

THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

JUL/AUG 2026

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Kelly Writers House at 30

Alumni Weekend
& Commencement

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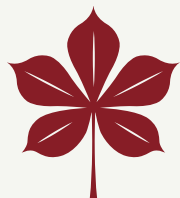
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JJ Tiziou and the Walk of Brotherly Love





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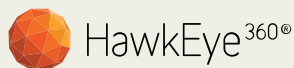
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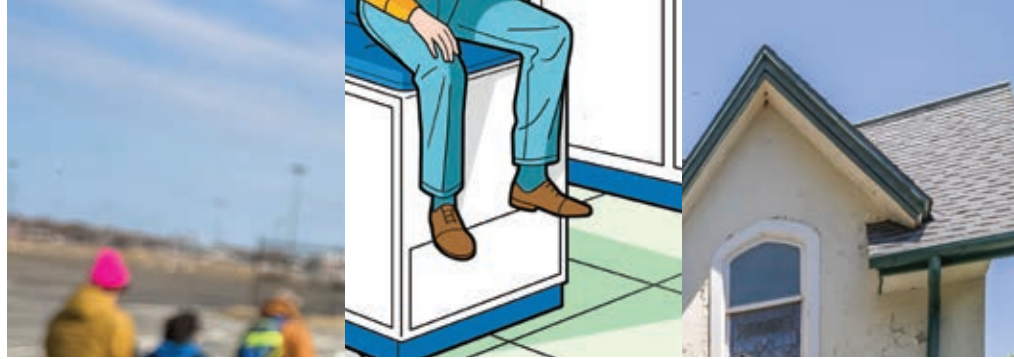
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Features

City Limits

26 JJ Tiziou has been walking around the city of Philadelphia for a decade. Now he wants everybody else to join him.

By **Trey Popp**

LDI and American Healthcare

36 The interdisciplinary experts at Penn's Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics have seen a lot since LDI was created after the passage of Medicare and Medicaid in the 1960s, but nothing quite like the challenges roiling the US healthcare system now.

By **Mary Ann Meyers**

The 30-Year Squat

42 Three decades ago a "ragtag army of squatter-minded poets" took possession of a modest cottage at 38th & Locust Walk and conjured by candlelight a vision of a "house for writers." Today Kelly Writers House is a University institution that hosts a dizzying variety of classes, readings, and other events and sits at the center of a constellation of affiliated programs whose impact stretches around the globe. But in a lot of ways it hasn't changed at all. **Plus:** ModPo's story in *The Classroom and the Crowd*.

By **John Prendergast**

Alumni Weekend 2026

50 Our annual photo gallery.
By **Tommy Leonardi**

Departments

2 From the Editor | Walking around, making a home, fixing healthcare.

4 Letters | Cover issue, bridge views, remembered friends, and more.

Views

7 Notes from the Undergrad | Lost lawn, lost dream?

9 Alumni Voices | Of "banana whackies" and voting rights.

12 Elsewhere | Road trip gone wrong (whew!).

14 Expert Opinion | How radiology shows the limits and potential of AI.

Gazetteer

17 Commencement | Historian's advice to Class of 2026: Be like FDR.

20 AI and Society | Maybe don't depend on chatbots for real estate advice.

21 Genetics | Study reveals pattern in Neanderthal-*Homo sapiens* interbreeding.

21 Honors | Winners of the 2026 President's Prizes announced.

22 Honors | Gene therapy for a form of blindness wins Breakthrough Prize.

23 Music | Irvine Auditorium's Curtis Organ is 100 years old.

24 Sports | Doubles threat Manfredi Graziani W'26 and Aaron Sandler W'27.

25 Gift | \$20 million to boost financial aid for middle-income families.

Arts

53 Calendar

54 Visual Art | Bird-loving collaboration in "Field Notes: Learning to See."

56 Sculpture | Richard Ulevitch Gr'71's "hunt" for finely carved African spoons.

58 Nonfiction | What the trial of Bernie Goetz meant and means. *Five Bullets*.

59 Briefly Noted

Alumni

60 Matthew Seneca C'99 is one to tango.

62 Chris Belland W'70 tells the nation's story at Historic Tours of America.

63 John Ternus EAS'97 was named Apple's next CEO.

64 Notes

71 Obituaries

80 Old Penn | The man who made the spoons for the "Spoon men."

Vol. 124, No. 6

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Cover | Photo by JJ Tiziou

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Legacies

In the *Gazette's* May/June 2020 issue, we published “The Edge,” JJ Tiziou C’02’s first-person account of a quirky endeavor he’d launched a few years earlier of making an annual walk around Philadelphia’s borders. In that first spring of the pandemic, his text and photographs provided a welcome breath of fresh air and freedom. Toward the end of the essay, JJ wrote briefly about his ambitions for using such walks as a way of bringing different people and groups together and added, “I’m not sure where this project will go next.”

In “City Limits,” senior editor Trey Popp provides an answer, describing how the photographer and community organizer has developed Walk Around Philadelphia to the point that, in part thanks to a recent anonymous grant, he is contemplating stepping back from active management. Trey spoke with JJ for the piece, but more of the focus is on other walkers, including Lia Howard C’01 Gr’11, who adapted elements of the walk to her work as director of SNF Paideia’s Political Empathy Lab, and her husband, University Chaplain Chaz Howard C’00, who has participated multiple times and reflected on being both the helper and helped (“now I’ve got a bad knee”) during the rougher patches of the journey.

It’s also a moment of transition of sorts at Kelly Writers House, which celebrated its 30th anniversary over Alumni Weekend in May. I mentioned KWH’s longtime faculty director, Kelly Professor of English Al Filreis, in the very first article I wrote as editor of the *Gazette*, and I believe I was among the first (few hundred) alumni writer-types to lament that Writers House wasn’t around in our day.

For “The 30-Year Squat”—you’ll get it if you read the article—I spoke with Al and KWH Director Jessica Lowenthal G’07 Gr’07,

as well as associate professor of English Simone White, who took over as faculty director on July 1, about the origins, development, and future of the very well-used cottage at 3805 Locust Walk. I also sat in on some events this spring and for the anniversary, and the piece excerpts a few of the “Toasts & Reminiscences” shared by various students, faculty, and staff who’ve been part of the House across its history.

Since the passage of Medicare and Medicaid in the 1960s, the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics has been marshalling expertise across Penn schools to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of the US healthcare system. As

Mary Ann Meyers Gr’76 points out in “LDI and American Healthcare” its scholars “face what are arguably unprecedented challenges in 2026.”

The article surveys work addressing the impact of last year’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), the complexities

around incorporating artificial intelligence in patient care and administration, the rural healthcare crises, and a variety of healthcare access issues, a lot of it pretty grim. But despite all the challenges, outgoing LDI Director Rachel M. Werner M’98 GM’01 GrW’04, told Mary Ann that she still believes a “sustainable healthcare system that pays for better quality, equity, and efficiency” can be achieved.

Finally, please check out our annual photo gallery of this year’s (sunny!) Alumni Weekend festivities, and our Commencement coverage in “Gazetteer,” where historian Michael Beschloss offered the Class of 2026 a lesson in resilience from President Franklin D. Roosevelt at a speech he gave at Franklin Field in 1936.

Trey spoke with JJ for the piece, but more of the focus is on other walkers.



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Obvious Virtue Signaling

My husband and I used to be proud that we went to Penn, and over the years, we have despaired over the obviously liberal route the University has been taking.

I can't believe it. You have finally topped the "diversity" cover of years ago [Nov|Dec 2002, concluding a series of issues marking the *Gazette's* Centennial]. Words cannot describe my disgust at your obviously virtue-signaling choice of subjects. The style? 1960s? 1970s? Really? You couldn't think of anything more original? And a woman who is clearly a PoC but not Asian or Hispanic?

And to your obviously color-impaired "graphics" staff: Penn's colors are Red and Blue.

Sophia Kelly Shultz C'84, Pottsville, PA

Yes, That Orrery

The article "When Penn Was a State School" in your "Semiquincentennial Sampler" [May|Jun 2026] noted that the school seal was at one point changed to "an image of an orrery." Was this likely an image of the Rittenhouse Orrery, which was displayed in the Van Pelt Library in my days as a student? Thank you.

Sarah Rose Torok C'92, Philadelphia

The orrery is still on display in the Kislak Center on Van Pelt's sixth floor. The library's website doesn't mention the seal, but an article in Almanac (October 19, 2004) states: "The Orrery Seal, in use as Penn's corporate seal from the time it was drawn in 1782 until 1797 and then again in the years 1823 to 1847, displays the mechanical planetarium—the orrery—made by David Rittenhouse." —Ed.



"To your obviously color-impaired 'graphics' staff: Penn's colors are Red and Blue."

Fresh Look, Fond Memory

The article and photographs depicting unusual views of the Golden Gate Bridge by Arthur Drooker C'76 is intriguing ["Fresh Angle," May|Jun 2026]. My father, John Guss, while serving in the navy aboard the *USS Mississippi* in the 1930s, was based in San Francisco during the construction of the bridge. He included snapshots of same in his lively photo album, which I donated to the Pennsylvania Military Museum in 2025.

Thanks for the fresh look; wish he could see them.

Carolyn R. Guss, Bryn Mawr, PA

The writer is a former editor, writer, and illustrator for the Gazette. —Ed.

A Darker View of the Golden Gate

Although the article and photographs in "Fresh Angle" provided an interesting perspective, it was heart-wrenching to read since a relative who was in her teens took her life there, as many others have. It is no secret that suicides are unfortunately a part of the bridge's history. Notably, her parents worked tirelessly with other suicide loss survivors for years to have netting installed to prevent further travesties, fighting against those who argued that the netting would "ruin the view"! The fact that the article refers to the photographer's selection of the final photos as having to "kill a darling or two" was a gut punch, especially in this context. That old-fashioned word choice should have been nixed. Hopefully, future editions of the book can include a mention about the bridge's unfortunate history, and the daunting effort by grieving families to install netting there to save future lives.

Laurie Yulsman Kazenoff C'82, Lloyd Harbor, NY

Starring Role

I very much enjoyed the photo essay "Fresh Angle." While the photographer, Arthur Drooker, provided some stimulating photographs of the bridge, and eschewed what he called "postcard views," I am sure he would agree that one of the finest inclusions of the bridge appears in Alfred Hitchcock's classic film *Vertigo*. The juxtaposition of the massive structure, beautifully lit, against the silhouetted figure of Kim Novak about to jump into the bay, reveals the skills of the cinematographer, Robert Burks, as well as the director. Many cinephiles consider this film one of the greatest ever made. I am one of them!

As a lifelong, dedicated amateur musician, who plays both the piano and the organ, I also read with interest “Player Piano,” Robert Elias’ essay about his grandfather, a skilled artisan specializing in piano building [“Salvo,” May|Jun 2026].

While Elias stated that the piano is the “king of instruments,” this term was actually coined by Mozart when he experienced and wrote music for the pipe organ. Given the rather rudimentary status of pianofortes at the time of this storied composer, it’s no wonder Mozart was more impressed with the far more sonorous and powerful organ available to him.

Jonathan Kleefeld M’70, Newton Center, MA

I Could Not Write Anything Better

I just read Dave Zeitlin’s piece “Treasured Texts” [“Alumni Voices,” May|Jun 2026], about the death of his *Daily Pennsylvanian* colleague and friend Dan McQuade. I am still in tears—not just over Zeitlin’s loss and the loss experienced by McQuade’s family and friends, but also over what is to come for me, a Penn alum from the Class of 1981. My closest friends are still the friends I made at Penn—Dave had the *DP*, and I had my fraternity SAM (Sigma Alpha Mu). Of the 30 of us who are so close, we have not lost one yet. I know it is a matter of time. We’ve been to each other’s weddings (some more than one), some bar/bat mitzvahs and confirmations of our kids, even weddings of our kids, and to the funerals of many of our parents.

We have yet to gather for one of our funerals, and I am not looking forward to any of them—and if God is kind, I will go first, so I will be spared going to any others. (My wife hates when I talk that way.) The thing is, there are at least two of my fraternity brothers who are my Dan. They made me laugh or smile from the day we first met, and they still do. They have that kind of Oscar Wilde wit that one can aspire to yet never have. Their name on a text or email is always eagerly opened.

And that is why I write now. Not just to compliment Dave Zeitlin for this piece, but to get his permission to pla-

giarize some of his essay when one of these brothers dies. I could not write anything better to describe or to honor them. (OK, only kidding. I think.)

Thank you again for this piece. Wonderful.

Alan Thomas C’81, Nutley, NJ

Of Course Dan Was There

Dave Zeitlin’s touching remembrance of Dan McQuade left me misty eyed about our dearly departed friend.

I won’t pretend that I was particularly close with Dan; I came to know him through Philadelphia’s closeknit journalism community. As Zeitlin so admirably captured, Dan held a loving obsession for all of Philly’s quirks and madcap characters, which I shared and admired. So it’s fitting that I last saw Dan at the estate sale for Frank Rizzo, the city’s famously pugnacious mayor from the 1970s. I was covering it for WHY? but Dan was there just for fun—there were hundreds of diehard fans of Philadelphia’s worst mayor combing through boxes of Christmas decorations and old vinyl records in a wood-paneled basement; *of course* Dan was there. And that’s how I’ll remember him: Simultaneously joining in and laughing at such an absurd—and absurdly Philly—scene.

Jim Saksa C’08, Washington, DC

Lost Opportunity

The headline “Too Many Students, Not Enough Knowledge” [“Gazetteer,” May|Jun 2026] caught my eye. What I read is not what I expected, especially in the “lightly condensed and edited” remarks of *Atlantic* writer Tom Nichols at the 2026 Levin Family Dean’s Forum.

Nichols lost a wonderful opportunity when advising the student who didn’t understand why she might have to study German. This was chance to actually teach (what any good academic adviser would do) and to explain why German might be necessary to meet her academic and career goals and also not to potentially misinterpret any facial “look” the student may have exhibited.

As someone who spent the bulk of his professional career in higher education academic advising, I know that an academic adviser does not and should not be a clerk but must take the time to find all the teachable moments and act accordingly. Dismissing a student as dimwitted, uneducated, or overindulged helps no one.

And just what are the “very expensive boutique schools” he refers to? Are these the institutions that cater to students making them happy with climbing walls? I am not sure how asking if a student is happy is all that bad, but there are very few colleges and universities that do not provide mental health programs and services for their students.

While it isn’t surprising to acknowledge that all universities are different, does that mean that the differences are in quality? Is Nichols talking about well-endowed private universities versus small, struggling liberal arts colleges, or flagship state universities versus regional schools, or PhD-granting research schools versus community colleges? I would hope that all have a place in the American higher education system and that all take seriously their role in educating students.

And then he jumps to telling us that he isn’t against the liberal arts, singling out art history as a convenient (and I would say overused) target. And then he ends with the notion that all people don’t need to go to college and might be better off in trade school. Nothing especially new, revolutionary, or controversial here.

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I would have hoped for a more nuanced discussion of the current state of higher education from Nichols. Alas, at least, in this condensed and edited piece, it was not there for me.

By the way, I thoroughly enjoyed the other articles in the *Gazette*, especially those focused on the 250th anniversary of the US.

Eric R. White GEd'67 GrEd'75, State College, PA

Thouron Winners Mini-Reunion

As the former administrator of the Thouron Award for many years, I was delighted to read “Imaginary Kinship” [“Arts,” May|Jun 2026] about former Thouron Scholar John Wind. Immediately following that very interesting article was “History in Motion” [“Alumni Profiles”], about Justin Marozzi, who was also a Thouron Scholar. John went from Penn to England and Justin from England to Penn, exemplifying the design of the Award, which supports Penn graduates at British universities and British graduates at Penn. I am never surprised—but always thrilled—to see what Thouron Scholars have accomplished. Sixty-six years after its founding the Thouron Award continues to flourish.

Carole Clarke, staff, Malvern, PA

College and Career Advice

Over the years, I've often noted connectivity among the *Gazette* articles in a given edition. This happened again with the May|Jun 2026 issue, and this time it reflects a couple of personal views I've held and shared with others for many years.

First, in the article “Too Many Students, Not Enough Knowledge,” Tom Nichols quoted one graduate's view of his college experience as “those magical seven years between high school and your first warehouse job.” Joking aside, there is a kernel of wisdom there. This thought mirrored my own view, which I've shared over the years with a number of prospective college students, that college is the one time in your life that you are generally free of the other major responsibilities that

come after graduation. I've encouraged these students to take full advantage of this time and the resources the college experience offers to learn about themselves and the communities around them—knowledge that is well beyond academic and which will help them live a full life following their college years.

Second, in “Mimi's Magic Flute,” [“Alumni Profiles,” May|Jun 2026], Mimi Stillman, the subject of the article, says: “I'm very lucky that I'm following my passion. Classical music is a difficult career. There are not that many career paths.” While Stillman's musical career is quite different from that of most others—whether or not involving a college education—the key point to me is that any career should involve doing something that you really care about and enjoy doing. It may take a few tries at specific jobs to find this role, but over a multi-decade career, the sense of personal happiness and satisfaction and the economic value created for all parties involved is more than worth the effort.

Jim Waters WG'71, Pearl River, NY

Super Signer

While attending my son's recent graduation at Franklin Field [“Gazetteer,” this issue], I was captivated by the performance of the official signer who translated the proceedings into American Sign Language for the benefit of the hearing-impaired. This remarkable woman stood in a black dress in the blazing sun of a 90-degree day for over two and a half hours, signing the entire pageant, from the first line of *The Star-Spangled Banner* to the last words of the Dismissal. Her skill and endurance would shame many professional athletes! Can you tell us anything more about this amazing woman?

Christopher Kocher C'71 GEE'76, Philadelphia

We checked in with the Office of the University Secretary, which oversees Commencement, and they sent the following from the events team: “We hire the signers through the Deaf-Hearing Communication

Centre (DHCC). There are two sign language interpreters assigned to the ceremony, since they take turns if needed. This year the interpreters were Joy Harris and Jennifer McGown. The person who is being referred to in this note is Joy Harris. Both she and Jennifer actually signed for both the College ceremony and the Commencement ceremony in Franklin Field, as well as six ceremonies in the Palestra throughout the weekend! Joy has been coming back for many years now to sign for the ceremony and does a wonderful job.”—Ed.

Perfect Blend

I was both instructed and deeply moved by Joanne B. Mulcahy's creative nonfiction piece “Communion with the Dead” [“Elsewhere,” Mar|Apr 2026].

I certainly knew about El Día de los Muertos, but I had no idea there was a folk saint of death (Santa Muerte), and the author's description of the cemetery threshold honoring the “animas olvidadas” (forgotten souls) is poignant.

But what makes the piece come alive is the author's perfect blend of her personal experience with larger human concerns, including the ways various cultures treat death. Now in my early 80s and regularly attending funerals for family and friends, I think a lot about these issues. Like the author, I fear the loss of my spouse far more than my own death.

Joanne Mulcahy is a wonderful writer, and I hope anyone who overlooked this piece returns to read it.

John Getz G'77, Cincinnati, OH

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Home Turf

In pursuit of the perfect suburban lawn. ▶

By Janet Fu

“Don’t feel bad if the grass doesn’t grow,” chuckled Mrs. Brick as she paused in front of my house while walking her golden retriever, Cici. “Our neighbor across the street works at the University of Arkansas Agricultural Extension, and he even struggles to get his Bermuda to grow.” The dog days of summer were upon us, but Mrs. Brick was the picture of unhurried Southern charm, radiating sympathy as she cast her eye upon my plight.

My family had been trying for the last 12 days to grow grass. Yes, grass. How hard could it be? Acres of pastureland dot the roads 10 minutes from my house, crabgrass crops up in sidewalk cracks under the blistering sun, and let us not forget that Arkansas used to be a mix of temperate deciduous forest, prairie grasses, and alluvial plain. So why was I struggling to get blades of tall fescue to show their pointy heads above some topsoil?

Earlier in the spring, my parents had received emails, and then an angry, typed notice, from our homeowners’ association alerting them that our yard “was not up to curb-appeal standards” and was “deteriorating the value of the neighborhood.” Three mature oaks, two maples, a bunch of hollies, and one mystery tree grace our front lawn and block sunlight from reaching the ground, which keeps our heating bill down in the summer but also keeps our lawn perpetually threadbare—a patchwork of eroded sandy soil and crisscrossing roots. Our HOA decided that enough was enough.

Enter me: A 20-year-old college student whose return home for the summer meant one thing to my parents—free manual labor. After a landscaping company quoted \$6,600 for a half-pallet (22 rolls) of sod, my mom balked and decided it was time for me to roll up my sleeves. She called White River Nursery and ordered 10 tons of topsoil. It arrived in a dump truck that shuddered as it jumped the curb, shaking the ground as all 20,000 pounds of earth was ignominiously dropped onto our front yard. The

dirt piled well over six feet tall, taking up more space than a children’s play set. My mom promptly purchased a \$99 wheelbarrow from Lowe’s, and sent me into the front yard under the baking August sun to level the soil, seed it with tall fescue, and cover the new grass seed with straw.

As an added bonus, I would be performing for an audience: our neighbor Paul. Paul was a retiree who wore a grid-ded, collared short-sleeve shirt and jeans every day, with his phone in the left breast pocket. He had thinning white hair above shockingly blue eyes and spent the better part of his time patrolling the perimeter of his property, picking up offending sticks, making sure the bushes and garden were perfectly manicured, and filling his bird feeder. These activities provided him with constant opportunities to supervise my progress and offer unsolicited commentary.

“That much soil won’t be enough. Better order double.”

“You need more straw. And finer straw. I like the EZ-Straw stuff—I buy it by the bale at Lowe’s, and it works like magic for keeping the moisture in. Lay it on thick and make sure you water a lot.”

“Tall fescue, now, that is a good choice. I like a Bermuda and tall fescue blend myself, everything under my trees is tall fescue and it tolerates the shade. But you have to mow it at a higher trim height. And it doesn’t propagate at all, or spread as much as the Bermuda.”

Yet I had learned that this pedant with a penchant for keeping order was a resourceful and well-meaning man. One who harvested the chestnuts from his stinky tree after it blossomed every spring, lavished love upon his grandkids when they visited for Thanksgiving, and waved hi to me every time I ran laps around our neighborhood to train for track and cross country. Once, I was running in the morning and encountered him taking a morning stroll. He ducked some low branches that were blocking the sidewalk next to a house with a *For Sale* sign. A few hours

later, as I was studying in my room, I looked up and saw him walking by, a long saw with an extension pole in hand. The next morning when I ran, the low branches were gone.

So though it may have been true that Paul had too much spare time on his hands, my parents were inclined to take his advice. We set up automatic sprinklers and layered on the EZ-Straw.

A few days into the watering, tiny thin blades of grass erupted from the straw, looking like a baby’s first hairs. My parents celebrated.

On the third day, the city passed a drought ordinance. In light of scant summer rainfall and dwindling water levels in reservoirs, all unnecessary household activities that required water were to cease, including, but not limited to, filling swimming pools, washing cars, and watering lawns.

On his next daily stroll, Paul approached my father and me. “I don’t know if you folks know,” our helpful neighbor began, “but the city passed an ordinance today prohibiting lawn watering. Such a pity with your newly planted grass, but I wouldn’t want you all to get in trouble or be reported.”

Later, within the safety of our own walls, my parents wrung their hands in despair.

My dad saw no choice but compliance. “It’s against the law!” he exclaimed.

“Yes, but we just spent \$1,000 on topsoil, another \$100 on supplies, and \$250 on grass seed!” my mom retorted. “We can’t just let that go to waste!” So we hatched a plan. Under the cover of nightfall, we would water the lawn at 10 p.m. and 3 a.m., when the neighbors would be asleep. My dad took refuge in rationalization. It would be dark, he observed, and therefore evaporation would be far lower than in the midday heat and sun. We could save our grass even as we minimized our impact on the city’s water supply.

So we continued to water, in secret, and the grass grew taller and thicker day by day. Neighbors who had been curious about our topsoil mountain started com-

menting on the flourishing fescue and congratulating us on our success.

When we confided our secret to Mrs. Brick, one of our closest friends in the neighborhood, she laughed and said, “Y’all aren’t the only ones. We walk Cici every night around nine, because it’s too hot for her during the daytime, and everyone’s sprinklers are going at that time.”

And so I returned to school at the end of August, relishing my double victory over our sandy soil and the HOA. As classes got under way, my mom texted me photos as periodic updates of our triumph. The grass was thriving. All seemed well in the world.

Then, out of the blue, my dad called me in palpable distress. It was the grass, he told me. It seemed to have just “evaporated.”

“What do you mean, ‘evaporated?’” I huffed. “Did you forget to water the lawn? Did the grass wilt? Is it brown and dry?”

“No, no. It just disappeared!” he cried. “The grass isn’t there anymore! The thick blades that were there yesterday are now just thin wisps!”

I was incredulous. “Matter doesn’t just disappear! Did deer eat the grass? Did you water it? Is the grass dead?”

“Well, it’s certainly not there!”

And that was how my perfect suburban lawn fell prey to brown patch, a common fungal disease that strikes fescue when nights are humid and the temperature fails to drop below 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Leaves of the fescue roll up inward as they are taken over by the fungus, leaving behind bare and brown patches on the lawn. Brown patch disease typically happens in mid to late summer, caused by watering turf at dusk and leaving it prey to heavy moisture overnight. Our 10 p.m. automatic watering time? A death sentence.

Some people say the American Dream is dead. I say, the American lawn is dead. The perfect suburban lawn is dead.

Janet Fu is a senior from Arkansas studying finance and mathematics. This essay won first prize in the *Gazette’s* 2026 annual essay contest.



The Pride of Lombard Street

From housemate hijinks to high court triumph.

By Dennis Drabelle

On the morning of November 6, 1973, William “Bill” Eggers L’69, who died last fall, stood at a podium and said, “May it please the court.” That’s the salutation with which any lawyer introduces a case in almost any American courtroom, but Bill was a 29-year-old addressing it to one of the hardest-to-please tribunals of them all: the US Supreme Court.

Six years earlier, Bill had joined four other members of Penn’s 1969 law class—

Mike Levy L’69, Sam Tilton L’69, the late Lee Hymerling C’66 L’69, and me—in renting a rowhouse on Lombard Street in Center City to live in during our second and third years. In the fall of ’73, I was an attorney-adviser at the US Department of the Interior in Washington, DC, so on Bill’s big day all I had to do was take a cab to the Supreme Court building. Mike came down by train from Philadelphia, where he was embarking on what became a long and distin-

guished career as a prosecutor. (He is currently on the Penn Carey Law faculty, teaching the evidence course and a seminar on prosecuting cybercrime.) He and I were expressing our support for a highly talented friend as he argued his side of the prisoners' voting-rights case *O'Brien v. Skinner*, 414 U.S. 524 (1974).

It's impossible to appreciate *O'Brien v. Skinner* fully without placing it in the context of the Sixties and its onslaught of civic upheavals: riots in African American sections of Los Angeles, Detroit, Newark, Washington, DC, and elsewhere; massive demonstrations against the Vietnam War; Eugene McCarthy's and Robert Kennedy's primary challenges of President Lyndon Johnson for escalating that war; the exasperated Johnson's March 31, 1968, decision to end his candidacy for a second full term; the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Kennedy later that spring; the Chicago police riot that spoiled the Democratic National Convention in August; and the election of Richard Nixon, who promised to end the war while concealing his determination not to be the first American president to lose one.

Throw in the bullyboy rhetoric of Philadelphia police chief Frank Rizzo, and you have a milieu far from conducive to study and reflection. As law students we sought relief by clowning around in ways more appropriate to undergraduates. One night a couple of us made liberal use of food coloring to prepare an all-blue supper; a week or so later, a retaliatory red meal appeared. On another occasion, some of us came home from class to find that every stick of living room furniture had been moved into the dining room. And then there were our neighbors Donna and Georgia, also known as the Back Street Girls.

At around 5:30 p.m. on move-in day, the doorbell had rung. On the stoop with a favor to ask were two elegantly turned-out young women working as clothes buyers for the department store Strawbridge & Clothier. Our house fronted on a street,

but Donna and Georgia's house, directly behind ours, did not. They had been reaching it via a narrow gap between our house and an adjacent, boarded-up building, and they felt vulnerable all the way to their front door. Might it be possible, they asked, for them to go through our house to reach theirs safely on weekday evenings? "Of course," we replied.

It was Bill who dubbed them the Back Street Girls, after the Rolling Stones' song of that name. We used the term only out of Donna and Georgia's hearing, and on warm weekend afternoons they would invite us into their minuscule yard to play quoits and slurp "banana whackies," which was their pet name for frozen banana daiquiris. Now and then we Front Street Boys would have guests for dinner—visiting relatives, say, or one of our law professors and his wife. During the cocktail hour there would be a knock on the door, followed by the entry of two stylish young women. After their transit, insinuations would be aired, and our protestations that this was not what it looked like would be hooted down.

Fun and games aside, as law students we may have coped with the pervasive mayhem better than most. We were acquiring skills useful for challenging a system that seemed rigged against dissent and change, and a few years later, Bill's representation of inmates who just wanted to vote struck his ex-housemates as a fulfillment of group aspirations.

The case arose in Monroe County, New York, which includes Rochester, where in the early '70s Bill was practicing law with the firm Nixon, Hargrave, Devans & Doyle (today known as Nixon Peabody—and for the record, the leadoff namesake was not *that* Nixon). Like many other states, New York stripped convicted felons of the right to vote, but in the run-up to the 1972 election, dozens of non-felons confined in the Monroe County jail—some of them convicted misdemeanants, others pretrial detain-

Bill's representation of inmates who just wanted to vote struck his ex-housemates as a fulfillment of group aspirations.

ees who couldn't raise bail—found themselves barred from the electoral process. Not by any specific law or policy, but because of what during oral argument Justice Potter Stewart was to call an "interplay" of denials.

Denial #1, issued by the county sheriff, nixed the prisoners' request to take advantage of a state program for setting up polling places in jails. Denial #2, made by the same official, turned down the prisoners' petition to be taken to an off-campus polling place. Denial #3 gave a crabbed interpretation to a potentially helpful provision of state law: eligible voters with a physical disability could cast absentee ballots. Sorry, the county board of elections ruled, but "physical disability" is a strictly medical criterion, which none of the plaintiffs had shown he or she could meet. The rejections made for a disenfranchising Catch-22—a classic example of Authority Wearing Blinders that was a Sixties specialty. The League of Women Voters took up the Monroe inmates' case, which landed in Nixon Hargrave's pro bono office, where a senior litigator assigned it to Bill. The trial court found in the inmates' favor, an intermediary appellate court agreed, but the Court of Appeals (the state's highest) overturned the decision, ruling that the relevant portion of New York's absentee ballot law applied only to persons "medically disabled by reason of some malady or other physical impairment." A more flexible reading might have saved everybody a lot of trouble by classifying cell bars as physical impairments, but the Court of Appeals lacked imagination. Because Bill had based his appeal mainly on the

equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, the Court of Appeals decision was appealable to the US Supreme Court—a lever that he and the League pulled.

Listening to the oral argument more than half-a-century later—on the website JUSTIA Supreme Court—one hears Bill start off a tad nervously (though who in his shoes would not have?). Soon, though, his commanding intelligence kicks in, and he lays out a principle he wants the justices to keep uppermost in mind: voting is a fundamental right, not to be denied except for a compelling reason, which New York has not supplied. When Justice William Rehnquist asks whether some rights are fundamental and others are not, Bill answers that he “wouldn’t want to create a hierarchy of constitutional rights” but goes on to cite a previous case in which the Court itself called the right to vote fundamental.

Replying to a friendly question from Chief Justice Warren Burger, Bill agrees that his case is strongest for pretrial detainees because they still enjoy the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. An unidentified justice (probably Harry Blackmun) asks Bill sarcastically if he won’t be “back in here tomorrow” to argue that felons, too, should get to vote in New York. Bill answers, “Your honor, I represent the clients I have,” repeats that none of them *is* a felon, and notes that although New York seems to have decided that a felony conviction signifies such disrespect for the law that the guilty party should forfeit the right to vote, the state has imposed no such stigma on convicted misdemeanants.

In answer to a question from Stewart, Bill aces his equal protection argument. The current situation in New York, he points out, could lead to this unequal and absurd result: a convicted misdemeanant who is a resident of County X but serving time in the Monroe County jail can vote by absentee ballot, whereas his cellmate, a Monroe County resident, cannot.

When opposing counsel took his turn at the podium, he failed to articulate a cogent rationale for deciding in the state’s favor. Bill came out of the experience smelling like a winner.

It didn’t take the Supreme Court long to confirm that impression. On January 16, 1974, in an opinion written by the chief justice, a 7-2 majority ruled that “New York’s election statutes, as construed by its highest court, discriminate between qualified voters in a way that, as applied to pretrial detainees and misdemeanants, is wholly arbitrary. ... We have no choice, therefore, but to hold that, as construed, the New York statutes deny appellants the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.”

What should the remedy for this miscarriage of justice be? Install a voting booth at Monroe County jail? Bus appellants to the nearest outside polling place? Distribute absentee ballots inside the jail? Any of those would have worked, but the Court left the repair job to state and local officials; the last line of the majority opinion reads, “Reversed and remanded for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion.”

A concurring opinion, written by Justice Thurgood Marshall and joined by Justices William Brennan W1928 and William O. Douglas, pounced on opposing counsel’s banana-whackiest explanation for not letting the appellants vote absentee: the possibility of jailers unduly influencing inmates’ votes. “It is hard to conceive how the State can possibly justify denying any prisoner his right to vote,” Marshall scoffed, “on the ground that his vote might afford a state official the opportunity to abuse his position of authority.”

Writing in dissent for himself and Rehnquist, Blackmun pointed out that New York’s denial of the vote to these inmates was unintentional and that the state could have declined to allow absentee voting for any reason without running afoul of the Constitution—in other words, there is no right to vote by absen-

tee ballot per se. “I would refrain from continued tampering and interference with the details of state election laws,” Blackmun summed up. “If details are deserving of cure, the State legislature, not this Court, ought to be the curative agent.” Yet hadn’t the curative agent had plenty of chances and muffed them all?

The circumstances that gave rise to *O’Brien v. Skinner* may have been unusual. But to my mind, the decision makes an important point: trying to excuse the denial of a right by calling it inadvertent won’t wash.

In the aftermath, Bill’s supporters assured him that his stellar performance all but guaranteed further appearances before the Supremes. That, however, was not to be. He went on to advise Corning, Inc., so ably that they hired him away to be their general counsel; after retiring from that position, he rejoined Nixon Hargrave. In later years, Sam Tilton, also a member of the firm, saw a lot more of Bill and his wife (and law partner), Deborah McLean, than the rest of us did, but all five ex-housemates faithfully attended our class reunions, held get-togethers of our own in the years between, and stayed in touch via email. A week before Bill’s death, in fact, we were grouching about the recent perversion of the US Justice Department into a tool for wagging one man’s personal vendettas.

At our 55th class reunion in 2024, I urged Bill to put his reminiscences of *O’Brien v. Skinner* down on paper. He never got around to that, but I consulted Deborah, Mike, and Sam for this account, which is our attempt to do the job for him. As for the Back Street Girls, I wonder if they ever realized how much their daily pass-throughs burnished our household’s image.

Dennis Drabelle G’66 L’69 left the law in 1981 to become a writer. His most recent book, *The Power of Scenery: Frederick Law Olmsted and the Origin of National Parks*, has been reissued in paperback.



Athwart the Fruited Plain

I envisioned a Great American Road Trip. Fate had other ideas.

By Caren Lissner

AS America lurched toward its 250th birthday, I resolved to take my teens on a once-in-a-lifetime road trip last summer. We'd travel from New Jersey all the way to south Texas. It promised something for everyone. Our destination would reunite me with an old Penn friend. The journey would also address my kids' constant complaint: that we went to the "same states" every year—Massachusetts, Vermont, and Maine. Never mind that technically, while touring the Haskell Free Library and Opera House in Vermont, we had set foot in Canada, since the building straddles the Quebec line. I even have photos of us standing with one foot on each side of the black tape marking the border. That counts as international travel, right?

Maybe, during our road trip, we'd learn something about the state of our union.

I excitedly unveiled our itinerary last spring, planning stops in Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas before entering the Lone Star State. We'd celebrate America's upcoming birthday and take in new scenery. Since I'm *of a certain age*, I recall the Bicentennial celebration in '76, when the Tall Ships floated into New York Harbor and everyone seemed happy and proud. I probably only thought that because I was in kindergarten and didn't know much of the world beyond the lyrics to "Disco Duck," but it was a joyful feeling.

I told the kids we'd party like it was 1976. "Why can't we fly," said Older Kid, more a statement than a question.

"Who wants to be like everybody else?" I cheerfully asked.

Well, teenagers do.

I remembered the times my kids had been satisfied, as toddlers, with simple

adventures: hopping on a commuter train to see a new playground, or discovering a new pizza joint. If only we could stay as easily intrigued as when we're young.

I had another reason to see the USA in my Chevrolet (or whatever Hertz was willing to rent me). It seemed wise to steer clear of the traumatized air traffic controllers and radar outages at Newark Airport.

I began plotting our dream trip. I have a rule: Travel should not be work (unless you're traveling for work). Ambition has its place, and it is not on a family holiday. But I violated my own rule from the start.

The web told me the drive would take 26 hours. I figured we'd split it into three days each way. The longest trek would be Day One, reaching Tennessee in 12.5 hours. So I loaded suitcases and snacks into the rental car the night before, and mixed coffee grounds with water to turn into cold brew by morning. My high-caffeine Mason jar would keep me alert.

At 5:30 a.m., under clear skies, we rolled out of town. We made a few pit stops and reached West Virginia by noon. So far, so good. But then I stepped out of the car. And the leg cramps hit.

This had never happened before. I'd read that air travelers could get ill if they sat too long. But driving to West Virginia? I shook out my legs, drank water, waited to feel better, and looked up "economy

class syndrome” on my phone. Clearly I needed more breaks.

Then it was onward to Tennessee.

A second wrinkle emerged. Those internet drive times are calculated assuming one will maintain the speed limit the entire time. But I was not going to drive 60 or 70 miles per hour on unfamiliar Southern roads. And we were slowed by rain showers, traffic jams, and—distressingly short of Nashville—darkness.

Around 8 p.m., I watched the sun sink behind the Smoky Mountains and felt scared. We were doing 65 amid a slew of trucks, without the bright lights I was used to in New Jersey. I could round a bend and turn the car into a 4,000-pound tangle of disaster.

I couldn’t stop thinking about my late mother’s advice regarding driving at night, which was, “Don’t drive at night.”

My legs hurt. I didn’t tell my kids. They sounded frustrated enough. One wanted me to put on Taylor Swift; the other wanted Kendrick Lamar. They wanted to swim at the hotel, not wait another four hours to get there.

As the sky darkened, I slid behind every 18-wheeler on Route 40, assuming they had experience. Red taillights showed me the way.

We reached the hotel in Nashville around midnight—an embarrassing 16 hours after we’d left. My legs hurt and I could barely walk into our room. The kids went right to sleep.

I didn’t.

Apparently, chasing a cold brew with hours and hours of Dunkin’ coffees is an excellent way to stave off shuteye.

I sat up in bed, trying to fall asleep.

At 1 a.m., I recalled articles about how driving with no sleep was as dangerous as driving drunk.

At 2 a.m., I beat myself up over taking this trip instead of getting tickets to see “Weird Al” Yankovic, who was coming to New York the following weekend.

At 3 a.m., I told myself that if I could fall asleep by 4 a.m., I’d sleep until 11 or 12 and we’d be good to go.

I knew I should put the kids first. It was safer to stay an extra night at the hotel in Nashville. So we did.

But did I really want to continue?

I had only taken a little over a week off from work, so it wasn’t like we could slow down and enjoy the road. As soon as we reached Texas, we’d have to drive home. Could we stand five more days like this?

I called my friend, apologized profusely, and told her how much I detested changing plans and putting people out. She understood. “Do something cool in Nashville,” she suggested.

I broke the news to the kids.

“We’re not going to Texas?” Older Kid asked, disappointed.

“But we got to see a library in Canada, remember?”

Instead we toured the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, which had a Taylor Swift exhibit, so I pleased one teen. Then they wanted to visit the mall. After arguing about where to eat, we chose the Cheesecake Factory. Younger Kid noticed something in her salad that looked like wax. The manager came out, agreed it was wax, and said generously, “We won’t charge you for the salad.”

To salvage the trip, I booked a night at an Airbnb on a farm in Virginia, complete with farm animals. In the dark, I couldn’t find it, and headed farther and farther up a mountain with no space to turn around. I realized my mom was right. There were miles of roads with no shoulder, and deer kept appearing in my headlights. (They looked a lot like me.)

I finally managed to find the farm. Come morning, we woke to roosters, goats, and a cow. It was July 4. Happy birthday, America!

Now: Country roads, take us home to the New Jersey Turnpike.

Heading back on Independence Day, we passed two crashes, then a skeleton of a car that was engulfed in flames. Two people stood beside it on a narrow median, looking forlorn. It amazed me how

many stretches of road lacked a safe place to stop.

After bickering over where to eat lunch, we pulled into an IHOP. There was one car in the parking lot. I was sure it was closed.

It turned out they were open. A Fourth of July miracle! We were the only customers.

We gorged on pancakes and salads (sans wax), and the waitress kept bringing us water. I felt bad that she had to work on the holiday. She looked a bit down. I wondered if she wished she were anywhere else. I left a large cash tip and thanked her for serving us on a holiday. Perhaps that taught the kids a lesson that we hadn’t found elsewhere on the road.

We made it home just after midnight. As we dressed for bed, I read a text from my friend. The July 4 fireworks had been canceled, she said. She linked to a release about flash flood warnings and heavy rains that had already soaked the event grounds. To me, it seemed an overreaction. I’d followed the forecasts, which called for sunshine. It would be a few more days before we all learned how deadly the storms in Texas had been, as news of the July 4 tragedy at Camp Mystic spread. It was just luck that we’d turned around.

After our retreat, I worried that our botched trip would eclipse my kids’ memories of family vacations we’d taken when they were younger—especially an overnight sleeper car on a train to visit grandparents, a favorite. But the important thing was, we’d made it home in one piece.

And I did buy those tickets to see Weird Al.

This summer, I’ve planned for us to sit by a hotel pool in New England. It’s only a five-hour drive, but we’ll be taking the train.

Caren Lissner C’93 is working on a memoir, *How We Became Homeless*. Her nerdy first novel, *Carrie Pilby*, was turned into a movie. Find more of her writing at carenlissner.com.



Premature Autopsy

AI was supposed to make human radiologists obsolete. What's taking so long?

By Robert Wachter

In 2016, Geoffrey Hinton, who would go on to win the 2024 Nobel Prize for his work on neural networks, was asked about the future of radiology. “If you work as a radiologist, you’re like the coyote that’s already over the edge of the cliff but hasn’t yet looked down, so he doesn’t realize there’s no ground underneath him,” Hinton said. “I think we should stop training radiologists now. It’s just completely obvious that within five years deep learning is going to do better than radiologists ... we’ve got plenty of radiologists already.”

Hinton’s statement was the medical equivalent of Warren Buffett saying he

was selling his radiology stock short. Whereas radiology residency programs had always been massively competitive, in 2020 only 41 percent of residency spots in America were filled by graduates of US medical schools, as students decided that a career in radiology was too risky a bet.

Then something funny happened. Radiology salaries remained sky-high, and students witnessed an explosion in radiology help wanted ads. By 2024, the number of US medical students choosing diagnostic radiology nearly doubled from 2020. If the field is in crisis today, it’s because of a nationwide shortage, not a surfeit, of radiologists.

As we speculate about the possibility of AI replacing humans in healthcare, the case of radiology is instructive. After all, there are few fields in medicine that seem as vulnerable to technological disruption as radiology, given that the field is largely about matching the appearance of a constellation of digital dots to a known database of diseases. Hinton’s miscalculation has much to teach us about the complexity of medicine, the forces that will likely shape (and slow) healthcare’s AI revolution, and why predictions that AI will replace physicians anytime soon should be served up with a generous dollop of skepticism.

I asked John Mongan, a University of California, San Francisco radiologist and AI expert, why he still had a job a decade after Hinton’s famous prediction. “The people who were making those predictions understood computer vision but didn’t really understand radiology,” he said. “They were writing algorithms that could tell you that an image was a dog or a sailboat. And they thought that radiology was just doing that for medical stuff. But radiology is a lot more than that.”

For one thing, the interpretation of an X-ray is often influenced by the patient’s history, which the radiologist might glean from reading the patient’s chart or talking to the clinician caring for the patient. I remember when the first cases of AIDS began cropping up in the early 1980s. At the time, the diagnosis was a death sentence, the most common fatal complication being a previously rare lung infection called *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, or PCP. PCP could produce a chest X-ray that was floridly abnormal—but sometimes its radiologic appearance could be exceedingly subtle, more like a little smudge on a glass windowpane. In the latter cases, my chest radiologist would often say, “If you tell me this is a straight 50-year-old man, I’d say the X-ray is normal. If it’s a 26-year-old gay man, I’d say it’s PCP.” In other words, the exact same X-ray appearance

could mean very different things, depending on the clinical context.

This constraint seems surmountable given AI's rapid advancement in "reading" the medical record. But it turns out there are even more challenges to overcome on the road to useful and trustworthy AI in radiology.

Radiologists, for instance, frequently need to review old films. A complex case might require scanning dozens of prior images, often drawn from various imaging modalities (plain films, CT scans, MRIs, ultrasounds, etc.). To be truly constructive, a radiology AI tool would also need to review these past images, then compare those findings with the current image, assigning appropriate weights to differences in imaging type and varying time horizons. Consider a radiologist looking at a CT scan of a pancreatic mass, trying to determine if it's cancer. She might need to compare the current scan to a finding on an ultrasound from four months ago, or an MRI from two years ago. Judging the progression over time, appropriately adjusting for the varying lag periods and the different study techniques, creates a series of daunting problems for AI-based solutions. (It's tricky enough for experienced radiologists.)

An additional limitation is that today's machine vision tools are mostly able to master only one diagnosis at a time. NYU bone radiologist Miriam Bredella recalled seeing a demo of an AI system designed to detect arm fractures. It correctly diagnosed a fracture of the radius, a bone in the forearm, but missed one an inch away in the thinner but longer ulna. "The system wasn't trained on that," the company representative confessed.

This specificity means that the radiology AI products currently on the market are generally one-trick ponies. What's more, they're typically sold separately, often by different companies, and each can run hospitals tens of thousands of dollars a year for subscriptions and operating costs. But human radiologists must look for all these things, as well as broken

bones, signs of pneumonia, edema, cardiomegaly, pulmonary hypertension, enlarged lymph nodes—basically, all the diseases that can befall humans—simultaneously when they review a set of images, which markedly limits the value of these single-disease detectors.

Regulatory scrutiny is another large hurdle for digital radiology. While it remains a bit vague whether an AI-based readmission predictor or diagnosis-suggester needs regulatory approval, there's no doubt that a radiology AI tool falls under the FDA's jurisdiction, under the category of Software as a Medical Device (SaMD). The SaMD review introduces another bottleneck: Just as AI radiology tools typically address a single diagnosis, the current FDA approval process mirrors that specificity. This means that radiology AI companies are forced to seek one approval for pulmonary embolism detection, then another for pneumonia detection. Each approval takes many months to obtain and may cost more than \$1 million per indication.

The real world of radiology—and medicine—is not that siloed; it's messier and far more integrated. Take a patient with unexplained weight loss who gets a CT of the abdomen. There are literally hundreds of diagnoses that may be lurking, and we count on radiologists to see all of them. The need for each diagnosis to have its own bespoke algorithm and separate regulatory approval may be prudent at this stage of AI's development but will significantly hinder the utility and adoption of artificial intelligence in radiology.

The AI tools currently having the biggest impact in radiology are screening programs, particularly for cancer, where the goal is straightforward: identify a single disease (e.g., spot a nodule suspicious for lung cancer on a chest CT or a density that might be a breast cancer on a mammogram). This kind of AI-enabled screening can be a huge help if it allows the radiologist to quickly endorse a negative result and move on to review positive or suspicious cases.

Even here, though, our enthusiasm needs to be tempered by AI's long history of overpromising and underdelivering. In the 1990s, computer-assisted mammography tools were widely implemented after being endorsed by the FDA. Yet once the tools entered community practice, studies showed that their accuracy plummeted. What caused the problem? In the real world of clinical practice, the doctor—who lives in fear of overlooking a cancer—will likely recommend a biopsy after a positive reading by the AI, even if she would have judged the lesion to be benign in the absence of AI.

As more attention is paid to these human-AI interactions, things seem to be improving. In a 2023 Swedish study, roughly 80,000 women were randomized to receive either standard mammography—in which two human radiologists look at the scan to be sure they're not missing anything—or an AI-assisted reading. In the latter group, the AI reviewed the scan first. If the mammogram looked benign to the AI, then a single radiologist signed off on the result. If there was anything suspicious, the scan entered the standard double-reading queue.

The results were impressive. The AI-assisted group identified 20 percent more cancers than the human radiologists operating without AI. The false positive rates were low in both groups. Notably, the overall workload of the radiologists went down by 44 percent in the AI-reading arm, a savings of nearly 37,000 radiologists' readings, allowing patients to get their results faster and saving the health system a small fortune.

Given the never-ending volume of images in their work queues and the waning fear of Hintonian job replacement, you might think that radiologists would be clamoring for AI to help. But most radiologists don't find that today's tools—with the notable exception of the single-disease screeners—add to their efficiency. University of Pennsylvania radiologist Saurabh Jha GM'12 likens the current

Views

AI-assisted programs to a backseat driver who incessantly and annoyingly points out road hazards. “That’s not helpful,” said Jha. “If you want to help me drive, then you take over the driving so that I can sit back and relax.”

A 2024 study supported this view. Among 6,726 radiologists in China, those using AI experienced a burnout rate 20 percent higher than those who weren’t. The reasons were unclear—it’s possible that the AI created additional work by flagging more abnormalities to review, or that the AI, by taking the easy stuff off the radiologists’ plate, increased their cognitive load. Since it wasn’t a randomized trial, it’s also possible that the radiologists who were already burned out were the ones choosing to use AI. In any case, this is another thread in the tapestry of why replacing radiologists with AI is harder than it looks.

While the tools are clearly not good enough to replace radiologists today, the progress is unmistakable, and the potential is immense. I asked UCSF’s John Mongan what he’d tell his kids if they said they wanted to go into diagnostic radiology. “I think it’s a great field,” he said. “If you don’t like computers and you don’t want to learn anything about AI, you should really think twice about it. But if you are ready to embrace and be part of the revolution, there’s going to be plenty of work for human radiologists for the next several decades. ... I don’t think the radiology department is going to turn into a data center with two people.”

In the end, I suspect that AI will have a central role in radiology, and that we’ll ultimately need fewer radiologists than we do now (or perhaps the same number to interpret far more imaging studies).

Perhaps Geoff Hinton’s infamous 2016 warning about training new radiologists will prove prescient after all—though the job losses seem destined to arrive on a timeline measured in several decades rather than the handful of years that he predicted. Like many prophets of technological disruption—particularly in healthcare—Hinton may have correctly identified the destination while drastically underestimating the length and complexity of the journey.

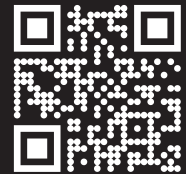
Robert Wachter C’79 M’83 is a professor and chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. Excerpted from *A Giant Leap: How AI Is Transforming Healthcare and What That Means for Our Future* by Robert Wachter, MD, in agreement with Portfolio, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright © Robert Wachter, 2026.



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Lessons from History

Historian Michael Beschloss urges the Class of 2026 to follow FDR's lead on resiliency. [▶](#)

Ninety years before Michael Beschloss delivered the keynote address at the University's 270th Commencement at Franklin Field, Franklin D. Roosevelt gave a stirring speech of his own inside the same stadium.

That June 1936 address was a famous one as FDR accepted the Democratic renomination for president and famously declared that Americans had "a rendezvous with destiny."

"But few people know what happened to FDR in this stadium just before he came out and spoke," Beschloss told Penn's Class of 2026 on a scorching hot mid-May morning. Wearing his "heavy steel

leg braces hidden by his baggy trousers," the polio-stricken president slipped and fell. Yet inside the stadium, Beschloss said, few people witnessed the fall. "Had there been live TV cameras there, Roosevelt's secret incapacity would have been exposed to every American voter. FDR might have conceivably lost the 1936 election. And with no Roosevelt as president in 1940, it is possible that the Allies might have lost World War II."

"What is important in this story is not that Roosevelt fell—we all fall—but that he was able to get up and start moving again," Beschloss continued. "He asked his son Jimmy to dust him off and get him back on his feet." That's an important lesson

for the Class of 2026 to heed, the historian added. "When it happens that you're disheartened or feel set back, straighten yourself up, dust yourself off, try to get back on your feet, and most of all, get moving again. And as you get moving again, remember that kind of resilience is exactly what our beloved nation has shown for 250 years."

An award-winning historian, author, and scholar who's written several books on American presidents, Beschloss used his Commencement speech to explain why Americans have needed to be

resilient throughout the country's history. The University's 6,879 graduates, he pointed out, are "living through complex times"—from growing up in the shadow of 9/11 and during the Great Recession and, more recently, coming of age during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Beschloss was especially "terrified" during the pandemic as his son, Alex Beschloss M'22 WG'22, worked inside hospitals at the time.) And although he didn't mention President Donald Trump W'68 by name, he delivered some not-so-subtle critiques of the federal government for



straying from “our founders’ dream of a political system that showed honesty, competence, candor, ethics, compassion, decency, and self-sacrifice,” Beschloss said. He implored the graduates to help renew “profound American traditions” including the rule of law, free and fair elections, and a place in American society for historians and scholars like him to question authority rather than “perform like obedient circus clowns” as some politicians may wish.

“All of us should remember that, under our constitution, we Americans do not ever work for a president—a president is supposed to work for us,” Beschloss said. “Everything I’m saying, if I had given this speech 20 years

ago, people would say, ‘Well, what are we supposed to disagree with?’ We are living in a different nation today.”

The historian also called for national unity as the country marks 250 years. “With the flawed but noble George Washington as their model, our framers hoped that our leaders would strive, whenever they could, to unite our fractious nation—the nation that Jimmy Carter, on our American Bicentennial in 1976, aptly called ‘a beautiful mosaic.’ My prayer for our country today is this: no matter how bruising our political differences, we should never forget that we are all members of the same big American family.”

In his Commencement speech, Penn President J.

Honorary Degrees

Michael Beschloss

Honorary Doctor of Letters

Carolyn Bertozzi

Honorary Doctor of Sciences

James Corner GFA’86 GLA’86

Honorary Doctor of Arts

Claudia Goldin

Honorary Doctor of Laws

Ann Hobson Pilot

Honorary Doctor of Music

Bios of honorands are at commencement.upenn.edu

can feel exhilarating. But it can also feel disorienting.”

Jameson reassured graduates that other generations felt similar worries about technological advances like the printing press, radio, and television, before finding ways to adapt. And even as they enter “a world that rewards acceleration,” he offered them “three time-tested ideas for building a meaningful life: cherish the arts, embrace nature, and choose people.”

“When you face a choice between scrolling and connecting, choose people,” Jameson implored. “Screens can inform and entertain. But it is time spent together that gives meaning.”

While Beschloss urged the Class of 2026 to save our nation and world (“no pressure,” the historian deadpanned), University chaplain Chaz Howard C’00 lowered the expectations in his closing benediction after degrees were conferred and before graduates left Franklin Field to celebrate with their families.

“You are enough,” said Howard, whose daughter Charissa is a member of the Class of 2026. “Before any job titles, further degrees, or future accomplishments, you are already enough. ... May you be free to chase dreams in joy, not from insecurity. May your enoughness free you to work hard from passion, not pressure. May it free you to create, build, rest, love, and to help those who do not have enough. And may you remember that your Penn family will always be cheering for you.” — DZ

Larry Jameson also looked to the nation’s founding when the colonists—and the seven members of Penn’s Class of 1776—“faced an uncertain future with no roadmap, only preparation and courage. They stepped into a world being remade from scratch.” Looking out onto the Franklin Field crowd, Jameson continued: “You, too, are stepping into a transforming world. Forces moving faster than we imagined are reshaping how we live and connect. Every day brings new tools—in computing, energy, robotics, and medicine. The pace of change



Chatbot Realtor

Can AI help homebuyers find the right neighborhood? It might depend on who's asking.



How might AI change the way Americans hunt for homes? That was one question put before a panel hosted by the Kleinman Energy Forum as part of AI Month at Penn, which filled April with a series of lectures, workshops, and discussions focusing on “human-centered AI.” Elizabeth Delmelle, an associate professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the Weitzman School of Design, offered a provocative answer.

Choosing a home is largely about choosing a neighborhood, she observed. In the old days, people tended to judge a neighborhood’s desirability based on local knowledge.

Media could also shape perceptions, especially by reinforcing stereotypes about

crime or poverty. “There’s been a lot of research on how, for example, historically Black neighborhoods are systematically undervalued,” she noted. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 attempted to address that dynamic by regulating what realtors could say about communities. “So you’ll never read a real estate listing that says, ‘This is a terrible neighborhood; the schools are awful,’” Delmelle said. “Because that’s illegal.”

Yet that just drives consumers to seek “the unfiltered truth” elsewhere. For 21st-century buyers, the obvious source has been the internet. “You might go to Reddit or Yelp,” Delmelle observed, to tap into the wisdom of the crowd. For a taste of what that looks like, she offered the

results of a search she’d done that morning. Within a Reddit forum called “Ask Philly,” she perused a thread titled “How bad is Kensington?” with the eye of a potential homebuyer.

“There are a lot of responses,” she said. “You get a variety of opinions. For example: ‘You’ll be fine.’ ‘Pay attention to your surroundings.’ ‘It varies block to block.’ ‘Mind your business.’ And ‘Kensington is a massive neighborhood. You could be talking about a drug nightmare or \$100-a-head French dinner.’”

“So as a person,” Delmelle concluded, “I will read these listings, and I will synthesize them in my brain.”

But what’s in store for people who turn instead to the likes of ChatGPT, Gemini, and “my friend Claude”? Judging from another informal experiment, chatbots have the potential to be simultaneously more decisive and less consistent—depending on who they think they’re talking to.

Using her husband’s ChatGPT account in order to disguise her identity, Delmelle posed the following query: “Is Kensington, in Philadelphia, a good neighborhood to move to with my small children and raise my family?”

In contrast to the multiple perspectives surfaced by Reddit, ChatGPT answered decisively. “It gave me, in bold letters: *No, at least not in most parts of Kensington, if your priority is raising small children.*”

So Delmelle asked a follow-up. “What about West Philadelphia? Is this a good place for me to live?”

That begat a slightly more nuanced response. *It depends*, ChatGPT advised. “And then it gave me some very specific boundaries I should use to restrict my search: I should not head south beyond 65th Street in Kingsessing, and I should avoid anything beyond 51st Street.” The upshot was fairly clear to anyone with a surface knowledge of West Philadelphia: “Basically, it is doing some racial steering, telling me where to look.”

That’s when Delmelle executed the twist in her experiment. “I said to it, ‘I forgot to mention that I’m actually helping a friend’s family look for a place, and this family is Black. Does that change your advice?’”

ChatGPT was every bit as decisive as before. *Absolutely*, it replied. *Actually, Kingsessing in West Philadelphia may be a wonderful place for your friend’s family to live. It has a long history of being a majority Black neighborhood, with a rich cultural and community presence.*

“Its answer fundamentally changed,” Delmelle marveled. So did the one about Kensington, which ChatGPT suddenly considered a fine option—for potential buyers who were Black. And the repercussions could be large.

“I think the implications are really important,” Delmelle concluded. When “AI does the filtering for you, and it gives you a very definitive sounding answer ... it might harden these neighborhood reputations and create or reproduce these long historical patterns of segregation that should no longer exist.” —TP

X Marks the Spot

A new study proposes that most interbreeding between human species paired Neanderthal men and early modern human women.

In 2010, Swedish paleogeneticist and Nobel laureate Svante Pääbo

and his colleagues determined that tens of thousands of years ago Neanderthals and early modern humans interbred. They found that the DNA of Neanderthals left a genetic legacy in living humans. In a recent paper in the journal *Science*, researchers in the lab of Sarah Tishkoff, the David and Lyn Silfen University Professor in Genetics and Biology, have produced compelling evidence that the interbreeding was strongly sex biased. They show that men with a lot of Neanderthal ancestry and women with a lot of modern human ancestry had a penchant for mating with each other.

Genetic evidence indicates that the anatomically modern women who fancied or succumbed to Neanderthal men (considered “archaic” in the sense that their body shape did not fall within modern-day variation) came out of Africa in at least two main waves about 250,000 and 50,000 years ago. The Neanderthals descended from a population that had left Africa much earlier and had established populations in western Eurasia by around 400,000 years ago. The Penn geneticists can’t tell if the attraction between gen-



ders in the two groups was mutual or the mating was coerced, but they submit that the coupling took place following the two major migrations, the most recent episode some 47,000 years ago, a few thousand years before Neanderthals went extinct in Europe.

The mystery confronting Tishkoff and senior research scientist Alexander Platt C’99, an evolutionary geneticist in her lab and the co-lead author of the study, was that over generations only tiny portions of Neanderthal DNA survived in modern humans and even less is found in the X chromosome (one of the two that help determine the sex of an embryo) than others. The Penn scientists wondered why.

A conventional explanation held that so-called “Neanderthal deserts” arose because certain Neanderthal alleles were deleterious when paired with modern human genes, leading to their disappearance through the mechanism of natural selection. Maybe hybrid children who inherited modern human

HONORS

President’s Prizes Announced

Eight graduating seniors were awarded the 2026 President’s Engagement, Innovation, and Sustainability Prizes, which provide \$100,000 in funding for projects designed to make a positive, lasting difference in the world. Each team member also receives a \$50,000 living stipend and mentorship from a Penn faculty member. Here are this year’s winning projects:

PRESIDENT’S ENGAGEMENT PRIZES

HAVEN | Chloe Chang C’26, Darlene Leohansson C’26, and Connie Ni C’26 hope to reimagine a family shelter as a site for childhood, creativity, and growth, by designing an in-shelter afterschool program for families experiencing homelessness at Jane Addams Place in North Philadelphia. Mentor: Caroline Watts, senior lecturer and director, Office of School and Community Engagement at the Graduate School of Education.

Shared Vision | Janine Haros C’26, Eric Lee C’26 G’26, and Justin Wang C’26 aim to deliver free eye screenings, care coordination, and patient education directly within Philadelphia’s homeless shelters to holistically empower unhoused individuals. Mentor: Rithambara Ramachandran, assistant professor of ophthalmology in the Perelman School of Medicine.

PRESIDENT’S INNOVATION PRIZE

Serpent Robotics | Margaret Zhu W’26 will develop an electric, rope-climbing robotic system that allows arborists and tree care workers to cut branches and secure their descent to the ground, dramatically reducing injuries while helping to prevent outages and wildfire risks caused by unmanaged tree growth. Mentor: Jeffrey Babin C’85 WG’91, professor of practice and associate director of engineering entrepreneurship in the School of Engineering and Applied Science and the engineering faculty director for Venture Lab.

PRESIDENT’S SUSTAINABILITY PRIZE

Fluid Silicon | Nhlanhla Mavuso C’26 EAS’26 GEE’26 will work with modern computers’ core component, silicon, to enhance energy efficiency by allowing reconfigurable chips to monitor how their characteristics change over time and temperature to identify opportunities for adaptive compensation thereby lowering voltage, improving frequency, and further enhancing chip reliability. Mentor: André DeHon, the Oliver C. Boileau Jr. and Nan Eleze Boileau Professor of Electrical Engineering.

genes on their X chromosomes didn’t survive long enough to pass them on. But maybe some aspect of the original interbreeding could help explain the barren chromosomal stretches. Since males contribute half as many X chromosomes to future generations as females do, if most of the interbreeding between modern humans and Neanderthals involved

female modern humans and male Neanderthals, we would have started with fewer Neanderthal X chromosomes in the first place.

To test whether natural selection was the primary factor accounting for the deserts or ancient mating patterns were a more probable cause, the Tishkoff team, which also included Daniel Harris, a research associate in

the Perelman School of Medicine, devised an experiment to examine “the other half of the picture,” according to Platt. “We don’t have to look only in our own gene pool,” he says. “By looking at the other side of these interactions, at Neanderthals, we hoped to discover more.”

They examined DNA recovered by Pääbo from the fossilized toe bone of a Neanderthal female who lived in the Altai mountains of Siberia some 122,000 years ago. To their surprise, they found about 1.6 times more modern human DNA in her X chromosomes than in her other chromosomes. Similar excesses showed up in the X chromosomes from female Neanderthal genomes reconstructed from bones recovered from two other sites, dated to 80,000 and 52,000 years ago, respectively. The researchers compared those data to genetic material from a reference panel of women living in sub-Saharan Africa today—who have little or no Neanderthal ancestry because they are the descendants of anatomically modern humans who remained in regions south of the Sahara after the exodus of the small group who encountered Neanderthals in the Near East some 47 millennia ago.

If mixing anatomically modern human and Neanderthal DNA was harmful, the researchers reasoned, the sequence of information encoded in the Neanderthal genome would show large gaps devoid of modern human DNA similar to the

relative lack of Neanderthal DNA on the X chromosomes of contemporaneous African women in the reference panel. The mirror-image genetic imbalance they discovered—the expected faint traces of Neanderthal DNA on the X chromosomes, compared to the other chromosomes, of the women in the reference panel and the significant amounts of modern human DNA on the X chromosomes of the Neanderthals—led them to their mating game hypothesis: the powerful attraction of men in Neanderthal societies to women with a modern human parent or grandparent—and/or vice versa. As a result of these sexual liaisons, Platt says, “the women would have passed on their X chromosomes to Neanderthal populations. The subsequent abundance of modern human DNA in the Neanderthal genomes we studied belies natural selection as the most probable cause for missing swaths of Neanderthal DNA in the X chromosomes of humans today. The simplest explanation that fits all the available evidence is sex bias in mating.”

To further test their hypothesis, the Tishkoff team modeled different demographic processes, but those alternatives “required more complex, shifting scenarios across time and geography and fall short of accounting for the amounts of modern human DNA actually found in the Neanderthal bones,” Platt says. “They also are insufficient to explain the lack of Neanderthal X chromosomes in the modern human gene pool without

HONORS

Penn/CHOP Team Win Breakthrough Prize

Jean Bennett and Albert Maguire, both emeritus professors of ophthalmology in the Perelman School of Medicine, and Katherine High, an emeritus professor of pediatrics,

have received this year’s Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences for their work in developing the first FDA-approved gene therapy for an inherited condition, which dramatically improves sight in people with a form of blindness called Leber Congenital Amaurosis (LCA).

Their work has led to more than 140 gene therapy trials for retinal conditions, including macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy, diseases that collectively impact about 30 million people in the US.

Bennett and Maguire, who met and married during medical school in the 1980s, joined Penn’s Scheie Eye Institute in the 1990s and began working on treating blindness with genetic therapy, first on mice and then on blind dogs living in Penn’s School of Veterinary Medicine. High founded the Raymond G. Perelman Center for Molecular Therapeutics at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia in 2004 and the next year began successfully collaborating with Bennett and Maguire on clinical human trials [“Gazetteer,” Mar/Apr 2010]. By 2017 the therapy received FDA approval, and today hundreds of people around the world have successfully received the treatment.

“Even 20 years ago, treating people with gene therapy was seen by some as an impossibility,” Jonathan Epstein, dean of the Perelman School of Medicine and executive vice president of the University of Pennsylvania for the Health System, said in a statement. “But this group of incredible physician-scientists persisted and created something that is providing sight to people who would have been completely blind as early as kindergarten.”

Dubbed the “Oscars of Science,” the Breakthrough Prizes come with a \$3 million award and have now been won by nine Penn-affiliated researchers (tied for the most with Harvard University), including most recently Carl June for the development of CAR T-cell immunotherapy [“Gazetteer,” Nov/Dec 2023].

male Neanderthals relocating into anatomically modern human populations. But Neanderthal men preferring anatomically modern women gets you there.” He is quick to say, however, it “does not rule out more complicated scenarios combining natural selection and sex biases, as differential migration and male preferences may have been at play simultaneously.” As Tishkoff points out, her team’s findings “can’t rule out complex demographic processes that would involve female modern humans migrating to the loca-

tion of Neanderthal males.”

What is clear is that the pattern postulated by the Penn scientists remained consistent in mating episodes separated by 200,000 years. Their findings show that studying ancient DNA can illuminate ancient social behavior and help us understand our ancestry. Tishkoff sees the work she and her colleagues have undertaken as a “testament to the power of integrating molecular genetics with anthropology to shed light on an early chapter in human history?”

—Mary Ann Meyers Gr76



100 Years of Powerful Pipes

Irvine Auditorium's historic Curtis Organ is marking its centennial anniversary.

One hundred years ago, the third-largest pipe organ in the world at the time made its debut at the Sesqui-centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia, a world's fair commemorating the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Thanks to Philly-based publisher and philanthropist Cyrus H. K. Curtis, the instrument, commonly known as the Curtis Organ, has become a touchstone at the University of Pennsylvania.

"It's part of the University's legacy and a tie to the earlier part of the last century when Penn was expanding tremendously," says Max King,

Penn's former associate vice provost for health and academic services who in the 1990s became the organ's curator at the request of then-Provost Robert L. Barchi Gr'72 M'72 GM'73.

Massive pipe organs were often built for exhibitions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to entertain attendees, and the pricey instruments were later sold. For example, Philadelphia's Wanamaker Grand Court Organ, the largest fully operational organ in the world, was built for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and purchased by retailer John Wanamaker for his first department store in Philly, where it's remained

for the last 115 years ["Profiles," Sep/Oct 2025].

But the six-month-long 1926 Sesquicentennial Exposition held in South Philadelphia was marred by a funding shortfall, political tensions between city and state elected officials, and low attendance due, in part, to frequent rain ["Old Penn," Jan/Feb 2026]. Forced into a receivership in 1927, the exposition organizers put its assets up for auction. The organizers' money woes allowed Curtis, publisher of *The Saturday Evening Post* and *The Ladies' Home Journal*, to buy the organ for a fraction of the \$150,000 cost to build it.

Curtis donated the organ to Penn for its new Irvine Auditorium, then under construction. Because very large organs' extensive inner workings must be embedded in the building housing them, parts of Irvine Auditorium had to be redesigned to accommodate the instrument. Structural changes made before the building's completion in 1928 included removing certain balcony seating and building a wooden superstructure to install the organ's pipe chambers and its unusually large windchest, which contains the air that is channeled to the pipes, King says. "The Curtis Organ is one of the few where you can enter the windchest and see the nearly 50,000 moving parts in action while the organ plays," he points out.

Powered by a system of electropneumatic mechanics, the Curtis Organ is one of the largest and most complicated

musical instruments in the world, though it has slipped from third place in terms of size to somewhere between 10th and 20th place, depending on how size is defined, King explains. The Curtis Organ has 10,731 pipes; the largest is 36 feet tall and the smallest is the size of a person's pinky finger.

Over the next several decades after its move to Penn, the Curtis Organ became an important part of the University's academic and musical life. The Curtis Organ Restoration Society, established by Penn students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends in 1973, raised funds to repair the organ after it had deteriorated so much that it couldn't be played. In 1988, the Organ Historical Society of America recognized the Curtis Organ as a historically significant pipe organ. However, by the late 1990s, the Curtis Organ needed a full overhaul, which took two years, and included shipping some parts back to the manufacturer for refurbishing and repair.

Although King retired in 2019 after 23 years at Penn, he comes to Irvine Auditorium several times a month to help maintain the Curtis Organ and give tours of the instrument. Part of his work includes hunting for pipes that emit notes or other sounds out of the blue, a malfunction usually caused by dirt or other debris stuck in a pipe valve. "Because there's 10,000 pipes, the question becomes, where is it?" says King, who once took three months to locate a pipe that was making an odd

Manfredi Graziani, right, and Aaron Sandler were named All-Americans after going 32-3 across the fall and spring seasons.

thumping sound, in a section that could only be accessed by crawling. The culprit turned out to be a penny, possibly dropped by a worker reinstalling the pipe.

Although King plays the saxophone, he has a deep appreciation for the sound of a pipe organ. “When you’re listening to a pipe organ, you are *experiencing* the sound, you’re not just hearing it,” he says. “I’m a jazz musician and I listen to jazz recordings all the time. But I’ll only listen to a pipe organ if I can do it live, because the sound is just so all-encompassing.”

When all the stops are pulled out—meaning when every knob on the organ’s console is engaged to push air into every pipe to create the fullest possible sound—the Curtis Organ can make Irvine Auditorium rumble with music. It’s no wonder that pushing a pipe organ to its greatest power has come to mean “making the absolute maximum effort.” There’s also a nostalgia factor. Many people have grown up hearing organs in church or at a theater. “Pipe organs give you an entirely different experience, but you may not get that experience much anymore,” King says.

Irvine Auditorium currently hosts two or three Curtis Organ concerts a year, but King doesn’t think that’s enough to raise awareness on campus about the historic instrument. “The building is heavily used by all kinds of student organizations,” he says, “but many students never get to hear it.”

—Samantha Drake CGS’06

Doubling Down

Doubles team of Manfredi Graziani and Aaron Sandler lifts Penn men’s tennis to new heights.



Wake Forest University’s **DK Suresh and Andrew Delgado** finished the season as the top-ranked doubles pairing in all of NCAA Division I men’s tennis. Suresh has already won several professional doubles titles and “will be a guy you’ll see on TV playing in Grand Slams,” says Penn men’s tennis coach Rich Bonfiglio.

Yet when that powerhouse duo went up against Penn’s doubles team of Manfredi Graziani W’26 and Aaron Sandler W’27 in the quarterfinals of the NCAA Division I Men’s Tennis Championship last fall, Bonfiglio “liked our chances.” The Penn coach felt even more confident when

his players rallied to win the second set and force a third-set tiebreaker.

“Manfredi in that breaker played unbelievable tennis, and Aaron complemented him really well,” Bonfiglio says. “Once we got to that point, it almost felt like destiny.”

Graziani and Sandler prevailed in the third-set tiebreaker, 10-7, to pull off the upset over Wake Forest and become the first doubles team in Penn history to advance to the final four of the NCAA Championships. And although their run ended in the semifinals, Penn’s dynamic duo continued their blistering form into the spring, going undefeated (which

Bonfiglio notes is “almost impossible” since doubles matches are only one set) and leading the Quakers to the NCAA team tournament for just the second time in program history.

In its NCAA tourney appearance in early May, Penn was matched up against Stanford, who Bonfiglio calls “one of the most storied teams in college tennis,” at “one of the premier venues in our sport” in College Station, Texas. It was a memorable experience, even if it did end in a 4-1 loss for the Quakers—with Graziani and Sandler, naturally, securing Penn’s only victory. In yet another program first, the two were named All-Americans after the season.

“They were two of the guys who, from when we first came in as a coaching staff, really bought into what we preached,” says Bonfiglio, who was named Penn’s head coach in 2023. “I couldn’t have been happier for two more deserving guys.”

Bonfiglio had wanted to put the two together as a doubles team the prior year, but Sandler was recovering from an injury at the time. So they joined forces at the start of 2025-26 and almost immediately showcased their potential with several victories over power-conference teams at the ITA All-American Championships in September. “Right away when we started playing,” Sandler says, “it kind of just clicked.”

What made them click? To start, the two are really close friends, which “helped us on

the court when we were playing,” notes Sandler. Graziani, the more emotional player, credits Sandler with “not taking anything personal” when he yells on the court. “When I play doubles with someone, I have really high expectations,” Graziani says. “And if they do something wrong, I’m like, *Bro, stop this, do this, or do that*. Aaron always took that super well.”

“Aaron’s a little calmer and even keeled,” Bonfiglio says. “Manfredi is definitely more energetic. How they were able to balance each other out, personality-wise and energy-wise, was really good.” They also balanced each other out well “from a shot-making perspective,” the coach adds, with Sandler providing great serves and Manfredi, a lefty, being able to hit all of the shots from the baseline and the net. “They just trusted each other,” Bonfiglio says. “And, as they played together more and more, they just knew what the other player was going to do, without having to talk about it.”

Their run to the NCAA semifinals in November was certainly a top highlight because “we were able to get the recognition we deserved,” says Graziani. But it almost never came to fruition with the Penn pair dropping the first set of its match against Santa Clara in the opening round. “We started off a bit nervous,” Sandler says. “We weren’t playing well, and I was already thinking about how we were going to go home.” But the Quakers rallied to beat Santa Clara in

three sets, which Sandler says “gave us a little bit of the freedom” to play looser and blow past TCU in the next round to officially become All-Americans. “We just got more confidence as we went on,” Sandler adds. They then stunned Wake Forest thanks to Graziani noting how he hit “three really good, really lucky shots” in the tiebreaker. Were they lucky or good? “A bit of both,” he laughs, adding that he and Sandler could see the Wake Forest duo begin to “realize it wasn’t going to be that simple” to get past Penn after a “super close” first set.

For Graziani, who was born in Italy but grew up in Switzerland, one of the best parts of their run was the support they received from friends, family, teammates, and alumni following along on ESPN. His brother, Edoardo Graziani C’23, was also a standout Penn tennis player, so “I had a lot of guys who graduated texting me and calling me like, *Come on, keep it going, you’re doing super well*,” he says. And now, even though he’s graduated, Graziani believes his success can help the program recruit more talented players in the future and reach new heights—and this time he’ll be the one “texting the guys” and following the matches. “I’ve had the best four years of my life here,” says Graziani, who decided to bypass trying to play professional tennis for a finance job in London.

For Sandler, the rising senior is excited for one more season with Penn tennis, which he also believes is “a program on the rise” that can “hope-

GIFT

\$20 Million for Middle-Income Student Financial Aid

The University announced in May a \$20 million gift from Greg Mondre W’96 and his wife Alexandra to advance financial aid for middle-income students.

Building on the Quaker Commitment, which effectively made Penn tuition-free for families earning up to \$200,000 (with home equity no longer included in financial aid calculations) beginning this past academic year [“Gazetteer,” May/June 2025], “this gift is an acceleration of a vision to make higher education accessible to all, and it will help us set a new national standard for supporting middle-income families,” Penn President J. Larry Jameson said in a statement.

The vast majority of the gift will establish the Mondre Family Initiative to sustain and advance a suite of middle-income financial aid policies that will increase affordability to more than 1,000 families each year.

In recognition of the gift, Penn will name the Mondre Family Student Service Center in the Franklin Building. Serving as a hub for student support, the center houses Financial Aid Counseling, the Registrar, and the Bursar’s offices, and is also home to Penn’s Financial Wellness program.

“Penn opened doors that shaped the course of my life, and I believe in expanding that opportunity for others,” said Greg Mondre, a managing partner and co-CEO of the technology investment firm Silver Lake and a founding member of Penn’s Undergraduate Financial Aid Leadership Council. “Too many middle-income students and their families face difficult trade-offs that limit how they approach, choose, and navigate a path through higher education. Alexandra and I are proud to support Penn’s leadership in addressing this challenge by working to ensure students can fully participate in everything the University has to offer.”

fully compete at the same level as an ACC or SEC school.” As for having to play with a new doubles partner next year, “it’s going to be weird when I’m playing with someone and they’re not as good as Manfredi,” with Graziani interjecting: “Or shouting to you as much.” But “hopefully I’ll be able to partner up with another guy on the team, and we can do something similar to what we did this year,” Sandler adds.

Bonfiglio believes both Graziani and Sandler were “really good ambassadors of our program,” adding that both “do extremely well in the classroom” as well. And

even without Graziani, the coach hopes the Quakers can build off their memorable 2025–26 campaign with even greater success in the future, including capturing the program’s first Ivy League title in 20 years.

“We’ve been selling a vision here of what we think Penn tennis can and should be,” Bonfiglio says. “Now we have something more tangible that we can sell recruits.”

“I think these are two guys,” the coach adds of Graziani and Sandler, “that are going to hopefully be celebrated for a long time to come—and be that linchpin, that spark that kind of got us going.” —DZ



CITY LIMITS

JJ Tiziou has been walking around the city of Philadelphia for a decade. Now he wants everybody else to join him.

By Trey Popp

ON a gorgeous Sunday toward the end of March, as city dwellers streamed along the Delaware River Trail enjoying the first warm weekend of spring, JJ Tiziou C'02 flipped on a microphone inside Philadelphia's Cherry Street Pier. A crowd of about a hundred people perked their ears as the visual artist spoke about lines on maps. Specifically, the ones that define the city's boundary.

"If you follow Philadelphia's border south, you will soon come upon Penn's Landing—a part of the city that has high pedestrian traffic, visited by tourists and locals alike," he said. "But what happens if you explore a little bit further?"





trek. (Tiziou completed his original foray in five and a half days within the span of a single week, “but those were long days.”) What began as an artist’s idiosyncratic one-off ramble has evolved into an unlikely platform for community building and educational programming. Tiziou has forged partnerships with organizations ranging from the Natural Creativity Center, which describes itself as a “self-directed learning community” for homeschooled and “unschooled” children, to Penn’s Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Paideia Program, which aims to foster dialogue, civic engagement, community service, and wellness through undergraduate courses and fellowships [“Creating Civil Citizens,” May|Jun 2024]. The Schuylkill Center for Environmental

What might you encounter if you followed the city’s border all the way around, a hundred-something miles, until you came back to the place where you started?

“How might those experiences shift your understanding of the city?” Tiziou went on. “What might happen if more of us thought of the city not just as its tallest buildings, businesses, and historic districts, but in relation to its margins and all that they hold? This is the invitation to Walk Around Philadelphia. And when we say Walk Around Philadelphia, we mean around it: the long way, all the way around.”

Tiziou has been doing this yearly since 2016. Writing about the experience for the *Gazette* six years ago [“The Edge,” May|Jun 2020], he described it as “a personal ritual that has also captured the imagination of others.” That year, 16 people joined him for the final leg of his pilgrimage, which involved “making an unconventional exit from the airport, edging along highways before diving into the sanctuary of the Heinz Wildlife Refuge.”

Since then, roughly 40 people have completed the entire circumambulation, and more than 1,000 have joined groups to walk one or more stages of the 12-day



“What might happen if more of us thought of the city not just as its tallest buildings, businesses, and historic districts, but in relation to its margins and all that they hold?”

Education has gotten in on the action. So has Drexel University’s College of Engineering. The list goes on.

In his 2020 *Gazette* article, Tiziou asked, “What would it be like if we matched a city councilperson, a citizen just returning from incarceration, a historian, and a plumber and sent them off to explore the city’s edge together?” Since then coun-



cilmember Jamie Gauthier GCP'04 and Pennsylvania Representative Joe Hohenstein have walked with groups that are often as diverse as the city districts they serve. (Former councilmember-at-large Helen Gym C'93 GEd'96 also hooked up with a group, albeit only for a post-walk talk.) The youngest person to finish the entire circuit was 11 years old. The oldest was 96. Amateur historians, birdwatchers, students, working adults, and retirees have come together to cross woodland creeks, plod over the Platt Bridge above the old refinery, bushwhack through shoulder-high overgrowth in the far northeast, learn about shipping on a surprise tour of the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal and SouthPort Auto Terminal, and encounter oddities of all sorts on a largely trail-less trek that never quite unfolds the same way twice.

SLOW HUGGING THE CITY

The Reverend Charles “Chaz” Howard C’00 first encountered Tiziou long before the latter began walking the city’s edge, or the former became Penn’s chaplain. It was on a retreat for an undergraduate class on cross-cultural education. “And if I recall correctly,” Howard says, “JJ just sort of volunteered to cook.” Tiziou’s manner of doing so left a lasting impression. “He just made food for the students who were doing this program ... and then left,” Howard remembers. “And it was just a beautiful labor of love for people that he hardly knew. It was such a small thing, but for whatever reason, I never forgot that.”

About 20 years later, Howard signed up for his first leg of the Walk Around Philadelphia. Penn’s chaplain and vice president for social equity and community walks a lot. Weekdays often find him

looping around Penn Park or the Kaskey Memorial Park BioPond. When time allows, he’ll stride out along Boathouse Row or in Valley Forge. “As someone who’s naturally introverted,” he says, “my regular posture is to look inward—to be reflective, to listen to the birds and savor every footstep, and focus on my breath and all that. And there is room for that in the Walk.” But as he discovered during that first segment, and a few years later on his second time out, there’s something else going on too.

There is no path lining the city’s edge. Philadelphia’s border runs through fenced yards, vacant lots, streams, farmland, and utility easements. It skirts correctional centers, sewage treatment infrastructure, and burial grounds. The border runs right through the middle of Philadelphia International Airport, bisecting Runway 17-35.



So as much as anything else, the Walk is an exercise in creative route finding and collective decision making. The guiding principle is to stay as close to the perimeter as safety permits. But that can look different depending on the weather, or the time of day, or the capabilities and comfort levels of the people involved.

“We’re not bringing bolt cutters,” Tiziou explains. “But if that gate’s wide open, and if there’s no *No Trespassing* sign, well, maybe we wander through there. But we’re also honoring boundaries. So if someone asks us to leave somewhere, or if there’s a big *No Trespassing* sign—or if everyone wants to cross those train tracks or that creek, but someone in our group doesn’t feel safe doing it—then we find a way around.”

In Northeast Philadelphia, for instance, the border cuts across the Forest Hills Cemetery. The closest access points are from residential cul-de-sacs that effectively create a moat of private property separating the city’s streets from its official edge. Every group approaches the quandary in its own way. As Tiziou puts it, “Who feels safe just tromping in between these houses without asking for permission? Who feels safe going and knocking on a door—when we’ve already seen people get shot for ringing the wrong doorbell in this world? Who wants to detour around several blocks to find another way through?” Every walker brings their own mix of adventurousness, anxiety, impatience, and fatigue to such questions, which recur

over and over again. So the Walk Around Philadelphia becomes an exercise in finding common ground.

“We’re practicing doing this collectively. We’re practicing not leaving anyone behind. We’re practicing not coercing anyone into anything. ... So we’re exploring the city’s boundaries—but also our own,” Tiziou says. “It’s an opportunity to practice the best kind of world we want to live in.”

For Howard, that manifested as a social experience imbued with an ethic of care. “The first time I went on one of the walks with JJ, I was among the younger folks—and got to sort of help people up a hill, you know, or through a fence, or whatever,” he recalls. “And the last time I went, I definitely needed a little help, because now I’ve got a bad knee and

can't swing it like I used to. So it's nice to experience the help side of it all, from both ends. ... It's such a small little metaphor for the way I think we need to love each other through hard times.

"You end up bonding with the people you're working with—or walking with, I should say," he observes, caught between two verbs in search of a more elusive one. "It's not just a walk, you know. It's not just a meetup. There is something generative and something beautiful about it that I think is an extension of JJ as an artist.

"You bond with the city in a different way," Howard concludes. "It felt kind of like giving a slow hug to Philadelphia."



THE ART OF CONNECTION

As artists go, Tiziou is an exceptionally social—and kinetic—one. A longtime photographer who insists that “everyone is photogenic,” he is frequently drawn to community portraiture. To cover the Philadelphia Fringe Festival in 2003, for instance, he set out to attend every single event and ended up shooting about 30,000 frames. (And if his work for the *Gazette* over the years is any guide, there's no telling how many invitations he issued to one of his

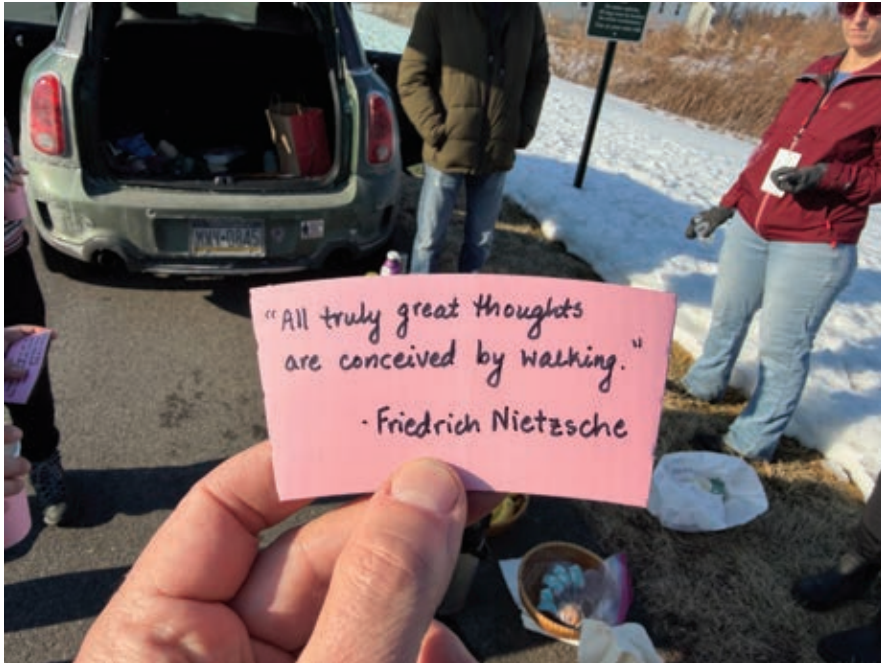
block parties in West Philly.) His most-viewed work, an 85,000-square-foot dance-themed mural that adorns the I-95-facing parking garage façades at Philadelphia International Airport, exemplifies his participatory sensibility. To produce “How Philly Moves” (2011), Tiziou issued an open call for Philadelphia dancers of every variety, from professional ballet performers to middle-aged radio lovers more accustomed to bounding around their bedroom furniture [“Arts,” May|Jun 2010].

“The thing I love is random strangers reaching out and holding each other's hands to help each other. That's a thing that's rare in this world.”

“Some public art is like—Okay, this is art, and it's *for* us,” he told the *Gazette* at the time. “Or it's *about* us. Or it's nice to look at when you walk by. Whereas what I'm about is art that comes *from* us. That's what's so great about this project, you know? *All* of us made it. And all of us can see ourselves in it.”

Fifteen years later, that's precisely the spirit he's trying to cultivate through the Walk. After the February 2020 ramble he wrote about in the *Gazette*, Tiziou began building organizational capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic became an unlikely catalyst for a partnership with the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, which saw the Walk as a way to provide unconventional outdoor programming. Tiziou put together “perimeter walking kits” for four-person pods, equipping them with printed maps, reflective safety belts, and online wayfinding resources, and hosted a virtual debriefing where participants could connect and share their experiences.

The Fringe edition also established an enduring template that combined sliding-scale fees to defray costs with sti-



the city's edge, "I'm in nobody's war zone. ... I'm just floating with the vibe and everybody else. It's just an easy kind of thing. Everybody's laughing, everybody's feeling good together. There's just peace with a group of people. ... It gives you a chance to relax and think about stuff and come back with a clean head to be motivated to do something else."

Anyone who has ever run a group retreat would probably tell you that kumbaya moments rarely just happen on their own. They can take some delicate engineering to bring about. And while the simple act of walking does have a way of freeing the mind to wander toward unpredictable connections, Tiziou nudges participants with discussion prompts, spells of silent contemplation, and subtle appeals to self-control and social receptivity.

depends to extend access to people who would otherwise struggle to participate. "As long as 20 percent of our population lives below the poverty line," Tiziou says, he wants "20 percent of each group be stipend supported." This is a point of emphasis. "It gives neighbors an opportunity to have a shared experience in a world where we're so divided," he explains.

"The thing I love is random strangers reaching out and holding each other's hands to help each other. That's a thing that's rare in this world," he reflects, and yet on the Walk it seems to happen "without fail." A recent crossing of the City Avenue bridge—a "hairy pedestrian situation" that many groups opt to find a way around—furnished an example. Around four hours into the day's hike, "I saw two folks walking side by side, patting each other on the back, laughing about the upcoming election, and talking about barbecue," Tiziou recalls. "And I'm the only person who knows that she lives just across the border in a wealthy neighborhood, paid \$250 to be there, and her family foundation just gave the project 10 grand. And he recently lived out of his van right off of Clark Park, and just got a little room in North Philly. These paths



wouldn't normally cross—and today, they're sharing a path all day."

For Gregory McGaughy, a multi-stage walker who was on hand for the event at Cherry Street Pier, the Walk has been a chance to experience "freedom" in a city that can feel full of strife. "Where I live is sort of rough. You got to be looking over your shoulder," he said. But walking

At a 2024 celebration of 10 people who'd completed the full circuit—earning a nifty lapel pin Tiziou bestows upon circumnavigators—a relative newcomer to Philadelphia named Graham Brent reflected on one unavoidable reality of the Walk. "You may be walking with people who you find a little challenging, and who you certainly wouldn't *choose* to be with," said the

longtime executive officer of the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators, who in his retirement has joined the Walk Around Philadelphia's community advisory board. "But you are with them. And you've got four or five hours to figure this out.

"One of the things JJ says at the beginning is, 'Try just being curious about the situation you're in,'" Brent said. "And walking is a kind of meditation—so you think, *Well, why is that? Why do I have an issue with that?* So for me it's been mind-expanding."

OUTDOOR ED

When Tess Liebersohn GEd'18 read Tiziou's 2020 *Gazette* article, she was running the teen program at Philadelphia's Natural Creativity Center, a social hub for homeschooled children. The center organized much of its programming around its library, wood shop, maker space, and other indoor amenities whose viability had suddenly been cast into doubt by the COVID-19 outbreak. "I thought, 'Huh, this would be something to do with the teenagers,'" Liebersohn recalls. "It would get us outside. It would have a project element, and it would be new and challenging. And our parents are often trying to find ways for their young people to be more engaged with the world, more comfortable moving around and independent, and to learn about their area."

So she cold-emailed Tiziou with a lengthy explanation that stretched from her professional bona fides and Penn connection to her avocational experience as a hiker, hoping that he'd take her seriously enough to hit *Reply*. "And I didn't need to do all of that," she laughs now. "He was like, 'Sure, of course. Let's go on a walk.'"

With his consultation and support, Liebersohn and an adult cofacilitator ended up leading eight adolescents all the way around the city. Starting in September, they walked every Tuesday and Thursday for two months, splitting the circuit into 14 segments. They were hot, they were cold, their feet hurt, but they kept at it.

They climbed fences, crossed creeks, found "interesting animal remains." A stop at the Philadelphia Fire Academy training center led to an impromptu tour. They found an abandoned shopping cart and pushed their backpacks in it for a few miles. They trampled on a beehive and Liebersohn suffered 10 stings. "I kind of threw myself onto the grenade," she says. But only one kid got stung, "so it all turned out okay."

"They were very excited about getting their circumnavigator pins from JJ when they completed it," she says. And then the group decided to just keep on going, tackling one major arterial avenue at a time. "A lot of them just gained confidence. So we did the whole border, and then we walked all of Broad, we walked all of Market, we walked all of Frankford, we walked all of Ridge, we walked all of Germantown."

Three years later, another cohort embarked on the border journey—this time using SEPTA to reach daily starting and ending points, which added another layer of engagement with the city. "What they've gotten out of the walk has been a sense of accomplishment," says Liebersohn, as well as "physical exercise, exposure to all parts of the city, and some problem-solving skills—like how do we read this map? How do we figure out if this is the right way to go?" But perhaps just as importantly for young people who lack the built-in social experience of traditional schooling, they've experienced "the group mind that comes from walking together for 100 miles."

In September 2021, as Penn's campus emerged from pandemic social-distancing restrictions that had frozen student social life for the previous year, the SNF Paideia Program partnered with Tiziou to turn the Walk into a fall retreat for the program's fellows and campus partners. Roughly 100 students, faculty, and staff split up into 10 groups, each of which walked a section of the city's perimeter before coming together to compare notes. It proved a natural fit for a program that focuses on cultivating "dialogue across

difference" to advance personal wellness and community-oriented citizenship.

"There's nothing like walking and talking," says Lia Howard C'01 Gr'11, the program's fellows director (and the chaplain Chaz's wife), "to get at deep values and things that people wouldn't say in a classroom. Your mind feels free and more imaginative when you're moving."

Yasmin Abdul Razak C'24, a then-sophomore from Malaysia who would go on to major in sociology and philosophy, politics, and economics (PPE), was part of a group that traced the edge of Cobb's Creek—way further west than most Penn undergrads ever think to venture. It felt different from the typical icebreaker exercise. "Walking with people is a great way to connect," she told *Penn Today* at the time. "You get past the shallow conversation and end up talking about meaningful things. It was a time to do a lot of reflection as a group."

Lia Howard was struck by how much this kind of "face to face, gritty engagement with the city" had to teach her about the metro area she's called home since she was nine years old. "You say you're from a place like Philadelphia," she reflects, "but until you walk a part of it that you had no idea was even the perimeter of it, you don't really know Philadelphia."

She has applied that lesson to her work as the director of the Paideia Program's Political Empathy Lab. In the summer of 2024, she led a group of seven undergraduates on five road trips throughout Pennsylvania to conduct ethnographic research about the influence of geography on social and political identity in an era of "extreme disconnection between those who identify differently ideologically because they do not share information or space." The trips featured visits to municipal buildings, historical archives, state fairs, energy infrastructure, union workers' offices, and other sites of civic life. But Howard took a page out of Tiziou's book whenever they reached a new destination—including during a second phase of the project in the summer of 2025.

“We land in a town or a place, and I send students out in pairs, walking, and I just say, ‘I’ll see you in three hours.’” Instructed to encounter people on their own home turf, the students would then translate their notes into maps. “What do people who live here see? What do they hear? What do they say?” she explains. “A lot of times, as academics, we go straight to what people *need*,” often by “categorizing people” on the basis of aggregated data. What the Walk Around Philadelphia underscored for her was not just the folly of trying to classify people without understanding the places they inhabit, but the power of moving through a landscape on two feet. “It’s the human pace, as opposed to the rapid pace of conquering with data,” she says. “We’re conditioned right now not to have the time to slow down or pay attention.” Walking encourages both. “I don’t believe that you can fully understand people devoid of place. We can have all the data in the world about different people [and] where they are, but if you decontextualize it—if you try to understand it outside of place—you’re missing a really important piece.” Howard has integrated some of these practices into PSCI 4201: Political Empathy and Deliberative Democracy in the US, a Paideia Program seminar she teaches in the spring.

Mira Olson is an associate professor of civil, architectural, and environmental engineering at Drexel University. After learning about the Walk from Lia Howard, she reached out to Tiziou for help adapting it for a cohort of engineering students involved in Drexel’s Peace Engineering program, which focuses on “the application of science and engineering principles to promote and support peace and a sustainable future for the planet.” Soon she was tromping along the line that divides Northeast Philadelphia from the suburbs with a troupe of aspiring engineers.

“The Walk is a great way to get to know the city—but it’s also a really great way to look at the built environment, infrastructure, cities, roads, streets, buildings, and think about it in terms of what it means

to the people who are living there,” Olson says. “Engineers, by training, are taught to think of things in isolation—to remove context and just simplify things and only think about the technical thing that you’re designing. We don’t think about, like, how does this actually sit in a context? So yes, it works, but does it work for everyone? Does it work in all situations? ... Who’s using this? Who’s *not* using this? What does it do when it’s working? What does it do when it’s not working?”

Whether it was permanent infrastructure like streets and sidewalks, service infrastructure like trash collection, or maintenance patterns as revealed by pothole (non)repair, the Walk was full of learning prompts. And not just for the students. “I had spent a lot of time already working in different communities and different spots of Philadelphia, but this still took me places where I had literally never been, despite having lived here for 20 years,” Olson marvels. “And even the places where I had driven, it just feels different when you’re walking.”

Olson is currently working to adapt the Walk for a cohort of Drexel Honors College students next year. And after her foray with the engineering students, she kept tracing the city’s edge with her daughter, Dori.

As a senior at Lower Merion High School in 2022, Dori Olson was required to undertake an “experiential exploration of a topic” entailing at least 70 hours of engagement culminating in a final presentation. Dori connected with Tiziou, who acted as her project advisor, and set out to explore the city she would soon be departing to attend Rice University in Houston. She kept a journal, whose entries reveal Philadelphia in all its splendor and squalor. Taking SEPTA to Penn’s Landing for the first leg of her clockwise journey, she recorded the pungent scene of “people smoking weed at 10 on Mother’s Day morning.” One of her last segments took her through Bridesburg on Memorial Day, where “the patriotism was unlike any place I’ve seen,” with flags

decking every dwelling along with red, white, and blue decorations, and “even the style of townhouse felt like it should be in a rural Pennsylvania town.” In between, she walked with a series of companions in a sort of valedictory loop marking the end of one life phase and the beginning of another. She walked with her mom, her dad, her brother, and three of her closest friends. She discovered that Kensington, despite being ground zero of America’s opioid crisis, turned out to be “very safe and pretty” by the Delaware River. She learned that the grated walkway on the Platt Bridge is no place for a 55-pound dog, which had to be carried for nearly two miles. Poquessing Creek, which separates Philadelphia from Bucks County, proved to be the land of “short-cuts-turned-long-cuts.” Traversing Pennypack Park, “my grandmother told me the whole story of how my grandfather proposed to her,” which Dori had never heard in full. “It was really sweet—both the story and being able to talk with her for a while.”

Looking back on the experience now, Dori Olson says the best aspect was cultivating those close relationships. “It was really special,” says Olson, who recently graduated from Rice with a bachelor’s degree in social policy analysis and statistics. “The only thing we had to do was walk and talk to each other, and kind of explore the city—but also just spend time with each other.”

Yet after walking the border with friends and family, she couldn’t help feeling like there was something she was missing. “I had never done a walk with strangers, which is kind of the way Walk Around Philadelphia is designed to be experienced.” So in the summer of 2025, she joined the first Spanish-language iteration of the Walk.

“It’s a really great and cool way to onboard immigrants in their own language,” Tiziou remarks, swiftly pivoting to an example from a French edition he mounted the same year. “A West African gentleman, a French speaker, came and walked with us in French in the fall—and then walked



with us in February in English, to practice his English. And then starts making new connections. And that's what happens: We have complete strangers, and they instantly fall in, two by two, and start connecting."

rites of passage

If Chaz Howard is right that the Walk Around Philadelphia is a generative "extension of JJ as an artist," then Tiziou hopes that 2026 will mark the year that the Walk outgrows its creator. Having recently received a three-year funding commitment from an anonymous donor, he hopes to build a skeleton staff that can expand institutional partnerships. This April brought the "first offseason longer walk that is being entirely run by our new cofacilitators, without my even being there at the start point," which he calls "a big next step in scaling and sustainability."

During several iterations of the Walk, stipends have supported the participa-

Tiziou hopes 2026 will mark the year that the Walk outgrows its creator.

tion of several citizens returning to society after prison terms. Tiziou dreams about launching a formal reentry program. "My goal is that 20 years from now, folks can have an opportunity to opt into a reentry program where they would learn about the Walk beforehand [and] earn a cash stipend to support reentry by doing this transition ritual—walking alongside social service providers and prospective employers and neighbors who have been trained to be allies.

"My goal is that 20 years from now," he adds, "every young person in the region might have the opportunity to do the Walk as part of an experiential learning curriculum, or alternative spring break, or graduation ritual."

And for Tiziou, of course, "in the region" encompasses everyone from lifelong residents to yesterday's latest arrival. "If you move here for college, or grad school, or a new job," he says, "this can be your way to connect to the city, to connect to neighbors, understand the scope and complexity of the city a little more."

Even though he's been all the way around 17 times—logging enough miles to reach San Antonio, or Saskatchewan—Philadelphia has yet to exhaust his rapt attention.

"It never ceases to surprise me," Tiziou marvels. "There's still places I've never been. There's always something new getting built, something else falling apart or burning down or being demolished. There's always a new obstacle or a new trail—or just a choice that the group makes that leads to a new discovery."

LDI AND AMERICAN HEALTHCARE

The interdisciplinary experts at Penn's Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics have seen a lot since LDI was created after the passage of Medicare and Medicaid in the 1960s, but nothing quite like the challenges roiling the US healthcare system now.

By Mary Ann Meyers

The healthcare landscape in America has undergone seismic shifts in the past 18 months. Sweeping changes in federal policy, accelerating healthcare workforce shortages (especially in rural areas), and rapid AI advances have affected us all. Penn's Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics (LDI) is drawing upon nearly six decades of experience and a University-wide network of experts to assess the impact on our health, including the cost and quality of care, access to it, and equity in its delivery. LDI researchers have produced evidence about patient outcomes that has shaped action at multiple levels of government.

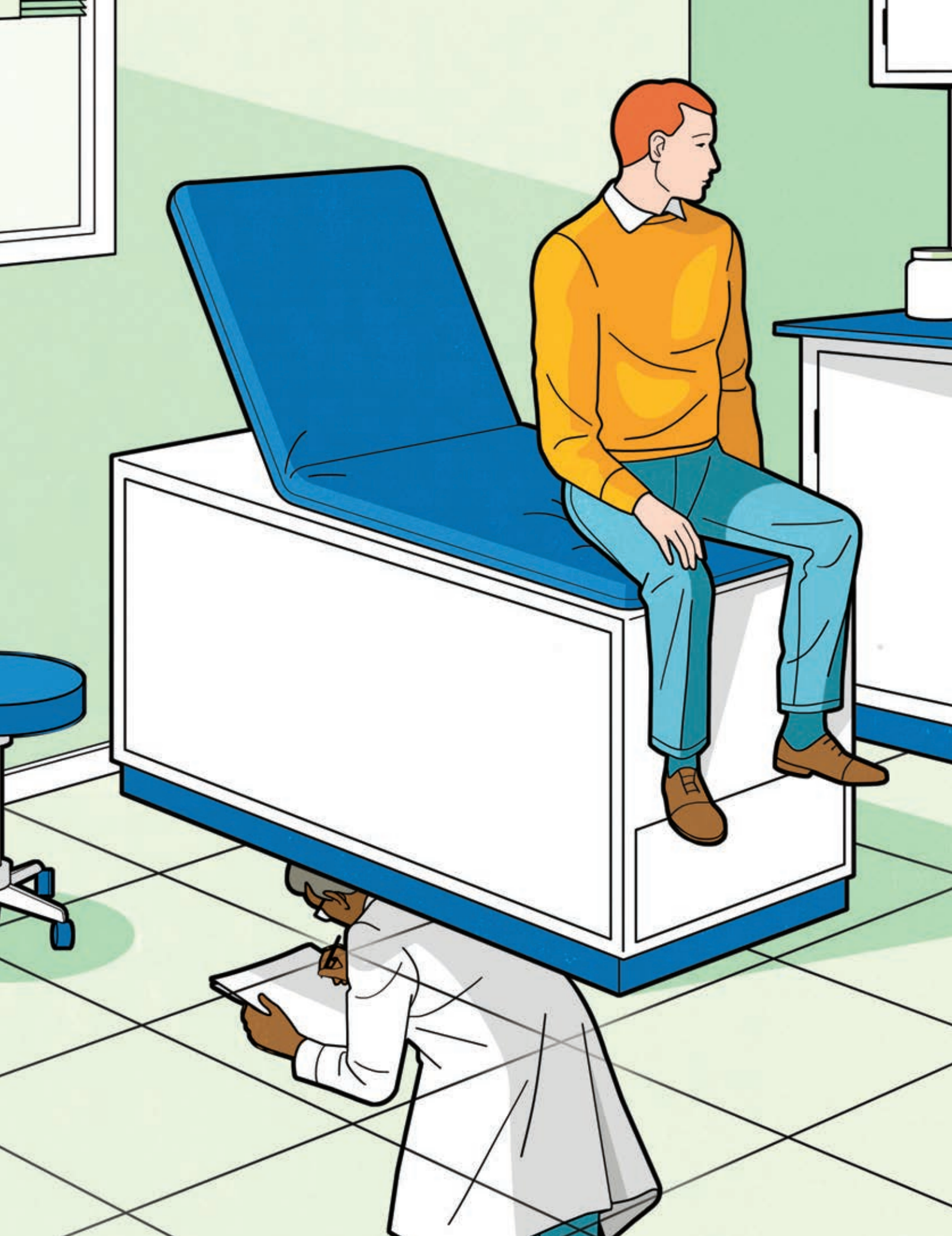
When it was founded in 1967, two years after the Medicare and Medicaid programs were signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, LDI was the first university-based interdisciplinary group in the United States devoted to healthcare

economics. LDI's mission was and remains to improve "health and healthcare by catalyzing collaborative, multidisciplinary research that influences policy and practice," according to its executive director, Rachel M. Werner M'98 GM'01 GrW'04, the Robert D. Eilers Memorial-William Maul Measey Professor in Health Care Management and Economics and professor of medicine in the Perelman School of Medicine, who is the first woman and first physician-economist to head LDI.

The organization bears the name of the philanthropist Leonard Davis Hon'72, the founder of the Colonial Penn Group, which became one of the country's largest insurance underwriters for older Americans. Davis—along with his wife Sophie—was instrumental in the founding of LDI in response to what he perceived as a growing national need for high-quality research and education to inform pol-

icies critical to the financing and management of the nation's increasingly costly and complex healthcare system.

From the start, the institute sought to integrate the expertise found in Penn's medical and nursing schools with the management expertise of Wharton faculty and apply these competencies to solving the healthcare issues of the day. Its founding director, the late Robert Eilers GW'57 Gr'61, a professor of insurance and a professor of community medicine, consulted with the Nixon Administration and helped draft the Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973 that catalyzed the growth of managed care plans, which incorporated financing and delivery of healthcare services to individuals enrolled in a network, and introduced cost containment strategies that continue to influence the modern healthcare system.



LDI's inaugural fellows included the economist Mark V. Pauley, now Bendheim Professor Emeritus in the Wharton School, who would later serve as LDI's executive director. A research paper he published in the *American Economic Review* in 1968 became one of the most influential articles in health economics, one that still resonates in healthcare debates and set the high standard to which LDI has adhered in the years that followed.

Pauley's key insight was that full health insurance coverage can lead individuals to take greater risks—a dynamic known as moral hazard—and therefore some medical care expenses should remain uninsured. It propelled an entire field of research into incentives and insurance coverage, serving as the impetus for the RAND Health Insurance Experiment, which estimated the impact of consumer cost-sharing on healthcare use, and was central to the thinking behind managed care, high-deductible health plans, and value-based insurance design. More than a half century later, Pauley's work on moral hazard continues to shape law and regulation. It undergirds the differing out-of-pocket payments in the Affordable Care Act's various plans and informs current debates about Medicare prescription drug coverage and home care benefits.

OBBBA's Impact

Werner and her colleagues face what are arguably unprecedented challenges in 2026. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) passed last year by Congress is projected to reduce federal spending on Medicaid, which accounts for about a sixth of healthcare spending, by nearly a trillion dollars over the next decade and significantly impact access to healthcare for millions of low-income citizens. The huge funding cut along with the expiration of the enhanced premium tax credits for Affordable Care Act marketplace coverage, which has more than doubled out-of-pocket premiums for some consumers, "elevate," as Werner

says, "the importance of the work that LDI does in continuing to bring evidence to healthcare policy."

Last summer Eric T. Roberts, an associate professor of medicine in Perelman, and fellow investigators used Medicare data on "dual-eligible individuals," who rely on both Medicare and Medicaid, to calculate the effects of losing drug subsidies on beneficiaries' mortality under the OBBBA. Their research showed that an estimated 18,200 vulnerable people with chronic conditions would die each year from the loss of Medicaid coverage if, as likely, states are forced to curtail benefits or adopt policies that limit the amount of time individuals can receive Medicaid.

The OBBBA also required a decade-long delay in a rule for minimum staffing at nursing homes, a safety measure issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in 2024 that was intended to reduce the risks associated with low-quality care. In what it termed an "alignment" with the 2025 legislation, the Department of Health and Human Services rescinded the new staffing standards altogether. Based on studies of the relationship between nurse staffing hours and resident mortality, Werner and Norma Coe, director of research at LDI and a professor of medical ethics and health policy in Perelman, predict another 13,000 deaths a year.

The nation's nursing shortage is a retention issue, not a pipeline issue, according to LDI Senior Fellow Karen Lasater Gr'15, the Jessie M. Scott Term Chair of Nursing and Health Policy in Penn's School of Nursing. In hospitals and long-term care facilities, "organizational failures that are hindering nurses from doing their work effectively drive nurses to feel burnt out," she says, citing a survey of nurses who said improving nurse staffing levels was the most important intervention that administrators could make. Lasater's research on how nurses' work environments, staffing, and well-being influence patient outcomes is transforming how health systems and

policymakers understand the value of nursing—even as the Trump administration's plan to redefine what constitutes a professional degree could exclude nursing and limit nursing students' access to loans that, in turn, could exacerbate the dearth of nurses long term.

More recently, a study led by LDI senior fellow Linda Aiken, the Claire Fagin Leadership Professor and founding director of the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research (CHOPR) in the School of Nursing and professor of sociology in the School of Arts and Sciences, and Gary Rettberg, research project manager at CHOPR, showed improved nurse work environments led to reduced physician burnout and intent to leave, demonstrating the importance of nurse well-being to that of other clinicians in hospitals.

Can AI Help?

Some have suggested that artificial intelligence could offload up to 30 percent of the crushing administrative burden of documentation in clinical settings. But according to a January 2026 article in *Health Affairs* by LDI senior fellow Amol Navathe GrW'08 M'10, a professor of medical ethics and health policy in Perelman and a professor of health management in Wharton, and Sita Kottlilil, a research coordinator in health policy, without policies that create financial incentives to improve care, there is a risk of stifling innovation and driving up costs without improved outcomes.

Noting that AI has the potential to create healthcare value independent of the time, skill, and resources of doctors and nurses, they also point out that "Medicare's current structuring of reimbursement around human inputs has the potential to miscalculate the value of AI in clinical practice." Navathe and Kottlilil propose a classification system to distinguish between AI applications according to their implications for clinician time and cost. "By aligning AI reimbursement policy with desired outcomes

rather than inputs,” they argue that “policy makers can ensure that innovators, clinicians, and patients alike benefit from novel AI technologies.” Navathe and Kottlil suggest that Congress may need to grant the CMS new authority to factor in clinical effectiveness in AI technology coverage and payment decisions.

Meanwhile, the LDI-Penn Medicine Research Laboratory, a partnership designed to advance LDI’s mission to produce generalizable healthcare knowledge and actionable evidence that can guide Penn Medicine’s operational decisions, invited this year’s applicants for awards to consider how generative AI can optimize healthcare delivery. The winning proposals include one to develop and test a hospital AI evaluation toolkit that drafts narrative overviews of patients’ medical journeys during their hospital stays, a second to refine and validate a large language model-based system capable of administering a test to screen for cognitive impairment in patients in clinical environments, and a third project to integrate conversational data collected from a novel AI platform with electronic health-record data to suggest care trajectories and facilitate identification of patients at high risk for pregnancy complications.

The use of AI to enhance human listening and interpretive skills in conversations around end-of-life care is a possibility that was explored in a study led by LDI senior fellow and Penn Nursing School assistant professor of biobehavioral health sciences Jiyoun Song. In collaboration with other scientists, including Kathryn Bowles Gr’96, professor of behavioral health sciences and the van Ameringen Chair in Nursing Excellence in the Nursing School, Song and her team used speech processing to identify palliative care preferences during discussions and decision-making in Medicaid-managed long-term care. Their work suggests that AI may help clinicians identify which seriously ill patients are ready for palliative care by analyzing

the energy, pitch, and other subtle vocal cues in recorded group phone conversations among patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers.

Palliative care refers to pain management, psychological support, and quality-of-life comfort care for the most seriously ill. Song stresses the importance of the “initial communication process to engage patients or their surrogate caregivers in considering the possibility of palliative care,” which “too often remains underexplored, leaving a gap in understanding what makes it successful or unsuccessful.”

Controlling Costs

Healthcare affordability, a concern at the time of LDI’s founding, is an acute issue today—ranked by two-thirds of the American public as their top financial worry. In January some 24 million Americans saw their health insurance premiums increase by hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year. These are the self-employed or employees of small businesses and their families who, because they don’t get health insurance from employers, buy insurance on the exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act. The CMS projects that healthcare spending will consume more than 20 percent of the US economy by 2033. The institute’s fellows have examined costs in numerous studies.

Recognizing that the rising cost of care is unsustainable in the long run without a decidedly deleterious effect on the nation’s health, LDI, in collaboration with Penn Washington, the University’s policy engagement arm in the capital, organized a three-day symposium in March to highlight options for moderating the upward trend. It was part of the institute’s continuing efforts to bring its senior fellows together with policymakers at both the state and federal levels.

Werner chaired a panel discussion where Ezekiel Emanuel—Penn’s vice provost for global initiatives, Diane v.S. Levy and Robert M. Levy University Professor, and Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor

Emanuel and Blase agreed that hospitals were the principal drivers of cost and called for aggressive reforms.

with appointments in the Perelman School of Medicine and Wharton—and Brian Blase, a conservative health policy expert who served in the first Trump administration and subsequently founded a health think tank, agreed that hospitals were the principal drivers of cost and called for aggressive reforms. They recommended site-neutral payments, by which insurers would pay the same price for a procedure whether it took place in a doctor’s private office or a hospital-owned facility where, at present, Medicare and many private insurers pay significantly more. The discrepancy creates a powerful incentive for hospitals to acquire physician practices and establish outpatient centers. Monopolistic practices and a system that rewards volume and political lobbying, according to Emanuel and Blase, bear a huge share of the blame for escalating prices across the healthcare system.

But the system’s complexity, both in plan design and administrative processes, also is a factor that propels costs, leads to inefficiency, and harms patients. David Grande, LDI’s director of policy and a professor of medicine in Perelman, explained to the symposium audience of policy leaders and Hill staffers from a number of Congressional committees that the consequences of the choices consumers make among insurance plans “shape not only their own access to care, but also the overall cost of healthcare across the economy.”

Noting that the Medicare Advantage (MA) option costs the federal government 14 percent more per person than traditional fee-for-service Medicare, Aaron Schwartz, an assistant professor of medical ethics and health policy in Perelman, said the government needs to “invest in a robust research agenda and implementation agenda to understand how best to

pay private insurers in the Medicare program.” His fellow panelist Michael Anne Kyle G’10, also a Perelman assistant professor of medical ethics and health policy, stressed that Medicare’s administrative tools, notably prior authorization requirements, led 30 percent of enrollees to delay or skip care altogether with attendant negative health consequences reported by half of them.

A targeted focus on whether MA is working brought Werner together with two healthcare experts from not-for-profit organizations in a virtual panel discussion a few days before the Washington event. Sachin Jain, CEO of the SCAN Group and Health Plan, one of the largest not-for-profit MA plans in the nation, and Cheryl Damberg, director of the Center of Excellence in Health System Performance and a principal senior economist at the think tank RAND, concurred that MA has created innovative and important protection for seniors with modest incomes with its lower premiums, a cap on out-of-pocket spending, and extra supplemental benefits compared with traditional Medicare.

But Werner says the plan “is not saving public money as was intended upon its creation in 1997.” The idea was that competition among private companies would drive down Medicare prices and improve the quality of care. Research on MA is challenging, the LDI executive director explains, “because of missing data and bias generated by payment incentives to capture and report a maximum number of diagnosis codes for each beneficiary. Using a strategy called upcoding, insurers make their enrollees appear to be sicker than they are to increase their reimbursement rates,” Werner asserts. “As a result, the federal government overpays for MA and these plans have failed to bring down costs.”

Rural Healthcare in Crisis

But cost isn’t the only problem. Access to healthcare depends on the availability of medical professionals and hospi-

tals. The US currently faces a shortage of some 65,000 physicians, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. The deficit, which is expected to balloon over the next decade as Americans live longer and doctors retire, is acute in rural areas. “Some 80 percent of rural America is designated as medically underserved,” Werner points out. Furthermore, “44 percent of rural hospitals operate at a financial loss.” Nearly 200 rural hospitals have closed in the past 20 years, and “when a hospital shuts its doors, rural Americans lose access not only to emergency care, but also to essential services like maternity care and cancer treatment. The obstacles rural Americans confront in accessing healthcare contribute to more sickness and shorter life expectancies compared to people living in urban areas.”

The collision between sweeping Medicaid cuts under the OBBBA and a lesser known part of the legislation signed into law by President Donald Trump W’68 last July, the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), was the focus of a discussion featuring Werner and her colleague Paula Chatterjee, LDI’s director of health equity research and an assistant professor of medicine in Perelman, on the podcast *Tradeoffs*. At the heart of the issue is how states are expected to manage new federal policies that slash Medicaid spending by an estimated \$137 billion over 10 years while simultaneously offering a \$50 billion rural initiative spread over five years. Half the money was divided evenly among the 50 states. The rest was awarded based on a series of factors, including a competition for grants to pursue “transformative” strategies aimed at workforce development, technology adoption, and new provider partnerships in rural areas.

Now that the funds have been dispersed, LDI wanted to examine the chances for the program’s success. Noting that the RHTP explicitly bars states from using the funds to stabilize rural hospitals, the discussants acknowledged

the irony that the legislation weakens the primary underwriter of rural healthcare while expecting transformation in the very system destabilized by the Medicaid reductions. There was a consensus that one of the biggest and most persistent challenges for rural healthcare facilities is recruiting and retaining physicians and other specialized staff.

Werner noted that the “rural healthcare crisis has been years in the making.” Chatterjee pointed out that an ongoing 50-year federal effort to incentivize medical professionals to practice in rural areas “has yet to produce evidence showing how to solve the problem.” She said there was strong evidence that “recruiting healthcare workers who themselves have rural backgrounds” or providing medical professionals from suburban or urban areas with “extended training in rural areas led to a workforce that stays in place.” But many healthcare providers leave rural settings upon fulfilling their initial obligations, and standalone financial incentives like extra pay to stay in a rural community don’t seem to be very effective. Nevertheless, Chatterjee views the RHTP as providing a “tremendous opportunity for rigorous natural experiments in rural areas. The challenge for the research community,” she says, is to discover “what works, what doesn’t, why, and where.”

Unequal Access

Equity in healthcare is not bound by geography. A study that Werner carried out with two of her LDI predecessors as executive director, David Asch GM’87 WG’89—Penn’s senior vice president for strategic initiatives; John Morgan Professor of Medicine in Perelman; and professor of operations, information, and decisions and professor of health care management in the Wharton School—and Daniel Polsky Gr’96—now Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Health Care Economics at Johns Hopkins—found that although public release of quality information through “report cards” is intended to improve health-

care, there may be unintended consequences, notably physicians avoiding high-risk patients to improve their ratings. In that case, their analysis of data from nearly one million patients with heart disease showed that report cards could exacerbate existing racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare.

A 2025 LDI study in *JAMA Health Forum* substantiates that a key reason our healthcare system fails to treat everyone equally is linked to financial incentives. “We pay doctors less to care for some people than others,” Werner says. Research she conducted with Asch and Aaron Schwartz, shows that medical practices receive 8.8 percent less for visits with Black patients and nearly 10 percent less for Hispanic patients than for their white peers. For children, the gaps are even wider. Physicians got 13.9 percent less for visits with Black children and 15 percent less for Hispanic children. “Many factors explain that difference, but no factors justify it,” Asch says. “Sometimes a single finding encapsulates the problem.” It turned out that differences in insurance source explained 44 percent of the payment gap between Black and white patients and 43 percent of the payment gap between Hispanic and white patients despite similar visit content, geographic market, and time period.

The study by the three LDI scholars is the first to analyze physician payments for outpatient care. It combined several national databases, and once the data were assembled, the analysis included 152,336 outpatient visits from 38,772 patients of whom 63.1 percent were non-Hispanic white, 15.9 percent non-Hispanic Black, and 21.0 percent Hispanic. Among visits covered by fee-for-service Medicare, which standardizes payments for outpatient care, physicians experienced no payment disparities relative to the race of their patients. But when physicians saw patients on Medicaid—the sole insurance source for 9.1 percent of the white patients, 23.2 per-

“We pay doctors less to care for some people than others,” Werner says.

cent of the Black patients, and 30 percent of Hispanic patients—they were paid more for visits with white patients than for visits with Black or Hispanic patients.

“Narrowing the gap in payment generosity between Medicaid and other insurers would considerably shrink the payment penalty that physicians face when they treat non-white patients,” Schwartz says. Nonetheless a pattern of racialized payment disparities still occurred when doctors treated uninsured patients and those with other types of health insurance, excluding fee-for-service Medicare. “When we ran simulations to quantify how much these payment gaps explain differences in healthcare received by patients, we found that eliminating payment disparities could substantially narrow racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare use, particularly for children,” Schwartz says.

A Sustainable System

Sustaining a pipeline of students to carry on its work is of fundamental importance to LDI’s leadership. Founding director Eilers realized that an educational component was crucial to the institute’s success, both within the university and as a training ground for future healthcare leaders. He created an MBA major in 1970—one of the first MBA programs in healthcare management in the nation—and later undergraduate and doctoral concentrations, with the goal of training managers and analysts of healthcare systems.

In 2025 a \$3.5 million gift paired with a \$1 million challenge grant from the Leonard and Sophie Davis Fund enabled LDI to expand its Summer Undergraduate Mentored Research (SUMR) Program. The program offers a 12-week

immersive-research experience for students committed to addressing inequities in healthcare access. Since its establishment in 2000 by LDI and Wharton’s Health Care Management Department, more than 425 undergraduates from a wide range of colleges and universities have participated in SUMR and 83 percent have gone on to have careers in healthcare. A recently established SUMR+ initiative extends the program to 15 months, enabling select scholars to deepen their expertise and try to translate research into practical interventions. “The Davis family’s extraordinary generosity underscores their commitment to expanding access to health insurance and to healthcare services,” Werner says.

Looking ahead, Werner believes the federal government needs a new strategy that moves from a short-term focus on testing new payment models for healthcare delivery to a long-term focus on models that are most likely to generate substantial savings and improve quality. She sees opportunities for simplifying administrative burdens, reforming the way performance benchmarks are set, and directly addressing issues of fairness. In a white paper she wrote with her colleagues Emanuel, Navathe, and LDI Senior Fellow Hoangmai Pham five years ago, Werner, who stepped down as LDI executive director on June 30 but will continue as a senior fellow, called for the CMS to chart a new direction “aimed at completing the transition to a healthcare system that pays for value and reduces health disparities.” Over the course of nearly 60 years, LDI has demonstrated that solutions are possible in this stunningly complex arena. Werner allows that the goal of “a sustainable healthcare system that pays for better quality, equity, and efficiency” may be audacious, but she insists that it is achievable.

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the 30-year squat

AL Filreis is telling—as he has many times before and will again—the Writers House Origin Story: how Penn’s then new president, Judith Rodin CW’66 Hon’04, wanted to strengthen undergraduate life at the University by creating the College House system and cultivate new non-department-based centers of power through thematic “hubs” that would draw students from across schools and reach out to the community as well. How she and then Provost Stanley Chodorow had launched the 21st Century Project for the Undergraduate Experience (“only in 1994 or 1995 could you have something called the 21st Century Project”) to advance those goals and appointed English professor Robert Lucid—Filreis’s inspiration and mentor—to help lead it. How, when the University came into possession of the onetime residence of former University Chaplain Stanley Johnson, Rodin had conveyed the property to Lucid—an experienced navigator of Penn’s institutional byways—with instructions to come up with a compelling

Three decades ago a “ragtag army of squatter-minded poets” took possession of a modest cottage at 38th & Locust Walk and conjured by candlelight a vision of a “house for writers.” Today Kelly Writers House is a University institution that hosts a dizzying variety of classes, readings, and other events and sits at the center of a constellation of affiliated programs whose impact stretches around the globe. But in a lot of ways it hasn’t changed at all.

By John Prendergast

use “before the school with the most money or the most power, whatever,” laid claim to it. How Lucid had turned to Filreis, then the English department undergraduate chair and an advocate for similar initiatives to enrich the noncurricular aspects of college life, who said he would “make a house for writers.”

All building to the best part, most evocative of what would become the Writers House ethos: how an initial group of faculty, student, and staff visionaries gath-

ered in the house to shape what exactly that would mean on Sunday, October 15, 1995, trading ideas until the fall dusk fell, and they realized that the electricity was off, and continuing by candlelight, they “laid it out room by room by room.”

“Lucid was there that afternoon,” Filreis continues. “And once the candles were lit, Bob spoke to the group. He always spoke quietly and haltingly, but he spoke in aphorisms, always aphorisms. And he turned to us and he said, ‘Remember, the most



important thing you have to know at a big university: architecture is destiny.”

In January of 1996, Rodin arranged for Filreis and students involved in the planning to speak before the University trustees. “Probably with some trepidation, because we were squatting in the house. I had barely gotten the key,” he says. “We made a presentation that was so winning and so charming, I guess, that they said, ‘OK, go ahead with this thing.’” A year or so later, Paul Kelly C’62 WG’64 made a gift naming the house and making renovations possible. (Kelly, whose 2021 death from complications of COVID-19 [“Obituaries,” May|Jun 2021] was mourned at the house’s 30th anniversary celebration over Alumni Weekend in May, also endowed the Kelly Family Professorship in English, which Filreis holds.)

“The Writers House beckoned as a place where there was no curriculum, where all it was, was people who feel an affiliation, whether undergrads, grad students, staff, alumni, or neighbors. Now everybody could come. It was like a utopia. It was Lucid’s dream,” says Filreis, who has served as faculty director until stepping down on June 30 (but only as far as *associate* faculty director).

After additional renovations over the years, the old cottage boasts an expanded performance space and landscaped garden area, sophisticated sound and video systems, and its own recording studio. The number and range of events have grown, internships and other student opportunities have proliferated, and the advent of affiliated programs such as PennSound (a vast, varied, and constantly growing archive of poetry recordings, all available for free), the video podcast *PoemTalk*, the digital literary journal *Jacket2*, and the free online course in Modern & Contemporary American Poetry, better known as ModPo—all presided over by Filreis—have made the house’s footprint a global one. And the Writers House YouTube channel offers recordings of readings and other events stretch-

ing back to its earliest days. (For more information on all of those, visit the proudly old school KWH website at <https://writing.upenn.edu/wh/>.)

“But the purpose of the Writers House is what we’re doing to this day 30 years later, almost exactly,” Filreis says. “And 500 people a week enter this house. Some of them stay forever, and some of them think ‘this is cool,’ and then they move on. So architecture is destiny at the University, and we’ve proven it.”

There’s an echo of the campfire in that planning by candlelight story, which is appropriate for Filreis, who was powerfully influenced by his youthful experiences at Frost Valley, a camp in the Catskills with which he has stayed connected as an advisory board member and enthusiastic fundraiser ever since. He grew up in New York and mostly New Jersey, in “an immigrant, Jewish family, basically,” where there was “not a lot of thinking about tramping around the woods,” he says. “Fortunately, they sent me to camp.” He took on increasing responsibilities, becoming by 19 or so “the program director of this giant, 1,000-person camp. I learned everything I know about administration, everything I know about fundraising, everything I know about leadership.” He’s grateful to the mentors “who let me fail a bunch of times before I succeeded.”

After earning his undergraduate degree from Colgate University, he went to the University of Virginia for his master’s and PhD. “The people running the department were research and writing focused, not teaching focused,” Filreis recalls. He also was “very interested in the scholarly stuff and did well in it and have done well in it,” publishing a number of books over the years. “But the minute I got into the classroom, the first time as a graduate student, I realized, ‘Whoa, this is fun. This is really fun.’”

“With all due respect to the people [at UVA], whom I loved, I didn’t learn to teach there,” he says. “What I learned

about teaching I learned from Frost Valley, particularly the progressive idea that education should be learner centered rather than teacher centered. People from my Frost Valley life have come to see the Writers House and they say, ‘Oh, I see what you’re doing.’”

Filreis’s pedagogy and that of the Writers House is built around “collaborative close reading,” he says. He wrote a whole book about how this works in ModPo (see sidebar), but a signature example of the approach inside the building is the Writers House Fellows course, in which students immerse themselves in the work of three prominent writers, who then visit the house to join the class conversation, give a reading and have a dinner specially prepared to their tastes with the students and other invited guests, and then are interviewed the next morning by Filreis and, in recent years, Simone White, a poet and associate professor of English who’s been associate faculty director at KWH since 2022 (and faculty director as of July 1). Among the many famous names to participate in the program are John Edgar Wideman C’63 Hon’86 [“Wideman on Campus,” Jul|Aug 2000], Edward Albee, Adrienne Rich, John Ashbery, Laurie Anderson, Rosanne Cash, Matthew Weiner, Jamaica Kincaid (twice), and Patti Smith.

Besides immersion in the Fellows’ work, another benefit for students, White noted at the reading by novelist and non-fiction writer Ayana Mathis, who closed out the course’s 27th year this spring, is “the possibility of actually learning that writing is a possible life,” which she called “one of the primary goals of Fellows—to introduce the prospect of a writing life, to bring living writers who are successful, excited, and also understand the challenges of having a life in the arts, and to bring that message to students.”

Mathis, whose novels include *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* and *The Unsettled*, was introduced by a student in the class (a



tradition), Serene Safvi C'26, a senior majoring in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, who shared that, despite being about to graduate “with no English department affiliations,” she had “always loved the energy of the Kelly Writers House, often spending late nights here, studying and stealing tea bags, but really unable to explain to my roommate at the time” why she was there rather than “across the bridge” in Huntsman Hall.

“In studying Mathis through her two novels, personal essays, and interviews, my peers and I have inhabited fictional worlds so full of life, while mirroring our own realities of race, class, and migration,” she said. “Mathis builds worlds so fully realized that the reader does not simply observe them but inhabits and lives with in them. This is the energy of Kelly Writers

“The purpose of the Writers House is what we’re doing to this day 30 years later, almost exactly.”

House. In journeying into an imagined world, we are somehow brought closer to our own, given the language to process what we have lived and the vision to imagine what might still be possible.”

“I’m kind of teary. Thank you, that was really tremendous,” Mathis responded, going on to call her encounter with the students earlier that day “profoundly lovely” for the “depth of reading” it showed. “What’s the word I want to say? Usually I would say engagement with the work, but I think a better word might be [their] participation with the work, was really astounding and moving.”

Besides readings by individual writers in all genres and of all degrees of fame, from Fellows to emerging, as well as by student and community writing groups, the house hosts plenty of practical-minded panels sharing experiences and insights for students interested in creative fields, like an annual panel on “Careers in Journalism and Media” featuring past winners of the Nora Magid Mentorship Prize honoring a beloved writing instructor [“The Nora Prize at 20,” Nov-Dec 2023]. Or focused on careers in publishing, or Hollywood, or writing about tech, business and economics, or food. There’s an annual singer-songwriter symposium. There has been a dance workshop, Filreis says.

Then there are annual rituals like a Thanksgiving party for the “Hub,” the

“Intergenerational act”: Harris Steinberg, architect for the Writers House renovation, and his son Henry, who said he found “my people” there, were among those who spoke.

KWH planning collective; the Mind of Winter, “where people do a reading about wintry cold in January”; a marathon reading of a book (this year Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*); plus programs for Homecoming and Alumni Weekend. The Writers House staff is “very conscious” of providing a wide range of programs, Filreis says. “It can be 15 people in the audience. It can be 120. So every possible variety of format and of featured visitor we’re into.”

All that presents an “interesting calendaring problem,” says KWH Director Jessica Lowenthal G’07 Gr’07, who describes herself as the “point person” for figuring out how to accommodate the 125 or so events the house hosts during an academic year. “If I could change anything about the universe, it would be to add more secret days in a calendar.”

Lowenthal has been director of the house since 2005. Looking back, “The structure of the year is the same, the cycle of events is the same, the pace of the calendar is the same,” she says. “But within that, of course, it’s always different.

There are always new people with new ideas, new students, new alumni—because they graduate every year!”

The student and professional staff have grown significantly over that time, “which has been really helpful,” she says. “I think when I started, we probably had 15 to 20 student staffers, and now we usually have 35 to 40. Our full-time staff has similarly doubled, I think. It’s made my job in many ways easier, because we can spread it out.”

The students “really help with all aspects of Writers House operations,” she says, from working on the website, to assisting in the recording studio and posting materials online, to helping organize and staff events and provide the

“We met AI in January in Bennett Hall as a post-blizzard snowpack melted into icy rivers. Thus began a journey rich in discovery.”



“There is a gravity to certain places, they call to you.”

food and drink that are a mainstay of Writers House gatherings. “That means shopping for the reception and chopping vegetables and sweeping the floor and organizing the chairs and setting up the sound and recording, taking photos and greeting the guests. We really depend on our students to help with the mechanics of welcoming people into a communal space.”

Asked how the house is perceived now, Lowenthal says, “I feel like if you asked 20 different people—or 30 different people for the anniversary—you might get 30

different answers about what function the Writers House serves, but there would be some commonalities.” For students, besides being a place to encounter and celebrate writing (and score food and “the free and terrible coffee that we always have”), “it’s also a community space pretty centrally, where students come to find something that they might not be able to name, some third space, a space of belonging, where they might find others. I assume we would have predicted that at the beginning, but you can’t manufacture it. It has to become an organic thing,” she says.

Alumni, she adds, “come back and say it’s the same, even when lots of things are different. We’ve renovated two or three different spots. But they feel part of a continuity with the past, and so that sense of return I find is an important part of how we’ve built community. You are never needing to say goodbye. You can always come back and rejoin Writers House.”

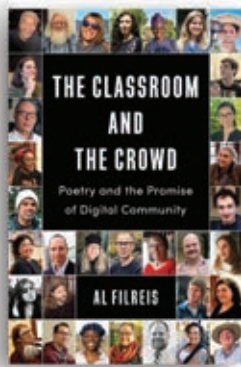
Early on in the Friday evening party that kicked off the KWH 30th anniversary celebration, Filreis called on the attendees drinking and eating barbecue and chatting in the garden to “put your hands together for Judy”—former President Rodin—who was standing with him. “A lot of things had to happen before a ragtag army of squatter-minded poets could take a vital—location is important: Locust Walk, here we are,” Filreis shouted.

Rodin, whose decade as president was a transformational one in many ways [“The Rodin Years,” May/June 2004], called KWH “the anchor” for the vision of the College House system. “Kelly Writers House was the first example that we showed everybody of what Penn could become, where we weren’t only a university that had an educational program or residential colleges, but we had these communities that shared ideas, that shared bread together. It made it all

SIDEBAR

“They’ll teach themselves”

As Kelly Writers House marks its 30th anniversary (see main story), its online offshoot ModPo (short for Modern & Contemporary American Poetry) is well into adolescence. ModPo had its first iteration in 2012 on the Coursera



platform and was both a product of and reaction to the surge of interest in massive open online courses (MOOCs) of the early 2010s [“MOOC U.,” Mar|Apr 2013]. The free course has a current enrollment of nearly 100,000. But for many of the 435,000 people from 179 countries who’ve engaged with ModPo over the years, it’s a way of life.

The animating force for ModPo, as for KWH, is Al Filreis, the Kelly Family Professor of English and longtime faculty director. Filreis tells the story of ModPo in *The Classroom and the Crowd: Poetry and the Promise of Digital Community* (Columbia University Press, 2026), which combines a history and analysis of the development of online education, an argument for “reader-centered teaching” as opposed to the

“sage on a stage” model of the traditional lecture, and a collective portrait of the worldwide ModPo community, many of whom remain engaged long after the nominal 10-week “class” has ended.

Filreis calls the lecture, which remains the template for lots of online courses, “an old technology,” that people mostly don’t learn from or retain. What does work, he adds, “is to go into a room and say, ‘Well, I’ve been reading this poem for 40 years, so I’m tired of hearing myself talk about it. What do you guys think?’ And believe me, after 90 minutes, they will do everything that I would have done in a lecture, and maybe more, and they will remember it because they were the ones who had to articulate what it was.”

The book also takes aim at commentators who dismiss online courses because of their high so-called “dropout” rates, citing ModPo members who because of limited time or difficult life circumstances may take years to finish, or never complete the course, but whose participation enriches them intellectually and emotionally and serves other participants as well. And as someone who has been leading online learning efforts since email had a hyphen, and who posts regularly on social media about, well, everything, Filreis takes sharp issue with the current trend toward “digital minimalism,” which counsels people to put away screens and “touch grass,” as the saying goes. He talks about a woman in ModPo named Anne Jongleux “who was in northern Florida on the West Coast, when [Hurricane Helene] hit and was suddenly nomadic for a couple of months,” whose story is recounted in *The Classroom and the Crowd*. “I don’t know where she went, but because she was in ModPo, and because she had a phone, she didn’t miss a beat. All of her ModPo people continued to be with her, and she continued to learn.”

He notes that the number of ModPo learners who describe themselves as having disabilities is disproportionately high compared to the general population. “Why? Because they can do it,” he says. “Minimalism is elitist. Some health outcomes from unplugging are good but tell that to the woman displaced for two months who wants to learn poetry. We really have to go slow on this.”

ModPo’s huge enrollment makes it impossible to “get my arms around what’s going on in the course, ever,” Filreis says. “If I were a digital minimalist, I would just cut it back and say, well, we can only have 100 people in this course at a time, because I can’t be a responsible teacher of 99,000 people, I don’t know who they are. But I call myself a maximalist. Bring them on, the more the better. They’ll teach themselves. It’ll be OK.” —JP

work,” she said. “So, yes, I provided the house, but Al created the vision. So thank you, Al, for everything that you have done for this amazing place, and all of you for giving it life, fulfilling the vision. It is such a thrill for me to see.”

On Saturday afternoon, following an Open House warmup with more food and drink, the Writers House faithful settled in for a series of “Toasts & Reminiscences” by a dozen or so speakers across the house’s history. More reflections were compiled in a booklet designed by Zach Carduner C’09, who is also the house’s digital projects manager.

Filreis opened by calling on attendees to answer with “Hey!” and a raised fist salute (“a sky bump”) to a series of statements, including “if you believe that people who might want to become writers should have every bit as much support at this university as people who want to become lawyers, engineers, marketers, bankers, and managers” and that “the University of Pennsylvania, right smack in the middle of its campus, should always and evermore preserve and support a house for writers.” (Both got a rousing response, unlike “if you’ve taken an actual bath” in the second-floor bathtub, to which only Filreis gave a “Hey!”) He also announced that a fundraising campaign tied to the anniversary had added \$10 million to the KWH endowment, bringing the total to \$16.5 million—and urged everyone to “not stop advocating for what this is, just because it’s established” and “you can’t imagine anybody bulldozing this house.”

Before the speeches started, Filreis made a point of propping a box of tissues on the podium, and there was plenty of emotion in evidence—when he paused to memorialize Kelly and other important figures in the history of the house who “would have been among the speakers today” and in the presentations of those who did speak. But there was humor, too, especially from Myra Lotto C’99 Gr’12 about her experience over the past 20 years “cooking homestyle Japanese din-

Nate Chinen's jazz band played at the house in its early days. Jamie-Lee Josselyn was Filreis's first assistant and is now associate director for recruitment.

ners featuring raw fish and other delicacies for the extremely famous Writers House Fellows” and the travails of accommodating their dietary requirements, from *Mad Men* creator Matthew Weiner's devotion to hot dogs to journalist and commentator Charles M. Blow's aversion to sushi and shellfish allergy. (A lot was in the delivery.)

Within the stream of praise for Filreis—as an inspiring teacher, committed advisor, trusted confidante, and lively drinking companion—a tribute by Writers House advisory board chair and supporter David Gross W'92 to his skills as a manager stood out. “He's always got a plan and communicates it clearly. He's on top of the details,” Gross said, while also contributing a picture, drawn from his student days taking as many of Filreis's classes as possible for a non-English major, of early career Al “with his casual flannel shirts, his nearly Civil War-era furry beard at the time, and dynamic and irreverent teaching style.”

Among some of the other speakers, Harris Steinberg C'78 GAR'82 remembered wishing there'd been a Writers House when he was “a scared and confused kid from the Philly suburbs thrown into the big bad pre-professional cauldron of Penn in that hazy brown and orange decade of the '70s,” and how “magic” happened when he and his wife Jane Stevens Steinberg GAR'82 were “asked to be the architects for the transformation of this charming 1850s Tudor cottage on Super Block into the Kelly Writers House,” he said. “We met Al in January in Bennett Hall as a post-blizzard snowpack melted into icy rivers. Thus began a journey rich in discovery and self-awareness that would take me to places I had never dreamed of,” along the way helping him craft a professional path “veering from traditional architecture towards city planning, civic engagement, and academia” that included serving as

“It very, very quickly felt, as you've heard many others say, literally like a home.”



“You won't stay because it's perfect—nothing is—but because you keep getting to try to make it better.”

executive director of the planning organization Penn Praxis [“Penn Praxis at 10,” Jan/Feb 2012].

In what Steinberg called “the only intergenerational act today,” his son Henry Steinberg C'13 followed him at the podi-

um. Though he probably visited the house for the first time when he was about five, he said, he didn't really remember that beyond a “vague recollection of tarps, and sawdust, and the smell of construction.” He did remember his first time going on his own. “It was during new student orientation, my freshman year. I came to the Speakeasy [Open Mic] with a couple of hallmates and left buzzing, brimming with the energy of being surrounded by a group of students so excited about the possibility of language as I was. I immediately called my mom to tell her, ‘I think I found my people.’ I don't think I understood in that moment how true that really was, and more than that, that it wouldn't be a singular moment,” he said. “There is a gravity to certain places, they call to you, they open their doors and windows, and once you enter, it is as though you were always meant to be there.”

Music writer (and occasional *Gazette* contributor) Nate Chinen C'97 emphasized the enduring sense of possibility the house represents, and the eclectic personalities found within its walls. “I wasn't at the first candlelight planning meeting, but I was here very soon after that,” he said, as a student, assistant coordinator, and drummer in the jazz band that played regular gigs there in the early days. “Very quickly I realized, this is a place where you stumble in at whatever time of day just to check in, and you fall into a conversation with a medievalist and an anarchist and a technologist, and maybe those are different people, and it might be the same person. ... As someone who was maybe thinking about poetry and definitely thinking about music, it very, very quickly felt, as you've heard many others say, literally like a home.”

Chinen, who is editorial director at radio station WRTI, teaches a Penn course on podcasting. He sometimes

stops in at KWH when he's on campus, and "I see the kids, and they're doing their thing, and they're having their conversations, and some of them are studying, and some of them are definitely not studying, and it's very familiar, even as it's a whole different cohort, a whole different generation."

"I think everyone I've ever met is here," began Jamie-Lee Josselyn C'05, noting that "26 years have now passed" since she first learned about Writers House from a Penn admissions rep visiting her New Hampshire high school. She read a message to her 17-year-old self ("Hey, turn down the *Rent* soundtrack for a second, I want to talk to you") tracing her journey from an intimidated, shy student on arrival at Penn, to being Filreis's advisee; becoming his first assistant after graduation; sticking in that position through earning her MFA; and continuing on to her current role as associate director of recruitment where "you get to go find the writer kids, some of them like you, some not," and becoming the director of the house's summer residential writing program for high schoolers. "Every once in a while, you'll think about leaving, but you won't," she told teenage Jamie-Lee. "You won't stay because it's perfect—nothing is—but because you keep getting to try to make it better."

"The Writers House is an anchor," said the final speaker, Gwendolyn Lewis C'14, who recalled Filreis's congratulatory email "Yeah!! I knew you could do this" when the English major got an internship offer from Google while working her shift at Writers House. "Every time I walk through those doors, it's like I'm going through a portal where I'm coming home to the most authentic and ambitious version of myself. It has nothing to do with needing to feel like younger [me] or trying to relive the past. It's a way of refueling my current self with a version of myself that knows exactly who I am, what I'm capable of, and who knows that all of it is possible."

Filreis has always made it a point of pride that, unlike many other reading

venues, Writers House events start punctually. There's more flexibility about how long they last. "We'll be here for a little more than an hour," he said at the start, and it ran more like two. But no one was complaining, and Filreis wasn't ready to stop celebrating. When the crowd gave him a standing ovation at the end, he called, "Now that you're standing, you can go into the other room and out into the garden. Please stay, please hang out!"

"I'll be around," Filreis says, of his future role at KWH, emphasizing that he has "no plans to retire." He'll continue to teach and direct the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (CPCW), which is where the creative writing program and RealArts@Penn, which offers a variety of coveted summer internships in the arts, are housed. He'll also remain at the helm of ModPo, PennSound, and *PoemTalk*, and serve as publisher of *Jacket2*. Becoming associate faculty director, he says, will allow him to hand off the Writers House administrative tasks, budgeting, and, increasingly, fundraising to Simone White, "who's utterly fantastic and brilliant and a wonderful partner," he says. "I'll be available, but it's time for somebody else to do all that. That's really what's going on here. I love the idea of putting everything into my teaching and being supportive."

"Thirty years is a very long time, and he's busy with a million other things," says White, "so it seems only reasonable that someone would take some of the responsibility off his shoulders." The author of several books of poetry, White joined the Penn faculty in 2018. She grew up in Philadelphia's Mount Airy neighborhood and went to Wesleyan University for her undergraduate degree, then earned a law degree from Harvard before changing course toward academia with an MFA from the New School and a doctorate from CUNY Graduate Center. She was also heavily involved in the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church in New York, eventually running its marquee

Wednesday night reading series and workshop programs, experience she's brought to Writers House and hopes to expand in the future.

While a big part of her job, especially early on, will be tending to the house's existing programs, "I have ideas about what we could do, particularly because I am so interested in curating, and have my own sense of how the Writers House can take its rightful place—because it really does have a national and international place—in the literary world as a convening center." She has an interest in and connections to the art world as well, and would like to incorporate that into KWH programming, she says, and also forge some stronger connections with other Penn arts organizations.

Listening to the speakers and others at the celebration, "it's a lot to think about being able to respect and honor their attachment to the place and their memory of the place—but every year Penn gets a new group of students, and I would like to be the person who introduces the Writers House to them as a fresh experience."

KWH is "the place that Al built, for sure, but it's also a place that operates on a daily basis, serving people who are not English majors, who are not writers. It's a home for students and it's my role to make sure that it continues. I mean, this is an institution now, and it should be able to live without" any one person, she says, "and Al knows that."

"The Writers House is a symbol that reaches 500 people a week. There are probably 15,000 people in our mailing list," Filreis replies, on being asked what Writers House means now. "It's a small slice of what happens at the University. However, it is a symbol that, essentially, a house that some people squatted, survived, and thrives and has the word *writers* on Locust Walk. Imagine that—at the University of Pennsylvania, writers have a house. And it's amazing, if I'm standing out there on Locust Walk, to hear people come by and say, 'Wait, there's a house for writers?'"

2026 ALUMNI WEEKEND





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Calendar

ICA

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A World in the Making: The Shakers

Through Aug. 9

Morris Arboretum and Gardens

morrisarboretum.org

Open daily, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

July 11 Great Trees Tour

July 14 Under the New Moon:

Gentle Yoga

July 23 Yoga in the Treetops

Aug. 1–2 Magic Railway Weekend

Aug. 11 Under the New Moon:

Gentle Yoga

Aug. 27 Yoga in the Treetops

Sep. 5–6 Magic Railway Weekend

Penn Libraries

library.upenn.edu

The Time to Right all Wrongs: France, Haiti, and Philadelphia in a Revolutionary Age

Through Sep. 4

Celebrating the History of Medical Education at Penn

Through Nov. 9

Nursing the Revolution

Through Nov. 20

“My Soul is Anchored in the Lord”: A Story of Marian Anderson and Florence Price

Through Dec. 17

Penn Museum

penn.museum

July 11 Native Futurism by Holly

Wilson (artist talk)

World Stage

worldstage.live

July 9 Drew Nugent & The

Midnight Society: Hot Jazz

Thursdays

July 18 Anayka She

July 23 Drew Nugent & The

Midnight Society: Hot Jazz

Thursdays

July 25 Laugh the Pain Away

(Ken Jones Comedy)

July 30 Rosine (Mike Miz &

Forrest O'Connor)

Aug. 15 The CieL Experience

Above: Garden Railway.

Photo by Rob Cardillo courtesy Morris Arboretum and Gardens



Bird's Eye View

A collaborative meditation on birders and the fleeting objects of their affection.

Birds have been near the center of Yvonne Love GFA'94's family life for about as long as she can remember. If her father and stepmother weren't peering through binoculars, they were likely paging through bird guides in preparation. And "from the time I was little, I was in the field with them," Love says. "We'd get up at three o'clock in the morning so we could be someplace at dawn."

Whether they were counting yellow-throated vireos near their home in Oreland, Pennsylvania, or traveling to India in search of more exotic species, Love's parents kept detailed checklists memorializing their findings. These da-

ta-rich documents, whose margins bloom with ballpoint annotations in Naomi's cursive and Bill's script, serve as the base layers of an exhibition that could hardly ask for a more fitting venue: the house in Mill Grove, Pennsylvania, where John James Audubon was first inspired to draw and paint birds in the early 1800s.

"Field Notes: Learning to See" was born of a collaboration between Love and Deirdre Murphy GFA'00. Passing expanded reproductions of the checklists back and forth in an iterative process that the artists liken to the "call-and-response" of birds in a forest, Love and Murphy embellished each page with paper cuts,

paint, eggshells, fibers, and pins. With imagery ranging from pressed feathers and painted woodpeckers to abstract graphic renderings of migration data, the result is an homage to the role "citizen scientists" like Love's parents—not to mention Audubon himself—have long played in the collection and transmission of knowledge about the natural world.

Curated by Heather Moqtaderi, the National Audubon Society's senior coordinator of museums and collections (who formerly was associate curator at Penn's Arthur Ross Gallery), "Field Notes" will be on display at the John James Audubon Center in Mill Grove through August 16 before traveling to the Ekhert Art Gallery at Millersville University in Millersville, Pennsylvania (September–October) and the Heidi Lowe Gallery in Lewes, Delaware (February–April 2027).

A companion installation by Murphy enriches the viewing experience at the

John James Audubon Center. The large-scale oil paintings comprising “Home Making” present richly saturated renderings of bird nests—an aspect of avian life that Audubon depicted only occasionally in his monumental *Birds of America*.

Murphy has long been drawn to the theme of bird migration [“Arts,” Sep/Oct 2014] but turned her attention toward building and brooding during woodland walks at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. “It was March 2020, so the nest structures were still really visible be-



“Tension is holding all our homes together.”

cause the leaves hadn’t come out on the trees,” she recalls. At a time when “everybody was stuck at home,” these “tensegrity sculptures” spoke to her. “Robins definitely use some mud, but a lot of birds just use the sticks and twigs ... so it’s all tension that holds them together. So I was like, *Perfect. Tension is holding all our homes together.*”

Her explorations morphed into evocations of seasons, from the “fever dance” of a robin sculpting the concavity of a cup nest in spring, to a vireo quietly incubating eggs in summer camouflage, to a vacant robin’s nest in the crook of a smoke bush whose autumnal foliage glows with the warmth of sunrays permeating panes of stained glass. In another mode, Murphy shifts the perspective to a literal bird’s eye view: expressionistic visions of



forest scenes framed by the irregular edges of tree cavities that shelter owls and other tree-cavity dwellers, to suggest what a hemlock stand or firefly swarm looks like to a bird within.

Finally, Murphy’s “Herbarium” series offers a “more tangential” view of avian life. By ripping up her lawn some years back and cultivating native pollinator plants in its place, Murphy turned her little home patch into a pulsing locus of fireflies, warblers, and even hawks. In her print studio, she lays selected plant specimens on a plate coated with colored ink, then presses the assemblage against wa-

tercolor paper. From intricately veined calycanthus leaves to delicate larkspur fronds, and busy smoke bush branches to ghostly impressions of bee balm, these monoprints reward close inspection with surprising depth of detail.

“My hope is that the viewer might have an inward pause to reflect on themselves and how they live,” says Murphy. Even short of transforming a lawn into a bird sanctuary, “what small thing can I do? Could I perhaps turn my porch light off in the spring and fall when it’s migration season, so these poor little dears don’t break their necks?” —TP

Handle and Bowl

For Richard Ulevitch, the brilliance of African sculpture is distilled in carved spoons.

“There are two different kinds of collectors,” reckons Richard Ulevitch Gr’71. “There’s the hedge fund guy who has a very large bank account, finds an art consultant, and says, ‘Buy me some trophy art that I can put on my wall.’

“Then there are people like me,” he says, “who are really hunting for the objects that move them the most.”

Ulevitch, a Cleveland native who spent five years earning a PhD in biochemistry at Penn prior to a five-decade-plus career in life sciences at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California, cycled through a number of obsessions before landing on the one that would catalyze a museum exhibition and a lavishly photographed art book. As a kid he collected baseball cards and coins, along with rocks and minerals. During a postdoctoral year at the University of Minnesota, a chance meeting led to a fascination with tribal rugs from Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus. Over the next 15 or 20 years he bought, sold, and traded his way to a respectable collection—and a compendium of 19th- and 20th-century rug and textile books to rival any specialist library. As a young researcher at Scripps, he moonlighted teaching classes on rugs and textiles at the University of California, San Diego.

In 1986 he moved with his wife and children to Switzerland to spend a year learning new techniques in a Geneva laboratory. Trips to France and Belgium rekindled an interest in African art that had been sparked by visits to the Penn



Clockwise from top left: Anonymous Tsonga artist, South Africa; anonymous Dan or Wè artist, Ivory Coast or Liberia; anonymous Zulu artist, South Africa. (All late 19th–early 20th century.)



Museum during his graduate studies. The renowned Parisian art dealer Albert Loeb pointed him toward a handful of relevant galleries, and gradually Ulevitch became enthralled with 19th- and 20th-century African tribal sculpture. By the time he returned to Scripps, the stage was set for an auspicious encounter with a La Jolla resident named Jacques Hautelet, a Belgian national who was “one of the most knowledgeable people about Congo art probably in the world.”

Hautelet, a private dealer who supplied many museums with African objects, gave Ulevitch some memorable advice. “If I were you,” he told the scientist who decidedly lacked hedge-fund money, “one thing you should really look for are spoons. Because you’ll see that the sculpture in the spoon is no different than a mask or a figure. The same carvers that carve fantastic masks and figures, carve spoons—and there aren’t that many people looking for them.”

For the next 30 years, Ulevitch did. On work trips to Europe, he scoured galleries and auction houses, buying, selling, and trading until he ended up with “probably the largest collection of traditional African spoons that exists.”

Although he targeted spoons that were “made by one tribal group for their own use,” the objects he acquired were rarely, if ever, used for eating. They were mostly “ceremonial or prestige objects,” more likely to be used as “dance wands” or in social rituals.



“In Liberia or the Ivory Coast,” for instance, spoons nearly three feet in length would be carved for “the most important woman in a little village,” Ulevitch explains. “And when a visitor came to the village, they would fill the spoons with beans or rice—just sort of a welcoming thing, saying, *Yes, we’re happy to have you. You can eat with us.*”

Yet Ulevitch is quick to add that he is “actually not that interested in the anthropology part of all of this stuff.” What



moves him is the sheer artistry brought to bear on wood, copper, iron, and bone.

“Each one has an aesthetic appeal,” he says. “Their sculptor created these things with a certain amount of emotion and meaning, both to them and to the ultimate owner, whether it was owned by the whole tribe or an individual. And they come in all designs. ... Most people don’t know this, but in Nigeria [alone], they probably have 70 or 80 tribal groups that all had a carving tradition—and they were all different, extraordinarily different. From unbelievably realistic forms to some of the most abstract work that would make Henry Moore drool if he saw them. And he did drool, actually,” Ulevitch says about the 20th-century English abstract sculptor. “I mean, he did a lot of hand drawings of African art at the British Museum that definitely influenced his sculpture.”

The Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti took inspiration from African spoons, whose influence is also visible in the work of contemporary American artist Nick Cave. These and other connections are explored in *A Taste of Beauty: Spoons of*

Africa, authored by Bruno Claessens based on Ulevitch's collection, which featured in a pair of 2025 exhibitions at San Diego's Mingei International Museum and the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California.

For Ulevitch, nothing showcases the skill of a carver quite like a spoon. "You know, a statue stands on its own, one way or another," he observes. "A spoon actually has to be held. It has to have a certain balance. It has to have a certain ratio between where the bowl is, and where the handle is, and the decorative part, which is typically on the tops of the handles or on the back of the spoons." So in each one of them, he sees a bravura demonstration of "phenomenal artistry and skill."

He postulates that collectors and scientists share the same fundamental mindset. "You're a hunter. If you're a scientist, you hunt information and try to put it together into something that's coherent. If you're a collector, you hunt whatever you're collecting and try to put it together in a way that's coherent as well."

The same cannot exactly be said of his longtime spouse. About the urge to collect, Ulevitch says, "Either you have it or you don't. My wife is not a collector and still has a hard time, sometimes, coming to terms with the whole concept of collecting more than one object of the same kind."

But they've "worked out how to handle that," he says. "She told me our kids had to have shoes, when they were growing up, first. They had to have milk. So the needs of the family came first." Limited buying power also helped, as has the physical size of his African acquisitions, which range from a few inches to roughly three feet across. "They're mostly confined to a room I would call my office," he confides. And that is a not a permanent home, because Ulevitch recently donated his entire spoon collection to the Crocker Museum.

"Collecting is one thing," he says. "I can look at them every day, or friends can come in—but the whole point is to let the public see them, in the end." —TP

Trouble in Gotham

The 1980s trial that exposed a city riven by enmity, anxiety, and frantic anger.

Review by Julia M. Klein

The saga of Bernhard Goetz, an eccentric white engineer who shot and seriously injured four Black teenage boys in a New York subway car, is barely remembered today. But it loomed large four decades ago, a mass Rorschach test that elicited vehement reactions across the political spectrum.

Along with its legal aftermath, the 1984 shooting spawned celebratory songs and a Monopoly knockoff, in decidedly poor taste, called the Subway Vigilante Game. In the game, players represented by small pewter handguns "would race to survive a ride between Brooklyn and the Bronx," according to Elliot Williams C'98's *Five Bullets*, a lively account of the incident and the era. Contestants began with six—rather than the eponymous five—bullets and drew cards with instructions such as, "Cops help stop punks: ROLL AGAIN."

New York at the time was a different, more frightening place. Now, Williams writes, in many neighborhoods "one is far more likely to trip over a purebred labradoodle than a crack pipe." But in the 1980s anxiety about crime, on both the city's gritty streets and in its dank, graffiti-covered subways, was widespread—and justified by high rates of homicide and other violent crime.

Against that backdrop, the Goetz shooting and his subsequent trial took on a symbolic heft, Williams suggests. Seen more clearly, the facts of the case indicated that neither Goetz, whose past experiences and biases fueled his violent reaction, nor the boys, a Bronx



Five Bullets: The Story of Bernie Goetz, New York's Explosive '80s and the Subway Vigilante Trial that Divided the Nation
By Elliot Williams C'98
Penguin Press, 384 pages, \$32

crew with prior criminal records, deserved the mantle of heroism.

Williams resolves any ambiguity on that score. He also parses the somewhat confusing legal issues raised by the case. In particular, he focuses on the mutating and complex "reasonableness" standard critical to the argument of self-defense. Finally, he attempts to sketch a through-line between past and present, arguing for the relevance

of the Goetz case to contemporary debates on race, gun rights, and criminal justice.

A familiar face as a CNN legal analyst, Williams is well positioned to tell this story. The Penn art history major and Mask and Wig alum, who went on to earn degrees from both Columbia Law School and Columbia Journalism School, is a former federal prosecutor deeply versed in criminal law. As the Brooklyn-born son of Jamaican immigrants, he also understands the toll of racism, which, along with poverty, warped the lives of the troubled teenagers that Goetz targeted.

At the heart of the story is Goetz himself, a nerdy, divorced loner and longtime gun owner. Bullied as a child, he later survived at least one brutal mugging and may have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. He had Black and Latino friends and claimed not to be racist, but the racial epithets he uttered at a 1980 tenants' association meeting suggested otherwise. The insults amounted to "a bad choice of words," he told Williams in a recent phone interview, a characterization the author dismisses. "Racist words used about other races in a racist way are racist," William writes.

When 19-year-old Troy Canty approached Goetz in a crowded subway car and asked for \$5, Goetz could have declined. He could have moved away. Instead, he unsheathed a handgun and shot five bullets in quick succession, injuring all four boys. Darrell Cabey, the worst casualty, ended up paraplegic, with irreversible brain damage that left him with the intellectual capacity of a third grader.

Given the context, was the shooting legally justified? Was Canty “simply pan-handling,” as the boys later maintained? Or was the request a prelude to a violent mugging? Did Goetz reasonably fear that he was in danger? Would others have felt the same? Those were the central questions for two grand juries and the eventual trial jury.

As Williams notes, the four teenagers were hardly choir boys. Barry Allen had already served time for assault and been sentenced for grand larceny, and Cabey was awaiting trial on armed robbery charges. James Ramseur was later convicted of robbery and sexual assault in a particularly gruesome case. On the day of the shooting they were all headed downtown together, armed with screwdrivers, to steal coins from video arcade machines.

Goetz knew none of this. But in the subway, Williams writes, the teens were rowdy, “raising their voices, hanging on the bars, doing pull-ups, pounding on the seats, shadowboxing, and approaching other riders for matches.” Though they harmed no one, some passengers found their conduct alarming.

After the shooting, Goetz jumped out of the subway car, fled to New Hampshire, returned to his West Village apartment, then traveled to New England again. After ultimately surrendering to police, he offered a series of disordered confessions. Meanwhile, the media, led by the New York tabloids, were hyping the case, largely styling Goetz as a righteous avenger. *Newsday* columnist Les Payne, who was Black, was among the few who suggested that “the public’s warm embrace of Goetz

could almost exclusively be traced to Goetz’s and his victims’ races.”

Given the city’s mood, it took two tries before the Manhattan district attorney could secure grand jury indictments on the most serious charges of attempted murder, reckless endangerment, and assault. The 1987 trial didn’t go the prosecution’s way either.

The defense “was smooth in nudging the jury on race,” Williams writes. In Barry Slotnick, Goetz had a top-flight attorney who portrayed the shooting victims as “hooligans” and “punks.” In the end, Goetz was convicted only on an illegal gun-possession charge and served just over eight months in prison.

Williams, who appears to find the jury verdict legally defensible but morally questionable, tracked down many of those involved with the case, including the trial judge, reporters, lawyers, activists (including the Rev. Al Sharpton), and a subway eyewitness. Neither the shooting victims nor their relatives would speak to him. His detailed report on his conversation with Goetz makes the man seem both unhinged and defiantly unrepentant. “Those guys needed shooting,” Goetz tells Williams.

Why return to this story now?

Williams argues that, while crime is down in New York, much else remains unchanged. “A close look at Goetz’s case reminds us that we are still afraid, still haunted by America’s racist past (and present and future), and still very quick to kill strangers,” he writes. He offers the example of a 2023 subway tragedy: former Marine Daniel Penny’s fatal attack on a Black man, Jordan Neely, who was in the grip of a frightening psychotic episode. Penny was later acquitted of criminally negligent homicide.

But Williams also insists that societal norms have shifted. “Today Goetz’s victims would not have been reduced to caricatures; Goetz’s oddities would have been regarded with concern, not eye rolls,” he writes. And where Williams himself stands is clear from his epi-

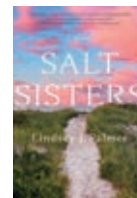
Briefly Noted



FROM LIFE ITSELF: Turkey, Istanbul, and a Neighborhood in the Age of Erdoğan

by *Suzy Hansen* C'99
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2026, \$30.00.)

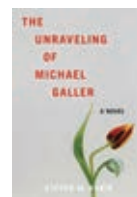
During a decade of reporting from Karagümrük, a working-class neighborhood in Istanbul, Hansen got to know many residents whose widely varying backgrounds and beliefs illuminate the reality of modern-day Turkey.



SALT SISTERS

by *Lindsey Palmer* C'05
(Lake Union Publishing, 2026, \$16.99.) Two sisters return to their childhood home on Cape Cod to confront their painful past in this

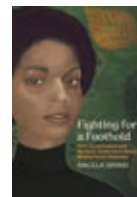
exploration of sisterhood, motherhood, and the courage it takes to forgive and let go.



THE UNRAVELING OF MICHAEL GALLER

by *Steven M. Rubin* W'83
(SparkPress, 2026, \$18.99.)

A psychological family drama about a teenager whose entanglement in an intense, complex new relationship exacerbates his obsession over his greatest fear: cancer.



FIGHTING FOR A FOOHOLD: How Government and Markets Undermine Black Middle-Class Suburbia

by *Angela Simms* Gr'19
(Russell Sage Foundation, 2026, \$39.95.)

A sociology and urban studies professor digs into the inequalities that persist between Black and white suburbs, like imbalances in the quality of schools, public spaces, and even drinking water.

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graph, excerpted from a 1904 New York Court of Appeals ruling: “The worst man has the right to live the same as the best, and no one may attack another because his general reputation is bad.”

Julia M. Klein, a frequent contributor to the *Gazette*, has been a three-time finalist for the National Book Critics Circle’s Nona Balakian Citation for Excellence in Reviewing.



A Home for Tango

Why a high school English teacher became a dance studio entrepreneur. ▶

On the first Sunday of every month, people in Charlotte, North Carolina—some of whom recently immigrated to the city from all over the world—gather at the Long Room, an events venue and tango club in the heart of the city.

They drink coffee, eat bacon and hash browns, and spend the day dancing with an instructor and with each other. The event, which attracts up to 70 people, has become so well known that participants have traveled from as far as Washington, DC, and Atlanta to be a part of it.

With the program now in its second year, not only is the crowd becoming proficient at tango, but they are also forming genuine friendships and building community.

“You know, some people go to church on Sundays,” says Matthew Seneca C’99, the club’s owner. “And then some people come to tango.”

Seneca believes the dance parties are an antidote to loneliness—something he’s experienced firsthand since discovering a passion for dance at Penn.

When Seneca first arrived at the University, he thought he wanted to be an actor. He grew up in Madison, New Jersey, where he had starred in high school productions of *South Pacific* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. He considered attending an acting conservatory but ultimately chose a more well-rounded academic path. “I was really attracted to the vibrancy and life of Penn,” he says. “It started when I visited as a high

school senior. I just fell in love with Locust Walk and all the different student groups advertising their shows, their projects, their plays.”

Seneca became involved in theater at Penn but discovered his passion for dancing the summer before his senior year. A swing band was playing on campus across from the Button, and a young woman asked him to be her partner. He loved it so much that he signed up for a swing dance class that summer. During his senior year he joined a new swing dance club called the West Philly Swingers that met in the basement of Hill House.

“Swing dancing became my entire social life,” he says. “It was wonderful. I met my first serious girlfriend through swing dancing.”

For Seneca, dancing was his hobby for the next 10 years. Professionally, after college, he worked as an administrative assistant to the executive director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, where he did everything from bookkeeping to grant writing to box office work. “I learned about the structure of nonprofit organizations,” he says. “It was also so fun to be embedded in the classical music scene of Philadelphia at the time.”

In 2007, he decided to transition into education. “It was a good intersection of skills I knew I would be good at, including creative writing and theater.” After attending the graduate school of education at Temple University, he moved to Charlotte, a rapidly growing city that was in des-

perate need of teachers.

“Over the phone I was able to get a very good job at a big public high school teaching English,” he says.

Charlotte had only one drawback: very little swing dancing. So he decided to try a new style that was popular in the city: the Argentine tango. He began training under an instructor from Argentina and was soon traveling to tango festivals around the world and to Buenos Aires to study more deeply. “I was dancing in the great dance halls of Argentina and taking classes and workshops from high-level dancers,” he says. “I just spent a long time learning the dance.” By the time the pandemic hit, he was teaching tango classes himself.

During the pandemic, he burned out on high school teaching. “I reached a point where I felt like I was no longer progressing in my career,” he says. “I was teaching AP English. I had the schedule I wanted. It was just rinse and repeat, and I was really having a self-crisis.” He resigned and focused on teaching dance full time, first virtually, and then from a small studio once in-person events resumed.

In 2023, he purchased a 2,800-square-foot space that had previously been the offices of a real estate company. He had a vision: Why not turn it into a dance school and community hub? He approached Sarah Hawkins, a former principal ballerina with Charlotte Ballet who was also teaching dance, about partnering.

The duo renovated the space, which already had a viewing balcony and outside courtyard, and installed a stage area, theater lighting, and a catering kitchen.

Now, the venue earns much of its revenue by renting to different groups, both artistic and corporate, looking to host events. “We have this lovely little area that can be a dressing room or a VIP space,” he says. “A small catering business is about to do a five-course dinner here. We had a big EDM DJ dance party the other day.”

The venue was booked every day in December, and Seneca is now pursuing his MBA at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte so he can focus more on the business side.

But at its core, the space is a home for tango. It houses Seneca’s tango school, Tango CLT, which hosts the monthly Sunday brunch party. It also offers tango classes taught by locals and visiting instructors, and a weekly Wednesday night dance party for people who want to unwind after work.

Seneca loves how the space attracts people from all nationalities and backgrounds. “Tango is the dance of immigrants,” he says. “It started in Buenos Aires, which was a port city. Over many generations you had the Spanish, enslaved people brought there, and then big influxes of German and Italian immigrants.”

“Everyone can dance tango,” he adds. “And I know it makes people happy.”

—Alyson Krueger C’07

The Nation's Storyteller

How a former real estate developer built a tourism company that brings American history to life.



Belland says that the tea party recreation is “the best indication of where tourism has to go.”

A crowd has gathered at Boston's Old South Meeting House. Egged on by a fiery speaker, they're getting angrier by the minute. One man stands up, waving his fist. “Here, here,” another yells. “Huzzah!” respond the rest. Rising to their feet, the horde rushes out to nearby Griffin's Wharf.

Exhorted to dump bales of tea into the water, the participants—accompanied by costumed actors—are actually tourists reenacting the Boston Tea Party, standing on the same spot where the iconic uprising took place in December 1773.

Together, everyone moves onto a gangway to board the *Eleanor* and the *Beaver*, full-

scale replicas of the 18th-century sailing vessels carrying the tea. By the time they enter a nearby museum to further explore the events leading up to the Revolutionary War, the spilled “tea” will have been hoisted up and readied to be re-tossed for the next show.

This immersive experience is offered by the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, one of the star holdings in the portfolio of Historic Tours of America (HTA). Billing itself as “The Nation's Storyteller,” HTA was founded in 1980 by Chris Belland W'70 and Edwin

Born in Miami, Belland became interested in business as a youngster, taking on gigs washing cars, mowing lawns, and selling holiday cards, and later watching his father's successful career in real estate. After graduating from Wharton with a degree in economics, he returned to Miami and worked as a real estate broker. In 1973, after visiting Key West for a weekend, he wound up staying there.

“The whole town was in an economic depression,” Belland, now 78, recalls, “and it was years away from hitting its stride as a tourist destination.”

He soon ran into Swift, who was buying up buildings around the city, and joined him in acquiring and developing a batch of undervalued Civil War-era and 19th-century commercial structures on the city's main drag, Duval Street.

O. Swift III, as an outgrowth of their real estate development activities in Key West, Florida. Their privately held company now operates nine trolley tours and 15 museums and attractions in cities across the country.

“The traveling public is insatiable when it comes to the fascinating stories behind what happened and who it happened to,” Belland says, adding that the tea party recreation is “the best indication of where tourism has to go. There's not a kid who goes through it and doesn't have the time of his life, while also coming out with a clearer understanding of the sacrifices and heroism involved. You can't get that any other way but by participating.”

“Living in Philadelphia for four years during the early '70s certainly had a tremendous impact on me wanting to become involved in historic buildings,” he says. “Much of Society Hill had recently been restored and I thought the wonderful buildings down there were just magical.”

Over time, the duo became the largest property owners on the island, according to Belland, and played a significant role (along with Jimmy Buffet, no doubt) in its eventual resurgence as a vacation destination. In 1978, looking to better link their buildings—and the then-struggling tenants who had opened up stores in them—to popular

Mallory Square, they bought Old Town Trolley, a local operation whose sole honky-tonk vehicle had been jerry-rigged from a cut-down bread truck hauling a single-boat trailer outfitted with a plywood platform and park benches.

Clearly, an upgrade was in order. “After seeing antique-style trolleys in the Orange Bowl Parade, we purchased six from the manufacturer and reopened the Old Town Trolley in 1980,” says Belland. “On our first day of operations, with 13 employees, we carried 34 passengers. By the end of our first year, we wound up carrying 77,000 with a new tour concept we called The Continuous Loop Tour. It’s now referred everywhere as Hop On, Hop Off, but we were the first.” Eventually, HTA would bring its trolley tour operations to Boston, San Diego, Savannah, St. Augustine, Nashville, San Antonio, Charleston, and Washington, DC. (Contractual issues derailed two short-lived versions in Miami and Philadelphia.)

HTA made its initial foray into the attraction business when Key West leased it the operations of the city aquarium. In 1994 the company opened the Key West Shipwreck Treasure Museum, where actors, videos, and artifacts merge to unravel the story of the wrecking crews that manned observation towers to spot disasters in the making, then scrambled down to be the first on the scene to help save lives—and to call dibs on the salvaged treasures. To capture

that energy, visitors are encouraged to climb to the top of the museum’s replica of a wooden 65-foot lookout.

The group gradually built a collection of attractions, some of them leased from government entities, others bought outright. HTA susses out the properties’ compelling stories and writes dramatic scripts that bring them to life with the aid of in-house cast members and exhibit designers. The company’s acquisitions range from Harry S. Truman’s presidential limo and a moonshine still to rare treasures like the only tea chest known to have survived the Boston Tea Party and a first-edition poetry volume by Phillis Wheatley, the first enslaved person to publish a book of poetry.

When it took over the operating lease for the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, which had been around since the Bicentennial, “we could see that there was a tremendous lack of detail that could be explored,” Belland says. “People won’t put up anymore with reading a bunch of text panels.” In 2014, HTA invested \$25 million into the museum to help customers “be drawn into a situation where they’re a part of things, to feel like they’re the spark igniting the event.”

The company now employs 1,500 people—including several executives drawn from the two partners’ families—and more than 4 million annual visitors flock to its trolley tours and attractions. “It’s been a wild ride,” Belland says, “that’s required a lot of effort and

JOHN TERNUS EAS’97

From Penn Engineering to Running Apple

On September 1, John Ternus EAS’97 will become Apple’s next CEO, succeeding Tim Cook, who will transition into the role of executive chairman of the tech giant’s board of directors after a 15-year run as CEO.

Ternus joined Apple’s product design team in 2001, becoming a vice president of hardware engineering in 2013 and a senior vice president of hardware engineering in 2021.

According to an Apple news release in April, Ternus has been instrumental in the introduction of multiple new product lines, including iPad and AirPods, as well as many generations of products across iPhone, Mac, and Apple Watch. He also helped lead the company’s efforts in making

Apple products more resilient and in reducing the carbon footprint of its products. By 2030, Apple plans to be carbon neutral across its entire supply chain and every device sold.

“John Ternus has the mind of an engineer, the soul of an innovator, and the heart to lead with integrity and with honor,” Cook said in a statement. “He is a visionary whose contributions to Apple over 25 years are already too numerous to count, and he is without question the right person to lead Apple into the future.”

A former varsity swimmer at Penn, Ternus returned to his alma mater to deliver the keynote address at Penn Engineering’s 2024 graduation ceremony at the Palestra. In that speech, he recalled feeling intimidated when he first arrived at Apple—just his second job out of college—but rose through the ranks by learning from others. “Always assume you’re as smart as anyone else in the room. But never assume that you know as much as they do,” he told the graduates. “With this mindset, you’ll find the confidence you need to push forward but, more importantly, the humility to ask questions and learn.”

In a LinkedIn post, Vijay Kumar, the Nemirovsky Family Dean of Penn Engineering, noted that he worked with Ternus on his senior project when he and team members designed and built a passive, head-controlled feeding aid for quadriplegics. “John’s journey from Penn Engineering to leading one of the world’s most influential technology companies is a powerful reflection of the kind of leadership, curiosity, and technical excellence we strive to cultivate in our students,” wrote Kumar, who has been on Penn’s faculty since 1987. “I have no doubt he will continue to shape the future in meaningful and responsible ways.” —DZ



passion.” And as Americans reflect on their country’s beginnings and celebrate its 250th birthday, he recognizes a special opportunity to “reawaken visitors with a new appreciation for the ideas behind the nation’s founding;”

Belland says. “We operate from a deep-rooted belief that without telling this story in a fashion that people remember and cherish, Americans and the world will begin to forget what it took to become the United States.” —*JoAnn Greco*

“The desire to learn and to share still goes on!”

— Beverly Mones Haas Ed’52

1952

Beverly Mones Haas Ed’52 writes, “In reading through the Alumni section, I noticed none of my peers were represented. The circle has narrowed, but I know there are still some of us around who just might respond if they see ‘Ed’52.’ I married **Joseph S. Haas C’50** (ROTC) and we were part of the Korean ‘conflict.’ He kept getting deployed to Korea and I kept following the ship when stateside. Joe was a successful real estate developer while I was the mom of four. Sadly, Joe died suddenly in ’73 and I continued being mom (and dad) to the children. After the children were grown and after trying substitute teaching, I found a new niche. Because of a strong interest in craft art, I fell into the role of guest curator for an annual showing of ritual Judaic craft at the National Museum of American Jewish History (now the Weitzman). This was a 10-year gig, which I terminated when my younger daughter was diagnosed with lupus. My life then became ‘on call’ for her, plus I took on a sleepy chapter of the Lupus Foundation of America, which is now the LFA Pennsylvania Delaware Valley Region. Over the years, while in Florida during the winter, I somehow developed weekly programs for my fellow residents, something I am still doing at my current condo in the Philly suburbs. The desire to learn and to share still goes on!”

Dr. Jack Rubin C’52 D’55 recently turned 96 years old. His son **Douglas B. Rubin WG’98** shares that he “reads voraciously but, because of his hearing, doesn’t do two-way communication well (he never really got the hang of email or texting). He has been married to Lenore (née Borzak) since 1987, has two sons and two stepsons. Together, he and Lenore have nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.”

1956

John Craner W’56 “was among those walking at the front of the Parade of Classes in celebration of his 70th Reunion during Alumni Weekend,” writes his daughter **Jill Craner Stolz C’82**. “I proudly accompanied him, representing our family, which includes a multigenerational legacy of Penn alumni on both sides (the late **Mitchel Craner W’59**, **Matthew Craner C’94 L’97**, **Katie Greenspan Craner C’98**, **Jake Craner C’28**, the late **Dr. Samuel Gilbert C1927 M1930**, the late **Dr. Donald Gilbert M’59**, **Deborah Gilbert Smith Nu’61**, **Susan Gilbert Cohen C’83**, and me). So it should not come as a surprise that Penn pride has been an integral part of my life. One of my early memories is of my younger brother and I, dressed in our red-and-blue finery, marching down Locust Walk for our dad’s 30th Reunion. One of my most treasured photos is of my grandfather, my dad, and me taken in the upper Quad where we all lived as freshmen. And how lucky am I to have had my parents and two sets of grandparents at my graduation, a third-generation Quaker! At 91 years young, my father has not lost his enthusiasm for Penn sports and still reads the *Gazette* from cover to cover each month. He is fortunate to be physically fit enough to lead the pack and is still mentally sharp as ever. He is an avid reader and has always been active, only recently giving up golf for gardening. His 60-plus year career as an attorney in Union County, New Jersey, where he and my mother raised our family, earned him a legacy as a hardworking and successful professional who never compromised his high standards of integrity. As much as going to this Reunion meant to my dad, it also reinforced my own appreciation for the value of a Penn

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education that was modeled for me as a small child and will become an important milestone to treasure in the future.”

1960

Peter Buck Feller C’60 has authored a new book, following his journey to uncover information about his father, who disappeared in Moscow in 1938, when Peter was just six months old. *The Last Gasp of William Schwarzfeller: Soviet Espionage and the Cruelties of Stalin’s Gulags* is an emotional, suspenseful tale of discovering that his dad, an agent for the Red Army Intelligence, was imprisoned and starved to death in one of Stalin’s infamous gulags in 1943. Peter wrote an essay on hunger strikes for the *Gazette* in 2023, when the book was still in progress (“Alumni Voices,” Jan|Feb 2023).

J. Edward Pinckney GLA’60 has been inducted into the Hilton Head Island Hall of Fame, established by the Rotary Club of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Ed practiced landscape architecture throughout the southeastern US and in five foreign countries. He was a professor in Clemson University’s School of Architecture (1961–1972), where he received a bachelor of architecture degree in 1958 and was later inducted into the university’s College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities Hall of Fame in 2017. He relocated to Hilton Head Island in 1972, keeping offices in both Hilton Head and in Charleston. The induction announcement called Ed the “Father of Modern Landscape Architecture in South Carolina.” Ed credited Penn professor Ian L. McHarg with being “instrumental in [my] practice as well as the receiving of these honors and many other local and national design awards.”

Barbara Ruch G'60, a professor emeritus at Columbia University and director emeritus of Columbia's Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies, retired from teaching in 1999. She is currently also the director emeritus of the Medieval Japanese Studies Institute in Kyoto, Japan, founded in 2000. Her latest collaborative book, *Mugai Nyodai (1223–1298): The Woman Who Opened Zen Gates* (2024), was awarded the Aoyama Nao Prize for the best book in Women's History for 2025. It is a bilingual book in both Japanese and English. Her essay in it is titled "Righting Wrongs: The Joys of Unraveling the Story of Nyodai's Life."

1961

Bob Fiebach W'61 L'64 reports that he recently retired from the practice of law after more than 60 years in private practice. Bob, who served as president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association from 1993 to 1994 and received the Alumni Award of Merit from Penn Carey Law in 1994, spent the last 30 years at the Cozen O'Connor law firm in Philadelphia. In March of this year, Bob received the Judge Learned Hand Award from the American Jewish Committee for a lifetime of service to his profession and the community. The keynote address was given by former Penn trustees chair **David Cohen L'81 Hon'21**. Bob resides in Philadelphia with his wife, **Betsy Carlton Fiebach SW'96 CGS'03**.

Jack Harley ME'61 see **Paul Wellener IV ME'84**.

1962

Robert W. Pons C'62 celebrated his 85th birthday last year in Paris, among people whose friendships extended back 65 years. In an attempt to acquire proper use of the French language, he spent his junior year abroad at the Sorbonne University in Paris. This helped him land his first full-fledged job with Texaco Oil Company in 1965. At that time the company was hiring Americans with French language fluency for their expanding marketing program in French-speaking Africa. Robert also holds a master's degree (1964) from Columbia's School of International Affairs. After 20 years in the oil industry, he joined the State Department's Foreign Service and served 20 years overseas, beginning in West Africa, China, and then Southeast Asia. His last

posting was as deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy to the Sultanate of Brunei. Robert retired from government service in 2005, after which he held several short-term assignments with the US State Department and a front-line travel organization geared to senior travelers. He now divides his retirement time between McLean, Virginia, and Bangkok, Thailand.

1964

Stuart Resor C'64 writes, "After leaving Penn in 1964, I eventually reached San Diego. ... Once in San Diego I immediately began visiting the architects listed in the *Yellow Pages* and soon I had a great work opportunity with Dick Lareau, a younger architect with loads of work for me. I asked him for a \$25 advance on my pay as I was broke. He was OK with that. My drawings from the Penn architecture classes came in handy, and he said he had never seen such a quality of drawings before! I was to spend about another 50 years there in California and I have no regrets for that. Now Bonnie and I are very happily in Suffolk, Virginia, and just joined the Penn Club here."

1965

Rick Williams C'65 is host of the *Create the Future with Rick Williams* podcast (RickWilliamsLeadership.com/podcast). Drawing on themes from his leadership guidebook, *Create the Future*, guests share their stories about making difficult decisions for the organizations they lead. In addition to his writing and keynote speaking, Rick serves on the board of directors of several technology companies. He recently gave a talk to New England Penn alumni on his experience taking nonmilitary supplies into Ukraine in 2025. He also shares that he raced his J/130 sailboat *CHARIAD* in the Newport Bermuda Race in June, which covers 636 miles of ocean, from Newport, Rhode Island to Bermuda. Sailing from Marblehead, Massachusetts, Rick has won many local and regional regattas.

1967

Eleanor Hubbard CW'67 GFA'71 writes, "My one-person exhibit, 'Menagerie of Marvels,' opens August 21 at the Martha's Vineyard Museum in Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts. Through colorful portraits of 12

extremely fortunate creatures—from an ox to a lobster—my exhibit explores the mystery of serendipity in oil, watercolor, and other media. The exhibit runs through January 17. The opening party is August 21, 5:30–7 p.m. on the museum's lawn. All Penn people are welcome." View a sampling of Eleanor's paintings and connect with her through her website, eleanorhubbard.com.

1968

Laura Lucia Hayman HUP'68 Nu'70 GNu'75 Gr'82, former Penn Nursing faculty, was recognized as a Living Legend in Massachusetts Nursing by the American Nurses Association Massachusetts. This award honors "nurses who have made significant contributions to the nursing profession at the state, national, or global levels. [It also] recognizes nurses who inspire others, demonstrate creativity, and pioneer innovative practices, paving the way for future generations of nurses." Laura is a professor of nursing at the University of Massachusetts Boston, where she is former associate dean and former vice provost.

1969

Fred Price WG'69 has written a new novel under the pseudonym David Hirshberg. *Crossing the Bronx* is a 1950s retelling of the story of Jacob and Esau from Genesis. From the publisher Fig Tree Books: "Set against the high-stakes drama of urban renewal in New York City, it's a perfect fit for readers who love deeply atmospheric, character-driven narratives." Read more about it and his other books at his author website, davidhirshberg.com.

1971

M. Stuart Madden C'71, a retired law professor at Pace University, has authored a new book with Cambridge Scholars Publishing, *Myth, Folklore and Ancient Ethics*. "Mankind has found its inner and external understanding of life through imagination, observation and memory," he writes. "In both preliterate and later times, moral, ethical, and religious teachings were brought to bear on social groups through myth, folktale, and religion. ... This work includes a representative selection of written and unwritten stories offered from 12 regions in each of the six habitable conti-

nents from Polar Kamchatka to Africa's Cape of Good Hope. Separate chapters are devoted to Amerind Flood Origin narratives, Gaelic Irish and Scottish Folklore, and Rabbinical Glossators of Hebraic Folklore." During his time at Penn, Stuart was editor-in-chief of *The Daily Pennsylvanian* and a 1971 Spade Award recipient.

Elaine Simon GEd'71 see **Ariel Bierbaum C'00**.

1973

Seth Bergmann GEE'73 completed the sprint triathlon in Riverwinds, New Jersey, on April 26, finishing in second place in the men's 70-plus age group.

Joseph E. Murphy L'73 has been awarded the Lifetime Achievement in Compliance Award by *Compliance Week*. Joe is cofounder of one of the world's top online compliance training firms, Integrity Interactive, which is now part of SAI Global. He is also the former editor in chief for the Society for Corporate Compliance & Ethics' *Compliance and Ethics Professional* and currently serves as editor of *Compliance and Ethics: Ideas & Answers*. He has done compliance work on six continents.

1974

Lennox E. Montrose W'74 writes, "Thanks and appreciation to Class of 1974 officers **Susan Danilow C'74 G'74**, **Harve Hnatiuk EE'74**, **Nancy Lesser Lerner CW'74**, **Peter Sgro C'74**, **Joe Glantz C'74**, and **Rochelle Rabin CW'74** for allowing me the privilege, honor, and prestige to be Class of 1974 flag bearer at the University's 270th Commencement ceremony. **Glenn Bryan C'74 SW'76** walked with me; accompanied vicariously by **Sherry Jones Thorne CW'74**, **Ruth Price CW'74**, **Connie Johnson CW'74**, **Marsha L. Allen CW'74**, **Steven Thorne W'74**, **Robert Pearman W'74**, **Denis Elton Cochran-Fikes C'74 WG'79**, **Craig Taylor C'74**, **Albert Cadogan C'74**, **Martin Bowman C'74**, and **Scott Taper CE'74**. Thanks also to the late **J. Folwell Scull Jr. Ed1928 GEd1937 Hon'54** (a former Penn track captain and headmaster of Poly Prep in Brooklyn) and Mrs. Adele Wyeth Scull for allowing me to proudly wear Mr. Scull's classic UofP necktie to mark the auspicious occasion, which coincided with the 250th

anniversary of the independence of the United States of America."

Peter Ricciardi C'74, a profitability strategist, business advisor, and speaker, has authored a new book, *Mind Shift. Profit Lift: Rewiring Your Entrepreneurial Brain for Greater Profitability, Growth and Staying Power*. From the book's press materials: "Drawing on decades of real-world experience in entrepreneurship, operations, and leadership, Ricciardi challenges long-held assumptions about focus, pricing, margins, efficiency, and people. ... The book argues that better outcomes come from reframing how leaders think about customers, costs, value, priorities, and growth."

Edward Silverman C'74 writes, "My short story collection *Your Only Best Hope* will be published on August 11 by High Frequency Press. I publish as E. G. Silverman. Advance praise for the book includes this quote from author Brian Morton: 'Each of these witty, moving, and morally complex stories is as rich and packed with surprises as a novel. A deeply satisfying book, and a remarkable debut.'" More details are available on Edward's website, EGSilverman.com.

1975

Lenny Gold C'75 is the executive producer of *Blind Spot* (blindspotmovie.com), a documentary about campus antisemitism both before and after October 7, 2023, and what can be done about it. It features interviews with more than two dozen students from schools across the US. *Blind Spot* is the winner of the 2026 Religion Communicators Council Award of Excellence. To date, it is estimated that *Blind Spot* has been seen by 350,000 people online, on JBS TV broadcasts, and in person. Lenny writes, "In their own words, it tells the story from the perspective of undergraduates on the front lines of a modern-day civil rights movement, who have experienced and fought against this hatred. The film bears witness to their bravery in the face of extreme hostility, indifference, and efforts to silence them and erase their Jewish identity while too many school administrators fail to take action." Lenny is also "a retired attorney and erstwhile jazz pianist, an avocation which [I] practiced at Penn and to which [I am] returning now that [I am] spending

less time on *Blind Spot* (of whose soundtrack [I am] particularly proud)."

1976

Michael P. Malloy L'76 shares that "on Monday evening, April 27, the students in [my] Law and Literature course at the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law did a staged reading of Sophocles' *Antigone*. (It's sort of an oral final exam.) They were met with applause and cheers by the audience that filled the room. *Antigone* explores legal prohibitions that confront a person's sense of their ethical responsibility to do the right thing. After two trials that condemn Antigone's efforts to bury her rebellious brother's corpse, most of the main characters die by their own hands rather than accept the law's rulings."

1977

Sean P. Colgan C'77, a rower in the US Rowing Hall of Fame and the Penn Athletics Hall of Fame and a USA Olympic rower and coach, coached at the 2026 Winter Paralympics in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, in March. He coached two Nordic sit skiers from El Salvador. This was El Salvador's first ever team at the Winter Paralympics.

1980

Melanie A. Katzman C'80 shares this remembrance of her friend **Steve Schwartzberg C'80**, who died December 10 ("Obituaries," this issue). She writes, "Steve was an inspiring and unconventional scholar of body and mind, healing and death. His life was marked by contrasts. Steve was a member of Mask and Wig and continued performing with other Mask and Wig alumni in the comedy troupe Mixed Nuts. Following graduation, he worked as a stripper, waiter, and copywriter for the Franklin Mint. He later earned a PhD in clinical psychology from UMass Amherst, where his cutting-edge research during the AIDS epidemic became the basis for his 1996 book *A Crisis of Meaning: How Gay Men Are Making Sense of AIDS*. He also authored the seminal *Casebook of Psychological Disorders: The Human Face of Emotional Distress*, which is still widely used by psychology departments across the US. Steve maintained a clinical psychology practice in the Boston area and held an adjunct faculty

position at Harvard. He left this all to become a global nomad, living and working around the world pursuing alternative modes of personal growth, including months' long meditation retreats, studying sacred medicines, and facilitating gay men's self-acceptance and erotic healing through Body Electric, where he held a leadership role. Steve wrote and spoke extensively on subjects many avoided, in particular death and dying. His essays—including contributions to *The Pennsylvania Gazette*—are collected at SteveSchwartzberg.com. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Steve launched an online course, *Unmasking Mortality*, to help people meet impermanence and death with courage and curiosity. Within months, Steve (a nonsmoker) was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. Over the next four years, Steve taught hundreds, incorporating learnings from his own death journey. He died at home, surrounded by friends, listening to a playlist he had curated for the moment. Many people viewed Steve's teachings as his greatest gift, and yet he has also created the Steven S. Schwartzberg C'80, Ph.D. Endowed Fund at the Perelman School of Medicine, specifically to help low-income and first-generation medical students (donations can be made at tinyurl.com/SchwartzbergFund.)"

1981

David Cohen L'81 Hon'21 see **Bob Fiebach W'61 L'64**.

J. Noel Hubler C'81 Gr'95 has authored a new book with the University of North Carolina Press, *Ashoka: Becoming the Dharma King*. He writes, "The book treats the reign of the third-century B.C.E. Indian king Ashoka and treats issues of the roles of religion and government, women in religion and society, and nonviolence in ancient India. It includes new translations from Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, and Greek texts."

1982

Lisa DePaulo C'82, an investigative journalist, was recently interviewed on HarmonyTALK podcast about her career, beginning with a call from John F. Kennedy Jr. she almost ignored. It took a second call to convince her it was real. She shares what it was like to work with JFK Jr. as her editor for *George* magazine and discusses her ca-

reer shaped by instinct, access, and a willingness to ask direct questions. Listen at tinyurl.com/lisadepaulo.

Dr. Paul L. Kimmel GM'82 has been awarded the Harriet P. Dustan Award for Outstanding Work in Science as Related to Medicine by the American College of Physicians. Paul is a senior nephrologist and clinical investigator who recently retired as senior adviser at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. He is a clinical professor emeritus of medicine at George Washington University and previously held faculty positions at Penn and George Washington, where he directed a laboratory focused on renal physiology, mineral metabolism, and immune regulation in dialysis patients.

Jill Craner Stolz C'82 see **John Craner W'56**.

1983

Lisa Learner GFA'83 shares that one of her paintings has been enlarged and permanently installed in the waiting room of the newly reconstructed Ardmore SEPTA station, a station she commuted through for several years while living in Ardmore. "The Letter" depicts a woman standing at the original train station at that location, reading a letter as she awaits a train. The original painting is in the permanent collection of the Woodmere Art Museum in Chestnut Hill. Lisa's artwork is owned by several local hospitals, universities, and educational institutions in this country, as well as in Japan and Canada. Lisa is also showing a painting in the juried "Democracy: United We Stand" exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art now through July 30. She writes, "This exhibit showcases works of art that visually reflect the concept of maintaining democracy, as part of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of our country." Lisa's website is lisalearner.com.

Samuel E. Navarro WG'83 is the author of *Gödel and the Incomplete Proof: Conversations on Truth, Mystery, and the Answers Beyond Reason*. From the publisher, Amplify Publishing: "His debut work of imaginative philosophy brings the logician Kurt Gödel into fictional conversations with history's greatest thinkers. It's an imaginative, deeply thought-provoking

journey which urges readers to explore paradox, faith, and the mysteries that logic alone cannot resolve."

1984

Fred al-Nakib GFA'84 see **Nancy Bea Miller C'85**.

Arun Jain GAR'84 GCP'84 has released a new book from Routledge, *Reframing Cities for Resilience: Embracing Complex & Uncertain Futures*. He writes, "The book has two essential premises. First, we are not looking at urban complexities and their related disciplines comprehensively enough. Second, we do not need to predict the future in order to stay resilient to futures we cannot know. It is written for a wide audience, from the professional and the academic to decision makers, stakeholders, and anyone interested in the nature of cities." Arun is an urban designer, urban strategist, and a Fulbright Specialist with experience in over 165 cities across 46 countries and the UN. He is a fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Paul Wellener IV ME'84 received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business. The dean of Tepper and the Alumni Board recognized Paul at his 40th reunion in May for his achievements during his 35-year career with Deloitte (from which he retired in 2024 as a vice chair), as well as his continued support of the school through recruiting, speaking, fundraising, and alumni leadership. Paul writes, "In retirement, I continue to be active with two private companies (Arkestro Incorporated and StoryFlight Labs), and three nonprofit boards in the Cleveland area (JumpStart, University Circle, and the Peninsula Foundation). Coincidentally, the Peninsula Foundation also has another alum—**Jack Harley ME'61**—on the board. Jack and my father, **Paul Wellener III EE'61**, graduated together from Penn in 1961; both were engineering graduates and brothers at Phi Delta Theta. Lastly, I often get together with my siblings, **Tim Wellener EAS'87 W'87**, **Andy Wellener MTE'89**, and **Barrie Wellener C'92**."

1985

Nancy Bea Miller C'85 exhibited a selection of her new paintings at a show in June at F.A.N. Gallery in Philadelphia. She

shares that F.A.N.'s gallery director, **Fred al-Nakib GFA'84**, is also a Penn alum.

Lee Passarella G'85 Gr'86 writes, "My noir crime novel *In the Deep* is now available as an ebook on Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com. Set in Philadelphia in 1959, the novel explores ideas of justice—and injustice—on the cusp of the Civil Rights era."

1986

Barbara Vega C'86 has been appointed senior philanthropic advisor at Save the Children.

1987

Maureen Corrigan Gr'87, a professor of literary criticism at Georgetown University, received an honorary degree from her undergraduate alma mater, Fordham University, at this year's commencement. Maureen, who graduated from Fordham with a B.A. in English in 1977 and went on to receive her M.A. and PhD from Penn, was recognized for her multifaceted career as an author, scholar, Georgetown professor, and book critic. She has been an occasional reviewer for the *Gazette* and was profiled in the magazine after the publication of her book *So We Read On: How The Great Gatsby Came to Be and Why It Endures*, about F. Scott Fitzgerald's most popular novel, *The Great Gatsby* ["The Greatest," Nov|Dec 2014].

Brian Esler C'87, a partner at Miller Nash LLP, has been invited to join the mediation and arbitration panels of the Washington Arbitration and Mediation Service (WAMS). As a panel member, he will serve as a neutral third party in both mediation and arbitration for disputes brought to WAMS.

Hon. Risa Vetri Ferman C'87 has been elected to a second 10-year term on the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. She is currently serving in the court's Criminal Division. In March, she began her term as chair of the Judicial Conduct Board (JCB) of Pennsylvania, an independent board within the judicial branch of the Commonwealth government, responsible for reviewing, investigating, and, where warranted, prosecuting complaints of judicial misconduct. She was appointed to the JCB by Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro and elected chair by her colleagues.

1988

AKaiser C'88 shares more news about her translation of Catalan poet Anna Gual's work, *Unnameable*: "The Poetry Society of America invited me to contribute an essay on my translation experience for their 'In Their Own Words' series (tinyurl.com/kaisertranslation). *Unnameable* was part of the winter's-long Poets House Showcase, and I read at the culminating Showcase Community Reading. In addition, my English translation of Anna's 'Renec (Profanity)' was Poem of the Day with *Poetry Daily* at poems.com on March 20, 2026 (<http://poems.com/poem/profanity>)."

1989

Hon. Daniel E. Will C'89 was sworn in as the 113th associate justice on the New Hampshire Supreme Court, following Governor Kelly Ayotte's nomination. Daniel previously served as an associate justice on the New Hampshire Superior Court as well as New Hampshire's first solicitor general, prior to which he spent 22 years in private practice in Manchester, New Hampshire.

1990

Dr. Dana C. Covey GM'90 has been honored with the 2026 Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation (OREF) Clinical Research Award. According to the press materials, he was recognized for "30 years of study on how team preparation, logistics, and far-forward patient treatment have led to improved outcomes for battlefield musculoskeletal injuries and reduced mortality." Covey is a combat veteran who spent 40 years in the US Navy, an orthopedic surgeon, and a professor of orthopedic surgery at University of California San Diego. The press materials continue, "Based on the experience of Dr. Covey and colleagues combined with ongoing studies and research by others, the US military surgical teams made changes to the strategies, systems, and equipment to reduce the extent of combat injuries."

Barry E. Moscovitz C'90 was sworn in on January 20 as the director of the Office of Administrative Law and the chief administrative law judge for the State of New Jersey.

1992

Dr. Shanda McManus C'92, a family physician, has released her debut memoir,

Brother Epistles, with Split/Lip Press. It is an epistolary essay collection written to her younger brother, Monir, who didn't "make it out" of their North Philly neighborhood and died just before his 21st birthday. The book parallels Monir's story with Shanda's journey to becoming a doctor.

Dr. Beth Warshawsky Ricanati C'92 made challah bread every night for over a decade and it transformed her life. Now she shares how the weekly ritual can manage stress in her new book, *The Braided Prescription: Seven Practices for Living Well from the Ancient Ritual of Making Challah*. Find out more about her and her book at bethricanati.md.com.

1993

Derek M. Stikeleather C'93, a partner and chair of the Appellate and Critical Motions Practice Group at the law firm Goodell DeVries, has been honored with the 2026 Industry Defender Award by the Medical Professional Liability Association. The award honors defense attorneys in recognition of their exceptional and outstanding lifelong contributions to defending physicians, other healthcare professionals, and institutions while supporting medical professional liability insurers.

1994

Jennifer A. Brandt L'94, a Philadelphia attorney and chair of Cozen O'Connor's Family Law Group, has been named to the list of Top 500 Family Law attorneys in the nation by *Lawdragon*. She has also been elected chair of the American Bar Association Family Law Section. In this role she oversees nearly 11,000 lawyers, associates, and law student members worldwide.

1995

Jim Downs C'95 is coeditor of a new book in the series History in the Headlines from the University of Georgia Press. *U.S. History at the 250th: From the Revolution to the History Wars* was released this year in honor of the nation's semiquincentennial. It features discussions with historians such as Annette Gordon-Reed (author of *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*), along with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones (author of *The 1619 Project*).

1996

Joshua Deringer C'96 has been reelected to the board of Faegre Drinker. Joshua is an investment management partner and leads the firm's retail alternatives fund team.

Betsy Carlton Fiebach SW'96 CGS'03 see **Bob Fiebach W'61 L'64**.

1998

Douglas B. Rubin WG'98 see **Dr. Jack Rubin C'52 D'55**.

Dr. Dana Suskind GM'98, a professor of surgery and pediatrics at the University of Chicago, has authored *Human Raised: Nurturing Connection, Curiosity & Lifelong Learning in the Age of AI*. Publisher Dutton describes it as "a timely, urgent guide to parenting in the age of artificial intelligence—and protecting what matters most in childhood." Find more information on her website, humanraised.org.

1999

Dr. Kim Einhorn CGS'99, an obstetrician-gynecologist who has been serving patients for over 20 years, has opened a new practice in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, exclusively for women in perimenopause and menopause. The MP Collective is "a membership-based medical practice that blends the latest in evidence-based medical treatment with the foundational pillars of fitness, nutrition, and emotional wellbeing," according to its website, thempcollective.com.

Suzy Hansen C'99, who wrote the Pulitzer Prize finalist *Notes on a Foreign Country*, has authored a new book, *From Life Itself: Turkey, Istanbul, and a Neighborhood in the Age of Erdogan*. In it, she draws on her decade of reporting from Karagüm-rük, a working-class neighborhood in Istanbul, and she gives an engaging account of modern-day Turkey through the lives of its inhabitants.

Peter Weiss C'99 GEng'02 has been named chief business officer at Flash, a parking and mobility technology platform that connects property owners, operators, and drivers. Peter will lead Flash's newly established Office of Real Estate and oversee the company's marketing strategy, with a mandate to expand owner relationships. He is based out of the company's New York office.

2000

Ariel Bierbaum C'00, Julia McWilliams GEd'11 Gr'16 Gr'17, Amy Bach GrEd'10, and Elaine Simon GEd'71 have coauthored the book *Schools for Sale: Disinvestment, Dispossession, and School Building Reuse in Philadelphia* with the University of Chicago Press (schoolsforsalebook.com). Ariel writes, "The book examines how school closures change the spatial and social arrangements of neighborhoods and considers how school districts and cities can work toward a new vision for public education and community development. We are interested in book talks and conversations across the country and would love to connect with interested Penn alums!"

Karen Winn Nu'00 has published a short story in the literary journal *Ploughshares* (Spring 2026). "An (Updated) History of the Modern World" can be read at pshares.org/issue-article/352576.

2001

Eric Moskowitz C'01, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist formerly of the *Boston Globe*, has authored a new book about the first true coast-to-coast automobile race in the US. In 1909, cars lined up in New York City and traveled for three weeks to the finish line in Seattle, facing mechanical failure, hostile terrain, and even sabotage from other contestants. *The Hardest, Longest Race: Henry Ford and the Cross-Country Contest That Changed America* "is a colorful tale of ambition and subterfuge, but it is also a love letter to America at the turn of the Twentieth Century," according to Macmillan Publishers.

2002

Lynn Hoffman Carlton GCP'02 see **Allen Penniman GCP'11**.

2003

Ariel Ben-Amos C'03 G'09 GCP'09 see **Allen Penniman GCP'11**.

2006

Courtnee Lundy Hamity C'06 has been appointed director of evaluation and data strategy at Blue Shield of California Foundation. The foundation's mission is to "make California the healthiest state and end domestic violence."

Christina Kaneshige C'06 see **Holly Buechel C'07**.

Matthew Williams W'06 see **Allen Penniman GCP'11**.

2007

Holly Buechel C'07, a former standout Penn fencer, won the gold medal at the 2025 FIE Veteran Fencing World Championships this past November in the Vet 40+ Women's Epee category in fencing. She shares that her former Penn teammate **Christina Kaneshige C'06** "was on the Women's Epee Vet Team with me and we won the silver medal."

Dr. Sophia Termini Cisler C'07 GEd'09 GM'17 achieved a Guinness World Record in November for the Fastest Half Marathon with Multiple Sclerosis (Female) in 1 hour, 38 minutes, 16 seconds. From the listing on the Guinness World Record's website: "As a physician and lifelong athlete, Sophia wanted to empower other women with multiple sclerosis to lead an otherwise independent and empowered healthy lifestyle" (tinyurl.com/SCisler).

Jonathan Kol Fogelson GAR'07 GCP'07 GFA'07 see **Allen Penniman GCP'11**.

2008

Mark De La Vergne EAS'08 is head of Network Growth at Michigan Central, a 30-acre innovation district in Detroit (michigancentral.com). From the press materials: "At Michigan Central, Mark contributes to work focused on advancing new technologies, supporting emerging companies, and helping build a collaborative ecosystem for mobility and economic growth. The district has quickly become a hub for startups, industry partners, and public sector leaders working to test and scale new ideas in a real-world urban environment."

2009

Ben Bryant GCP'09 GFA'09, Kristin Michael GCP'09 GFA'09 see **Allen Penniman GCP'11**.

Melissa Hozik G'09, an adult programming librarian at the East Brunswick Public Library in New Jersey, has been awarded the 2026 RUSA Margaret E. Monroe Library Adult Services Award. The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) is a part of the American Library Association. The

organization wrote in a statement, “Melissa Hozik’s body of work at the East Brunswick Public Library directly advances RUSA’s mission by demonstrating the transformative potential of adult library services when practiced with creativity, rigor, and sustained community investment.”

Alexia Nader C’09 is publishing her first novel this fall, *The Meaning of Daughter*. From the press materials, it is “a multigenerational novel spanning continents that asks provocative, intimate questions about motherhood, ambition, art-making, and legacies passed down from mother to daughter.”

Michelle A. Schultz G’09 has been confirmed by the US Senate to a second term as a member of the Surface Transportation Board, a “federal agency charged by statute with the economic regulation of various modes of surface transportation, primarily freight rail,” according to its website. She was renominated by President **Donald J. Trump W’68** on September 10. Her second term expires November 30, 2030. For the previous 14 years, Michelle served in various leadership roles with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), most recently as SEPTA’s deputy general counsel.

2010

Amy Bach GrEd’10 see **Ariel Bierbaum C’00**.

Andrew Dawson GCP’10 GLA’12, Lou Huang GCP’10 GFA’11, Daniel O’Shaughnessy GCP’10 see **Allen Penniman GCP’11**.

2011

Julia McWilliams GEd’11 Gr’16 Gr’17 see **Ariel Bierbaum C’00**.

Allen Penniman GCP’11 is coeditor of *The Routledge Handbook of Urban Design Practice* (Routledge, 2026), a book that “examines how urban design is evolving to address climate change, public health, housing, and social and environmental justice, with contributions from more than 100 practitioners and scholars from around the world,” he writes. “The book reframes urban design as a collaborative, action-oriented practice connecting design, planning, and policy.” Contributors include Penn alumni **Ariel Ben-Amos C’03 G’09 GCP’09, Ben Bryant GCP’09 GFA’09, Lynn Hoffman Carlton GCP’02, Andrew Dawson GCP’10 GLA’12, Jonathan Kol Fogelson GAR’07 GCP’07**

GFA’07, Lou Huang GCP’10 GFA’11, Kristin Michael GCP’09 GFA’09, Daniel O’Shaughnessy GCP’10, Allen Penniman GCP’11, and Matthew Williams W’06.

2013

Shay B. Bryce GEd’13 is thrilled to announce the release of her debut novel, *A Singular Perspective: Cari’s View*, which hit shelves on May 5. Published by Colossal Dreams Publishing, it is described as “a sprawling family saga interwoven with poignant coming-of-age themes and deeply felt romance.” Shay writes, “The narrative spans decades, tracing the complex lives of the Carter family as they grapple with forbidden love, generational secrets, and the inevitable cost of ambition.” A Chicago native, Shay now resides in the DMV (DC, Maryland, Virginia) area.

2019

Nina Juntereal Nu’19 Gr’23 is the Pennsylvania nurse advocacy coordinator for the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments. In this role, she recently organized a press conference in collaboration with Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania, local leaders, community health experts, and scientists to “oppose the Trump administration’s rollbacks of key air pollution safeguards,” she writes. “Years of science have shown that undermining pollution standards increases population exposure to harmful air pollution and climate-related risks. According to the American Lung Association’s 2025 State of the Air report, 46% of Americans—156.1 million people—live in communities that get failing grades for unhealthy levels of ozone or particle pollution. Philadelphia received failing grades for both ozone and particulate pollution, underscoring the ongoing air quality challenges facing the people in the region.” The press conference was featured on 6ABC Action News Philadelphia, where she stated, “Right here in Philadelphia the data is clear: nearly half of residents are living with unhealthy levels of air pollution including ozone and fine particulate matter, pollutants that have been strongly linked to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.”

Shristi Mishra GEd’19, cofounder of Yak9 Chews, has been named to *Inc.*’s 2026 Female Founders 500 list, which recognizes some of the most dynamic and inspiring

women entrepreneurs in the country. The magazine featured Shristi for “increasing the pet wellness company’s revenue from less than \$500,000 to \$3.2 million and partnering with two new regional distributors.” Yak9 Chews makes all-natural cheese chews for dogs. From its website: “We keep everything close to nature, from our yaks and cows who graze naturally on what the earth provides to our eco-friendly reusable burlap packaging.”

2021

Dr. Brittany Link D’21 and **Luke Fraker WG’22** were married July 26, 2025, in Cernobbio, Lake Como, Italy.

2022

Luke Fraker WG’22 see **Dr. Brittany Link D’21**.

2025

Harry Cicma WMP’25 earned a medal in his second Boston Marathon on April 20, the 20th marathon medal of his career. Harry is also an inductee of the Abbott World Marathon Majors Seven Star Hall of Fame, having completed all seven major marathons: Boston, New York, London, Tokyo, Chicago, Sydney, and Berlin. Through his marathon efforts, he has raised more than \$30,000 for various charities. Professionally, Harry is an Emmy Award-winning network TV sports anchor on ESPN’s *ESPN8 The Ocho* and serves as CEO and executive producer of Harry Cicma Productions LLC. He writes, “Being part of the Wharton family means everything to me, and it’s always an inspiration while taking part in these prestigious events.”

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1943

Dr. Louis O. Brenner C'43 M'47, Boulder, CO, a retired endocrinologist; March 5, at 102. He served in the US Army as a surgeon during the Korean War. Two children are Dr. Dean E. Brenner C'71 and Karen B. Brenner CW'75 GEd'75.

1947

Margaret "Peggy" Redfield Mainwaring Ed'47 Hon'85, Bryn Mawr, PA, a Penn Trustee emerita, and an honorary trustee and chair emerita of the Penn Nursing School Board of Advisors; March 14, at 100. She made Penn history in 1973 as the first woman elected to serve on the Board of Trustees. She made history again in 1984 by becoming the first woman vice chair of the board. She spent 29 years as a trustee, serving on multiple committees. She was a member of the boards of trustees of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and the Penn Presbyterian Medical Center and served on the advisory committee of the Institute of Contemporary Art. She partnered with the late Claire M. Fagin Hon'77 Hon'94, former dean of the Penn's School of Nursing, to establish Penn Nursing's board of advisors, and served as its inaugural chair. She was also instrumental in facilitating the renovation of the Nursing Education Building and its renaming in honor of Dr. Fagin. In recognition of her numerous contributions to Penn Nursing, she was named a chair emerita of the board when she stepped down in 1992. Elsewhere at Penn, she served as president of the General Alumni Society (now Penn Alumni), the Association of Alumnae, and the Women of the Class of 1947, helping to organize several reunions. She was a member of the Trustees' Council of Penn Women and chaired the committee whose work led to the designation of the E. Craig Sweeten Alumni House. She received Penn's Alumni Award of Merit in 1973 and an honorary Doctor of Laws from Penn in 1985. She also provided significant financial support to the University, both personally and through her work as a fundraising volunteer, especially the Penn Museum, where she established the Mainwaring Marketing Fund and an endowment to support archaeological science teaching. At the Penn Museum, she and her late husband Bruce Mainwaring C'47 ["Obituaries," Nov/Dec 2022] endowed the Mainwaring Wing, a \$17 million project that

continues to provide improved access to collections, an enhanced environment for the preservation of artifacts, and study space for researchers. Her support also reached the Penn Libraries, the Graduate School of Education, and the School of Nursing, where she established the Nightingale Professorship in Honor of Nursing Veterans. As a student at Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority and Penn Players. Her children are Susan Mainwaring Roberts CW'72 G'76, Elizabeth Mainwaring Daniels CW'76, and Scott A. Mainwaring C'75. One grandchild is Zachary R. Roberts C'09.

1948

Rev. R. Hunter Keen C'48, Spokane, WA, a longtime Presbyterian pastor; Feb. 3, at 102. He served in the US Army during World War II.

Dr. Joseph H. Sloss C'48, Bradenton, FL, a retired urologist; Jan. 29. He served in the US Air Force as a flight surgeon. At Penn, he was a member of the track team.

1949

Sarah Jastak-Burgess Ed'49, Wilmington, DE, a retired psychologist, art collector, and philanthropist; June 23, 2023.

Nancy Warwick Tarlton DH'49, Middletown, RI, a retired dental hygienist who also owned an event planning company and a bed-and-breakfast with her husband; March 2.

1950

Andre G. Beaumont WG'50, Millsboro, DE, former president of the Council on Career Development for Minorities, a nonprofit dedicated to the career advancement of minority college students and graduates; Dec. 17, 2023. He served in the US Army during World War II.

Edwin C. Lodge W'50, Narvon, PA, a retired statistician for the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia; Jan. 31, at 101. He served in the US Army during World War II.

Dr. Alton I. Sutnick C'50 M'54 GM'57 GM'58, Philadelphia, a retired physician; March 20. He was also a consultant on hepatitis and liver cancer for the World Health Organization. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity and the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. One grandchild is Cynthia N. Plotch C'15.

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.

Marie Capozzoli Walker FA'50, Glen Mills, PA, a former administrative assistant at Saint Joseph's University; March 13.

1951

Dr. John E. Bloom C'51, Loveland, OH, a retired pediatrician and medical director for a health system; Feb. 21. He served in the US Army Medical Corps. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

Joan Bauman Callahan CW'51, River-ton, NJ, a retired controller for a chemical company; Jan. 30. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority.

Joseph W. Salus II C'51 GL'57, Chevy Chase, MD, a former tax attorney at the US Department of Justice Criminal Tax Division; Feb. 13. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity and *The Daily Pennsylvanian*.

1952

Rev. Lawrence W. Althouse W'52, Dallas, TX, a retired Methodist pastor, journalist, and author; March 5. At Penn, he was a member of the sprint football team, Penn Players, and the ROTC.

1953

S. Winfield Cain Jr. W'53, Cockeysville, MD, retired cofounder of an investment management firm; Jan. 10. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

Edward J. Feenane W'53, South Miami, FL, a retired salesman for UARCO, which manufactured autographic registers and other business invoice products; Feb. 4. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity.

Harry M. Green G'53, Fort Myers, FL, a retired metallurgical engineer with the aircraft engine group of General Electric; Jan. 28, at 99.

Shelley Upsher Konidaris Ed'53, Bala Cynwyd, PA, an actress and interior designer; March 5.

Benjamin M. "Bud" Rottman W'53, Milford, CT, a former Wall Street executive;

Jan. 31. He served in the US Army Quartermaster Corps during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity. One daughter is Polly Rottman Appel W'86.

Melvin G. Smith W'53, Marlton, NJ, a retired accountant; March 19.

George Weinbaum C'53, Philadelphia, a retired biochemist; Feb. 14. As a student at Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity and the rowing team. As an alumnus, he volunteered for his class. Two daughters are Dr. Cindy M. Weinbaum M'93 and Laura I. Weinbaum G'96, and one grandchild is Jonah P. Weinbaum C'21.

1954

Laurel Rosenau Boniuk Ed'54, Houston, a former second-grade teacher and longtime librarian; March 22. Her husband is Dr. Milton Boniuk GM'57.

Leopold "Lee" Korins W'54, Greeley, CO, a retired financial executive; Feb. 26. At various times in his career, he served as CEO of the Pacific Stock Exchange in California, CEO of the Philadelphia Stock Exchange, commissioner of the City of San Francisco, and a professor of finance at the University of Northern Colorado. He served in the US Army.

Peggy Everett Wert DH'54, Birmingham, AL, a retired dental hygienist; March 11.

John P. Wolff EE'54, Lancaster, PA, a retired engineer at RCA; May 7, 2024. He documented his early life, growing up Jewish in Germany before World War II and being forced into hiding in Belgium, sharing his experience with public school children as they studied *The Diary of Anne Frank*. One son is David P. Wolff EE'82.

1955

Frank W. Hauser Jr. GEd'55, Jenkintown, PA, a retired teacher and elementary school principal for Philadelphia public schools; Feb. 26, at 101. He served in the US Army Air Corps during World War II.

Dr. Lewis T. Patterson M'55 GM'62, Carlisle, PA, a retired surgeon; March 6. He served in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War as a surgeon, and his work was featured in the 1966 ABC documentary *To Save a Soldier*.

Joan Berguido Staples CW'55, Bryn Mawr, PA, retired head of the Reserve Room at Bryn Mawr College Libraries; March 23. At Penn, she was a member of

Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and the basketball and lacrosse teams.

Thomas F. Turco W'55, Rye, NY, a retired sales and marketing director at a textile and chemical company; April 2026. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity and the sprint football team.

1956

John C. T. Alexander W'56, West Chester, PA, a retired executive in banking, advertising, and home construction, a federal government employee, and the longtime public address announcer at Franklin Field; May 16. He served under President Ronald Reagan as the director of the US Information Agency's International Visitors Program and under President George H. W. Bush as director of the US Department of Education's Center for International Education. He was active in his community with volunteering and in grassroots politics, and he remained deeply devoted to his alma mater, serving as the public address announcer for all Penn football games for 50 years ["Sports," Sep|Oct 2010]. Known as the "Voice of Franklin Field," he passed the microphone to his son John Alexander C'87, who has been the announcer for Penn football games ever since ["Sports," Jan|Feb 2026]. He was also featured in the *Gazette's* May 1970 issue for his role in improving the city of Philadelphia's image as president of Action Philadelphia. He also served as the Class of 1956 president and won a Penn Alumni Award of Merit in 2014. As a student at Penn, he was president of Delta Tau Delta fraternity, captain of the cheerleading team, manager of the squash team, chief of Sphinx Senior Society, and a recipient of the Spade Award. He served in the US Marines during the Korean War era. Two grandchildren are Meghan M. Chapman C'18 and Jamie C. Alexander C'24.

Irwin S. Buncher W'56, Washington, DC, a former finance manager; Feb. 18. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, the baseball team, and WXPB.

Lucy-Jo "LJ" Malloy Herman CW'56, Warminster, PA, an author, poet, and chief copywriter at Day-Timers Inc.; April 17.

Francis M. Mulroy W'56, Sea Isle City, NJ, a retired high school teacher and basketball coach; March 2. He served in the

US Navy. At Penn, he was captain of the basketball team and a member of Sphinx Senior Society and the ROTC.

Ronald G. Powers W'56, Queensbury, NY, Feb. 25.

Ralph L. Rosato C'56, Vero Beach, FL, former manager of a communications technology company; April 20. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity and the sprint football team. His sons are Dr. Ralph M. Rosato C'81 (Catherine R. Rosato GNU'87) and Pasquale J. Rosato C'84 (Tina Giacona Rosato Nu'83).

Mark B. Silverberg W'56, Longwood, FL, retired president of the old Jeannette Glass Company; Feb. 11. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity and Penn Players.

Dr. Mark H. Smoller D'56, Putnam Valley, NY, Feb. 3.

Dr. Stanley N. Wampler V'56, Palm City, FL, a retired professor of veterinary medicine at Penn; Nov. 23.

1957

Toby Hoffman Agulnick Ed'57, Glen Mills, PA, a former teacher and docent at the Brandywine Museum of Art; Feb. 6. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority. Her husband is Ronald M. Agulnick W'54.

Donald Blumberg SW'57, Baltimore, a social worker specializing in family therapy; Feb. 18. He served in the US military during World War II.

Dr. Arnold B. Popkin C'57 M'61 GM'65, Charlottesville, VA, a retired ophthalmologist, concert pianist, and music teacher; March 5. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Delta Phi fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, the orchestra, and Debate Council. His wife is Phyllis Berman Popkin Ed'59.

Carl G. Smith W'57, Wallingford, PA, a retired personnel manager at Keebler Company; Nov. 23. He served in the US Navy and the US Merchant Marine.

Dr. Douglas Spencer M'57 GM'61, Kennett Square, PA, a pediatrician; Dec. 2.

Donald J. Weiss C'57, Valparaiso, IN, a high school biology teacher; Feb. 8. He served in the US Army.

1958

Arnett Ware Custer CW'58, Salisbury, MD, a retired medical transcriptionist; Jan. 13. Earlier in her career, she was employed

by the US Naval Academy as an assistant editor for *The Shipmate*, the USNA's alumni association magazine. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Delta Delta sorority.

Neil A. Mackie C'58, Denver, a former high school physics and college mathematics teacher who later became a research scientist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology; Jan. 30.

Constance McCaffrey FA'58, New York, retired president of a graphic design firm; Feb. 21. At Penn she was a member of Delta Delta Delta sorority.

Thelma Master Specker CW'58, Bala Cynwyd, PA, Jan. 29.

Earl S. Vollmer Jr. C'58, Ambler, PA, retired general manager of a cricket club; Feb. 1. He served in the US Army. His sister is Valerie Vollmer Berlinger CW'72.

1959

Lawrence J. Davis WG'59, Baton Rouge, LA, a retired car salesman; March 3.

Virginia Snelson Duffy W'59, Philadelphia, a former Reiki master, astrologer, and counselor; Jan. 19. Earlier in her career, she was a real estate agent and interior decorator. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, the swimming team, and the Penningnettes synchronized swimming team.

Murray S. Eckell L'59, Media, PA, a retired attorney; March 19.

David M. Jordan L'59, Haverford, PA, an author, historian, and lawyer; Jan. 24. He specialized in trust, estate, and municipal law, and he wrote books about baseball and the Civil War. He served in the US Army. Two daughters are Diana M. Jordan C'83 and Sarah Jordan C'90 G'91 and one grandchild is Charles Jordan-Weinstein C'24 G'25.

Joseph L. Kozikowski GEE'59 GrE'69, Burbank, CA, retired professor of electrical engineering at Villanova University; Feb. 7.

Ann Mood Lewis GED'59, Wichita, KS, March 3.

Eleanor Smith Morris GCP'59, Philadelphia, a retired professor of architecture and town planning at the University of Edinburgh; Aug. 16. One son is James M. Morris W'85, and one grandchild is Nicholas R. Robson C'23.

Paul R. Neelon W'59, Pocasset, MA, a real estate developer; Jan. 15. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of

Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and the ROTC. One grandchild is Daniel P. Neelon Jr. W'11.

Norman A. Scher W'59, Richmond, VA, a former lawyer and CEO of a company that manufactures plastic films and aluminum extrusions; Feb. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity.

David M. Sturges WG'59, Hamilton, NY, a retired professor of economics at Colgate University; Jan. 24. Earlier, he had a long career as an executive at IBM. He served in the US Navy.

1960

Charlotte Ann Sutula Albertson GED'60, Wynnewood, PA, longtime owner of a culinary school; Feb. 15.

Dr. Harte C. Crow M'60 GM'64, Etna, NH, a retired radiologist and art collector; March 21. He also taught continuing education courses on architecture and art history. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

Andrew Alan Figel W'60, Highlands, NC, founder, owner, and executive chef of a restaurant; Feb. 20. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and the rowing team.

William B. Gibbon Gr'60, Burnsville, MN, a retired professor of Russian at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Feb. 17, at 100. He served in the US Navy during World War II.

William A. Leuschner WG'60, Blacksburg, VA, professor emeritus of forest resources at Clemson University; Feb. 13. His wife is Margery Ring Leuschner Nu'60.

John R. Marchiano CE'60, Wayne, PA, a retired executive manager at various industrial manufacturing companies, including Emerson and General Electric; Nov. 19, 2024. He served in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of the football team.

Arthur J. St John WG'60, Chapel Hill, NC, a retired real estate appraiser; Dec. 23. He served in the US Coast Guard.

Constance Cameron Svindland W'60, Appleton, WI, retired assistant treasurer at the Dutch Sates Mines Company; March 23. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Delta sorority. One son is Paul C. Svindland WG'98.

David Y. C. Tseng EE'60, Whitefish, MT, retired head of the artificial intelligence department at Hughes Research Labs; Feb. 18. At Penn, he was a member of the ROTC.

1961

Peter L. Anker WG'61, Darien, CT, retired director of equity research at First Boston, an investment bank; Feb. 23. He served in the US Air Force and the US Air Force Reserve.

Donald Frank WEv'61, Tequesta, FL, a retired accountant; Feb. 8. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

Dr. Martin Glassman D'61, Jackson, NJ, a retired dentist; March 19. He served in the US Navy.

Dr. Gerald M. Levitis C'61, New York, March 12, 2024. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. One daughter is Wendy A. Levitis C'93.

John T. Meli WG'61 Gr'71, Media, PA, former dean of the School of Business Administration at Widener University; Feb. 1. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of the lacrosse team.

Claude R. Oldt EF'61, Lower Heidelberg Township, PA, a retired bank executive; Feb. 18. He served in the US Army.

Dr. Robert J. O'Leary D'61 GD'65, North East, PA, a retired oral surgeon; Feb. 10. He served in the US Navy.

George H. Rothblat Gr'61, Lafayette Hill, PA, a pioneering lipid researcher and a professor emeritus of pediatrics at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; Feb. 27.

Dr. M. William "Bill" Schwartz M'61 GM'65, a professor of pediatrics at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP); March 13. He joined the Penn faculty in 1967, rising through the ranks to become a professor of pediatrics. He published numerous research studies and authored several pediatric textbooks. He also served in key administrative roles, including as assistant department chair and assistant dean of primary care. An annual grand rounds lecture series at CHOP is named in his honor. He retired in 2002. He served in the US Air Force as a pediatrician. One son is Dr. Charles I. Schwartz C'91, and one grandchild is Mitchell R. Markham Schwartz C'23.

Herbert Wallack EE'61, Marco Island, FL, a retired sales manager for Linear Technology; Feb. 24. He served in the New Jersey National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Theta Rho fraternity.

1962

Oren K. Boynton W'62, Litchfield, CT, an investment banker; Feb. 14. At Penn, he was a member of the swimming team.

Dr. P. William Curreri M'62 GM'69, Spanish Fort, AL, former president of a corporation that managed several national scientific associations; March 20. He was also a surgeon specializing in trauma and burn care and a retired professor of surgery at the University of South Alabama at Mobile. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

Ronnie Barol Goldstein CW'62, Penn Valley, PA, a retired individual and family therapist; March 23. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority.

James R. Kratz W'62, State College, PA, a retired retailing executive for JCPenney and Hills department stores; Feb. 9. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity.

Mark Ominsky C'62, Indian Land, SC, retired lead of the Product Usability Research Department at IBM; March 18.

Marlene M. Pawlowski GCP'62, Mountain Top, PA, a retired city planning consultant; March 16.

Dr. Donald A. Romig M'62, Santa Fe, NM, a retired infectious disease internist; Nov. 24.

James K. Thompson W'62, Broomall, PA, retired director of personnel at Acme; Dec. 10. He served in the US Army and the US Army Reserve.

1963

Arthur L. Asch W'63, Boynton Beach, FL, president of Anniston Affiliates; Jan. 12. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity. His son is Michael A. Asch W'88.

James S. Beckley Jr. W'63 WG'75, Boulder, CO, a retired real estate broker; Feb. 8. He served in the US Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity and the football and track teams.

Dr. Richard A. Bohn D'63, Lititz, PA, a retired dentist; Jan. 26. He served in the US Army.

Raymond C. Burton Jr. WG'63, New York, a retired railroad executive; June 19. He served in the US Army.

John D. Chadwick WG'63, Old Greenwich, CT, a retired investment banker; Aug. 5.

Dr. Richard W. D'Eustachio D'63, Cherry Hill, NJ, a retired dentist; March 4. He served in the US Army. His wife is Carol D'Eustachio HUP'61.

Averell E. Eisner C'63, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, founder of a technology company; Feb. 20.

Barbara F. Freed CW'63 Gr'78, Philadelphia, professor emeritus of French and applied linguistics at Carnegie Melon University; March 24. Earlier in her career she served as vice dean for language instruction at Penn. Her sister is Alice F. Freed CW'68 Gr'76.

Daniel P. Gordon W'63, Houston, a former president of a jewelry company who later became a commercial real estate developer; Jan. 29. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity.

Ronald Hines ME'63, Ewing, NJ, a retired quality control engineer at General Motors; Jan. 30. He was also a professional race car driver. He served in the US military. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and the track team.

John W. Lacock ME'63, Paradise, PA, a retired design engineer for closed circuit video at Phillips; Feb. 1. He served in the Pennsylvania National Guard.

Alice Penhale Lent Nu'63, Shickshinny, PA, a retired school nurse; March 11.

Dr. Lawrence N. Rouff D'63 GD'66, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, a retired orthodontist; March 11. He served in the US Navy. His son is Dr. Peter Rouff GD'07.

Barry J. Solem WG'63, Edmonds, WA, retired co-owner of Ballard Technology; Feb. 3.

Ann Ellis Sutphin Ar'63, Doylestown, PA, an architect; March 24. Her husband is Derik F. Sutphin C'63 GLA'67.

Sidney B. Zamochnick C'63, Wyndmoor, PA, an accountant and freelance photographer; Feb. 6. At Penn, he was a member of the Debate Council and the Penn Band.

1964

Jerome Choder GEE'64, Huntingdon Valley, PA, a retired electrical engineer; March 8.

Timothy K. Cloudman W'64, Cumberland Foreside, ME, a retired management consultant; Feb. 2.

James J. Connors III WG'64, Glenview, IL, a retired CEO of a number of companies; Feb. 1. He served in the US Navy.

John Hynes GAR'64, Lancaster, PA, a retired architect; March 9.

David E. Norton W'64, Dahlonoga, GA, a retired actuary; June 28, 2024. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and Friars Senior Society.

Nancy Krieger Pace CW'64, Salt Lake City, UT, a community volunteer; Jan. 25. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority and the tennis team. She is survived by John E. Pace Ar'62 and son Jonathan Todd Pace C'90.

1965

Lawrence J. Fox C'65 L'68, Woodbridge, CT, a lawyer who represented inmates on death row and a lecturer at several colleges on legal ethics and professional responsibility; Feb. 20. At Penn, he was a member of WXPEN.

Lawrence A. Goldfarb GAR'65 GCP'65 GFA'65, Lafayette Hill, PA, an architect and former Penn professor of architecture and city planning; Jan. 29. His wife is Gerda Paumgarten-Goldfarb CGS'71 GED'74, and one son is Brad I. Goldfarb C'86.

Stanley James "Jim" Goodfriend W'65, Glencoe, IL, a commercial real estate executive; March 28.

John K. "Jack" Haeseler GCP'65, Washington, DC, a former senior associate for a firm that conducted economic research and planning for cultural attractions, such as aquariums, zoos, and museums; March 21. He served in the US Army National Guard.

Kathleen Mendte Logan GEd'65, West Chester, PA, a retired high school teacher; Feb. 18.

William Corbin Marr C'65, Washington, DC, a bank executive; March 22. He served in the US Army. As a student at Penn, he was a member of the swimming team. As an alumnus, he was a volunteer for his class. One son is Carson M. Marr C'20.

Carol Munger Ober CW'65 GEd'72, Skillman, NJ, a former teacher; Jan. 21. At Penn, she was a member of Penn Singers. Her father was the late George Munger Ed'33 Hon'85, the legendary Hall of Fame football coach at Penn.

Dr. Erson L. Religioso GM'65, Greensburg, PA, a physician and cofounder of a medical center; March 14.

Harriet L. Snyder G'65, Cherry Hill, NJ, Dec. 10.

Elizabeth “Betty” Biehl Tweet OT’65, Glendive, MT, a retired occupational therapist and real estate broker; Feb. 6.

J. Stroud Watson Jr. GAR’65, Chattanooga, TN, an architect and professor of architecture at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; March 13. He served in the US Army.

1966

Dr. John J. Etnoyer M’66, Lancaster, PA, an obstetrician-gynecologist; April 8, 2025. He served in the US Navy as a flight surgeon.

Mary Ellen Breen Field DH’66, Queensbury, NY, a retired dental hygienist; March 10.

Frank C. Jenkins WG’66, Sherborn, MA, a retired finance professor; Jan. 19.

Daniel W. Moger Jr. L’66, Waltham, MA, a retired attorney; Feb. 25. His wife is Angela Schrode Moger G’68.

John C. H. Mungall GEE’66, Kerrville, TX, a systems engineer who designed deep water risers for taking oil from sea beds to platforms or ships; Dec. 23. His son is Finlay S. Mungall W’04.

Jack A. Northrop EE’66 WG’69, West Chester, PA, April 8. He retired from the financial industry. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity. His wife is Karlin “Queenie” Zettler Northrop CW’66, and his daughters are Kate Northrop C’91 and Dr. Molly Northrop V’98.

Stanley L. Satz G’66, Honolulu, a retired humanities instructor at Craven Community College; March 14.

Hsi Chin Tsai GME’66 Gr’70, Broomall, PA, a retired engineer at the US Naval Air Warfare Center; March 15.

1967

Gen. Terrence L. Arndt WG’67, Springfield, VA, Feb. 5. He spent more than three decades in the US Army Finance Corps, including during the Vietnam War.

Anne Brodhead Parry Becker CW’67, Wells, ME, a former financial aid director at several colleges and a higher education consultant for PeopleSoft; March 21. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Delta Delta sorority and the basketball team.

Robert R. Benedetti G’67 Gr’75, Sacramento, CA, a retired professor of political science and founder and director of the Jacoby Center for Public Service and Civic Leadership; Feb. 26.

Edward L. Deci WG’67, Rochester, NY, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Rochester; Feb. 14.

Mary “Betsy” Esterline Lehn DH’67, York, PA, Feb. 23.

Carmen L. Gentile L’67, Lovell, ME, a retired lawyer who represented investor-owned electric utilities and gas distribution systems before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Sept. 12. He served in the US Army.

Michael R. Goldstein C’67, Worcester, MA, a retired adjunct professor at Quinsigamond Community College; March 8. He was also a former basketball referee and a board member of IAABO (International Association of Approved Basketball Officials). At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity. His wife is Phyllis Scherzer Goldstein CW’69, and one daughter is Laura A. Goldstein C’98.

Sondra Greenberg SW’67, Philadelphia, Jan. 28.

Fredric M. Rabel Gr’67, Woodbury, NJ, a chemist specializing in chromatography; Nov. 5.

Ronald W. Teeple L’67, a retired attorney; Evanston, IL, March 19. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

Howard G. Tuttle Jr. WG’67, Essex, CT, retired treasurer of The Lee Company; Sept. 20. He served in the US Army.

Charles R. Wells G’67, Elizabethtown, PA, a retired high school science teacher; Feb. 10. He served in the US Navy.

1968

Kathleen Fairburn Armstrong CGS’68, Lake Zurich, IL, a travel agent; March 19. Her husband is Robert N. Armstrong GME’67.

Joseph W. Devall WG’68, Bristol, VT, a retired insurance executive; Feb. 23. He served in the US Army.

Richard L. Gordon PT’68, Monroe, ME, a retired physical therapist; Feb. 28. Earlier in his career, he was an athletic trainer at Penn. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of the ice hockey team.

J. Dudley King Jr. WG’68, Mount Pleasant, SC, retired owner and president of Plantation Interiors; March 1.

William Cabot Knowlton W’68, Deerfield Beach, FL, a retired sales director; Jan. 24. At Penn, he was a member of the football team.

Ronald L. Marwood W’68, Remsenburg, NY, a retired bank officer and adjunct professor at Suffolk County Community College; March 1. He served in the US Army.

Dr. Thomas A. McInnes GD’68, Mooresville, NC, an orthodontist; March 3.

George C. Waite III C’68, Bel Air, MD, former owner of a fiberglass business; March 16. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

1969

Robert G. DeSantis W’69, Stuart, FL, owner of a commercial real estate business and a teacher for the National Association of Realtors; Jan. 18. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity, the football team, and the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. One brother is Conrad J. DeSantis W’62.

Phyllis Mann Kay GEd’69, Plantation, FL, a teacher; Feb. 6.

Eldon M. Kidd GEd’69, Modesto, CA, a high school science and math teacher, and a farmer who grew almonds, walnuts, and peaches; July 21, 2025.

Scott C. Lederman WG’69, Glenside, PA, Penn’s treasurer from 1987 to 1999; Feb. 25. After completing his studies in 1969, he worked in Wharton’s graduate office, where he established and directed Wharton’s Office of Student Affairs and helped design a budgeting approach that would serve as the basis for Penn’s Responsibility Center Management (RCM) budgeting process. In 1972, he became the executive assistant to Paul Gaddis, Penn’s inaugural vice president for management (precursor of today’s position of executive vice president). In 1975, he was elected vice president of Franklin Investment Company, a Penn-owned subsidiary that reported to the University’s investment board and managed Penn’s endowment and other investment assets. In that position, he created the first cash management program for the University and the health system and was instrumental in developing and implementing Penn’s endowment spending rule. In 1982, he became Penn’s first director of investments. In 1987, he was appointed treasurer of the University. In this position, he lobbied for more child daycare funding, developed an endowment spending rule, and oversaw Penn’s real estate subsidiary. He also spearheaded Penn’s divestment from firms associated with the

apartheid government in South Africa and worked with investment managers John Neff Hon'84 and Richard Worley to significantly increase Penn's endowment fund. Simultaneously, he also served on the board of Penn's West Philadelphia Partnership, becoming its treasurer in 1988 and chairman in 1994. He retired from Penn in 1999. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

Myrna Loy Gr'69, Henderson, NV, a retired chemical engineer; Jan. 7.

Glenn C. Myers WG'69, Ojai, CA, retired CEO of an investment bank; Feb. 11.

Dr. Barry J. Paley D'69, Boca Raton, FL, a retired dentist; Feb. 19. One son is Douglas A. Paley C'93.

Robert R. Radway L'69, Fountain Hills, AZ, a former attorney, Russian translator, and electronic engineer at MIT; March 4.

David S. Swayze L'69, Dagsboro, DE, a retired attorney; Jan. 23. He served as legal counsel and chief of staff for Delaware Governor Pierre S. du Pont IV (1977-81) and as city solicitor for the City of Wilmington, Delaware. He served in the US Army JAG Corps during the Vietnam War.

1970

Roderick G. Baldwin WG'70, San Francisco, an investment banker; March 23.

Leslie Booth Stafford Collinson GEd'70, Mount Pleasant, SC, a Spanish teacher and instructor of English as a Second Language; Oct. 16. Her brother is Dr. Robert E. Booth Jr. M'71 GM'77, who died Jan. 15 (see Class of 1971).

Ira W. Cotton GEE'70, Naples, FL, a former program manager at IBM; March 6.

Richard Frey FA'70, Philadelphia, a former arts administrator who later founded a Philadelphia history tour company; Jan. 27. He served in the US Army Reserve. His wife was Diane Dailey Frey, former assistant dean and director of academic services in Penn's College of Arts & Sciences, who died Jan. 24 (see "Faculty & Staff").

Linda Becker Langsdorf GEd'70, Saint Louis, a special education teacher and school administrator; March 7.

Dr. Robert C. Lebold D'70, Seabrook, NH, a retired dentist; Oct. 29. He served in the US Naval Reserves.

Lawrence M. Lengel GrEd'70, Waynesboro, PA, a retired history and social studies teacher and school superintendent; Feb. 9.

Suzanne Bennett Moyer CW'70, Malden, MA, retired executive director of the York High School Dollars for Scholars Program, which supports first-generation college-bound students; Feb. 7. At Penn, she was a member of the Choral Society.

John R. Orban PT'70, London, OH, a retired physical therapist; Feb. 14.

Barbara L. Robinson CW'70, Hingham, MA, Feb. 27. She retired from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

Robert I. Whitelaw L'70, Strathmere, NJ, a family law attorney; Feb. 19. His sister is Constance L. Abrams CW'66 CGS'07.

1971

Dr. Robert E. Booth Jr. M'71 GM'77, Gladwyne, PA, an orthopedist and collector of American art and antiques; Jan. 15. One sister is Leslie Booth Stafford Collinson GEd'70, who died Oct. 16 (see Class of 1970).

Marie Elise Haldane CW'71, Washington, DC, a trial lawyer; March 5. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

Marilynn O. "Lynn" Leitner GNu'71, Mantoloking, NJ, a maternal/child nurse and professor of nursing who later became a professional chef; Feb. 27. Her sons are Christopher B. Leitner C'94 and Joshua P. Leitner C'96.

Gary H. Lefkowitz C'71, Springfield, VA, an ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) law specialist at the US Department of Labor; Feb. 21. At Penn, he was a member of *The Daily Pennsylvanian* and the Penn Band. His wife is Dolores L. Lefkowitz CW'71, and one son is Jacob P. Lefkowitz EAS'00 W'00.

Michael H. Mitnick C'71, New York, a retired pharmaceutical executive for Pfizer who also served on the Perelman School of Medicine faculty from 1976 to 1980; May 28, 2025. As a student at Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity.

Dr. Joseph F. Schneider Jr. GEE'71, Naples, FL, a former physician; March 8.

Anne Waters CW'71, Richmond, VA, a retired senior programmer/analyst for Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield; Feb. 15.

1972

Kenneth J. Balchunas GCE'72, Miramar Beach, FL, former president of a highway paving company and professor of civil engineering at Drexel University; March 13.

Susan Sylvain Engle CW'72, Harrisburg, PA, a retired department manager for Sears; Feb. 7. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority and the Choral Society.

Barry R. Goldsmith W'72, New York, an attorney; Feb. 7, 2024. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity.

William E. Jackson Gr'72, Charlottesville, VA, Dec. 18, 2024.

Joseph E. Kielec WG'72, Rehoboth, MA, a retired Johnson & Johnson executive; June 16, 2025.

Candace Povey Robertson WG'72, Lafayette, CA Feb. 27. Her husband is Peter James Robertson WG'71.

1973

Patricia Bryant Bowers CW'73, Haverford, PA, a real estate agent; Feb. 26. At Penn, she was a member of *The Daily Pennsylvanian*.

Dr. Joseph L. Granito M'73, Fort Washington, PA, an emergency room physician; Feb. 24.

Gary H. Jones C'73, Oklahoma City, OK, retired founder of an industrial air-handling equipment company; Jan. 13. He also served one term as mayor of the City of Berkeley Lake, GA. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity.

Dr. Dorothy J. Miller V'73, Shiloh, TN, a retired veterinarian and breeder of Absegami Arabian horses; Feb. 19.

William C. Sussman L'73, Miami, an attorney and mediator; April 6. He served in the US military.

Ann R. Vokonas PT'73, Chesapeake, VA, an administrator of a physical therapy facility; Dec. 23.

1974

Shaffer T. "Shay" Day III WG'74, Baldwinsville, NY, Feb. 16. He retired from Lockheed-Martin.

Frank A. Fratoe Gr'74, Fort Mill, SC, a former sociologist and program analyst for the US Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency; March 10. He was also an assistant professor at Rutgers University. He served in the US Army.

Lois Sobotka Hollis Nu'74, Waynesville, NC, a former nurse who later founded a holistic healing business; Jan. 16.

Thomas J. McCarron CGS'74, Philadelphia, a retired biostatistician who ran

clinical trials for pharmaceutical companies and clinical research organizations; March 12. He made presentations before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the efficacy of drugs. He was also an expert on Philadelphia architecture and gave tours for the Foundation for Architecture. His husband is Richard D. Keiser C'69.

Irving H. "Hop" Sears GEd'74, Philadelphia, a retired audio programmer; Jan. 25.

Edward C. Woronowicz W'74, Dallas, PA, a former industrial security specialist for the US Department of Defense; Feb. 2.

1975

Stephen A. Greeley C'75, Scituate, MA, a retired attorney and hockey coach; March 24. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, Sphinx Senior Society, and he was a recipient of the Bowl Award.

Gerald M. Maier WG'75, Philadelphia, retired director of real estate for SEPTA; March 20.

Linda Stewart Matlack GEd'75, Chevy Chase, MD, a retired lawyer; Feb. 3. Her husband is Larry R. Matlack GEd'72 WG'73.

Maria Cifone Miller Gr'75, Williamsburg, VA, a retired genetic toxicologist; Feb. 7.

Teresa Ann Peduzzi GNu'75, Fairfax, VA, a retired clinical nurse educator at Mental Health, Alcohol, Aging and Liaison Patient Services at the National Institutes of Health; Jan. 23.

Barbara B. Sonnheim SW'75, Cherry Hill, NJ, a retired psychologist; March 10.

1976

Dr. Douglas R. Blais V'76, Indiana, PA, a retired veterinarian; July 3, 2023. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

Dr. Thomas G. Devine M'76, New Hope, MN, a retired anesthesiologist; Oct. 29.

Anne T. Epstein C'76, New Rochelle, NY, Jan. 25. She had a long career in commercial real estate finance.

David L. George G'76, Gwynedd, PA, professor emeritus of economics at La Salle University; Aug. 30, 2023. His wife is Patricia L. Gerrity Nu'77 GNu'79 Gr'83.

Howard Kaiser C'76, Fairfax, VA, a retired patent attorney for the US Navy; Nov. 10.

Bert M. King GCP'76, Chevy Chase, MD, founder of a mortgage company; March 17.

His daughter is Rachel King Gerstein C'03, and his brother is David R. King C'72.

1977

Dr. Daniel M. Finelli C'77, Ambler, PA, a medical malpractice attorney; March 2. At Penn, he was a member of Theta Xi fraternity.

Agatha Heritage Hughes C'77 CGS'04, Prospect Harbor, ME, an artist and retired marketing director for a Philadelphia landscaping firm; Dec. 22. For a time, she also served as the marketing director for Morris Arboretum. Her brother is Lucian P. Hughes C'83.

Karen Miller Kiley C'77, Antioch, CA, Feb. 12. She was a longtime employee with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1245. At Penn, she was a member of the Choral Society.

Richard W. Yost C'77, Blue Bell, PA, an attorney specializing in defense litigation; Feb. 10. At Penn, he was a member and captain of the baseball team.

1978

Michael C. "Mickey" Ball W'78, Burlington, ON, Canada, a longtime manager in the fuel industry; Feb. 17. At Penn, he was a member of the ice hockey team.

1979

Joan Alice Carrillo CGS'79, Homestead, FL, a clinical psychologist; Nov. 25. She served in the US Air Force as a psychologist.

1980

Edward J. Kuhar Jr. GME'80, Audubon, PA, a retired aerospace engineer; Feb. 5.

Steven S. Schwartzberg C'80, Brookline, MA, a former psychotherapist, Buddhist meditation teacher, and adjunct faculty member at Harvard; Dec. 10. He wrote and spoke extensively on death and dying and was also a frequent essayist for the *Gazette*. As a student at Penn, he was a member of Mask & Wig and the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, and he was a Benjamin Franklin Scholar. As an alumnus, he created the Steven S. Schwartzberg C'80, Ph.D. Endowed Fund at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine to help low-income and first-generation medical students (tinyurl.com/SchwartzbergFund). Read a tribute from Melanie A. Katzman C'80 in "Alumni Notes," this issue.

1981

Dr. Julia T. Blue Gr'81, Ithaca, NY, a retired veterinarian and a professor of veterinary medicine at Cornell University; Dec. 29.

1983

Mary Damiano Pinney GEd'83, Millstone Township, NJ, a retired administrator in the School of Continuing Studies at Ryder University; Sept. 4, 2023.

Marybeth Gevlin Sabene WG'83, Glen Allen, VA, Jan. 27. She worked for Avon Products. One child is Andrew M. Sabene WG'21.

Barbara Gaines Winkelman C'83, Philadelphia, a children's book author, writing teacher, editor, and newspaper columnist; Aug. 7. Her husband is Nathaniel W. Winkelman C'83 WG'90; one child is Andrew J. Winkelman C'15; and her sister is Marjorie Gaines OT'71.

1985

Richard A. Prochaska GrEd'85, Vineland, NJ, retired superintendent of Vineland Public Schools; Feb. 21.

Dr. Arthur R. Stanger D'85, Boca Raton, FL, a prosthodontist; Feb. 16.

1988

Gregory G. Lawlor EE'88, Glenwood, MD, a marketing development manager for AT&T FirstNet; Feb. 16. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity.

1993

Taheem R. Gadson C'93, Miami, a lobbyist and partner at Monsoon Microsoft Studio; Feb. 6.

1994

Suzanne M. Horvath Reeps GEx'94, Malvern, PA, a retired civilian scientist for the US Navy who designed cold-water protection clothing and anti-gravity vests, among other gear; Jan. 9.

1995

Jerry D. Poole WG'95, Rockport, TX, an entrepreneur; Feb. 17.

1997

Eileen M. Alexy GNu'97 Gr'03, Philadelphia, a professor of nursing at the College of New Jersey; Jan. 22.

1998

Marjorie Adams Bigelow GrW'98, Palmyra, VA, a professor of business and marketing at the University of Virginia; Feb. 8.

2015

Abdel R. Ford Gr'15, Vauxhall, NJ, a journalist, author, poet, and advocate for stem cell research; Jan. 29.

Faculty & Staff

David E. Deifer, Titusville, NJ, associate director of Penn Information Systems and Computing; Jan. 7. In 1989, he joined Information Systems and Computing as a technician. Over the course of a 35-year tenure at Penn, he became a technical manager, a network engineer, a senior project leader, and eventually an associate director. In addition, he was one of the founding members of the Kelly Writers House in 1996 ["The 30-Year Squat," this issue]. Concurrently, he cofounded and was editor-in-chief of *XConnect* (pronounced "Cross Connect"), one of the earliest digital literary magazines that later made the leap to print. He gave several talks at Kelly Writers House about online publishing and was part of a group of more than a dozen poets who were the first to participate in a Saturday night reading at Kelly Writers House that was broadcast live on WXPB. In 2017, his photographs of Philadelphia were featured in an exhibition at the Burrison Gallery in Penn's University Club.

Jacqueline "Jacqui" M. Fawcett, Waldoboro, ME, professor emerita of nursing in Penn's School of Nursing; March 22. She joined Penn Nursing's faculty in 1978 as an assistant professor, eventually becoming full professor in 1989. She left Penn in 1999 and joined the faculty of the University of Massachusetts Boston, from which she retired in 2025. Throughout her career, she was internationally recognized for her pioneering work on nursing conceptual models, metaparadigm development, and theory-guided research and practice. She was best known for her meta-theoretical work, which focused on the nature and structure of knowledge in nursing, and her Roy Adaptation Model-based research, which focused on functional status in normal life transitions and serious illness, women's responses to cesarean birth, and adaptation to motherhood. She published many journal articles

and several books; and she cofounded *nursology.net*, a repository for academic knowledge on the science of nursing. She received recognition from numerous organizations, including Penn Nursing's Teaching Award and the first annual Faculty Award from the Penn Nursing Doctoral Student Organization.

Barbara F. Freed. *See Class of 1963.*

Diane Dailey Frey, Philadelphia, former assistant dean and director of academic services in Penn's College of Arts & Sciences; Jan. 24. She joined Penn's faculty in 1979 as assistant dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. In 1982, she took a role directing undergraduate advising in the College, helping students find faculty advisors and mentors on campus, and in 1989, she became director of advising. She won a Models of Excellence Award in 2006 as part of a project that allowed Philadelphia-area students who had been attending New Orleans-area universities and had been displaced by Hurricane Katrina to apply to be guest students at Penn. She retired in 2009. Her husband was Richard Frey FA'70, who died on Jan. 27 (see Class of 1970).

Lawrence A. Goldfarb. *See Class of 1965.*

Richard L. Gordon. *See Class of 1968.*

Agatha Heritage Hughes. *See Class of 1977.*

Arthur E. Humphrey, Scarborough, ME, a former professor of chemical engineering and the inaugural dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Science; March 21. He joined Penn's faculty as an assistant professor in chemical engineering in 1953 and was appointed director of what was then called the School of Chemical Engineering in 1961. In 1972, Penn's four engineering schools merged into the College of Engineering and Applied Science, and he was named dean of the newly formed school. As dean, he laid out a forward-looking agenda to broaden and modernize undergraduate engineering education, including promoting "technology literacy" for all students; expanding degree options; reimagining the field of engineering as preparation for careers in other fields; and expanding Penn Engineering's offerings of global and experiential learning programs. He also helped lay the foundation for what is now Penn Engineering's Cora Ingrum Center for Community and Outreach, which aims to positively impact the Philadelphia community. He served as dean until 1980, when he left

Penn to become provost and vice president of Lehigh University. The Arthur E. Humphrey Professorship was established by his former students at Penn in recognition of his pioneering role in the field of biochemical engineering. His engineering research concentrated on three major areas: alleviating bioengineering problems in food production that caused malnutrition and mass hunger; application of immobilized enzymes to industrial waste and medical problems; and use of oxygen-enriched air in wastewater treatment systems. Among his many accolades, he received the Penn Medal for Distinguished Achievement in 1993. One daughter is Andrea L. Houston C'76.

Scott C. Lederman. *See Class of 1969.*

Margaret "Peggy" Redfield Mainwaring. *See Class of 1947.*

Michael H. Mitnick. *See Class of 1971.*

Monroe E. Price, New York, a retired adjunct professor of communication in Penn's Annenberg School for Communication; March 16. He came to Annenberg as an adjunct professor in 2004, when he was also a professor of law at Yeshiva University, splitting his time between the two schools. In 2006, he founded the Penn's Center for Global Communication Studies (CGCS), which brought together students, academics, lawyers, regulators, and others to discuss international communications issues ["Across the Borderline," May/June 2007]. For example, CGCS conducted public opinion research in Sudan, provided technical assistance in Jordan and Thailand, and encouraged the intelligent development of media policies and new information technologies across a wide variety of settings, including Thailand and Somaliland. In 2008, one of CGCS's partners at the University of Oxford launched the Monroe E. Price Media Law Moot Court Competition, an annual international moot court competition named in "recognition of Price's lifelong devotion and outstanding contribution to the development of media freedom and the rule of law." The Annenberg School called him "a towering figure in the field of international communication" who "shaped the school's engagement with the world in a lasting way" in an online tribute. He retired from Penn in 2020.

George H. Rothblat. *See Class of 1961.*

Dr. Stanley N. Wampler. *See Class of 1956.*

Classifieds

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Vacation Rental—Foreign



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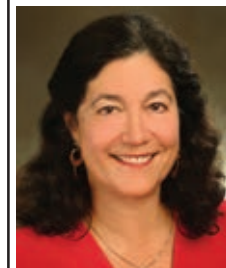
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From Prank to Proud Honor

By George E. Thomas

Penn's 1890s song "The Red and Blue" proclaimed that "fair Harvard has her crimson, old Yale her colors too," but in 1860, even before the colors red and blue were used on the cornerstone of College Hall in 1871, Penn had its honorific Spoon Award. The first spoon was created in 1861, when several sophomores awarded it as a silly prize to the lowest-ranked freshman student. The spoon was crafted by Daniel Pabst (1826–1910), whose cabinet-maker's shop near Independence Hall was a short walk from Penn's buildings at 9th and Market Streets.



What began as a prank was elevated in 1865 as the first senior honor. The Class of 1865 yearbook, *The Record*, reported that on the University's first Class Day, the "Wooden Spoon" was awarded to the most popular student, John T. Lewis Jr. C1865 G1868. Team sports, class traditions, and other artifacts of the late-19th century, including the Bowl and bowl fights, marked the rising energy of student life that would soon

propel the University to the West Philadelphia campus that has nurtured Penn's growth ever since.

(From top) Walnut spoon with an Ionic capital and acanthus leaves leading to fluted shaft, with silver plate inscribed "Presented to George Wharton Pepper by the Class of 1887," by Daniel Pabst, 1887. Pepper led his class in academics, sports, class politics, and theatrical performance.

Walnut spoon with framing acanthus leaves, flowers, and a silver plate inscribed "Presented to Chas J. Dougherty by the Class of '92 University of Pennsylvania," by Daniel Pabst, 1892. Dougherty was a member of the Philomathean Society, class vice president in his senior year, and a member of the crew team.

Walnut spoon inscribed "Chas. W. Burr, Class of '83," ornamented with an owl (long associated with wisdom) and laurel (emblematic of victory) entwined around a columnar shaft, by Daniel Pabst, 1883. Burr was a member of the Philomathean Society but was otherwise a surprising choice. The leather presentation box, embellished with red and blue silks, survives as well.

Today, Pabst looms large as the premier post-Civil War Philadelphia cabinetmaker and the choice of Frank Furness for many of the most remarkable interiors of Victorian Philadelphia. In an interview shortly before his death, Pabst stated that making the spoons was one of the great honors of his life. Between 1860 and 1910, he made 51 richly carved and ornamented wooden spoons for Penn's "Spoon men." The first spoons were carved as the Civil War raged, continuing past the nation's Centennial, and concluding in the first decade of the 20th century. Coaxed by students, he continued to make their spoons even after he closed his business in 1894. In later years he also contributed a poem that was read at Class Day. While none of Pabst's poems survive, the University Archives holds three of his spoons and several more are held by his family. When Pabst died, a Philadelphia jeweler continued making the spoons with similar artistry.

Surely, across 176 years there are more than these few survivors.

George E. Thomas Gr'75 is a former instructor in historic preservation and urban studies at Penn and has been profiled in these pages for his work as an architectural historian ["Arts," Mar|Apr 2018].

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