for nearly seven decades with the Settlement

Music School, joining the board in 1957. One daughter is Leslie H. Benoliel WG'91.

Robert E. Feibus W'58, Clarks Summit, PA, a retired commercial realtor; Dec. 3. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity and the *Daily Pennsylvanian*. His son is Arthur J. Feibus W'82.

Dr. George L. Flickinger Jr. V'58 Gr'63, State College, PA, a former research professor in obstetrics and gynecology in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine; Oct. 9. In 1961, he joined Penn's faculty as an instructor in pathology and became a full research professor in 1987. While at Penn, he helped design and then oversaw the in vitro fertilization program for the department of obstetrics and gynecology. He left Penn in 1991 to become head of the in vitro fertilization program at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas and then returned to Philadelphia to assist at his daughter Dr. Barbara J. Flickinger C'81 V'85's veterinary practice until his retirement.

Mark J. Goldstein W'58, Stratford, CT, a retired computer systems analyst for General Electric; Feb. 5. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Alpha fraternity, WXPN, and the ROTC.

June Reinhardt Huebner Ed'58 GEd'60, Lansdale, PA, retired director of personnel for the Cheltenham School District (PA); Jan. 8. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority.

Dr. Bernard S. Jortner V'58, Hewitt, TX, professor emeritus of biomedical sciences and pathobiology at Virginia Tech; Sept. 28. He served in the US Air Force.

Dr. Louis L. Keeler M'58, Cherry Hill, NJ, a retired urologic surgeon; Feb. 4. He served in the US Air Force.

Kurt L. Pauly W'58, Merrick, NY, a former accountant; Aug. 1.

Joseph J. Pendrak WEv'58, Cape May Court House, NJ, retired president and CEO of the old McArdle-Desco Corporation; Dec. 31. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War.

Hon. William H. Rufe III L'58, Ft. Pierce, FL, a retired judge in the Bucks County (PA) Court of Common Pleas; Jan. 14. One grandson is James H. Rufe C'10.

Joseph A. Salvia Jr. WG'58, Erie, PA, an accountant; July 28. He served in the US Army.

Dr. Frederick A. Schubert D'58, Sandpoint, ID, a retired orthodontist; May 9, 2023. He served in the US Navy Reserve.

Ralph J. Stern W'58, Denver, retired owner of his family's men's knitwear business; Jan. 3. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity.

Rhoda Gordon Weinstein CW'58, Essex Junction, VT, October 2024.

1959

David L. Andrus Jr. C'59, Sarasota, FL, a longtime manager for the Port Authority Transit Corporation (PATCO); Dec. 30. He served in the US Army.

Joan Mulford Braun Ed'59, Shelburne, VT, a retired director of the experiential and service-learning program at a high school; Feb. 6. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

Allan B. Gurney WG'59, Langhorne, PA, a marketing consultant for Lenox China; Jan. 4. He served in the US Navy.

Stuart R. Gygi EE'59 GEE'61, Salt Lake City, UT, a computer scientist; Feb. 5. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Theta Xi fraternity, WXPN, and the Glee Club. His former wife is Janice Lemmon Gygi CW'63.

Walter J. McMahon WG'59, Katy, TX, a financial consultant and consulting geologist for the oil and gas, and business financial services sectors; Dec. 2. He served in the US Air Force.

David "Dave" Micahnik C'59, Milford, CT, a longtime and retired fencing coach at Penn; Jan. 4. As the head coach of Penn's fencing programs from 1974 to 2009, he earned 722 wins and won 20 Ivy League championships—10 on the men's side, 10 on the women's side—as well as NCAA team titles in 1981 (men) and 1986 (women). He also coached six individual men's NCAA champions. Before coaching, he was a standout fencing athlete in all three weapons—épée, foil, and saber—and competed in the 1960, 1964, and 1968 Olympics. He won the US national title in the épée in 1960 and placed second nationally in 1964, 1966, and 1968. He also won individual titles at the World Maccabiah Games in 1965 and 1969. As a student at Penn, he was an all-Ivy member of the fencing team, the Penn Band, and WXPN. He was inducted into the Penn Athletics Hall of Fame in 1998 and the US Fencing Association Hall of Fame in 2008. Two sons are Henry Alan Eskin C'86 WG'92 and Steven H. Micahnik GEd'03.

Dr. Marc R. Peck C'59 M'63, Linwood, NJ, a retired radiologist; Jan. 10. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity.

Marshall A. Rutter L'59, Pasadena, CA, a retired attorney and cofounder of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, a professional chorus company; Dec. 4.

1960

Eugene B. Berman W'60, Boynton Beach, FL, a retired senior information systems consultant and manager of fiscal services for the New Jersey Department of the Treasury; Jan. 15. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Theta Rho fraternity and the sprint football team.

Dr. James W. Esler Jr. M'60 GM'63, Myrtle Beach, SC, a retired anesthesiologist; Feb. 20. He was also an adjunct professor at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine. He served in the US Army. His son is William James Esler WG'97.

Sally Schwartz Friedman Ed'60, Merion Station, PA, a longtime newspaper columnist for the *Burlington County Times* (NJ); Jan. 3. Her husband is Victor Friedman CGS'07, one daughter is Amy E. Friedman C'86 GEd'86, and her sister is Ruth Schwartz Rovner CW'58.

Brian R. Percival Ar'60, Forest Hills, NY, a retired professor of art and architectural history at Queens College, CUNY; Jan. 19. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity and the Glee Club.

Malcolm W. Pownall Gr'60, Hamilton, NY, professor emeritus of mathematics at Colgate University; Jan. 24.

Alan H. Robbins C'60, Ashland, MA, a retired attorney; Jan. 4.

Kenneth L. Zippler CE'60, Denville, NJ, a retired executive at an infrastructure and transportation engineering company; Oct. 19.

1961

Andrew P. Barton Jr. WG'61, Cincinnati, retired president of a wholesale distributor of pipes, valves, and fittings; Sept. 28. One grandson is Michael L. Barton W'17.

John A. "Ike" Eichelberger C'61, Hackettstown, NJ, Jan. 12. He worked in human resources in the oil industry, public accounting, and consulting with national outplacement firms. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and the swimming team.

Dr. Lon D. Hodge V'61, Augusta, GA, professor emeritus of cell biology and anatomy at the Medical College of Georgia; Dec. 25.

Jay Jacobson W'61, New York, retired founder of an executive placement firm; July 27. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Delta Phi fraternity and WXPN.

Dr. Sidney N. Millstein D'61, Miami, a retired dentist; Jan. 9. He served in the US Air Force. One son is Edward W. Millstein L'91, and one grandchild is Zoe A. Millstein C'24.

Roman Ostapiak EE'61, Pine Brook, NJ, a retired engineer for a telecommunications equipment company; Jan. 15, 2024. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and the sprint football team, captaining the 1960 team. One daughter is Christine L. Ostapiak C'88, and one brother is Walter Ostapiak EE'65.

Albert E. Silberman W'61, Pompton Plains, NJ, a retired stockbroker; Feb. 7. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of WXPN and the ROTC. One grandchild is Benjamin R. Zareh EE'28.

Mary Anne Burgi Tessaro HUP'61, Jacksonville, TX, a retired nurse; Dec. 29.

Dr. Alan E. Van Sant M'61 GM'64, Sun City Center, FL, director of rehabilitation at a hospital; Feb. 6. He served in the US Air Force.

1962

Robert D. Chapman C'62 WG'78, Blue Hill, ME, retired executive vice president of the recreational marine division at ACE USA; Jan. 11. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Psi fraternity.

Dr. Paul M. Crum M'62, Jacksonville, FL, a retired urologist; Dec. 7. He served in the US Navy.

Iva Hall de Coverley PT'62, West Lebanon, NH, a lecturer and teacher; Dec. 27.

Dr. Jack A. Donley D'62 GD'63, Williamsburg, VA, a retired orthodontist; Feb. 8, 2024. He served in the US Army.

Alan R. Goldman G'62, Jan. 14. He worked for the US Defense Intelligence Agency.

Brenda Silverman Harmelin CW'62, Sunny Isles Beach, FL, July 21, 2023. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority and the lacrosse team.

Charles A. Klinger G'62, Johns Island, SC, retired CEO of Medifax Corporation; Jan. 22. He served in the US Army.

Robert G. Loewy Gr'62, Philadelphia, a retired professor of aerospace engineering at Georgia Tech; Jan. 3. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Penn Players. One daughter is Liz Loewy C'80.

Richard J. Rosenfeld FA'62, Gainesville, FL, a gallery owner, art dealer, and artist benefactor; Jan. 13. He co-owned the Rosenfeld Art Gallery with his wife in the Old City section of Philadelphia.

Dr. Albert Vaiser GM'62, Dallas, a retired retina specialist; Feb. 1.

Dr. Charles J. Wittmann Jr. M'62, Vero Beach, FL, a retired surgeon; Nov. 26. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War.

William Denman Zirkle WG'62, Edinburg, VA, a retired finance executive and managing partner of a winery in Germany; Jan. 31. He served in the US Army and the US Army Reserve. One daughter is Dr. Micaela Zirkle Shaughnessy V'93.

1963

Lonnie J. Clayton GEE'63, Moorestown, NJ, a retired engineer for RCA, General Electric, and Lockheed Martin; Jan. 26. He served in the US Navy.

Harvey I. Goldstein W'63, Bridgeville, PA, a retired attorney; Jan. 8.

James P. Hall W'63, Dothan, AL, a retired life insurance agent; Jan. 3. He served in the US Army.

Craig N. Johnson ME'63 WG'68, Lafayette Hill, PA, a management consultant for the shipping industry; Feb. 14. He served in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, Mask & Wig, Sphinx Senior Society, and the track team. His wife is Sally Van Dusen Johnson CW'69, one daughter is Samantha B. Johnson CGS'99 C'05 CGS'07, and one grandchild is Ainsley P. Rexford EAS'25 GEng'26.

Susan Gilman Jokelson CW'63, Berkeley, CA, Dec. 25. One sister is Nancy Gilman Jokelson CW'67 (Neil E. Jokelson W'65).

M. Richard Marcus W'63, Dallas, former chairman of Oryon Technologies, which makes electroluminescent lighting technology, and founder of March to the Polls, which encourages voter engagement; Aug. 20. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

R. Winifred Witherspoon Morris CW'63 G'70, Ambler, PA, founder and principal of a private Christian school; Jan. 5. One daughter is Jennifer Morris-Brockington C'01, and one sister is Dr. Joan Witherspoon Simpson CW'60.

David H. Panetta C'63, Warminster, PA, Jan. 8. He retired from the old US Naval Air Development Center in Warminster, PA.

Frederick A. Parsons III W'63, Clinton, CT, a retired financial advisor; Jan. 16. He served in the US Air National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity. One son is Robert Douglas Parsons C'89.

Allan R. Somoroff ME'63 GME'64 Gr'67, Burke, VA, a retired aerospace engineer; Jan. 14.

David L. Wallerstein WG'63, Washington, DC, July 4.

Joel Weisberg C'63 L'66, St. Petersburg, FL, a retired attorney and former Pennsylvania deputy attorney general; Feb. 22. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War, where he was awarded a Bronze Star Medal. At Penn, he was a member of the ROTC. One son is Larry A. Weisberg W'88.

1964

Dr. Dean A. Arvan GM'64, Fairport, NY, professor emeritus of pathology and laboratory medicine, and of pediatrics at the University of Rochester, and senior associate dean emeritus for academic affairs at the university's school of medicine and dentistry; Jan. 14. Earlier in his career, he was on the faculty in Penn's department of pathology.

David E. Downen WG'64, Evanston, IL, a retired investment banker; Feb. 10.

Dr. Ronald C. Hillegass M'64 GM'65, Barrington, RI, a retired orthopedic doctor; Jan. 27. One grandson is Ronald C. Hillegass W'20.

Yale I. Lazris L'64, Boynton Beach, FL, a retired attorney; Dec. 29.

Joseph S. McEntee WG'64, Newcastle, ME, retired owner of a bed and breakfast; Jan. 2. He served in the US Navy.

Ida V. Orr Nu'64, Reading, PA, retired professor of nursing at Reading Area Community College and an artist; Feb. 3.

Dr. Vincent A. Parisi D'64 GD'65, Reading, PA, a retired orthodontist; Jan. 23.

Bertram M. Soltoff GEE'64, Warminster, PA, a former manager at Lockheed Martin; Dec. 28.

Dr. James W. Stokes G'64 M'66 GM'71, San Antonio, TX, a retired physician; Jan. 2. One son is Brian J. Stokes C'93 EAS'93.

Dale W. Van Voorhis WG'64, Hiram, OH, former CEO of Parks! America, which owns amusement and animal parks; Oct. 26.

1965

Susan Sheppard Arrison CW'65, Kilmarnock, VA, a retired paralegal and financial advisor; Feb. 15. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Delta Delta sorority and the basketball, lacrosse, and field hockey teams. One sister is Jane Sheppard Harper CW'63.

Richard N. Cohen C'65, West Tisbury, MA, vice president of a film distribution company; Dec. 25. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity and Penn Players.

D. Allyn Grubb WEv'65, Telford, PA, retired comptroller for North Penn Water Authority; Jan. 7. He served in the US Marine Corps.

Dr. Peter L. Manis D'65 GD'69, Haverhill, MA, a retired orthodontist; June 18, 2024. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War. His wife is Karen Beck Manis DH'67.

Dr. Frank E. Michener M'65 GM'69, Alexandria, VA, a child psychiatrist; Dec. 26.

Dr. Ephraim E. Shulman C'65, Lebanon, NH, a retired prosthodontist; Jan. 22. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.

William R. Sims Jr. GAr'65 GCP'65 GFA'65, Lansing, NY, professor emeritus of design and environmental analysis at Cornell University; Feb. 7.

Gerald S. Weiss Gr'65, Lancaster, PA, professor emeritus of chemistry at Millersville University; Jan. 4. He served in the US Army.

John Taylor "Ike" Williams L'65, Cambridge, MA, a literary lawyer and agent; Dec. 26.

1966

Samuel F. Gorman W'66 WG'67, Houston, a senior partner at a business management consultancy; Dec. 19. He served in the US Army.

Gary L. Hart GEE'66, Bountiful, UT, vice president of human resources at a nursing home; Jan. 4. He served in the US Army National Guard.

Dr. Philip J. Lopresti GM'66, Mount Laurel, NJ, a retired dermatologist; Feb. 4. He served in the US National Guard.

Dr. Werner K. Margenau V'66, Doylestown, PA, retired owner of a veterinary practice; Dec. 16. He served in the US Air Force.

Larry G. McAfee GEE'66, Reading, PA, a retired electrical engineer at AT&T; July 8.

Robert H. Michel C'66, Montreal, a retired senior archivist at McGill University; Feb. 4.

John M. Ross Gr'66, Morrisville, PA, a retired science teacher; Dec. 26.

Anne Robertson Sellin G'66, Washington, DC, a retired art historian and historic preservationist; Jan. 18.

Sandra Strickhouser Spellman CGS'66, Vero Beach, FL, a former administrative assistant for a publishing company; Feb. 10.

1967

Mark H. Baumbach G'67, Voorheesville, NY, a professional organist and co-owner of a music school; Jan. 23.

Dorothy B. Berner Gr'67, Brunswick, ME, professor emeritus of biology at Temple University; Dec. 19.

Dennis M. Custage W'67, Delray Beach, FL, a senior executive for companies such as Xerox, Nortel, Ryder System, and the National and Alamo car rental brands; Feb. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity and the rowing team. One son is Andrew W. Custage W'12.

Dr. John R. Durocher M'67 GM'71, Chestertown, MD, a retired physician; Jan. 17. He served in the US Army. One granddaughter is Sarah M. Starman C'18.

Allen B. Goldin W'67, Santa Fe, NM, a former public school teacher in Los Angeles; Jan. 18. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity and the baseball team.

George H. Hamilton III G'67 WG'69, Wayland, MA, an executive at Polaroid; Dec. 23.

Harold V. Hawkins PT'67, Southampton, PA, a physical therapist, head of a healthcare corporation, and radio host; Nov. 24.

William F. Jelin WG'67, Washington, MO, a financial analyst; Dec. 29. He served in the US Navy.

Jerome S. Levkov Gr'67, Riverdale, NY, professor emeritus of chemistry at Iona University; Nov. 25.

Dr. William H. Lipshutz M'67 GM'73, Philadelphia, a retired gastroenterologist at Pennsylvania Hospital and clinical professor of medicine at Penn; Nov. 4. He served in the US Navy.

Roger E. Little Gr'67, Franklin, TN, a retired actuary at a life insurance company; Oct. 1.

Msgr. Joseph F. McCahon WG'67, Tampa, FL, a retired military chaplain; Feb. 4. He served in the US Air Force as a budget comptroller during the Vietnam War.

Robert M. McIlvaine G'67, Renfrew, PA, a retired English professor at Slippery Rock University; Feb. 1.

Gary R. Mooney WEv'67, Media, PA, a retired regional sales manager for the dermatology division of Bristol Myers; Feb. 3.

Thomas J. Quinn WEv'67, West Chester, PA, a retired manager of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia; Dec. 31.

1968

Mary Martin Carson PT'68, Folly Beach, SC, a retired physical therapist and founder of an amputee clinic at a hospital; Feb. 8.

Donald S. Cook Jr. WG'68, Boca Raton, FL, a former executive at Ford Motor Company; March 4.

Martin E. Goldstein Gr'68, Haverford, PA, a retired professor of political science and international relations at Widener University; Dec. 29. He served in the US Air Force. His wife is Janet Mendell Goldstein G'67, and his brother is Arnold A. Goldstein GCP'70 Gr'76.

Virginia Greene G'68, Philadelphia, a retired senior conservator at Penn's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Jan. 23.

Kristi Hager CW'68, Missoula, MT, a painter and photographer; Nov. 12.

Pamela Judson-Rhodes Gr'68, Philadelphia, an archaeologist; Nov. 19. One granddaughter is Molly Hemphill C'16.

Daniel A. Kleman WG'68, Port Saint Lucie, FL, retired director and fire chief of the Jacksonville, FL, fire department; Feb. 12.

Nicholas H. Lamotte C'68 WG'72, Hobe Sound, FL, retired founder and CEO of an employee benefits consulting firm; Jan. 29. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War, earning a Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Phi fraternity and the rowing team.

Raymond C. "Skip" Lynch GAr'68, Glenside, PA, an architect; Jan. 14. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War, earning the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal. His daughter is Daphne G. Lynch C'97 CGS'05.

Dr. Frederick D. Slaughter GM'68, Bristol, TN, a retired ophthalmologist; Jan. 5. He served in the US Army Reserve.

Larry N. Sokol C'68, Lake Oswego, OR, an attorney; Feb. 1. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity and the swimming team.

William E. Spiegle III G'68, Marmora, NJ, an attorney; Feb. 7. He served in the US Army.

Maureen Howell Tracy CW'68, New York, former program director of the elder care program in a hospital's emergency department; Jan. 9. Her daughter is Nicole L. Snow C'90.

Charles M. "Marty" Wasser Jr. W'68, Greenville, PA, Jan. 7. He worked in the sanding department at a cabinetry manufacturer. One granddaughter is Halle C. Wasser C'22.

Charles G. "Terry" Zug III Gr'68, Chapel Hill, NC, professor emeritus of folklore and English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Jan. 19. He served in the US Navy and the US Navy Reserve. His son is Charles Gordon Zug IV C'92.

1969

Theresa Dr. Magnano Digiulio V'69, Coventry, CT, a retired veterinarian; Nov. 1, 2023.

Dr. James L. FitzGerald Jr. GM'69, Green Valley, AZ, a retired ophthalmologist; Feb. 24. He also taught at the University of Arizona. He served in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War as a flight surgeon. His former wife is Judith C. FitzGerald Nu'68.

Frank J. Hermes WG'69, Williamsburg, VA, Jan. 21. He worked for Citicorp and Standard & Poor. He served in the US Army.

Charles J. Ingersoll C'69, Wyndmoor, PA, a retired investment executive; Jan. 15. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Psi fraternity.

Linda Rosenblatt Katz CW'69 WG'82, Philadelphia, founder and executive director of the Children's Literacy Initiative; Jan. 18.

Harry B. Meran W'69, Boca Raton, FL, an attorney, entrepreneur, and financial advisor; June 15, 2023. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, and the heavyweight rowing team. His wife is Linda Plotnick Meran CW'69, and his sons are Andrew Meran W'96, Jeffrey Meran C'99, and Marc Meran C'03.

Leonard A. Selber C'69, Jacksonville, FL, an attorney and professor of accounting at the University of North Florida; Feb. 12. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity.

David F. Wolf C'69, Lancaster, PA, Oct. 12.

1970

Dr. Daniel W. Burbank V'70, North Berwick, ME, a retired veterinarian; Aug. 23. He served in the US Navy.

John C. Dickson Jr. WG'70, Gibsonia, PA, a retired high school history teacher and basketball coach; Jan. 26. He served in the US Army.

Dr. Charles E. Mangan GM'70 GM'71 GM'72, Cherry Hill, NJ, retired chief of gynecologic oncology at Pennsylvania Hospital; Dec. 25. Earlier in his career, he was an associate professor at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine. He served in the US Army.

John C. McMeekin WG'70, Philadelphia, retired CEO of the hospital system Crozer Health; Jan. 12. He served in the US Army.

Alexander Messinger GAr'70 GCP'70 G'84, Norristown, PA, a retired professor of architecture at Philadelphia University (now part of Jefferson University); Dec. 10. Earlier in his career, he served as the coordinator of Advance Studies in Structures at Penn for 10 years. As an environmental artist, his sculptures were displayed at Penn and SEPTA's Huntingdon station in Philadelphia.

Roy A. Nierenberg L'70, El Cerrito, CA, founder of Experience in Software, which developed interactive project management software; Jan. 24.

Dr. Kenneth M. Pearson D'70, East Montpelier, VT, a retired dentist; Jan. 13. He served in the US Army.

Dr. Louis H. Reich M'70, New Cary, NC, a retired psychiatrist; Jan. 3. He served in the US Air Force Medical Corps. His wife is Susan Dion Reich WG'71.

1971

Dr. Gary Berchenko D'71, Shokan, NY, a dentist; Jan. 12.

Carol H. Emblidge GEd'71, Orchard Park, NY, a retired elementary school teacher in Philadelphia and Buffalo, NY; Feb. 3. Her husband is Warren E. Emblidge Jr. WG'69.

Alan H. Gilbert L'71, Philadelphia, Dec. 17. His wife is Hon. Barbara S. Gilbert L'71.

John E. Hetherington C'71, Wake Forest, NC, Jan. 5, 2023. At Penn, he was a member of Sphinx Senior Society.

Dr. Andrew B. Leiter C'71, Wellesley, MA, a gastroenterologist and professor of medicine and physiology at Tufts University; Jan. 19. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity.

Dr. David H. Lilly V'71, Dublin, VA, a veterinarian; Dec. 25.

1972

Sr. Mary Ann Gecina GEd'72, Oaklyn, NJ, a classroom teacher and principal in the (arch)dioceses of Camden, Metuchen, Newark, Providence, and Trenton, NJ; Dec. 24.

Anne T. Gwiazdowski HUP'72 Nu'74, Pavillion, WY, a retired public health administrator in maternal and children's health at several Native American reservations; Feb. 13.

Frank W. "Ted" Hamilton III C'72, Nantucket, MA, senior managing director at a financial services company; Feb. 3. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Psi fraternity.

Sr. Carol A. Hoban GNu'72, Lake Toxaway, NC, a retired nurse practitioner at a medical clinic affiliated with the Sisters of Mercy; Jan. 12.

Dean A. Nichols WG'72, Woodway, WA, a managing partner at a business management consultancy; Feb. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

Louis R. Perugini Jr. WEv'72, Reading, PA, former president and owner of Eastern Automotive Warehouse; Jan. 3.

William H. Wagner GFA'72, Suffolk, VA, an art professor at Old Dominion University; Jan. 18. He served in the US Army.

Ronald P. Weiss L'72, Springfield, MA, an attorney; Jan. 28. He served in the US Army Reserve.

John M. Zelnicker W'72, Mobile, AL, a tax accountant; Sept. 25. At Penn, he was a member of the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

1973

Leo J. Cohen GEE'73, Yucca Valley, CA, May 19, 2023.

A. Glen Everhart GrEd'73, Venice, FL, a retired school superintendent; Jan. 8.

Paul A. Lombardi C'73, Macungie, PA, a gemologist who worked for several jewelry stores, including Tiffany & Co.; Feb. 13. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity and the cross country team.

Dr. Robert S. Zerbe V'73, Barnegat Light, NJ, a veterinarian; Aug. 18.

1974

Deborah S. Kliman GrEd'74, Hamilton, NY, a retired family psychologist and founder of a nonprofit providing support and education around Lyme disease; Jan. 23.

John Nagy Gr'74, Ridge, NY, a physicist; Feb. 19.

Dr. C. Dina Russell V'74, Ottsville, PA, a veterinarian; Jan. 1.

1975

Reid S. Drucker W'75, Hanover, NH, a former executive at the American Cancer Society; June 12. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity. His brother is Dr. Tod H. Drucker D'83.

Dr. Joseph A. Fontana M'75, West Bloomfield, MI, a former professor of oncology at the Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit; Jan. 5.

Dr. Dobroslav M. Valik D'75, Langhorne, PA, Aug. 8. One daughter is Eva Neradova Valik C'93 W'93.

Patricia Britt Volk CGS'75, Broomall, PA, a Medicare contractor management officer; June 1, 2024.

Michael J. Zelinski GCP'75, Everett, WA, a former planner for Snohomish County, WA; Aug. 24.

1976

Allen W. Banbury GEd'76, Plainfield, VT, a retired math department head in the School District of Philadelphia; Jan. 11. He served in the US Naval Reserve during the Vietnam War.

Dennis M. Horn L'76, Chevy Chase, MD, a real estate attorney; Dec. 13.

Ronald L. Rupp D'76, Tewksbury, NJ, a retired dentist and executive at the American Dental Education Association; March 20, 2024.

1977

Marina Angel GL'77, Philadelphia, a retired law professor at Temple University and a champion of civil rights and women's issues; Feb. 1.

Isabelle Cheafsky HUP'77, Ocean City, NJ, a retired nurse; Jan. 10.

Dr. K. Ann Jeglum V'77, West Chester, PA, a veterinary oncologist and former associate professor of medical oncology at Penn; Sept. 22.

Michael A. Marrese Gr'77, New York, a retired executive at J.P. Morgan; Dec. 26.

Robert H. Newton WEv'77, Langhorne, PA, a retired director for Conrail; Jan. 2. He served in the US Army.

Michael R. Page W'77, Nashville, TN, a retired sales and accounting executive; Feb. 15, 2023. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and the lacrosse team, where he graduated as the program's all-time leader in goals with 80 and was a first team All-American and national Division 1 Midfielder of the Year as a senior. He went on to play and coach lacrosse at the international and professional level, including a one-year stint coaching at Penn. He was inducted into the Penn Athletics Hall of Fame as a member of its inaugural class in 1996.

Barbara A. "Babs" Raczkowski SW'77, Newtown Square, PA, a former social worker; Jan. 14.

1978

Charles L. Saxe GEE'78, Portland, OR, a former engineering executive for the old Avnera Corporation, which made analog system-on-chip technology; November 2024.

Thomas O. "Kip" Williams Jr. C'78, Towson, MD, a telecommunications sales manager; Jan. 13.

1979

Nathaniel L. Fidler WEv'79, Levittown, PA, a computer specialist for the State of New Jersey; Dec. 1. He was also a scuba instructor and taught computer classes for Gloucester County Community College.

Dr. Madeline S. Ginzburg D'79 GD'80, Bronx, NY, a retired dentist; Dec. 7. Two children are Alexandra S. Delfiner C'10 and Matthew S. Delfiner C'10.

Dr. George G. Jeitles Jr. V'79, Pottstown, PA, a veterinarian; Feb. 6.

W. Dennis Moran WG'79, Scituate, MA, former president of an engineering firm; Jan. 16. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

Sanford K. Mozes L'79, Philadelphia, an attorney; Dec. 2. One son is Daniel S. Mozes C'08.

Robert G. Nichols GEE'79, Marlton, NJ, July 25. He retired from L3 Communications, a defense contractor.

Shirley Shuman Reses G'79, Warwick, PA, the director of Jewish Older Adult Services of Atlantic County, NJ; Jan. 8.

1980

Mark J. Kilker GNu'80, Saylorsburg, PA, former dean of the School of Health Sciences at East Stroudsburg University; Feb. 15.

Charles S. Lunden W'80, West Chester, PA, a retired forensic accountant and expert witness; Nov. 17. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity. His wife is Edith Wenrich Lunden W'79.

John C. Romberg W'80, Gainesville, FL, an entrepreneur; Feb. 12. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity.

1981

Romola R. Bose WG'81, Bala Cynwyd, PA, a director at Cigna, a healthcare and insurance company; Jan. 8.

Deirdre A. Leber C'81, New Paltz, NY, an artist and former program administrator for Skylake, a Buddhist meditation and retreat center; Oct. 24. Her husband is David W. Daub GRP'81.

James V. Maugeri Jr. WG'81, Delran, NJ, a financial strategist, program manager, and software developer for the health insurance company Cigna; Dec. 28. He served in the US Army.

Sharon R. Rhode C'81, Philadelphia, Jan. 14.

1982

Lorraine M. Fisch C'82, West Windsor, NJ, Aug. 28, 2021. She was a longtime volunteer for a number of organizations, including her synagogue and Girl Scouts of the USA. Her husband is Robert L. Friedman ChE'83.

Roland L. Williams Jr. C'82 Gr'93, Philadelphia, a retired English professor at Temple University; Jan. 8. Earlier in his career, he taught at Penn.

1983

Michael A. Mendoza ME'83, Glen Rock, NJ, Nov. 16. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Psi fraternity.

1984

Iva E. Deutchman Gr'84, Geneva, NY, a retired professor of political science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges; Jan. 3.

Miriam S. May WG'84, Newton Centre, MA, CEO emerita of Friends of the Arava Institute, which supports the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies in Israel; Dec. 31.

Judith Zetzel Nathanson GEd'84 GrED'88, Haverford, PA, Feb. 6. She worked in the field of mental health.

1985

Catherine Saffer Stephenson W'85, New York, a global practice manager at the business management consulting firm McKinsey & Company; Aug. 28, 2023. Her father is Walter Saffer W'52 and her brother is Robert Saffer C'84.

1986

Helaine Shoag Greenberg SW'86 GrS'89 CGS'07, Long Beach, NJ, a retired lecturer at Penn Nursing; Sept. 13. One grandchild is Matthew W. Shenkman EAS'23.

1987

Lisa Green Hall W'87, Washington, DC, impact chair at an investment management firm; March 15. She served as senior policy advisor for the National Economic Council during the Clinton administration. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and Sphinx Senior Society.

Christopher I. Maxwell G'87 LPS'09, Bellefonte, PA, a retired professor of leadership and management at Wharton; July 25. He was also a fellow of Wharton's Center for Leadership and Change Management. During his tenure, he created and directed an experiential leadership development program that took participants on climbing expeditions all over the world.

1988

Sean P. Dougherty W'88, Hampstead, NC, a nurse; Feb. 11. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and the lacrosse team.

Hugh A. Fogel C'88, Henderson, NV, Dec. 23, 2023. At Penn, he was a member of Mask & Wig.

1989

Melissa J. James C'89 GEd'06, Mount Holly, NJ, former senior editor for the academic publisher W.B. Saunders Company; Jan. 20.

Robert G. Porter GL'89, London, a former barrister; Feb. 17.

Dr. Betty Ann Pyatak-Monaghan V'89, Sparta, NJ, chief operating officer at an emergency veterinary practice; Feb. 15.

1990

Dr. Randolph M. "Randy" Peters M'90 GM'94, Pittsburgh, medical director of employee health services at Allegheny Health Network (PA) and diversity officer for the Primary Care Institute; Jan. 9.

1991

Stephanie T. Childs Gr'91, Wyncote, PA, a retired educator, author, researcher, and public speaker in the Philadelphia School District; Feb. 14.

Christian J. Luhnow WG'91, Vista, CA, an entrepreneur; Jan. 9.

1992

Tahmina Ferdousi Gr'92, Langhorne, PA, a retired statistician in the pharmaceutical industry; Feb. 16.

1993

William P. Broderick CGS'93 GGS'95, Philadelphia, an English professor at Community College of Philadelphia and Holy Family University; Dec. 26. He served in the US Army.

1994

Michel Coonley Hartnett GNu'94, Marlton, NJ, director of nursing for a hospice center; Dec. 16.

Annette S. Wilson G'94, Chalfont, PA, people analytics lead for FedEx; Nov. 4.

1997

Charles D. Beeler WG'97, Menlo Park, CA, cofounder of Rally Ventures; Nov. 11.

Robert L. Steenrod G'97, Richmond, VA, a former sales and marketing manager for Campbell's food company and an adjunct professor at St. Joseph's University; Feb. 20.

1998

Jeannette Flamm Brockman CGS'98, Haverford, PA, a former assistant dean of Penn's Graduate School of Fine Arts (now the Weitzman School of Design); Dec. 21. She began her work at Penn in 1977 as registrar at the Penn Museum. She then became chief development officer of the Graduate School of Fine Arts in 1981 and director of development for Penn Libraries in 1986. During this time, she raised over $30 million for the University, spearheading the renovation campaign for the Fisher Fine Arts Library and the Eugene Ormandy Music and Media Center. From 1992 to 1995, she was assistant dean for external affairs at the Graduate School of Fine Arts. A celebrated photographer, she went on to teach photography in the Graduate School of Education's Say Yes to Education program for children. Her photographs of spontaneous memorials that were assembled after the September 11 attacks are in the permanent collection of the 9/11 Memorial and Museum.

1999

Brigette Pospisil Bogart GCP'99, Wyckoff, NJ, owner of a planning and design firm; Dec. 27.

Mary E. Collin G'99, Kennett Square, PA, a former science teacher for adjudicated youth and a high school teaching assistant; Dec. 12.

Lisa M. Perricone G'99, Milton, MA, a senior human resources professional; Jan. 24.

2001

Mary Lotz Beck CGS'01, Newtown, Square, PA, a retired environmental engineer at the US Environmental Protection Agency; Jan. 30.

2002

Kristi M. Brecht C'02 CGS'03, Denver, a product manager for media companies such as Time Out New York and Reuters; Jan. 27.

John R. Poncy WG'02, Fairfax, VA, a business consultant and CEO of several companies in the information technology and private military contracting industries; Sept. 17, 2023. He served in the US Army.

2007

Iris Buten Newman CGS'07, Philadelphia, Dec. 24. She retired from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

2008

Rishikesh R. Gadhia L'08, Washington, DC, an attorney; April 16, 2024.

2011

Margaret S. "Peg" Harper GNu'11, Butler, PA, a psychiatric mental-health nurse practitioner; Feb. 13.

2012

Rohan Mirchandani WG'12, New York, cofounder of the yogurt brand Epigamia; Dec. 21.

2013

Lesley A. Gable GEd'13, Tinton Falls, NJ, a high school special education teacher; Jan. 1.

2017

Ronan Fermin Cajimat GNu'17, Alpharetta, GA, a nurse; Jan. 1.

2021

Sarah L. Best L'21, Philadelphia, an associate at a law firm; Jan. 29.

2025

Kathryn Parten WG'25, Franklin, TN, a second-year student in the Wharton Executive MBA program and an associate at a private equity firm; March 2025.

Faculty & Staff

Dr. Dean A. Arvan. *See Class of 1964.*

Hon. Phyllis Whitman Beck, Philadelphia, a groundbreaking retired judge of the Superior Court of Pennsylvania, former vice dean of Penn Carey Law, and a former member of the Penn Nursing Board of Advisors; March 3. In 1976, Penn appointed her vice dean of its law school. At the time, she also held a faculty appointment at Villanova University. She left Penn in 1981 to become the first woman appointed to the Pennsylvania Superior Court. She was only the third woman in Pennsylvania history to gain a statewide elected office. She brought her expertise in family law, judicial reform, and merit appointment of judges to a 25-year tenure on the bench, retiring in 2006. In 2000, Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge named her a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania for serving as a "tireless advocate in the civic and judicial communities on behalf of women, families, racial equality, and public education." She was married to the late cognitive therapy pioneer Aaron T. Beck ["Obituaries," Mar|Apr 2022; "Tim Beck's Final Brainstorms," May|Jun 2022], and their children include Judith S. Beck CW'75 Gr'82 (Richard J. Busis C'75 G'80); Dr. Roy W. Beck M'77 (Dr. Ruth Hanno M'76); and Hon. Alice Beck Dubow C'81 L'84 (Robert A. Dubow C'81 WG'87). Her grandchildren include Dr. Sarah B. Busis C'02 M'08, Deborah B. Busis C'05 SPP'10, Benjamin N. Dubow C'10, and Rebecca D. Dubow C'13.

Jeannette Flamm Brockman. *See Class of 1998.*

Michael P. Cancro, Media, PA, a retired professor of pathology at Penn; Feb. 7. He joined Penn's Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine in 1976 as a postdoc-

toral fellow and became a tenure-track faculty member in 1978. He spent 49 years at Penn, where he was recognized as an expert in B cell biology.

Charles E. Dwyer, Ventura, CA, a former faculty member in Penn's Graduate School of Education; Jan. 27. He joined Penn in 1966, teaching for more than four decades and earning the Lindback Award for Excellence in Teaching. He also contributed to Wharton Executive Education programs for 35 years and directed the Management and Behavioral Science Center for 12 years. His children include Mark J. Dwyer C'84 G'89, Michael J. Dwyer C'88, and Kathryn Dwyer Christopher C'90.

Dr. James W. Esler Jr. *See Class of 1960.*

Dr. George L. Flickinger Jr. *See Class of 1958.*

Helaine Shoag Greenberg. *See Class of 1986.*

Virginia Greene. *See Class of 1968.*

Dr. K. Ann Jeglum. *See Class of 1977.*

William Labov, Philadelphia, a former professor of linguistics in Penn's School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and a widely recognized pioneer in the field of sociolinguistics; Dec. 17. He joined Penn in 1969 as a professor of linguistics. His research argued that regional and urban English dialects, even ones considered uncouth, were valid accents that merited study. In the early 1970s, he was one of the first academic researchers to study African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and he taught classes at Penn wherein students tutored young children in West Philadelphia schools and churches, simultaneously learning about the dialects these children spoke. In 1972, he published the book *Language in the Inner City: Studies in Black English Vernacular* about this work. In 1979, he testified in favor of Black students in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in a federal lawsuit they brought against their elementary school alleging a language barrier between teachers and students. The *Gazette* wrote about his *North American Atlas of American English* in 2006 ["Continental Drift," May|Jun 2006]. He retired in 2014 but continued to conduct and publish research. His wife is Gillian E. Sankoff, a retired professor of linguistics at Penn; and four daughters are Joanna L. Labov GEd'88 Gr'00, Sarah J. Labov GEd'96, Alice T. Goffman C'06, and Rebecca E. Labov C'09.

Dr. William H. Lipshutz. *See Class of 1967.*

Dr. Charles E. Mangan. *See Class of 1970.*

Christopher I. Maxwell. *See Class of 1987.*

Alexander Messinger. *See Class of 1970.*

David "Dave" Micahnik. *See Class of 1959.*

David C. Schmittlein, Waban, MA, former deputy dean of the Wharton School; March 13. He joined Penn in 1980 as an assistant professor at Wharton and was subsequently named the Ira A. Lipman Professor of Marketing. From 1982 to 1985, he codirected the Center for Marketing Strategy Research. He held several leadership positions at Wharton, including serving as chairperson of the marketing department and as vice dean and director of Wharton's doctoral programs from 1993 to 1995. He was honored with a Wharton Undergraduate Excellence in Teaching Award in 1993. During his time as deputy dean, from 2000 to 2007, he helped to solidify Wharton's reputation as a global leader in management education. For a short time, he served as Wharton's interim dean and then as vice dean for Global Initiatives and Brand Development in 2007. That same year, he left Penn to become dean of MIT's Sloan School of Management, where he remained for 17 years.

Amos B. Smith III, Merion Station, PA, professor emeritus of chemistry in Penn's School of Arts and Sciences; Feb. 3. After a year of medical school at Penn, he transferred to Rockefeller University, earning a PhD in chemistry in 1972. He then returned to Penn in 1973 as an assistant professor of chemistry, eventually becoming the Rhodes-Thompson Endowed Professor of Chemistry in 1990. He had a joint appointment at the Monell Chemical Senses Center. His research centered on the synthesis of architecturally complex organic molecules, many with biological significance. This included ongoing projects aimed at inhibiting HIV's entry into susceptible cells and its propagation in infected cells. He retired in 2024.

Roland L. Williams Jr. *See Class of 1982.*

School Abbreviations

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

Classifieds

Collectibles

BUYING COLLECTIONS OF BOOKS and Pulp Magazines, especially Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror and others. Email: ray@raybowman.com

College Admissions

TEST PREP & COLLEGE ADMISSIONS Robert Kohen, Ph.D., Harvard and Columbia grad, provides individualized tutoring for SAT, ACT, ISEE, SSAT & SHSAT and guides families through all aspects of the college admissions process. 212.658.0834; robert@koheneducationalservices.com; www.koheneducationalservices.com

JUSTIN NEIMAN ex-Harvard Admissions Officer and Stanford Dean. Strategic advising and planning. 1-800-917-5947 justin@selectiveadmissions.com; www.selectiveadmissions.com

Gift Ideas

Real Estate for Sale

PARIS PENTHOUSE ON SAINT GERMAIN

Luxury penthouse apartment with 4 bedrooms with in-suite bathrooms, 5 marble fireplaces, balconies on north and south facades, 4 expositions and flooded with sunlight. Air-conditioned. Rare and breathtaking views of the Eiffel Tower, Invalides, Notre Dame, St. Sulpice, St. Chapelle, Pantheon, Sorbonne...5 minute walk to Luxembourg Gardens and Notre Dame. High-end renovation was completed in December 2024 including custom walnut built-ins, beautiful lighting, Pierre Frey fabrics, and high-end furnishings. Turnkey sale possible. We are selling only because we are moving for our children's education. douglas.rosefsky.wg95@wharton.upenn.edu

Travel

RETREAT Do you need to get away? Are you stressed, tired and uninspired? Join me, Yoga Diva CAS '91, for a retreat filled with sunshine, relaxation, and delicious adventure. https://omyogadiva.com/

Vacation Rental—USA

SECLUDED COUNTRY HOME for artist retreat or family getaway on 37 acres in Upper Bucks County. Features 5 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, living room, dining room, sun room, enclosed porch, one acre pond, hiking path, fenced garden. One mile from Nockamixon State Park with marina, hiking and biking trails. 45 miles from Center City Philadelphia. $15,000 for June 15-September 15. Text 215-495-3863

STONE HARBOR, NJ On beach. Outstanding home. Great on/off Season Rental. Call (570)430-3639. www.Stoneharborbeachhouses.com or email: RAda

Classified Advertising

Regular Classified

- $4.00 per word for 1 issue • $3.60 per word for 3 issues • $3.25 per word for 6 issues
- Add color to title (no additional charge)
- Add a photo to the online listing: $25 (one-time fee)
- Telephone numbers (including area code) count as one word
- No charge for zip codes
- Ten word minimum

Display Classified

- $150 per column inch (depth) • 2" depth minimum
- Column width is 2.2"
- Electronic files required (300 dpi jpg/pdf/tif/png)

All classified ads must be prepaid. Payments can be made online at www.alumni.upenn.edu/GazetteAdvertise

Alumni in Business

Advertise your business or profession with us and reach 270,000 fellow alumni.

- Must be a Penn graduate • See our current Alumni in Business ads on page 65.

To advertise, email Linda: caiazzo@upenn.edu or visit thepenngazette.com/advertise

Philadelphia, as it looked in 1778. Spire 3 (to the right of the tallest spire) represents Penn's original campus at Fourth and Arch Streets.

Revolution at Penn?

"What is a college education for? How should schools be led and managed, and by whom? What should students learn, and who should pay?" These questions, as contested today as they were in the 18th century, are explored in an exhibit examining Penn's changing identity during the fractious political era of the American Revolution. *Revolution at Penn?*, on the sixth floor of Van Pelt-Dietrich Library now through July 11, is organized by the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, which supplied many artifacts along with the University Archives.

Dozens of political pamphlets, letters, maps, and manuscripts showcase conflicting ideas surrounding the University's formation, structure, and mission at the time, including a 1755 charter requiring all trustees and faculty to take an oath of allegiance to the Protestant King of Great Britan and Ireland. The exhibit also features: minutes from a trustees' meeting announcing a name change to the University of the State of Pennsylvania after the institution's 1779 seizure by the state; a University receipt book noting a payment of "one pound ten shillings" to Absalom Jones, who later became the country's first Black Episcopal priest, for "sweeping Chimnies at the College"; a 1787 address made by Penn trustee Benjamin Rush, arguing the benefits of advanced education for women; a 1775 map of downtown Philadelphia, which notes the names of nearly every homeowner and business (view it online at tinyurl.com/philadelphia1775); and of course, reproductions of Revolutionary-era issues of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Benjamin Franklin's newspaper that this alumni magazine takes its name from.

Perhaps the most dramatic aspect of the exhibit is the life-size replica of an 18th-century coffeehouse that invites interaction. Guests are encouraged to bring their own drinks, take a seat in the Windsor chairs, and play chess, study, or squabble by (fake) candlelight. The coffeehouse even includes a portrait of King George III, placed upside down in a form of protest. —*NP*

Image courtesy Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at Penn Libraries

Photo Courtesy of the Office of University Communications

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When planning your legacy, consider including your favorite Penn program in your will or living trust, or as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or life insurance policy. Your future gift will strengthen the University for generations to come.

With a bequest or beneficiary designation, you can support scholarships and professorships, groundbreaking research, competitive athletics, and Penn's renowned cultural institutions—ensuring continued excellence and opportunity. These gifts are simple to arrange, cost nothing today, and can be designated as a specific dollar amount or a percentage.

By making this meaningful commitment, you help sustain Penn's tradition of innovation and leadership, shaping the future for those who follow.

To learn more, contact:

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If you've already included the University in your plans, we'd love to hear from you!
Your commitment qualifies you for membership in the Harrison Society.