

THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

SEP/OCT 2026

Fall Reading:
Duckworth,
Grant, Seligman



Penn Hillel,
Then and Now
Leslie Urdang:
Godspell and After
Tree-Covered Campus





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30 In new books, Penn psychologists offer their prescriptions for friendship and achievement and trace the impact of a can-do mindset on human history.

By Julia M. Klein

A Haven at Hillel

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Play Maker

44 The cofounder of New York Stage & Film—which has helped launch *Hamilton*, *Hadestown*, and hundreds of other projects since 1985—is tackling another medium right now: TV. With her new MGM+ show enjoying glowing reviews, yet still on the bubble for a second season, Leslie Urdang C'76 reflects on the high points of her 40-year career as a theatre and film producer—and the challenges of making stuff in 2026. **Plus:** the student production of *Godspell* that included some of Penn's biggest future Hollywood players.

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©2026 The Pennsylvania Gazette

Published by Benjamin Franklin from 1729 to 1748.

Cover | Illustration by Gérard DuBois

thepenngazette.com

Making Things Happen

Martin E. P. Seligman Gr'67—the positive psychology founder who has famously explored the worlds of both learned helplessness and learned optimism—is one of three Penn psychologists whose new books are discussed by Julia M. Klein in this issue's cover story, "Don't Only Connect—Get Situated and Practice Agency."

Seligman considers his entry, *Agency: The Psychological History of Human Progress*, to be his most ambitious work to date, which is saying quite a lot. The others are *Situated: Find the People and Places that Bring Out Your Best* by Angela Duckworth Gr'06, a follow-up to her influential 2016 book *Grit*; and the prolific Adam Grant's latest, *Vibe: The Secrets of Strong Connections in a Lonely World*.

Besides noting the coincidence that three of Penn's leading thinkers are publishing books nearly simultaneously—"a perfect storm," Seligman called it—Julia's piece highlights the key themes of each book and places them in the context of the authors' previous works and also reveals some intriguing connections among them. "I think that all three of us are interested in how psychological science can help people live better lives," Duckworth told her. Together, they make for some insightful and thought-provoking "Fall Reading," as our cover line has it.

When he became the executive director of Penn Hillel in 2021, Rabbi Gabe Greenberg could not have anticipated the situation he'd face in the fall of 2023, as the campus became engulfed in tensions over antisemitism and the war in Gaza. But as associate editor Dave Zeitlin C'03 lays out in "A Haven at Hillel," he has turned out to be the right person to steer Penn's center for Jewish student life through that period and chart its future course.

Dave sketches in Penn Hillel's history, and in interviews with Greenberg and others shows the range of reactions by Jewish students to recent events, whether reaching out for discussions with those of differing views or seeking solidarity within their community. The article also covers a recent survey of Jewish sentiment about Penn (generally positive, with important reservations), the shrinking Jewish presence at the University in recent decades, and the challenge for Hillel of building that back going

Three of Penn's leading thinkers are publishing books nearly simultaneously.

forward. "If we do not stem the decline of Jewish students at Penn," Greenberg has said, "then it kind of doesn't matter what else we solve."

In Molly Petrilla C'06's "Play Maker," theatre and film producer Leslie Urdang C'76 describes her often mis-

understood role as, "You wake up every morning and try to figure out how you're going to make something happen."

Over a four-decade career in the entertainment industry, for Urdang those things have included cofounding New York Stage & Film, an incubator of new plays and movies where *Hamilton*, among many other shows, was shaped; major film productions; and a recent, critically lauded streaming series, *American Classic*. That the show's second season was still in doubt when this issue went to press shows the challenges of today's uncertain entertainment industry, even for veterans.

A companion piece, "Day by Day (By Decade by Decade)," surveys the cast and crew of the Urdang-directed 1975 Quadratics production of *Godspell*—whose future credits, Molly writes, "would leave anyone wondering what was in the Annenberg Center water fountains that year."



THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

VOL. 125, NO. 1

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THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE (ISSN 1520-4650) is published bimonthly in September, November, January, March, May, and July by Penn Alumni, E. Craig Sweeten Alumni House, 3533 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6226. Periodicals postage paid at Philadelphia, PA, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Pennsylvania Gazette, Alumni Records, Suite 300, 2929 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-5099.

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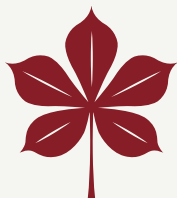


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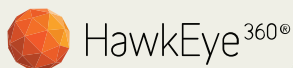
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Breaking Through

The hard but necessary work before the headlines.

By President J. Larry Jameson

In the 1980s, the idea of gene therapy was in its infancy. For some people, the field's feasibility landed it somewhere between 'moonshot' and *Star Trek*. This did not discourage Penn Medicine emeritus professors Dr. Jean Bennett Hon'23 and Dr. Albert Maguire, who met and married during medical school. They decided then that they would partner at the frontier of correcting gene mutations and defects, specifically for inherited forms of blindness.

Decades of perseverance and innovation followed, including collaboration with Dr. Katherine High of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In 2017, their therapy for a form of blindness called Leber Congenital Amaurosis (LCA) became the first FDA-approved gene therapy for an inherited condition. Hundreds of people worldwide have successfully received the treatment. The trio's work has also cleared the way for more than 140 gene therapy trials for retinal conditions that affect more than 30 million people in the US alone, with more trials underway.

Last spring, Drs. Bennett, Maguire, and High were awarded the prestigious 2026 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences ["Gazetteer," Jul|Aug 2026]. The Breakthrough Prize is the largest award in the sciences and recognizes transformative researchers whose discoveries improve and extend human life. Nine Penn-affiliated researchers have won the Prize so far, tying us only with Harvard. As we celebrated this achievement, I was reminded of something fundamental about what we do at Penn. Great scientists, scholars, and students must persist through years of effort. They routinely investigate old assump-

tions and go out on a limb to test new ideas. Long before any headlining breakthrough, they do the hard but necessary work of breaking through.

In the case of Penn's latest Prize winners, this work has resulted in sight for people once doomed to go blind. For another Penn scholar, it means painstakingly translating an ancient story so that new generations can enjoy and examine it with fresh eyes.

Just weeks before the FDA's historic gene therapy approval, Penn Professor Emily Wilson published a new translation of Homer's *The Odyssey* ["An Odyssey for Our Time," Mar|Apr 2018]. Among her innovative approaches was recasting the poetry in iambic pentameter, bringing the epic's ancient oral traditions to life for modern audiences. For her work, Professor Wilson earned a MacArthur Fellowship, known as the "Genius Grant." Her translation has continued making waves since 2017, most recently as one of several versions that helped inform the summer's blockbuster movie event, director Christopher Nolan's adaptation of *The Odyssey*.

Readers have purchased more than a million copies of Professor Wilson's translation this year alone. As I write this, the movie is approaching \$1 billion in global sales. Fueling these numbers is an impassioned public dialogue that has engaged Homer fans of all ages and introduced the Greek classic to a new generation. All of this is powerful proof that ongoing translation and adaptation are critical to keeping humanity's stories resonant. As Professor Wilson observed, "We need new translations because we need constantly to be reassessing: What exactly might this text be doing? Might

there be ways that an earlier generation of scholarship missed certain things?"

By coincidence, I was in Greece this summer to meet with Penn alumni and attend the SNF Nostos conference in Athens, where I joined with student Fellows in Penn's SNF Paideia Program. *Paideia* is an ancient Greek word meaning 'to educate the whole person,' and our program focuses on equipping students with tools for productive dialogue across different perspectives. In our polarized times, there may be nothing more important than preparing people to civically engage, especially in the face of disagreement.

Greece is the birthplace of democracy, a distinction stretching back some 2,500 years. Chatting with the Penn Paideia Fellows made that millennia-long tradition feel new again, and I came away deeply hopeful for the future. Here were some of our best and brightest, learning what it takes to work through differences and keep democratic society moving forward.

Every day, I have the privilege of seeing our faculty, students, staff, and alumni achieve incredible things. But their achievements do not happen overnight. Advances come from dedicated study, trial and error, experimentation and exploration, and most important, perseverance. The same is true as we position our University for continued excellence with *Penn Forward*. Leadership in education, research, and clinical care means testing new ideas and opportunities for scaling them up. In areas like access and affordability, lifelong learning, and AI, we are refreshing old models and experimenting with innovative methods to better serve members of our University community and society. I look forward to sharing more about our momentum in the months ahead.

Behind every headline-grabbing breakthrough, there was a lifetime dedicated to breaking through. As we embark on a new academic year, I am confident that Penn's people will continue to demonstrate to the world how it is done.



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No Free Lunch

“LDI and American Healthcare” by Mary Ann Meyers [Jul|Aug 2026] mentioned that Medicare Advantage (MA) plans cost the federal government 14 percent more per person than does traditional Medicare. The result is unexpected, the article implies, as the creators of MA plans believed that competition among the private companies should instead drive down costs. My personal experience, as a nearly 65-year-old enrolling now in Medicare, leaves me entirely unsurprised.

I quickly discovered that beneath all of the choices and details to consider is a fundamental trade-off between choice and cost. Traditional Medicare offers more choice among providers but at a greater expense for the enrollee. For thrifty people who perceive themselves healthy, people like me, low-cost MA plans naturally appeal. For persons with preexisting conditions and with doctors they know and trust, traditional Medicare appeals. Consequently, we Medicare enrollees self-partition—or cherry pick—ourselves, in doing so undermining the risk pooling essential to insurance. People respond to trade-offs, even those unanticipated.

So, of course, the government overpays for MA plans because that’s where the healthy, low-intensity users of healthcare are! One policy response might be to document this phenomenon and use it as a reason to reduce reimbursement to companies offering MA plans. Of course, that would likely raise the premium and cut the benefits of the Humana HMO MA plan I just enrolled in. Alas, as economists like to say, there ain’t no such thing as a free lunch.

Paul B. Laub Gr’95, Albuquerque, NM



“I quickly discovered that beneath all of the choices and details to consider is a fundamental trade-off between choice and cost.”

Insurance Doesn’t Provide Healthcare

“LDI and American Healthcare” thoughtfully explores many of the challenges facing American healthcare. As a pediatric dentist who has practiced for more than four decades, I would suggest that one essential component of healthcare reform deserves greater attention: the long-term economic sustainability of the healthcare professionals and institutions upon which every insurance program ultimately depends.

Dentistry provides one illustration of this broader issue. According to the American Dental Association Health Policy Institute, Medicaid dental reimbursement nationally averages approximately 39 percent of dentists’ usual fees

and about 67 percent of average private insurance reimbursement.

Cost containment is an essential goal of healthcare policy. The question is not whether costs should be controlled, but who bears the burden when payment no longer reflects the efficient cost of providing care. When reimbursement persistently falls behind inflation, healthcare professionals and institutions increasingly absorb that burden. Eventually, practices reduce participation, postpone investments in staff and technology, retire early, or leave public programs altogether. Patients ultimately experience the consequences through diminished access and fewer choices.

As Penn continues to shape the national conversation on healthcare policy, I hope it will also help lead a discussion about a question that receives far less attention than coverage or cost: What constitutes economically sustainable reimbursement? Coverage, access, quality, and affordability are all indispensable goals, but each ultimately depends upon a healthcare workforce that remains economically viable.

Insurance coverage is a promise of care. That promise can only be fulfilled if the professionals and institutions responsible for delivering healthcare remain willing—and economically able—to do so.

George M. Angelos D’82, Harlingen, TX

Not Sure About the Bathtub!

Always, I enjoy the *Gazette*. The recent issue celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Kelly Writers House [“The 30-Year Squat,” Jul|Aug 2026].

When I was a student, this was the chaplain’s house. I do not remember if Stanley Johnson was the chaplain during

my years. During at least 1930–31, it was the house of Sigma Zeta fraternity. My father, William F. Steinkamp W’31, and his fraternity brother and roommate, G. Fesler Edwards W’31, lived there. One of them was president, so they occupied the front room, second floor. Not sure about the bathtub! They would be very proud of this current use, as I am.

Richard B. Steinkamp W’63, Little Rock, AR

What AI Can Do for Radiology

In “Premature Autopsy” [“Expert Opinion,” Jul|Aug 2026], Dr. Robert Wachter C’79 M’83 tells us that radiologists are still needed. No argument about that. But what he misses is that when AI improves, the machines will not only obviate humans making the complex visual judgments; but also, they will dramatically increase the medical value of scans.

There is a long history of technological advances surpassing human judgment. Thermometers and scales replaced sensitive hands, sonar replaced water dowsers, blood tests and smog tests replaced visual inspection. Dr. Wachter appears to sense the inevitability of radiology joining the list. This is obviously not a good thing for students pursuing the field, but in the long term it’s probably a benefit to humanity.

Expertise can be inadequate for two distinct reasons. One is human frailty. Those certified as experts via education and/or experience may not live up to the label.

The other reason expertise can be inadequate is systemic. The right answers are unknown. The gold standards are often tarnished. The history of medicine is replete with examples of diagnoses and treatments that were ineffective, even harmful. AI’s big potential is to increase validity.

As of now, a radiologist makes a determination, a clinician makes a treatment decision about what should be done given that determination, and a patient outcome occurs. What does the radiologist learn from that outcome? I hope I’m wrong but, I fear, very little. At best, some feedback occurs; but even then, few other radiologists share it.

AI offers the potential for massive data sets to be scrutinized, with the determination-decision-outcome chain allowing the field to advance. Human analysts can’t process this much information unaided. By the way, treatment decisions, which evolve as new interventions become available, will also be assisted by AI. Machines will be learning how to read scans with an eye toward improving results. How can society incentivize AI developers to cooperate with physicians and go in that direction?

David J. Weiss, C’66, Brea, CA

Haunting Experience

The article “100 Years of Powerful Pipes” [“Gazetteer,” Jul|Aug 2026] brought back fond memories of the Curtis Organ, including seeing the original film *Phantom of the Opera* with Lon Chaney Sr. at Irvine Auditorium on Halloween 1973 or 1974. It was a silent movie with the musical accompaniment of the amazing organ. When you sat down, you could hear the air whirring in the windchest and the vibration of the huge pipes, which seemed to be under the floor. Together, it was a haunting experience of the senses without equal.

Ed Dosik W’77, Potomac, MD

Winning Argument

As a retired appellate lawyer (but not before the US Supreme Court), I so enjoyed Dennis Drabelle’s recounting of Bill Eggers’ argument before the Supreme Court in “The Pride of Lombard Street” [“Alumni Voices,” Jul|Aug 2026]. That experience was made all the more poignant by the stories of Bill’s and friends’ law school high jinx. It brought me back to so many similar such experiences in my ’70s Penn undergrad days. Thank you for resurrecting those days with your story, Dennis!

Andy Cohn C’74, Philadelphia

Needless Injection of Race

This is sent to respond to a hateful letter in the Jul|Aug 2026 edition of the *Gazette*.

Try as I might *not* to respond—suspecting that the vast majority of Penn alumni recognize, and dismiss, demonstrations of ignorance when they see them—I can’t help myself. Perhaps failure to respond to ignorance simply serves to sustain it.

The letter writer and her husband are apparently “disgusted” by the fact that the character draped in red and blue on the cover of the May|Jun *Gazette* focusing on our nation’s 250th anniversary was, let’s be honest, *not* white. Such a selection means, apparently, that the University is too liberal, and the letter writer can no longer be proud of her alma mater.

After considering many potential responses, I choose just this: I recall seeing the cover when it arrived—thought the largely red and blue outfit/hat were well done, offset nicely by the white shirt showing underneath. As for the character wearing the outfit—didn’t really notice. Why on earth would I? It’s a random character that presumably represents Penn in some way—white, Black, red, yellow—what’s the diff?

For those to whom the color selected for a fictional representative of our University brings disgust and loss of pride, I share words to which Benjamin Franklin once affixed his signature: “All men are created equal.”

For those who felt as I did on reading the letter writer’s needless injection of race into a simple *Gazette* cover picture—Hail Pennsylvania!

Matthew Arbit C’83, Highland Park, IL

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Everything That Moves

“The women simply gather, as if pulled by tide.” ▶

By Mariam EINaggar

Cairo moves long before anyone in the apartment does. The road between the Giza Zoo and Cairo University begins its day in motion—buses braking hard, students pouring through the gates, taxi drivers inventing lanes where none exist. The sound rises through six floors of concrete and humidity until it becomes a single, unbroken current: a kind of weather.

From my great-grandmother Seto's window, where I am still small enough to stand on the sill, the zoo looks green enough to be another country. The gazelles move through it like a quiet rumor, their bodies taking the color of whatever light touches them—sand, haze, early morning dust. They lower their necks in unison, ears flicking. They never startle.

Inside the apartment, movement scales down. It becomes texture instead of volume: Seto's slippers whispering across the tiles, the scrape of a metal chair, the click of a gas stove catching flame. Butter melting in a pan. Onions surrendering to heat.

There had always been a certain choreography to her days: rinse, fold, stir, pour, correct, rinse again. She never rushed. She never repeated herself.

The rhythm carried.

Across a hallway that never quite went dark, the two apartments met. My grandmother, Noussa, would sprinkle jasmine water on the tiles in the morning, and the scent would drift toward Seto's door. The buttered onions would drift the other way.

By the time I was in middle school, Seto had begun to slow, and the entire family adjusted its movement to hers. The daughters, Noussa and Toota; the granddaughters, Iman, Ingy, Aya, and my mother Dina. They orbited around the apartment. They sat at her feet. They listened for the way she rose from a chair, for the way she cleared her throat, for the small shifts in breath that signaled something changing. These women moved with the loyalty of muscle memory, taught by decades of watching the oldest woman in the family hold everyone together.

Ever since her husband died young, Seto had been the one who knew how to

run a house, how to comfort a child, how to negotiate a sibling dispute without taking a side. She raised her children and half her grandchildren. Ingy, who lived in America, cried every time she left Cairo, because leaving meant stepping out of Seto's orbit.

Movement fills the apartment on the day she begins to die. It isn't panic. Just the dense, deliberate motion of people who know what to do but wish they didn't have to do it. The great-grandchildren stand where they can. Some lean against walls. Some count breaths. At 15, my hands don't know where to go. My grandfather, the doctor, moves once to bend down, lift her eyelid, look for the last thing he knows how to look for. When he straightens, no one asks him what he's seen. The answer is already moving through the room. Someone cries. Someone sits. Someone else leans into the doorway the way you lean into bad weather.

The body is carried into the bedroom. No one asks who will do the washing. The women simply gather, as if pulled by tide. They were taught by women who were taught by women, a knowledge passed hand to hand the way water passes through fingers.

I follow without thinking.

The room is warm, Cairo's heat stored in the walls like a secret. I lean back against them. The water is cold enough to change the air. My mother pours the first pitcher. The water runs over Seto's shoulder and makes its own decisions from there. Down the arm. Along the ribs. Into the curve of the stomach. The women adjust their rhythm to the water's. One supports the head. One washes the feet. One folds a towel. When the pitcher empties, another hand refills it. No one speaks.

They are a machine made of women and water.

The water does not pause for breath. Her body does not shiver or respond. This is the kind of cold that does not belong to weather. The women's hands continue anyway. Circles on her arms, slow and certain. Circles on her back.

Circles around her ankles. This is not cleaning. It is returning.

When they braid her hair, her head is lifted with such care that the air in the room seems to hold its own breath. The braid is tight, a final act of order beyond ceremony and time. The *kafan* is unfolded. Cloth passes beneath her, around her, over her, the way you would wrap something valuable for a long journey. The women do not collide. Their hands find each other without searching.

Outside the window, the zoo continues as if houses do not lose their centers, as if whole families do not change shape in a single afternoon. A bus shrieks through the intersection. Students laugh loudly enough to be heard six floors up. The gazelles lower their necks to grass.

After her death, the apartment moves differently. Footsteps echo more sharply. Conversations run shorter. Noussa's laugh shrinks, becoming something off-balance. When a Sudanese family moves into Seto's apartment, new rhythms enter the hallway: incense instead of butter, different feet on the floor, a different way of closing the kitchen cabinets. The hallway absorbs it the way walls absorb humidity. But movement is stubborn. It remembers.

Sometimes, when I visit, I stand at Noussa's window and look toward the zoo. I press my forehead to the glass. It's cool, the way Seto's tea glasses never were. I watch everything that hasn't stopped yet: the cars, the air, the faint sway of trees under heat. Somewhere below, a giraffe lifts its head above the treeline; the gazelles continue grazing.

And something in me keeps moving toward the moment in that warm bedroom—the sound of pouring, the women's hands working in circles, the body gleaming with water. The last movement she could not make for herself, made for her by the women she raised.

Mariam ElNaggar C'26 graduated in May.

This essay won the grand prize in the *Gazette's* 2026 annual undergraduate essay contest.



Farmers' Hours

"The days held, and I learned to fill them."

By Hilal Isler

By nine in the morning, I've already done plenty. Breakfast. A short stretch, less for ambition these days than maintenance. I've answered student emails: questions about deadlines, extensions, how to begin when you don't quite know what you think.

Soon, I'll have written two pages of a manuscript I'm working on. Lunch is at my desk, eaten quickly while I skim the news, always terrible; fresh horrors every day.

In the afternoon, I prepare my lectures. At night, I grade.

It's a busy day, but it's an ordinary one. It's taken me years to learn how to live like this. Not efficiently, exactly, but de-

liberately. To understand what my time is really for.

In my early 20s, time felt endless. I couldn't imagine ever running out. After college, I moved through a series of temp jobs: tending bar, waiting tables, tutoring kids, waking up at a different hour every day. My life had no real center back then, no real discipline. I was sloppy, unmoored. I stayed up too late, slept when I could, watched bad television, read worse books. Sometimes, late at night, I wrote.

Not that I was a writer or anything. Writers were a different breed of person, I thought at the time. I imagined them solitary and strange, living in remote-wilder-

ness cabins, drinking themselves into genius. I didn't think of writing as something you returned to every day. I didn't think of it as work.

In my mid-20s, I moved to Philadelphia to begin a doctoral program at Penn. I'd been living in suburban Maryland for years and by contrast Philly felt dense and serious. Row houses pressed together. Summer heat lifting off sidewalks. Uneven SEPTA platforms that roared and echoed. Maybe I didn't belong here, I thought. Maybe I was getting in over my head.

But soon enough I met someone on campus, a fellow graduate student, and my life began to rearrange itself in ways I didn't yet understand.

Late one morning, after brunch, we sat outside together, reading. It was bright and brisk. I was thumbing through a copy of the *Daily Pennsylvanian*. The table was sticky with syrup and coffee rings, I remember that clearly.

"Look at this," I said. "Says here they need columnists."

"You should do it," he replied.

I think I just stared at him at first. We'd only been dating a couple of weeks at that point and I hadn't yet told him I liked writing things. I hadn't told him that writing—writing with the intent of being published—was a door I'd never had the courage to open.

That night, in my room, the newspaper spread out before me, I wrote the two sample essays the application required. The following week, I got the call.

At first, I wrote very badly. But it didn't seem to matter that much because it still felt like movement. It felt like I was moving toward something big, even if I couldn't yet name it. Like I was stepping into a life I'd been rehearsing for all along.

Time accelerated after that. The days held, and I learned to fill them. I learned to work inside the shape of each hour. I sat cross-legged on my dorm-room bed, hands on the keyboard, telling myself I only had to stay there for 30 minutes, for 45. I was surprised by how much I

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could do when the day had edges. Penn helped me learn that structure has a way of magically stretching time.

What I had been missing before was urgency. Not the frantic kind, but the kind that actually steadies you. Deadlines—which I once believed suffocating—turned out to be clarifying instead. At last I learned to get out ahead of my days.

Now, in my 40s, time feels different again. My body wakes earlier. I stretch to keep going. My ambition is still sharp, but it's tempered by an awareness of cost. I understand that energy spent in one place can't be spent in another.

Penn helped me learn that structure has a way of magically stretching time.

I still want many things: to teach well, to be present for my family and friends, to travel. But maybe above it all, I want to write. I no longer wait for pristine conditions. I write through noise, through fatigue, through doubt. I know time is limited and I have a lot to say.

I think sometimes of the younger version of myself—pulling pints, wandering. I want to tell her she's not failing. She's just circling a room she's not quite ready to enter.

It's late as I write this. The television murmurs in the background. The dishwasher hums. Ungraded papers blink on my computer screen, demanding attention. My body is tired in a way I recognize now not as defeat, but as evidence. I know I don't have forever.

Hilal Isler GrEd'05 is an associate professor of instruction at the University of Texas, Austin. Her short story collection, *Har Mar*, was published by Northwestern University Press in July.

Elsewhere

Making Home

Turning rubble into a dwelling on St. Croix.

By Cynthia McVay



I am drawn—no, I am addicted—to saving wrecks and ruins. I tried to quit, but I can't help myself. They beckon. I get my fix from fixing them, putting them back together. I wish I could fall for a turnkey, finished home like normal people, but they hold little attraction. There's no challenge or mystery or story. I love older structures for their understated elegance, placement in the land, mature vegetation, unabashed mark of activity and time, and

their (often) simple functionality. Their layouts, priorities, and proportions make sense to me. I don't need a walk-in closet, or a kitchen the size of a gymnasium, or a media room. I minimally renovate, just enough for basic creature comforts while respecting the original intentions of the makers. Urgency accompanies older buildings, too. I worry that they will crumble beyond recognition, or—worse—someone else will “gut” them, removing the character that sets them apart.

Photos courtesy Cynthia McVay

In 2018, I purchased one such property on the island of St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands. While I was visiting the island for the first time, the listing popped up on Zillow. With dramatic stone walls and enormous window openings, it perched on a hill in a seductive, vulnerable state at a bargain price. I couldn't resist.

I have renovated a half-dozen homes over the years, but not one like this. This ramshackle skeleton required everything—roof, windows, doors, walls, plumbing, electrical—done immediately, if I wanted to get out ahead of hurricane season. Arriving a year after Hurricanes Irma and Maria, I competed for scarce and expensive tradesmen and materials, as FEMA pumped millions into the island's repair. Lots of people needed new roofs, not just me, and arguably with greater urgency. Operating as general contractor and architect, I quickly boned up on what it means to build a hurricane-proof, water-catching roof and clean, impermeable cisterns fed by ducts and conduits during the rainy season.

To get a jumpstart, I brought two carpenters from the Hudson Valley for the month of January. Because there was no electricity, we got by with loud, annoying, gas-fueled generators to operate the tools. One broke down. Then another. I borrowed my neighbor's generator, and it croaked too. Nonetheless, we banged out the roof and covered critical openings in short order. We had our laughs and our challenges, with me as their chauffeur and Home Depot runner. I must have loaded 500 bags of concrete—and then buckets and buckets of debris to take to the dump—into the back of an arthritic pickup. It was a memorable, productive month.

Over time, I assembled a team of mostly locals—local to the Caribbean, that is. They came from Antigua, Dominica, Trinidad, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Nevis, and St. Croix. I valued them highly and they became dear to me as I ferried them back and forth in the pickup. A couple had stands with avocados or mangos at the local farmers' mar-



Without electricity or plumbing, I camped in the living room.

ket. One took a half day on Friday to collect fruit and vegetables from "the bush." They shared local foods and plant knowledge with me, along with trade expertise. I often worked alongside them.

Reconstruction was guided by discovery, and a bias toward reuse. I watched how the sun worked its way around the structure and determined how to harness the hilltop breeze to minimize Caribbean heat and spring mold. We squared and fenced the three round arches in the driveway to create a main entry. I personally jackhammered five inches of concrete and standard-issue glazed white tile out of that patio to reveal hidden terrazzo. That patio now connects the main house to the guest wing and hosts an outdoor bar and multiple living spaces. A large, sculptural flamboyant tree shades a brick patio a few steps below. The deep pool on the west side of the house, a breeding ground for mosquitoes and curing station for tadpoles when I arrived, required significant investment to bring up to code, worth every penny. With a big sky, it offers another outdoor "room" to sip morning coffee, catch sunsets, and view the hemisphere of a rainbow after a shower. A fence, thoughtfully scaled and joining the existing walls,

steps around the entire house, giving the property dimension and security, and keeps my dog Dexter nearby.

Some internal walls don't reach the ceiling, a feature I saw designed into old plantation houses for air circulation. We made hurricane doors out of repurposed corrugated metal roofing found on the side of the road. I located elusive glass block—a mainstay of the island's architectural lexicon—and used it to create a tub and shower stall and to fill several superfluous openings, allowing natural light to reach interior rooms, maintaining the open feel. I filled driveway potholes with concrete rubble and drove the rest to the dump.

After three weeks, there was a roof, some doors and windows, but no electricity or proper plumbing. My furniture had arrived via container (too early!) and was piled high under dusty tarps. I decided to save some money by moving from a nearby Airbnb to camp in the living room. On this inaugural night I would sleep atop four mattresses stacked high, like *Princess and the Pea*.

I dug out sheets and pillows and made my bed. I bathed in a (clean) garbage can that had collected water from the roof not yet connected to the cistern. I brushed my teeth with bottled water and spat into the driveway. I changed into nightwear. I slipped into the clean sheets. *Mmm*. I felt the breeze and heard the rich night sounds that had been absent at the Airbnb.

I was happy to be surrounded by this nocturnal concert, and, at first, it seemed, as I'd hoped, mosquitoes were not an issue, even with no screens in the gaping openings. I certainly wasn't thinking about rats or boas or Cuban white frogs or the foot-long Amazonian giant centipedes yet.

I was exhausted, but I couldn't sleep. I lay awake following individual croaks and bellows, trying to ascertain whether they were frogs or birds.

The first hour was just about excitement.

The second hour was about pain. I used to miss the feeling of muscle fatigue I remember from my childhood. Sore

muscles were reminders of hours playing kick-the-can and tag. But that night, my whole body screamed from the jackhammering I'd been doing nonstop, trying to get the most out of my \$22-per-day tool rental. Had I caused permanent damage to my nerves? Or were my hands just a bundle of fractures? My legs, too, were heavy and pulsing. Instead of sleeping, I throbbed. I had no idea where my Advil was, and there was no use rummaging in the dust and dark in search of it.

I tried counting to six: three long breaths in, three long breaths out, meditation-style. I put a pillow beneath my knees when I lay on my back to ease lower back pain, and between my knees when I lay on my side to pad the knocking bones.

The third hour, just as I discovered sleep, the mosquitoes discovered me. I waited until one was near my ear and smacked it. The whine was gone, replaced by ringing. I sprayed myself with poison and hoped for the best. I pulled the sheet over my face and head until it got so hot, I kicked it all off. This cycle repeated dozens of times. I eventually dozed off.

I heard a loud knock at the door. I jumped out of bed petrified, alert, wondering who had found me on the hill, in the dark. Another knock. I opened the door and peeked out—and then down. An enormous hermit crab outside had been throwing himself against the door.

Hermit crabs had been living below the house between the cistern and pool when I first arrived. I found them a tad disconcerting as I explored the nooks and crannies of the underworld. But what was one doing here, on the threshold of my new abode? When I told my mason, Henry, about the encounter in the morning, he said, “Oh, yeah. They like to snuggle at night.”

Since I've moved in, they've moved on. I hope they've found somewhere cozy.

Cynthia McVay G'88 WG'88 is the author of *Under the Crucian Sun: A Memoir of Place* (2026) and *A Field of My Own: A Memoir of Place* (2025).

Unlimited Liability

Who is responsible when AI goes wrong?

By Michael J. T. Steep



The legal framework for AI liability in enterprise settings is in its early stages of formation, and the current state of that framework is, from an enterprise risk perspective, genuinely alarming. The fundamental problem is that the way AI systems are deployed creates multiple layers of potential responsibility—the AI developer, the enterprise software vendor, the company deploying the tool, the employee using it—with no clear legal doctrine yet established for how liability is allocated when things go wrong.

Current law, as of early 2026, generally does not impose automatic liability on AI vendors for incorrect outputs. Liability typically requires demonstrating negligence, misrepresentation, or a spe-

cific duty of care—and AI tools are still treated more like general-purpose tools than authoritative advisers. The perverse consequence: liability falls primarily on the enterprises and professionals who rely on AI outputs, even when those outputs come from systems whose failure modes are not fully understood or disclosed by their developers.

Microsoft has partially acknowledged this through indemnification for copyright-infringement claims tied to Copilot use—but that covers only one narrow category of harm, leaving enterprises fully exposed for errors in financial analysis, legal research, medical guidance, contract interpretation, and many other high-stakes applications for which these tools are marketed.

Illustration by Tracy Walker

The regulatory landscape is hardening, too. The EU AI Act, passed in 2024, imposes mandatory risk assessments, human oversight, and audit trails on organizations that deploy AI systems in high-stakes domains like employment decisions, credit scoring, and law enforcement. For any enterprise operating in or with the European Union, embedding LLMs in HR or financial systems is no longer merely a technology decision. It is a regulatory commitment.

The liability question is particularly acute in professions where practitioners have personal legal obligations to their clients. Lawyers who submit AI-generated briefs containing fabricated citations are not protected by the fact that the AI made the error: professional responsibility rules hold attorneys accountable for the work product they file, regardless of how it was produced. Physicians who rely on AI-generated clinical guidance face malpractice exposure if that guidance is incorrect; financial advisors who incorporate AI-generated analysis into client recommendations may face fiduciary liability if that analysis is wrong.

In precisely the domains where AI tools are being most aggressively marketed—legal, medical, financial—the professional users of those tools are assuming liability for AI errors they may not be equipped to detect. The *Washington Post* reported in June 2025 that attorneys across the US have filed court documents containing AI-generated cases that do not exist, leading to judicial sanctions and fines. These are not isolated incidents of negligence. They are predictable consequences of deploying systems that produce authoritative-sounding incorrect information to professional users operating under time pressure.

Another category of risk operates at a different level from individual errors or data breaches: systemic dependency on a small number of AI providers whose failure modes are correlated and whose terms of service give them significant unilateral power over the enterprises

that rely on them. Prior enterprise software was deterministic and fully specifiable in advance. LLMs are probabilistic: their outputs vary, their failure modes are not fully predictable, and their behavior can change as providers update the underlying models without notice. When critical business processes across thousands of enterprises depend on the same underlying models, a systematic failure—a bad update, a security breach, a geopolitical disruption to cloud infrastructure—propagates across the economy simultaneously. Existing business continuity frameworks are not designed to address it.

None of this is an argument for avoiding AI in enterprise applications. The competitive consequences of non-adoption are real. The productivity gains, where AI is deployed thoughtfully, are also real. The argument is for a level of rigor in AI governance that most enterprises have not yet achieved. Four principles should govern responsible deployment.

The first is that AI should be deployed in mission-critical applications only where robust human verification mechanisms are in place and where the humans have the expertise to actually catch AI errors. This sounds obvious and is routinely ignored. Putting AI into a clinical decision support system and then training physicians to “review AI suggestions” is not an adequate control if the physicians lack the time or independent competence to evaluate those suggestions critically.

The second is that enterprises need to conduct systematic error auditing of their AI deployments, not just pre-deployment testing. The hallucination rate of a model in controlled conditions is not the hallucination rate of that model processing real enterprise data with real users asking real questions. The only way to know how a deployed AI system is actually performing is to audit its outputs continuously, and measure error rates in the actual deployment context. Most enterprises are not doing this.

The third is that contracts with AI vendors need to reflect the actual risk allocation. The current standard is that vendors disclaim liability for errors while enterprises accept that risk implicitly by deploying the product. In any other domain involving enterprise software that drives consequential decisions, this would be considered unacceptable. Legal, procurement, and risk teams need to be deeply involved in AI vendor negotiations, not as an afterthought but as a prerequisite for deployment.

The fourth focuses on preserving the cognitive experiences that build human judgment. The continuous use of AI can lead to the degradation of human judgment, and the question of who is responsible for preserving it deserves far more attention than it currently gets. Training environments that preserve direct cognitive engagement will be a core component of any solution.

These risks share a common feature: they are visible. They generate incidents, court filings, financial losses, and audit findings that responsible governance can catch and correct. There is, however, a deeper layer of risk that does not generate visible incidents—at least not until much later, when the damage is no longer reversible: the gradual erosion of human judgment in the domains where AI is most heavily deployed.

It is imperative that enterprises actively resist the erosion of human competence that routine AI use can produce. This means preserving human-only workflows in at least some proportion of high-stakes work, so practitioners continue to develop independent judgment. It means treating AI as a tool to augment expert judgment rather than a replacement for developing it. And it means building organizational cultures that reward appropriate skepticism toward AI outputs rather than penalizing the “wasted time” of checking AI work.

It also means rethinking professional training and credentialing. If law schools, medical schools, and business schools are

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producing graduates whose foundational training was mediated by AI assistance, the competency frameworks designed for an earlier era may not capture whether those graduates can function without it.

The most dangerous moment in the adoption of any powerful technology is the period when its benefits are vivid, and its failure modes are not yet fully understood. We are in that moment with enterprise AI. The productivity gains from AI-assisted work are real and immediate. The legal liability from an AI-generated error in a financial filing, the patient harm from an AI-generated clinical recommendation, the contract exposure from an AI-generated clause misinterpretation—these are diffuse, probabilistic, and easy to assign to other causes.

The vendors selling these systems have powerful incentives to emphasize the benefits and minimize the risks. The

industry's self-interest and the enterprise buyer's enthusiasm for productivity gains create a structural bias toward underinvestment in risk management.

The history of technology risk teaches us that the costs of underinvestment tend to arrive suddenly, in concentrated form, after a long period of accumulation—financial models that worked brilliantly until a stress event broke their assumptions, safety systems that prevented thousands of minor incidents until they failed to prevent a catastrophic one. The question is whether enterprises, regulators, and AI vendors will build adequate risk frameworks before the costs of inadequate ones arrive.

LLMs are not the first technology deployed in enterprises before their failure modes were fully understood. But their particular combination of characteristics—confident in error, broadly de-

ployed, deeply integrated, rapidly evolving, and touching the most consequential decisions organizations make—makes the stakes of getting the risk framework wrong unusually high. The enterprises that will navigate this most successfully are those that take the risks as seriously as the benefits, before the benefits have had time to obscure how serious the risks actually are. And the risk that may prove most serious of all is the one that governance frameworks address last, if at all: the slow, invisible, generational erosion of the human judgment that enterprise AI, at its best, is supposed to serve.

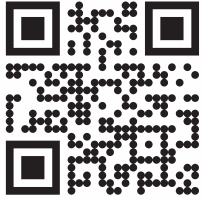
Michael Steep W'76 is the founding executive director of the Stanford Program for Disruptive Technology and Innovation, and the author of *Critical Turning Point: What Leaders Must Confront in the Age of AI*, from which this essay is adapted.



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Market Street Makeover

Melding the future and the past of a historic Philadelphia corridor. ▶

It's the mid-1850s and in the middle of Philadelphia's Market Street dozens of produce, fish, and meat vendors hawk their comestibles in a series of covered sheds that run west to Broad Street. Midsize row buildings that stand cheek-by-jowl along the sidewalks beckon buyers with signs announcing the sale of carpets and cigars, seeds and shoes.

By the 1890s, the scene has changed and huge, newfangled department stores dominate Market Street's retail landscape. Horsedrawn carriages, trolleys, and pedestrians clog the streets. Money is changing hands at a furious pace.

In the 1970s, a new kind of commerce enters the picture. It's called The Gallery, an urban riposte to suburban malls. Neither as chaotic as the covered sheds nor as elegant as Europe's shopping arcades, it entices consumers off the street and indoors to peruse the wares of national chains.

Today, too many of the small storefronts of yesteryear stand vacant, while the magnificent retail palaces that still exist have been converted into offices and apartments. Even the mall has been retooled; now called The Fashion District, it leans more on entertainment spaces than retail ones.

It's no secret that Market Street has been a place of abandonment and decline for some time now. And so, last fall, a cadre of architecture, historic preservation, and city planning students at Penn's Weitzman School of Design joined an ongoing discussion that's got every-

one from the mayor's office to ambitious developers dreaming about reviving what was once the city's premier shopping district.

Engaging in a multidisciplinary investigation of the site and its issues, the students proposed out-of-the-(big)-box remedies and unveiled pie-in-the-sky visions. Then this summer, a few loosely connected and more tangible projects evolved from these studios.

First among them is Meantime on Market, an intervention born of a partnership between the City of Philadelphia, Center City District, and local property owners. Launched in May, the effort marked the latest effort from Meantime, a nonprofit arm of the Philadelphia-based architecture firm ISA, which matches local businesses with unrented storefronts.

"The thinking is, if we don't know what to do with the area, why don't we at least try a temporary fix?" says Brian Phillips GAR'96, the head of Meantime, a founding principal of ISA, and a Weitzman School lecturer. "While an owner waits for a traditional tenant, Meantime will come in and do its thing, typically for 30 days, though we've even done one week. Market Street has been our largest and longest activation."

The overarching idea is that pop-ups can help the street and the building look viable and vital; in return, Meantime asks that owners forego collecting rent. Empty storefronts force a "public good kind of discussion," Phillips says. "They benefit

no one—not landlords, not citizens, and not the many small businesses looking for affordable leases. We think that storefronts belong to the community. They're not private property in the way that apartments and offices are."

Handpicked by Phillips, who knew some of the business owners personally, the

The interiors of vintage clothing shop Almost Famous (top) and Clubfriends Radio & Records.



original set of pop-ups on the south side of the 900 block of Market included offshoots of Two Persons coffee shop, Rarify mid-century furniture, and Siddiq's, the beloved West Philly water ice shop, as well as outlets for creative businesses without permanent homes, like Almost Famous (vintage clothing), Clubfriends Radio & Records (a listening room), and Art Philly (a storytelling hub). Later in the summer, the project expanded with the opening of an outlet from independent bookseller Harriet's in an empty storefront across the street and the Immigrant Marche, a marketplace of goods made by artisan immigrants, around the corner. "We were looking for diversity in all ways, but also I wanted people who were

going to bring game," says Phillips. "These businesses were excited by the idea and up for pulling it off."

Also part of the mix was a storefront curated by Penn-Praxis, the clinical arm of Weitzman, which installed an exhibition prepared by lecturer Ashley Hahn GCP'08 GFA'08. Hahn combined findings from historic preservation students with her own research and presented the material in digestible chunks that brought Market East's past to life while subtly informing its possible futures.

"There was a graphic component to the research that we wanted to highlight," Hahn says. Sifting through watercolors, prints, photos, maps, signage, and newspaper articles, she also produced an accompanying 20-page zine *Meet*

Market, which delves deeper into the Market East corridor through themes like centrality (geographical and metaphorical), celebration (all those parades!), commerce (it's there in the name), and cycles of reinvention. "We also looked at the history of preservation itself," she adds. "Examining, say, the Thomas Jefferson House, which was a reconstruction, or the Lit Brothers restoration, which was made possible by historic tax credits, helps us see how preservation approaches have changed over time. Like Meantime on Market itself, the zine is meant to provoke curiosity and to encourage a view of the street that stretches beyond what you see there now."

The original seven pop-ups were part of a parcel recently purchased by Comcast and HBSE (the company founded by Joshua Harris W'86 and David Blitzer W'91 which owns the Philadelphia 76ers and other sports franchises). Not long after these real estate partners pulled out of a contested mixed-use development that included an arena for the Sixers, the city announced a \$1.85 million investment to spruce up the strip all the way to City Hall in anticipation of a summer of converging events, including the World Cup, Major League Baseball's All-Star Game, and America's 250th birthday bash. The beautification included dozens of newly planted trees, newly painted murals, and refurbished street furniture like bus shelters and light poles. The retail pop-ups were built out by ISA in less than two months and received

a unifying coat of black exterior paint, branded black signs with white lettering marked "Coffee" or "Music" or "Books," and a bold, vaguely mid-century-modern style mural.

Freed from rent pressures, the businesses often used their spaces as branding or to stage participatory and community-oriented events like coffee tastings or listening parties. During this summer's extremely hot weather and the distractions of semiquincentennial celebrations and watch parties, store hours were spotty. But Phillips contends that "Meantime on Market is a demonstration project more than a real estate one," and that just "getting this up and running at all was a success."

"And if it changes some of the trajectory of the planning process for this area, that's a success," he says. "When someone says to me, *I walk on this side of the street now*, I don't know how that can be measured. But it sticks with me because it's so revealing. Philly is one of the great physically connected, dense, walkable places in America and we all have our pathways. This is partly about rewiring them."

As this case study continues on its own path—one with an uncertain ending—Phillips and the other partners are "really immersed in all of the big questions that Meantime on Market is asking," he says. "It touches on ideas of commerce, community, and equity. So far, the lesson learned is that there's going to be a ton of lessons learned." —*JoAnn Greco*

Jameson to Step Down

Penn's 10th president will end his term in June.

Over the summer, J. Larry Jameson confirmed that he would be ending his

tenure as Penn's president on June 30, 2027, after what will be three and a half years in office. "Although I greatly enjoy serving as President, now is the right time for Penn to begin its next chapter under new leadership," he stated in a June 12 message to the Penn community.

"When I accepted the honor of leading Penn, my goal was to help restore stability during unanticipated leadership transitions, refocus our community on Penn's mission, and strengthen Penn for the future during a challenging time for higher education," Jameson wrote. "With your partnership, resilience, and dedication, we have accomplished these objectives and much more. Penn has tremendous momentum and is exceptionally well positioned for the future."

Jameson, who had previously spent a dozen years as executive vice president for the health system and dean of the Perelman School of Medicine, was thrust into the presidency in December 2023 following the resignation of Penn's ninth president, Liz Magill, after controversies culminating in her testimony at a Congressional hearing on antisemitism. Jameson served in an interim role until March 2025, when the University's trustees voted to

make the appointment permanent and extended his term to June 30, 2027.

Early in his tenure Jameson confronted continuing tensions when a pro-Palestinian encampment was set up on College Green. After 16 days of negotiations, he ordered its disbanding by police. His administration also settled a Title IX investigation by the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights that had suspended \$175 million in research funding arising from the participation of transgender athlete Lia Thomas C'22 on the women's swim team in 2021–22.

Both actions were criticized by faculty and others within and outside the University, but more generally Jameson is credited with restoring a sense of normalcy to campus and a renewed focus on the University's core missions. In September 2024, he announced a new policy limiting institutional statements under which "the University will issue messages on local or world events rarely, and only when those events lie within our operational remit." He presided over the relaunch of Penn's strategic framework, *Of Principle and Practice*, and led the development of a further planning structure, *Penn Forward*, aimed at enabling the University to continue to thrive in the current period of "historic change," when the "headwinds Penn and higher

education face are fierce,” as he once wrote in the *Gazette* [“From College Hall, Sep/Oct 2025].

“Together, we have built upon a foundation of academic excellence,” Jameson said in his June message. “We have made education more accessible and affordable, witnessed multiple medical breakthroughs, championed recognition of faculty and students, and strengthened a culture of inclusion, collaboration, respect, and thoughtful debate.”

He pledged to build on Penn’s momentum in his remaining time in College Hall. “*Penn Forward* has launched an ambitious set of actionable initiatives that will further enhance access, catalyze discovery, and extend our reach, nationally and globally, positioning Penn to lead in a rapidly changing world for years to come. I look forward to continuing that work with you while partnering with the Board of Trustees to ensure a seamless leadership transition.”

In a separate message, Board of Trustees Chair Ramanan Raghavendran EAS’89 W’89 LPS’15 wrote that the board “respects his decision” and praised Jameson for stepping in at a “pivotal moment” in Penn’s history. “What he has accomplished in two and a half years has been simply extraordinary,” Raghavendran added.

The search for a new president is under way, beginning with the formation of a consultative committee that includes trustees, deans, students, faculty, and staff. For more information, visit president.upenn.edu/presidential-search. —JP



Trust Issues

Large segments of the US population have turned against higher education. Who’s to blame, and can it be fixed?

“So, we got to twice the number of questions I thought we would; we got to two,” said Katharine Strunk, dean of Penn’s Graduate School of Education, wrapping up “Higher Education in the United States: From Origins to Outlook,” an Alumni Weekend panel discussion she’d been moderating with Mark Yudof C’65 L’68, Elaine Maimon CW’66 G’67 Gr’70, John Silvanus Wilson Jr., and Nicholas Lemann.

To be fair, they were big questions, and there was plenty of debate among the four academic leaders about both of them: Why is there so much distrust of higher education today? And what can

educational institutions—from community colleges to the Ivy League—do to restore public faith in their mission?

“I think there is a nonpartisan distrust of universities today,” said Yudof, a constitutional scholar who has run universities in California, Texas, and Minnesota. Whatever their politics, “everyone believes universities should be safe for their students. Universities should be attentive to their students’ needs. Students should progress toward their degrees, and go out into the world and get the jobs that they desire and serve the nation. Occupied buildings, encampments, racism, antisem-

itism, violent demonstrations are not on their list.”

The failure of many universities across the country to meet that standard has had a cost in terms of public approval, Yudof added. “What’s the best approach? Simple: adopt reasonable rules and enforce them. I don’t think someone deserves the death penalty for something they did on campus. Reasonable rules [enforced] through the right processes, through faculty governance, the whole works.”

On a partisan level, many conservatives see universities as hotbeds of liberal thought and activism, “and there’s something in that,” he said—as reflected in polls showing heavy Democratic tilt among faculty and the fact that many professional associations lean left on issues and “are outspoken” about it. “There are no umpires anymore,” Yudof said. “The Association of American University Professors is anti-Israel, very left wing, and no longer calls balls and strikes, no longer enforces the academic rules. It’s a player. Everyone wants to be a player.”

Many progressives also distrust universities, he added, “based upon the notion that universities embrace the status quo, that they embody past knowledge, past morality, and they tacitly, if not purposely, sort of reinforce inequities in America. And there’s something to that as well.”

Maimon—a founder of the Writing Across the Curriculum movement who has led institutions including Governors State University in Illi-

nois and the University of Alaska Anchorage—dismissed the significance of faculty party affiliation (“I’ve never seen any survey of how many bankers are Republicans”) and instead pointed to evidence that students at all types of higher ed institutions “see that they have openness from the faculty in their class discussions, that no one’s trying to proselytize to or convert them. That goes very much against what we hear—too much, I think—from the media and, of course, from people on the right.”

While universities have a responsibility to take a hard look at themselves and make improvements in this “pivotal moment,” she added, “I don’t think there’s any question that universities and all of higher ed—and I would say education as a whole—is under serious, unwarranted federal attack.”

Wilson, a former president of Morehouse College who now serves as executive director of Penn GSE’s McGraw Center for Educational Leadership, noted that current distrust of higher education is part of a larger skepticism about institutions of many kinds—and is also nothing new, as is evident from the striking similarities in the rhetoric of vice presidents Spiro Agnew and JD Vance. But his main point was that hostility to higher education has gone hand in hand with greater college and university access for previously underserved populations.

The panel was billed as the first in a speaker series marking the nation’s 250th birth-

day that will continue through the end of 2026. Wilson singled out another approaching milestone, the 400th anniversary of higher education in what would become the United States with Harvard’s founding in 1636. But only within his lifetime has higher education become “less uniform, less inequitable,” and “more open,” he said. “I believe that distrust in higher education is largely from a segment of the population that believes that what has been happening in the last 60 years is the wrong direction.”

He viewed that as the principal motivation for conservative attacks. “You call the leadership feckless. You call the professors leftist. You call the students destructive,” he said. “Basically, what is happening in higher education is an echo of what we see in the nation. There are some people who believe that progress is recovery: ‘We have to go back—MAGA, make America great again.’ There are others who believe—and higher education is an example of this in the last 60 years—that progress is not recovery but discovery. That we have to get to an America we haven’t experienced yet.”

While education in general gets a failing grade when it comes to supporting democracy, Wilson contended, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have come closest to fulfilling the philosopher John Dewey’s statement that “Democracy must be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife.” In the mid-20th

century, these institutions “went on a deliberate and aggressive quest to shape the foot soldiers and the generals of a civil rights movement” that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act that “gave birth to democracy in America.”

All of American higher education needs to “do a version of what HBCUs did,” in giving their students “a dual competency, a skill set for a better me, where I can get a good job, but also a mindset for a better we, caring about everyone and not sitting in your tribe or in your narcissistic space.”

Lemann, a longtime *New Yorker* staff writer and dean emeritus of Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism, questioned whether any organization that turns away 95 percent of those seeking to join it can ever be beloved.

In contrast to many other countries’ national-test-based systems for college entry, the US has “this kind of mysterious, smoke-and-mirrors admissions process—that makes sense if you’re part of it, but not to outsiders, and it looks unfair,” he said. Still, he added, no one seems bothered by West Point, a highly selective institution whose admissions criteria lean heavily toward “what Harvard got dinged for in its recent lawsuit—intangible things like character and leadership.”

One reason the uniformed military is among the handful of institutions not “plummeting in public trust”—unlike his two professions of journalism and higher ed, he said—may be that “it has a very clearly

stated purpose and a very big public service requirement that everybody has to follow.” With this in mind, Lemann suggested that either universities stop “constantly talking about how they exist to serve the public” or “put some meat on the bones of that by saying every student who’s admitted here has to do, let’s say, five years of national service after they graduate. Would that build trust?”

Maimon called for an alliance of higher education institutions modeled on a proposal by former Columbia University president Lee Bollinger—a kind of NATO in which “an attack on one is an attack on all.” In such a group, a university like Penn would be vocal in support of Community College of Philadelphia’s federally funded TRiO programs to assist low-income, first-generation, and disabled students, and CCP in turn would have the University’s back in speaking out against “this disgraceful removal of research funds from Penn, and to talk about how that hurts everybody.”

Lemann offered a “Philadelphia-specific” variation involving “a sort of higher ed constitutional convention” that would bring together different types of schools as well as external stakeholders to “try to see if we can agree on a set of principles that we all are willing to support regarding higher education,” he said. “If everybody had a bit more shared vision of what the university is—both the inside stakeholders, like alumni and donors and par-

ents and faculty, and the outside stakeholders that we depend on, like politicians—I think, if it could be achieved, it would be healthy. Because otherwise, you’re in the old fable of the blind men and the elephant, and everybody thinks the university is or should be a completely different thing. Creating a unity around what its purpose is would go a long way.”

Yudof asserted that the trust issue was “not about ideology” but about universities doing their job. The Trump administration’s attempts to politicize the awarding of research grants “is going to fizzle out,” he predicted. “They’ve already lost at virtually every court in America. The American people want the University of Pennsylvania and others to do medical research and engineering, and indeed liberal arts research and all the rest.” As for any higher ed alliance, “You can talk to each other till you’re blue in the face. The question is, what do the American people think?” he said.

Public universities “have always been subject to deep controls by their [legislative] bodies,” and “New York votes for different legislation than Florida does, and Texas for different than California,” Yudof added. “I think they love their universities. I think they have confidence in their universities. They like the research of their universities.” They also don’t care about the political affiliation of faculty “so long as they’re not revolutionaries in the classroom,” he said. “I mean, that’s what they think! You may disagree with

that, and it may only be two percent of the professors that do that. I don’t know, but that I think is the way to restore trust, reviving higher education and making it more accessible and better.”

Maimon—who noted that she had spent the bulk of her “professional career at little-known regional public universities who did a lot of great things” while receiving comparatively little attention—referred to her experience working with legislatures in both red and blue states. “I really did find that it was possible to communicate the public good issue and to evoke some degree of trust—not from everybody but, you know, enough to make things work,” she said. “The moment is different right now. We have people who are deliberately sowing seeds of distrust in what we do and that’s why something like this constitutional convention would be helpful.”

Earlier in the session, she had suggested a different solution based on her experience as a returning alumna: “This morning, arriving here, I have to say the kind of joy I felt in being on Locust Walk and seeing the students trying on their caps and gowns, the families taking photos, students and families celebrating what universities are all about—and that’s promoting curiosity, promoting the search for knowledge,” she said. “And I think that if we could take the essence of Locust Walk and have some of the critics drink it, we’d be a lot better off.” —JP



Who Will Save the Media?

A new paradigm will emerge for the free press, says one University professor and media historian. It’s just complicated.

If newspapers and other media outlets are essential for democracy—but they can’t be funded or regulated by the government, and people complain about paywalls and subscriptions—how will news survive?

At a time when the public will often share photos, videos, and doctored social media memes before linking to news articles, media outlets are foundering and closing, leaving an average of eight local journalists for every 100,000 Americans, down from an average of 40 just a quarter century ago. And around 50 million people live in “news deserts” with little to no local coverage, re-

searchers at Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism have found.

The puzzle of how to maintain a free press—one that will question public officials and unearth corruption—has plagued the American media ecosystem for 250 years. New challenges have emerged, and not just from internet competition. Deregulation over 30 years has squeezed out small outfits, with the US losing nearly 3,500 newspapers and more than 270,000 news jobs since 2005, including 136 largely independent outlets in 2024 alone.

“It wasn’t inevitable to have it this way, but inaction led us to this moment,” says

Victor Pickard, the C. Edwin Baker Professor of Media Policy and Political Economy at Penn's Annenberg School for Communication. But he sees hope and opportunity, believing there are ways to maintain and reinvigorate the American free press.

In December, Pickard coauthored "The Political Economy of the US Media System: Excavating the Roots of the Present Crisis." Funded by the nonprofit Roosevelt Institute, the report examines actions from across the political spectrum that led to the decline of news availability, highlighting past safeguards and initiatives that could bring back a strong media.

While the report mentions the oft-discussed 1987 repeal of the "Fairness Doctrine"—a 1949 Federal Communications Commission [FCC] policy to ensure contrasting opinions and public interest reporting—Pickard also delves into the erosion of less obvious government safeguards due to the misguided belief that deregulation would keep the press free.

"I'd like to reframe [the discussion] a little bit," he says. "Government is always involved in our media, our news, our communication infrastructures—in everything from managing the public airwaves, to intellectual property laws. So if we know government will always be involved, *how* should it be involved?"

Going back to the 18th century, the government has funded and regulated the press in obvious and subtle ways, Pickard notes, includ-

ing through reduced postal rates for periodicals. By 1832, "95 percent of the weight of the post was newspapers," he says. "We subsidize postage rates. Media subsidies are as American as apple pie. At the dawn of the republic, it's something we were doing."

Pickard grew up outside of Pittsburgh—a city that recently almost lost its daily newspaper, the *Post-Gazette*. (A new owner saved the paper but made significant layoffs.) He graduated from Allegheny College in 1995 and became interested in media policy when he traveled in Southeast Asia, he says, and saw disparities between international news coverage abroad and in the US. Pickard earned a PhD at the University of Illinois in 2008 with a dissertation on media survival after World War II. He came to Penn in 2011.

Pickard says the market can't be the only arbiter of whether a free press survives, which is something he notes the country's founding framers also believed. In addition to the repeal of the Fairness Doctrine and other weakened policies of the FCC—which was founded in 1934 to regulate media due to lawmakers' concerns about limited space on the airwaves and a potential monopoly by the three main broadcast networks—Pickard's report listed more changes that have hastened the demise of modern media.

Among them is a lack of internet regulation. Around 2024, social media owners loosened their content moderation policies. "Perhaps the

AWARDS

Wharton MBA Student Wins Medal of Honor



Nicholas Dockery WG'27, a student in Wharton's MBA Program for Executives, was awarded the Medal of Honor, the country's highest military award, for valor in combat while serving in Afghanistan.

The medal was presented by President Donald Trump W'68 during a White House ceremony in June.

A retired major in the US Army, Dockery received the honor for rallying his platoon and allied Afghan forces during an October 2, 2012, ambush by Taliban fighters. Among other heroic actions, he saved a wounded comrade from enemy capture and rendered the soldier lifesaving aid, pushed another soldier behind cover and shielded him from a grenade blast, and refused to leave the battle until every wounded soldier reached safety.

Dockery also holds the Silver Star for a 2018 firefight that left more than 100 enemy fighters dead, as well as a Soldier's Medal for risking his life while off duty to stop an armed assailant and help a wounded civilian in December 2025. His other decorations include the Legion of Merit, multiple Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts, the Nining Award for Valor at Arms, and the MacArthur Award for Leadership, making him one of the most highly decorated soldiers of his generation.

First awarded in 1862, the Medal of Honor has gone to roughly 3,500 recipients, including four Penn alumni for their actions during the Civil War.

most profound structural shift in the modern information economy is the rise of digital platforms as dominant gatekeepers of public discourse ... the platform-dominated advertising market has contributed to hollowing out the economic base of journalism, accelerating layoffs, consolidation, and the collapse of local news," the report notes. "Big Tech powerfully influences the policy landscape through lobbying, litigation, and vast public relations campaigns."

Inadequate funding for public media has also been an issue. The 1967 Public Broadcasting Act, "a critical step toward media democracy," the report states, created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, declaring that "the development and

growth of public radio, television, and nonbroadcast telecommunications technologies are in the public interest." But the CPB—which shut down in January 2026 when Congress zeroed out its funding—always lacked a guaranteed stream of income, and countries like Norway and Sweden spend about 62 times as much per person on public media as the US. Still, "CPB-funded public media reached almost all Americans—99 percent of the US population ... [and] the corporation played an especially crucial role for rural, island, and tribal communities," the report notes. "The refusal to adequately fund public media is often justified by overwhelming fears that federally subsidizing journalism will inevitably

result in state-controlled media ... [but] proper institutional safeguards can enhance, rather than undermine, press independence.”

And then there have been the increases in the number of media organizations that one company or person can own. The FCC’s “7-7-7” rule in 1953 prevented a company from owning more than seven AM radio, seven FM radio, and seven television stations nationwide. A separate 25 percent national audience reach cap was later introduced, which Congress then increased to 39 percent before the limit was lifted entirely in August by the FCC. But “rather than promote competition, it enabled corporate mergers,” Pickard’s report states. (One such potential megamerger, between Paramount and Warner Brothers, led Pickard to recently write on social media: “This is, of course, absurd for any democratic society worthy of the name.”)

Pickard insists that the market doesn’t always work in the public interest. Like libraries, he said, news outlets require public funds. They will also need safeguards, especially with emerging technology. “There’s always a mistaken assumption that we could just leave the internet to be dictated by Silicon Valley and various corporate interests, just like AI,” he says. “We can’t leave [media] up to the market and what a handful of billionaires think it should look like. There’s so much we’re going to have to do, figure out an entire regulatory paradigm.”

The past provides clues for how to do that. “The manifest failure of corporate libertarian media policy has created space for new approaches that treat journalism as essential democratic infrastructure,” the report states, “rather than a commodity whose existence is determined solely by its profit potential. The coming years will require a fundamental rebuilding and reinvention of such core institutions.”

One bright spot: A Pew Research report last October said 70 percent of Americans trust local news. While survey data show high levels of public distrust toward “the media” (along with all major institutions), Pickard says that “once you dig down a bit, when it comes to their local media institutions they still have warm-fuzzy feelings. That should give us some hope that people do still care and do trust local media.”

He also pointed to journalism nonprofits, and to new state government initiatives that fund reporting, as reasons for hope. For example, New York provides tax credits for companies that maintain and add journalism jobs.

“We need public support behind initiatives that not only salvage what’s left, but rebuild,” Pickard says. “This is a rare opportunity we have, to entirely reimagine what journalism should and could look like. What’s the cliché? *Every crisis is an opportunity*. We’re at a critical junction. We can create something better than what we had before.” —Caren Lissner C’93

The New Meets the Old

Penn football’s new head coach has lofty ambitions for a 150-year-old program.



Not long after Rick Santos became Penn’s new head football coach, he and

his staff landed a recruit who seemed to meld the program’s storied past with its lofty aspirations for the future.

Miles Teodecki, a standout quarterback from Texas, spurned offers from several power conference schools to come to Penn—where his father, Steve Teodecki W’97, played quarterback 30 years ago.

The younger Teodecki had initially committed to play at Kansas State, but after a

coaching change there, re-opened his recruitment in January. That prompted Santos to call his dad and persuade the family to come for an official visit. “And we instantly hit it off,” says Santos, who was hired to replace Ray Priore in December after a five-year stint as the University of New Hampshire’s head coach [“Sports,” Jan/Feb 2026]. “What’s not to love about him? A football family, a great competitor, brilliant, and obviously how talented he is as a football player.”

Although Teodecki's family connection certainly played a role in his decision to play in the Ivy League over the country's premier conferences, Santos believes the Quakers will be able to "move the needle" and reel in other big-time national recruits as he looks to position Penn back atop the Ivies after eight straight seasons without a title.

He is confident that he'll be able to sell recruits on a vision that "you can accomplish everything you possibly want from here" by pointing to alums who earned Penn degrees before going to the NFL or, more recently, earning money as a graduate student player at another university during their fifth year of eligibility. To that end, networking with Penn football's vast alumni base has been a critical mission for Santos, so students can not only get a glimpse into what a successful post-college life can look like but also advice on how to win Ivy League titles—which the Quakers won 18 of before their recent drought.

"I talked to a lot of guys who played on all of those championship teams over the decades, [asking] *why were you guys so special? What made you different?*" says Santos, who's already been to alumni events in California, Texas, Florida, New York, and the Jersey Shore, among other stops. He's also had Zoom calls from players dating back to the 1950s, learning some of the history of a program that will mark its 150th anniversary this season. (Penn lost its first intercollegiate contest to Princeton, 6–0,

"There's no doubt in my mind that we will be contending for national championships on a yearly basis."

on November 1, 1876, in a game without helmets, pads, touchdowns—or coaches.)

In truth, though, Penn football's rich history would be hard for the 42-year-old coach to avoid. Every day that Santos comes to work in an office overlooking historic Franklin Field, which has hosted 130 seasons of college football, he walks by old photos of program legends and items like a replica of the Heisman Trophy in honor of John Heisman LI892 ["Heisman's Game," Sep/Oct 2019]. "It's humbling to be a part of this, and I don't take that lightly," Santos says. "I understand the expectations are really high in a program like this, but that's what my staff and I signed up for. We want to compete and win championships and restore this great program to its glory."

And beginning an exciting new chapter while celebrating 150 years of Penn football is a responsibility the Quakers' first-year head coach embraces. "We need to acknowledge all the great past players and coaches that have come through this program," he says. "It's really balancing the two and making sure we can honor them with how well we play this year."

Although this year's Penn squad lost a slew of key players to graduation, including standout receivers Jared Richardson C'26 and Bisi Owens

W'26 (now playing, as graduate students, at Duke and Purdue, respectively) and quarterback Liam O'Brien W'26 (Cincinnati), Santos believes "we can win here early, and make an immediate impact in the Ivy League and beyond." One thing he's especially excited about is working with the quarterbacks—including Teodecki and junior Karson Siqueiros-Lasky, who's been tapped as one of the team's captains (along with linebacker Cole Olsztyn, offensive linemen Ryan Mitchell and Luke Sacchetti, and defensive back Josh Narcisse) and is in line to potentially start when Penn opens its season at Bucknell on September 19.

"The overall narrative is we have a lot of guys eager to prove themselves," says Santos, a star quarterback while playing at New Hampshire. "We're going to be flying under the radar this year. I think the whole league probably won't expect much from us, and we've got something to prove."

To build the program back up, "recruiting is the most important thing," says Santos, who led New Hampshire to a 37–24 overall record and three Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) playoff berths in the last five years. Unlike at his alma mater, Santos knows he needs to "chase test scores around the country" in a nationwide search for recruits.

He also believes the transfer portal will pose less of a challenge than at other schools where you're "constantly re-recruiting your roster" when players chase money

elsewhere. "It's kind of the bane of your existence as a head coach," he says. While that still might happen occasionally at Penn (it did in the last offseason, for instance, when Malachi Hosley bolted for Georgia Tech), Santos insists the vast majority of recruits will stay with the Quakers, thanks in part to a new NCAA age-based eligibility model that allows most student-athletes to play five years in college without redshirting (though it's still four in the Ivies). "We want to develop these guys and see them through" to an Ivy League degree—and then, perhaps, to another school after they graduate, as Penn has "a really good track record of fifth-year seniors transferring and getting paid a lot of money in the portal," he notes.

Another rule change that could benefit recruiting is the one that allows Ivy League teams to compete in the FCS playoffs ["Sports," Sep/Oct 2025], which began last year with Yale and Harvard both earning berths. With that in place, Santos thinks "in the next three to five years, the Ivy League is going to be a top three FCS conference," he says. "We're going to have multiple teams in the Top 25."

And he is intent that the Quakers will be right there leading the charge, as they've done at various times throughout the program's illustrious history. "There's no doubt in my mind," Santos says, "that in the next couple of years, we will be contending for national championships on a yearly basis." —DZ

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Don't Only Connect— Get Situated and Practice Agency

This fall three of Penn's biggest thinkers—Angela Duckworth Gr'06, Adam Grant, and Martin E. P. Seligman Gr'67—will release major books, all likely destined for bestseller lists. “It's quite a perfect storm,” says Seligman, the Zellerbach Family Professor of Psychology and director of the Penn Positive Psychology Center.

Duckworth's *Situated: Find the People and Places that Bring Out Your Best* (Scribner) serves as a companion volume and follow-up to her 2016 debut, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. Grant's *Vibe: The Secrets of Strong Connections in a Lonely World* (Viking) concentrates on friendships, marrying social science research with tips on improving different kinds of bonds. And Seligman's *Agency: The Psychological History of Human Progress* (Simon Acumen) introduces an ambitious theory positing that changes in psychological orientation have spurred scientific invention, artistic creation, the expansion of democracy, and other indices of progress.

The three psychologists have close professional and intellectual ties. Duckworth, the Rosa Lee and Egbert Chang Professor of Psychology, was a graduate student of Seligman's and considers him a mentor. Her work on achievement is an offshoot of Seligman's study of flourishing. She and Grant, the Saul P. Steinberg Professor of Management and pro-

In new books, Penn psychologists offer their prescriptions for friendship and achievement and trace the impact of a can-do mindset on human history.

By *Julia M. Klein*

fessor of psychology at Wharton, are friends and collaborators. His previous book, *Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Great Things* (2023), paralleled Duckworth's *Grit* in arguing that factors other than native talent contribute significantly to success.

In their new books, Grant says that he and Duckworth are “both addressing how different situations can bring out the best in us. In her case, that's often about performance or well-being. In my case, it's about connection.”

Duckworth's first encounter with Grant was an assignment to help woo him to Penn. “I was asked by Wharton faculty to make sure that Adam Grant was happy during his visit,” she says. “We hit it off right away. We became fast friends, like at first sight.” That's just the sort of dynamic that Grant discusses in *Vibe*, though he notes that chemistry isn't always immediate and can develop over time.

“Adam and I like to disagree because it's more interesting, but I think we mostly agree,” says Duckworth.

The two share “similar values and similar interests,” Grant says. “And we were often

circling the same questions from different angles, and that led to fascinating conversations and collaborations.” *Vibe* differs from most of his past work, as well as hers, he says, in its focus on interactions rather than individuals.

Duckworth says that *Situated* shares with Seligman's new book a concern with agency—“very specifically, situational agency, the control you have over your situation, and how we can be blind to that, and why we shouldn't be.”

As Seligman sees it, *Situated* “takes a problem no one's ever been able to solve, which is to what extent does personality contribute and to what extent does the situation contribute [to achievement].” It is, he says, “a good advice book,” a genre in which he, too, has published. (One example is his 1994 volume, *What You Can Change and What You Can't: The Complete Guide to Successful Self-Improvement*.)

By contrast, Seligman says, *Agency* “is not about the individual,” but rather “an attempt to talk about cultural history.” His most ambitious book yet, he considers it “primarily an intellectual contribution to knowledge of psychology.”



Duckworth stresses the commonalities in the trio's academic projects. "I think that all three of us are interested in how psychological science can help people live better lives, whether that means being happier, or more successful and achieving our goals, or being connected to other people," she says. "I think that's one throughline that connects all of us."

The big news from the popularizer of the concept of grit is that grit alone is not enough. To succeed, it seems, even gritty people need to put themselves in the right situation. Hence *Situated*.

"The first book, *Grit*, is really about the inside game of success—the positive, optimistic ways that really gritty strivers think about adversity, failure, challenge, growth," says Duckworth, while Zooming in workout clothes from a treadmill desk. "I felt very compelled at the time, 10 years ago, to publish that book. And I feel as enthusiastic today looking back as I did the moment it came out about the message."

But Duckworth has since switched her focus, to what she calls "the outside game of success." She hastens to add: "It's not a contradiction. I think it's a complement. I see so much of what happens to somebody's goals or their achievement, or their lack thereof, as dependent on the situation."

That means, she says, "Who's around you? Where do you work? Where do you live? What political system are you under?" It also embraces more trivial-seeming issues, such as where you keep your (endlessly distracting) cell phone when you're working. "If there's one important message of this book," she says, "it's that you have agency over some aspects of your situation." And maybe more so than you think.

Was the new book influenced by criticism that *Grit* didn't pay enough attention to social context and other factors? Is she now meeting her critics partway?

"That was one of the most salient critiques of *Grit*," Duckworth says. But the criticism was hardly revelatory. "These

critics are correct to point out that the situation is important. Also, they're correct to point out that not everyone can change every aspect of their situation, or maybe nobody can. But I have *always* agreed with them."

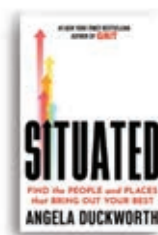
Duckworth's current work incorporates tenets of behavioral economics, which introduced the idea of using situational "nudges" to shape behavior. (One classic example is automatic enrollment in 401(k) plans to encourage saving for retirement.) Also integral to Duckworth is cognitive behavioral therapy, whose great insight was that thoughts trigger emotions, and that changing cognitions could relieve depression and anxiety. Duckworth says that, in his later writings, Aaron T. Beck Hon'07, who conceived CBT, spoke of the need "to find our sweet spot where our passions come alive." That, for Duckworth, "was foundational."

In recent years, she has collaborated with James Gross, the Ernest R. Hilgard Professor of Psychology at Stanford University and director of the Stanford Center for Affective Science. Together they found that "of all the ways you can change your behavior, willpower is the absolute worst," she writes in *Situated*, and both adults and adolescents "rated situational strategies as more effective—and less effortful."

The high achievers that Duckworth has studied—world-class athletes, world-class business leaders, "world-class anything"—"surround themselves very deliberately with mentors and with teammates who bring out their best," she says. "They don't keep their cell phone right next to them when they're trying to do very difficult work. They don't put junk food in the pantry when they're trying to stay on a diet."

What's more, she says, "the outside game changes the inside game because when you are with positive, can-do people who are looking for you to be your best, that changes what kinds of thoughts you have."

Situated covers what Duckworth calls "situational awareness," "situational



So much of what happens to somebody's goals or their achievement, or their lack thereof, is dependent on the situation."

agency," and "situational responsibility," which involves setting others up for success. The book offers guidance for readers in their roles as parents, leaders, and citizens. The situational citizenship chapter highlights the accomplishments of 1996 MacArthur Fellow Bill Strickland, founder of a nonprofit arts and job training program in Pittsburgh that serves both at-risk teenagers and adults in a beautifully designed setting. Strickland told Duckworth that the training center—inspired by his visit to Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic Fallingwater house museum in Mill Run, Pennsylvania—allowed clients to "spend time in a bright, clean, nurturing place where it didn't seem pointless to dream." He added, "If you want world-class behavior, you need to begin with a world-class environment."

Another of Duckworth's case studies involves the relationship between Olympics swimming ace Michael Phelps and his equally dedicated coach, Bob Bowman. Phelps had passion and perseverance, the two components of grit. But that would not have sufficed, Duckworth contends. "There's no way Michael Phelps would have won 28 [Olympic] medals, 23 of them gold, without having the best swimming coach in history as his swim coach from age 11 to when he retired at 31," she says. Bowman crafted what he calls an "environment of excellence" at the country's best youth aquatic center, in North Baltimore.

Another factor in Phelps's success, says Duckworth, was his mother, Debbie Phelps, an educator and "the wisest, kindest person." Despite her son's struggles in elementary school—restless and unable to sit still, he was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) at nine—she "never stopped believing in his potential, never stopped

figuring out what's a great situation for Michael," Duckworth says.

Other examples in *Situated* are drawn from Duckworth's own life. She talks, for instance, about her mother, a promising artist whose career was interrupted by the demands of marriage, parenthood, and a needlepoint business. But her artistic production sparked when she was able to sell the business and rent an art studio, gaining the proverbial room of her own. At 91, Duckworth says, "she is now working in ceramics," and her latest project involves representations of the traditional "bound feet" shoes that once hobbled Chinese women.

Duckworth even uses her own marriage, to the real estate developer Jason Duckworth, as a case study. (It was his idea, she says.)

After years of "fairy-tale romance" and two children, the trouble started in 2007 or 2008, when the US housing crisis and subsequent recession imperiled Jason's business. At the time, both spouses were working impossibly hard. "In part it was because every time we had ever been challenged in life," Duckworth says, "we thought the answer was inside us: get up earlier, stay up later, try harder." But all that effort was leaving them exhausted, isolated, and unhappy.

The eventual solution, she says, involved "widening the aperture to look at the whole situation." For a time, at considerable expense, they enlisted individual therapists, as well as a couples therapist. Instead of working solo, Jason found mentors by setting up an advisory board and peers by joining an organization for entrepreneurs. She, too, changed her approach to work, making her projects team efforts.

They're still "strivers," she writes, who "rise with the sun, share coffee and breakfast, and then disappear into our work." But they find more time for each other. "We had a challenging situation, but we did not have a supportive situation, and you need challenge and support both to flourish," she says.

Adam Grant—Wharton's most popular professor, best-selling author, TED talker and podcaster—was once an introverted kid who struggled to make connections. So just how did he get to where he is now?

Turns out, Grant has wondered about that himself.

"I grew up as somebody who felt like a lot of my interactions were awkward. I was shy, I was introverted, I was nerdy," he recalls in a phone interview. "And I often would leave an interaction or a conversation and feel like, 'We didn't click, we didn't hit it off.'" He would ask himself: "What did I do wrong?" Or even: "What's wrong with me?"

His current life could hardly be more different. "Something strange has happened," he says. "I went from feeling like I couldn't have a great conversation with as many people as I hoped to now having strangers tune in to listen to me talk to other people."

He details the techniques that helped him, as well as clients such as the US Women's National Soccer Team, in his latest book, *Vibe*. Debuting in October, it offers what Grant calls "a new language and a new lens for understanding our bonds with other people."

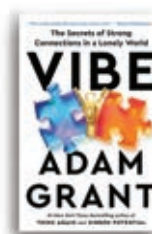
Key to his approach is a typology of friendship, suggesting that different kinds of relationships entail different expectations. Melding social science research and anecdotes about the interpersonal challenges of various groups, Grant offers ideas about how to improve and deepen connections.

The story begins with a publicity tour for his last book, *Hidden Potential*. When his interview partner for a scheduled Los Angeles appearance contracted COVID and had to bow out, Grant scrambled to find a last-minute replacement. "The first person to respond with an immediate 'yes' was Jennifer Garner, the actor," whom he had met just once, over Zoom. "And we had a conversation [in Los

Angeles] that every single audience member I saw afterwards said was electric." It was, he says, "a great experience of an unexpected sort of connection."

Grant subsequently aired the conversation as a podcast, and another friend, Jessica Gelman, the CEO of a sports analytics firm, was struck by the chemistry of the interaction. "She encouraged me to study it," Grant says. "And I could not get that out of my head. I teach entire classes about building and maintaining connections. But I've never really taken it on as a subject. And that was the original inspiration."

Recent concern about a nationwide "loneliness epidemic," prompted in part by a 2023 US Surgeon General's report, lent the project more urgency, Grant says. "As a species, we are struggling with interaction and with forming and re-forming and maintaining connections. And so it felt like a topic that needs to be tackled now."



"We are struggling with interaction and with forming and re-forming and maintaining connections."

In *Vibe*, Grant distinguishes four types of friendship. *Associates* have transactional ties; they trade favors and resources. *Allies*, often found at work, share a common mission. *Pals* form "alliances of amusement" around common interests and hobbies. *Companions* are confidantes who offer emotional support.

Of course, the lines can blur, and friendships can fall into more than one category. But problems arise when people mistake, or disagree about, the kind of relationship they're in. In *Vibe*, Grant tells the story of a distant associate who kept asking him over for dinner. He kept saying no until the message finally got through.

For the most part, though, *Vibe* focuses on strategies for enhancing relationships: by, for instance, upping the intensity of shared activities, ditching small

talk in favor of more meaningful conversations, expressing vulnerability, and identifying shared values. Grant notes that workplaces often spend too much time on forced bonding rituals, when colleagues need mostly to be allies focused on common goals.

In researching the book, Grant says he was guided by his own advice in *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know* (2021). “I went in thinking, before I read the research, that chemistry either happens or it doesn’t—not that it can actually grow over time,” he says. He also believed “that it takes time to become close,” and discovered instead that “closeness can be cultivated overnight in some cases under the right conditions.”

But aren’t those insights contradictory? “I thought those were contradictory at first, too,” he says. “And I realized they’re not. Chemistry is the synchrony you have in an interaction, the feeling of clicking. Most people assume you either get it instantly or you don’t. But actually, it can take a long time to find that click, to get the common wavelength. On the flip side, closeness is the strength of a bond. And you can have that without chemistry.”

After writing *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success* (2014), Grant was asked how he prioritized his own giving. “And I said, ‘Well, it’s really simple: Family first, students second, colleagues third, everybody else fourth.’ And it only hit me much later that friends were not even on my list. That bothered me.”

His insight now is that he was defining a friend as a pal, someone to hang out with, “not someone that you help.” He developed his four-part typology “out of being frustrated, not having the nuance I needed to describe different kinds of friendships—that I was close to people in different ways. And somebody who was really fun to spend time with was not always reliable.”

That distinction hit home when, about six years ago, his wife, Allison Sweet Grant, was diagnosed with breast cancer. (He says she has now been cancer-free for more than five years; her book on the

experience, *Lump: A Memoir in Ineloquent Reflections*, is due out in September.) One friend, after learning of her illness, never followed up, and “I was really hurt,” Grant says. Now he realizes that the friend in question was an ally and pal, not a companion. “And I needed to have different expectations for that relationship.”

Vibe doesn’t have much to say about generational and gender variations, but Grant has pondered them. Surveys suggest that Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012), digital natives who were severely impacted by pandemic isolation, is the loneliest generation. But that may be more of a “young people phenomenon” than a “birth cohort phenomenon,” Grant theorizes. (Time will tell.)

Grant says he was “very curious” about gender differences. They turned out to be clear in some cases, but “much less robust than I expected” in others. “Women expect to have more companionship than men, for example, and more frequent interaction,” he says. “What really didn’t turn out to be true was that men do side-by-side bonding and women do face-to-face bonding.” And while women also connect more frequently in pairs and men in groups, that may be changing.

“My overall takeaway is that a lot of our assumptions about gendered interaction and relationships are the fulfillment of our stereotypes, not necessarily the way things have to be,” Grant says. “I think men naturally gravitate toward being allies and pals more than companions. And women may do the reverse. And maybe each of those genders would benefit from balancing things out a bit.”

In his epilogue, Grant expresses some concern about the role of AI. Using AI can “build your social skills and exercise those muscles,” he says. “I think there’s a lot of potential benefit there. The problem is, what we see more and more clearly in the data is that people are using AI as a substitute for interaction—instead of building those muscles, actually allowing them to atrophy. That would be a massive social problem if it continues.”

This much has always been true about Martin E. P. Seligman: He takes big swings. From his groundbreaking experiments on learned helplessness, Seligman moved on to pioneer the theory of learned optimism, the field of positive psychology, and the science of flourishing. The former president of the American Psychological Association, he is the author or coauthor of more than 30 books, including a memoir, *The Hope Circuit: A Psychologist’s Journey from Helplessness to Optimism* (2018). His biography, disdaining false modesty, lists him as “the most influential psychologist in the world.”

Now, at 84, he has completed what he calls “the most audacious project I’ve attempted in 60 years of research,” one likely to embroil him in new debates.

The thesis of *Agency*, out in September, is that a causal connection exists between people’s belief in their power to act and historical progress. That belief, he posits, has waxed and waned over time, influenced by shifts in cultural, social, and economic circumstances, and transforming them in return.

The book promises, he writes, “to show you how one invisible force—human agency—has shaped the major turning points in our species’ history. How it sparked the Golden Age of Athens. How its collapse plunged Europe into centuries of darkness. How its resurrection created the modern world.”

Seligman discussed the project at his rambling Tudor-style house in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, in what was once his poker room—until, he says, all his poker-playing buddies died. He shares the home with four dogs (not all of them friendly) and his wife, Mandy, a fine arts photographer, psychologist, and founder of a nonprofit that promotes well-being through photography.

The ground floor houses Seligman’s home office and shelves crammed with a lifetime accumulation of honors and awards. His wife’s mostly black-and-white images of swans, horses, roses, and

horticulture decorate the walls. (Seligman says his “idea of heaven” is her photograph of a hayfield at harvest time near Adelaide, Australia.)

Seligman has been studying the idea of agency for years and reading history, too—in part to help homeschool his five youngest children. His undergraduate study of philosophy at Princeton University also informs *Agency*.

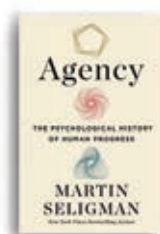
Dedicated to his two grandsons, the book begins by defining the concepts of agency and progress before selectively tackling the entirety of human history, beginning with the Bronze Age. In Seligman’s view, agency has three separate components. “Efficacy drives trying, optimism drives future orientation and perseverance, and imagination drives innovation,” he says. Together, he writes, “they’re the gears of progress.”

To prove his case, he explores manifestations of agency in ancient and classical Greece; ancient China (where agency was often collective); Judaism and early Christianity; medieval Europe; the Renaissance, Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and splintering of Protestantism; and the modern era. Seligman singles out the rise of agency for both Blacks and women in the 20th century, devoting a chapter to each.

He also lauds AI—he is a big enthusiast—for amplifying human agency. Large language models such as Claude and ChatGPT turn out to have been integral to his methodology. Their ability to analyze texts was indispensable in researching his claims and validating his thesis, he says. “I’ve never had a colleague like this before.”

One entry point to his subject, Seligman says, was trying to determine what triggered the transformations of different civilizations—the Hebrews, Chinese, Greeks, and Persians—during the period the German philosopher Karl Jaspers called the Axial Age. At around 1000 BCE, these civilizations were stagnant, but by 500 BCE, “all those four cultures are flourishing.”

Using AI to examine texts in multiple languages, Seligman found that in the earlier period, people lacked a vocabulary for human agency; in their writings, they attribute actions primarily to the gods. “But by 500 BC, all of these cultures have a rich agentic vocabulary,” he says. “And once you have new words, you can do things with the words. The invention of new words may have been part of what drove this new psychological history.”



“Once you have new words, you can do things with the words.”

Seligman doesn’t deny that improved material circumstances, affording people the leisure to consider new questions, are part of the story. “I think it’s reciprocally related,” he explains. “I think the material circumstances change our way of thinking, and the way of thinking changes our future material circumstances.”

Initially, Seligman used selective quotation to argue “that in the 200 years exiting the Bronze Age, the Greeks were discovering agency.” Then he called on AI for assistance. Provided with a list of agentic words such as “choice,” “purposes” and “freedom,” it made his hypothesis “quantitative and verifiable,” he says.

Seligman performed similar exercises with the Bible, comparing the (older) Torah, in which God commands and people obey, with other books of the Old Testament and the New Testament. “The Christian Scriptures make human intention, decision, and responsibility far more explicit than the Hebrew Bible, while still affirming divine sovereignty,” he writes. Agency arises in this period, he suggests, from “an urgent new need to navigate the treacherous waters of cultural change.”

Seligman attributes much of the stagnation associated with the Middle Ages

to Saint Augustine, whose fourth century doctrine of original sin “casts a deep, almost fatal, shadow over the optimism of the classical world.” In declaring salvation wholly dependent on divine grace, Augustine represents “a new low” in the history of agency, Seligman says.

But even during the Middle Ages there were bright spots, among them the cultural efflorescence of the Carolingian Renaissance, during Charlemagne’s reign, and the achievements of Dante. In Seligman’s view, the poet balanced divine grace with an emphasis on human agency—and laid the groundwork for Renaissance humanism.

Seligman touches on the murderous impact of the Crusades. But he mostly skips over a litany of modern cataclysms, including the Holocaust, Stalin’s gulags, two world wars, and subsequent genocides around the globe. In our contemporary world, where agency thrives, can we really link it to progress?

Agency briefly acknowledges the conundrum. “The imagination that built cathedrals built Auschwitz,” Seligman writes. “The antidote is not less agency but wiser agency—efficacy paired with acceptance of what cannot be changed, optimism tempered by prudent planning, imagination disciplined by moral seriousness about consequences.”

Pressed on the moral issue, he says: “While I’m hardly blind to Stalin and Hitler and the Holocaust and the awfulness of things that have happened in history, I’m not trying to explain the awful stuff.

“I’m trying to take the notion of agency and see how that drives progress and how its absence produces stagnation. This does not deny that there are things like antisemitism and greed” that impact the course of history, too, Seligman says. “This is the story of one psychological trait influencing history.”

Julia M. Klein, a frequent *Gazette* contributor, writes for *The Atlantic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, and other publications.

a Haven at **Hillel**

For more than 100 years, Penn Hillel has served varying functions with a wide range of offerings—but has always been a spiritual home for the University's Jewish students. At no point in its history has its mission been more vital.

By Dave Zeitlin

On the first day of July, as a heat wave scorches a quiet campus, Rabbi Gabe Greenberg is excitedly pacing around his second-floor office in Steinhardt Hall.

Although students are gone for the summer and the typically bustling building, located on 39th Street between Walnut and Locust Walk, is virtually empty, the Penn Hillel executive director has just finished an email to the University's incoming Jewish freshmen, with information on High Holidays services. "It's very cool to see the new names, where they're coming from," says Greenberg—who then digs out a handwritten letter, with a similar objective, from exactly 50 years earlier.

In the summer of 1966, then Penn Hillel president Howard Schulder '67 used lively language to recruit freshmen to join their ranks. "Let's get down to

brass tacks—no preliminary niceties, no general come-ons, no we-like-you and you'll-like-us bit—just business," he began, before promising a "dynamic, multi-faceted program including religious services, study classes, cultural opportunities, social events, forums, etc." and help with any questions a new student might have ("from religion to blind dates, from academics to maid service").

For Greenberg, Schulder's letter is a reminder of both Penn Hillel's vast history and the cyclical nature of campus life. For more than a century, the Hillel has strived to help teenagers leaving home for the first time.

Yet at no point in the organization's history has it served a more vital role in helping Jewish students navigate challenges—from freshmen to graduate students, from Orthodox to secular Jews, and everyone in between.

As Penn Hillel's executive director, Rabbi Gabe Greenberg has helped Jewish students navigate tumultuous times over the past three years.



October 7 and its Aftermath

Greenberg was only two years into the job running the University's hub for Jewish student life when Penn became a focal point in a national debate over campus free speech and institutional responses to antisemitism.

The fall 2023 semester began with a controversy over speakers at a Palestine Writes Literature Festival and antisemitic vandalism at the University. In September a swastika was found painted on a wall inside Meyerson Hall, and a week later an individual disrupted the peace in Penn Hillel by shouting obscenities and overturning furniture. The October 7 terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israel and the ensuing war in Gaza escalated tensions on Penn's campus, which was further rocked by alumni and donor backlash and the resignation of then Penn President Liz Magill after Congressional testimony, which was condemned by, among others, Penn Hillel for Magill's "inability to state clearly that calls for the genocide of Jews constitute bullying and harassment," Greenberg wrote in a December 2023 email. The 16-day pro-Palestinian encampment on College Green at the end of the following semester, which caused distress and fear among some Jews on campus, capped a tumultuous school year that still reverberates today.

"I would say the last three years have had extended periods which were quite difficult personally and professionally," Greenberg says in the first of two interviews in his office this summer. "The bad was really bad, including threats to my safety and the safety of members of my team. And explicit acts of antisemitism on campus were all very difficult." Yet he has experienced more than just strife. "There have been moments which made me optimistic about the future of Jewish life on campus, including members of other cultural communities and faith communities reaching out in acts of solidarity and support. There were beautiful moments amongst the pain as well."

Things have calmed down considerably at Penn. Greenberg calls 2025–26 a most-

ly "normal year" for Jewish students. The lone exception, he says, was the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's legal campaign against Penn to obtain private employee information as part of a federal antisemitism investigation. "Every Jewish student, Jewish staff, and Jewish faculty member that I've spoken with at the University of Pennsylvania all agree that this is not how the [Trump] administration should have approached this issue, though many of those people want the government to take seriously the issue of antisemitism on campus," Greenberg remarks. "I've never seen such unity. This one hit the wrong way." (The Trump administration ended up dropping its subpoena demanding personal contact information for Jewish employees.)

Looking back on the fall 2023 semester and its fraught aftermath, Greenberg admits that "perhaps naively, I did not anticipate how deeply political and politicized this job would become." For him, that meant fielding media requests from national outlets including *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* (most of which he declined) and interacting with politicians. He and a couple of other Penn Hillel staff members also received a threatening email that was "quite explicit," from a sender who was never identified.

The challenges have spurred Penn Hillel to become "fundamentally much more outward facing," Greenberg says, in terms of advocating for Jews on campus in talks with the Penn administration and participating in the University Task Force on Antisemitism. Penn Hillel also began to welcome "many more" students into its building to seek solace, Greenberg notes. With a noticeably increased security presence outside Steinhardt Hall, most visitors felt secure in the building—but not all. "I remember vividly a student who did come to a Shabbat dinner after October 7, and saying to me through tears that she did not feel safe coming but felt that it was important," Greenberg recalls.

That conversation, among others, drove home that Jewish students at Penn "are

not a monolith," Greenberg remarks. "Jewish students responded to the events on campus in a wide variety of ways," he says. "Some said, *Now is the time to do bridge building and to reach out culture to culture, religion to religion, faith to faith, person to person.* And that's beautiful. And we at Penn Hillel tried to support students that want to do that.

"Other Jewish students said, *This is a time where I want to spend a lot of my time with other Jews, and I just want to know that I can go to a Shabbat dinner with a joyful community of other Jews and feel supported in that.* And that's critical and beautiful. And we support that as well."

There was, however, one thing many of them agreed about. As some alumni and people outside of the Penn community relied on social media feeds or cable news portrayals painting the University as a hostile and unwelcoming place for Jews, the reality on the ground—aside from a few troubling instances—was different.

"Most students over the past three years," Greenberg says, "expressed to me and to others that there was a significant gap or dissonance between the level of external media attention and discourse and rhetoric about what was happening on campus and what they felt."

And Penn Hillel was a big reason for that.

Open Dialogue and Seeking Comfort

When Gabe Greenfield C'27 got his first email from Penn Hillel, he did a double take. With such a similar name to the organization's director, "I was like, *why am I emailing myself?*" he recalls with a laugh. But he hooked on with Penn Hillel immediately, going to its pre-orientation program for incoming freshmen held at a Jewish summer camp before becoming a regular at Steinhardt Hall. "They're really fantastic about reaching out and making it accessible," says Greenfield, who enjoys the free coffee K-pods as well as the opportunity to "just walk into the office and chat with my favorite staff members."

He was in his first semester of college when the October 7 attacks happened, which “shaped my trajectory, and honestly created a launch point for me to go on this journey of understanding.”

Penn Hillel played a big role in that journey. Greenfield was “already really interested in learning other perspectives and broadening my worldview” when he got to college. As the war in Gaza unfolded, he reached out to Muslim students to form small discussion groups about what was going on in the Middle East and Penn’s campus—“not to argue or debate but just to foster understanding.” Those conversations, part of what was called the Breaking Bread initiative, were often held at Steinhardt Hall. Greenfield recruited students from Penn Hillel to join. “I think creating that space in the middle is important,” says Greenfield, who also serves as president of Penn’s PRISM interfaith club.

Greenfield might seem like an unlikely person to foster connections with self-declared anti-Zionists. He comes from a modern orthodox background in Teaneck, New Jersey, and spent a gap year in Israel before arriving at Penn. He’s visited the Jewish state several other times, including this summer.

But in dialogue sessions, he has strived to focus on similarities between the Torah and Quran, and to understand geopolitical perspectives beyond his own. And, he says, he’s never felt scared or uncomfortable walking around Penn’s campus while proudly donning his Star of David necklace, which “I don’t even think twice about wearing in public.”

“But even if I wasn’t feeling particular targeting, it was still an interesting time to navigate as a student,” he admits. “And I think Hillel has been very good about being a place for people to come and unload and talk. Obviously they’re going through it as well, but they’re always here to listen ... trying to actively engage with students and make it a place that everyone feels comfortable in.”

Perhaps that’s one reason why Greenfield pushed back when friends and family

“I think Hillel has been very good about being a place for people to come and unload and talk. They’re always here to listen.”

members singled out Penn and other college campuses as primary hotbeds of antisemitic behavior and hate. “I have a friend in the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] and I’m on the phone with him catching up, and he’s like, *Gabe, I hear it’s really bad on Penn’s campus*,” Greenfield recalls. “I’m like, *Ethan, I joined a fraternity this semester. You are in a war*.”

Beaue Bernstein C’26 proudly wore her Jewish star around campus, too. But she says that “being anywhere visibly Jewish was a little frightening” around the time of the encampment, calling that episode “really difficult emotionally” to deal with at the end of her sophomore year. Yet Bernstein also expressed a more nuanced view than many media portrayals. Although she did have a friend who was yelled at for wearing a yarmulke, she said explicit antisemitism like that was rare. “It was more the organizing against Israel that was hard, because there were so many people from off campus who were coming and riling everybody up.” (Greenfield also believes non-Penn-affiliated agitators “commandeered” the encampment and “I don’t think really represented the beliefs of the students that genuinely cared about the conflict.” When Penn Police disbanded the encampment on May 10, 2024, Penn students only accounted for nine of the 33 people arrested and charged.)

But there is a “large population of students that is very outwardly anti-Israel,” Bernstein says, “and so that feels kind of isolating.” Unlike Greenfield, she found it “exhausting” trying to engage with them and instead opted to hunker down and spend “more time within the Jewish

community, because I don’t really feel like wasting my energy in other spaces where I’m going to feel isolated.”

She credits Penn President Larry Jameson’s leadership for helping to restore enough of a sense of calm to “give us a chance to actually focus on Jewish activities and Jewish life” in a more ordinary way. For her, that meant leading the Penn Shabbaton, a Jewish cappella group that practices in the basement of Steinhardt Hall and became the backbone of her undergraduate social life. She also took part in Penn Hillel’s Shabbat Hosting Lab, a fellowship that includes funding and support to host two Shabbat dinners, and the Jewish Leadership Initiative, a fellowship for upperclassmen to meet with Jewish leaders across different industries. “That has been, by far, one of the most impressive things that Penn Hillel does,” says Bernstein, who appreciated hearing executives, doctors, judges, and others discuss how their Jewish values shaped their careers.

More than anything, Bernstein took advantage of the extensive travel opportunities that Penn Hillel provides, visiting Israel through the Birthright program (her fourth time there), London with the Jewish Leadership Initiative, and Poland and Greece to learn about Jewish history. “That was really meaningful because my great-grandmother is from Poland,” she says, “so I got to reconnect with that part of my heritage.”

Other travel opportunities include a Winter Break trip to the United Arab Emirates and Israel for Wharton undergraduates to learn about the Abraham Accords, because “Penn Hillel is doubling down on supporting students in learning more about the conflict from every angle ... and about the broader Middle East,” Greenberg notes. And thanks to Penn Hillel’s fundraising efforts, those trips are heavily subsidized for students. “We want to make these trips as accessible as possible,” he says. “We’re always trying to explore Jewish stories around the world.”



A Rich History and a Bustling Building

Travel has been an important part of Penn Hillel since Jeremy Brochin served as executive director from 1987 to 2010. So has social justice, rooted in the Jewish value of *Tikkun olam*. During Brochin's tenure, the organization led trips to Central America, Russia, and Germany. It began a partnership with the Greenfield Intercultural Center and the African-American Resource Center that sent Black and Jewish students to the South to retrace the history of the Civil Rights Movement ["Gazetteer," May/June 2005], and a program that sent Jewish and Muslim students to rebuild in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

But despite a large and active Jewish community that spread its wings around campus and well beyond, Penn Hillel was based out of what Brochin calls a "pretty schleppy building" on 36th Street near Walnut Street that has since been torn down. "It became clear that the community was too large for that facility," he says.

By then, Penn Hillel had been a part of campus life for many decades, having

gone through several iterations. In 1919, the Women's Council of Conservative Judaism began an independent Jewish student house, which a few years later became one of the first Jewish student associations in the country. Later named the Louis Marshall Society, it affiliated with the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation in 1944 and moved into its house on 36th Street not long after. It then grew into one of the largest and most active campus Hillel chapters in the world, today reaching about 85 percent of Penn's Jewish students with a wide variety of social, cultural, religious and educational opportunities. But according to Greenberg, its mission has shifted over time.

"My understanding of some of the earlier kinds of permutations was that Hillel, in many ways, was a synagogue—a purely religious space," says Greenberg, the organization's 11th director since 1944. "It still serves those functions, but it grew to be a Jewish Community Center [JCC] model," which is a community-based recreational and social space. "And then it expanded its mission to become a campus cultural center, and

then again in recent years to become an advocacy organization. But we are still a synagogue and we're also still a JCC."

The move to Steinhardt Hall was necessary to continue Penn Hillel's growth. Brochin credits the late Ed Berkowitz '49 as a driving force in negotiations with the University for space as well as raising the money for the \$12 million project. The three-story, 36,000-square foot space, designed by JacobsWyper Architects, opened in October 2003 ["Gazetteer," Jan/Feb 2004], beginning what Brochin calls the "heyday" of the organization after a "difficult" period before that. "In the early 2000s, you'd get 400 people here for Shabbat between services and eating," Brochin says. "People couldn't believe the beauty of the building, especially compared to the old place."

With comfortable spaces including a rotunda, library, student lounges, an activities space, and a 300-seat auditorium for classes and events, the building "is definitely a place of gathering," says Bernstein, who calls it "one of my favorite places on campus." Greenfield believes that the central location is key and that the atmosphere is welcoming for all kinds of Jews (and non-Jews too). "It's a very pluralistic space," he says. "If you go to the third floor, you can learn Talmud all day. Or you could sit on the first floor and just grab lunch and that can be your connection to Judaism for the day. Or if you go in between to the second floor, there's a staff member that would love to talk to you about your Jewish journey."

That's always been the goal for Greenberg, who says "the vibes are great" in the building, even when things have felt uncertain outside of it. "You can come just to hang out, meet with friends, and do homework," the Penn Hillel director says. "We have free printing and free coffee. And then, while you're here, maybe you want to check out some of our offerings, be they more academic, or more social, or more cultural. It gives me great joy that I'll come here on a random Tuesday or Wednesday night, and you might

have a rabbi teaching an intro to Judaism class, you'll have someone teaching a group of non-Jewish students about Judaism or Israel, you'll have a club, or a sorority meeting, or a non-Jewish dance group practicing. That, to me, is sort of at the intersection of what we want a Jewish space at a university to look like."

The building also boasts a popular kosher dining hall, which two years ago eliminated a surcharge in order to match the cost of any other campus dining hall. "The moment they did that, it increased traffic into our building significantly," Greenberg says. "For lunchtime and dinner, there's a line out the door." The make-your-own chicken wraps are a particularly tasty draw, for Jews and non-Jews alike.

"I like to say the biggest combatant of antisemitism on campus," says Greenfield, "is the dining hall."

A Wide Array of Programming— For Grad Students, Too

While Steinhardt Hall has been an easily accessible hub for Jewish life at Penn for the last 23 years, it hasn't always felt that way for the University's graduate students.

"In graduate school, there are significant differences in starting age, level of professional experience, and academic focus," says Liza Goldstone GEng'27, who is pursuing a master's degree in Penn's Integrated Product Design (IPD) program after graduating from Duke in 2025. "The landscape is complex, and building community requires intentionality."

After enjoying Jewish experiences at Duke, Goldstone recognized that "Penn Hillel could be an anchor" in her city. In the spring before she started at Penn, she was introduced by a friend to Ariel Nissan, who had recently stepped into the role of director of a new program called GradHillel. "We had never served graduate students in a formal way," Greenberg says. "After October 7, graduate students said, en masse, *We really need support socially, politically, we need you to advocate for us.* It was a wave that really hit." In her first year in the role in 2025–26, Nissan was

tasked with identifying the needs of the University's Jewish graduate and professional students and offering learning opportunities and social gatherings both on campus and around Philadelphia.

Describing Nissan as a "warm community builder" and "an incredible human," Goldstone immediately felt embraced by Penn Hillel. She found that the events and people provided her with "a sense of place on Penn's campus" while helping her build her Jewish knowledge and identity. She participated in hands-on classes and workshops, including making bagels and themed cocktails. She enrolled in the Shabbat Hosting Lab and brought together a dozen Jewish students and young professionals for meaningful conversation over brisket and chocolate-covered matzah at her Rittenhouse Square apartment. And she has expanded her network, connecting with law, medical, education, and business students who embrace Jewish values. "Being a member of GradHillel has truly enriched and defined my Penn experience," she says.

Calling the program's debut "a wild success," Greenberg hopes to build on it and get more grad students inside the building for all of Penn Hillel's offerings, including its wide array of speakers. The most well-attended recent ones have ranged from serious panels featuring Holocaust survivor Michael Katz CCC'49 ["Gazetteer," Jul/Aug 2025] and October 7 survivors, to events featuring filmmaker/actor Jesse Eisenberg and NFL running back AJ Dillon, who is African American and Jewish and was asked both about how Judaism impacts his identity as a football player and deeper-in-the-weeds questions about the Philadelphia Eagles (for whom he played in 2025).

"We have to push Jewish joy," Greenberg says. "Students are seeking joyful, interesting, compelling ways to connect to their Jewish identity."

Penn Hillel also continues to build on its "strong social justice pillar," Greenberg says, which includes a student-run soup kitchen in the building and a partnership

with the Jewish Relief Agency to pack and deliver food to the homes of Holocaust survivors. The organization maintains other partnerships across the University, including with other cultural and minority groups, often through interfaith service projects and trips. Mike Uram—who served as Penn Hillel's executive director from 2010 until Greenberg took over—told the *Gazette* as he was leaving Penn Hillel ["Gazetteer," Mar/Apr 2021] that he was proud of those programs but noticed that Penn's Jewish students were often more concerned about "justice and equality and inclusivity for everyone ... than *how do we protect the Jews?*"

As antisemitism has grown nationwide since Uram's departure in early 2021, Greenberg has noticed Jewish students "closing ranks a bit" and "seeking out more community with more Jewish students." But he believes that over the next few years, Penn Hillel will restore its interfaith work and that its advocacy efforts will extend to other communities that need support.

"As long as antisemitism continues, we are going to need to have a strong core of showing up for our community and advocating for ourselves," Greenberg says. "But as long as we're doing that and have that core, then we also need to make sure we're showing up for others as well."

A Survey About Israel and Antisemitism

Back in November, Greenberg hosted a webinar for alumni, parents, and other members of the Penn Hillel community—his seventh one, he noted at the outset of the talk, since October 7, 2023. An important way to keep people updated on campus happenings, the impetus for this particular iteration, he said at the time, was "the feeling that we are really closing the page on a chapter in Jewish life at Penn" with an opportunity to look ahead to a brighter future.

In addition to recapping the "highly destabilizing and deeply upsetting" previous two years and the work Jewish lead-

ers did to “rise up” and advocate for a safer campus, Greenberg had two students speak about their personal experiences. One, a freshman named Judah Blitstein, discussed writing a paper on the mislabeling of Zionism for a writing seminar. “And my teacher, surprisingly, greeted it very warmly, and she really encouraged me to write about that and be passionate about that and talk to my fellow students about the topic,” Blitstein said. “And I think that’s been really great about Penn. I think it’s really shifted from this kind of almost polarized spectrum to a place where people want to have conversations about this type of thing.”

Yet that hasn’t been the experience for everyone in the classroom, and fewer students nowadays are likely to identify as Zionists. Greenberg also used the webinar to introduce alumna and professional pollster Shira Angert C’06, who had conducted for Penn Hillel what Greenberg called “the first major survey on Jewish life at Penn in over a decade.” Having polled hundreds of students during the 2025 spring semester, the survey found first that “Jewish students at Penn have very strong Jewish identities,” Angert said on the webinar. “They’re proud to be Jewish and they’re highly engaged in Jewish life.” But while 96 percent of students agreed with the statement that they are proud to be Jewish and 87 percent said that being Jewish is very important in their lives, the numbers dipped when they were asked about Zionism, which is defined as the movement to support and protect the existence of a Jewish homeland and state in the ancestral region of Israel. Angert noted that while 65 percent of those surveyed have traveled to Israel and 84 percent believe it has the right to exist as a Jewish state, only 62 percent described themselves as Zionist. “So that really speaks to the fact that Zionism has become coopted by the other side as a dirty word,” Angert said. “There’s a hesitation among Jews to identify as a Zionist, despite the fact that the vast majority believe that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state.”

Greenberg calls that a “fascinating gap” but one that is “very similar” to national polling data. More specific to Penn, and “more challengingly, was that a majority of Jewish students still feel that in the classroom they pay a penalty for expressing their political beliefs, specifically about Israel,” Greenberg says. “So that’s a problem that needs work.”

In the poll, Angert found that while about 80 percent of Jewish undergrads used a positive adjective to describe how it feels to be Jewish at Penn, 51 percent also used negative words—“things like *alienated, isolated or lonely, scared, difficult, anxious, nervous, confused*,” she said. Roughly 45 percent of students reported that they felt intimidated or uncomfortable because they are Jewish or because of Israel, and nearly a third felt as though they needed to hide their Jewish identity. A higher number—85 percent—said they had either heard about or seen something antisemitic at Penn, “but these experiences have been pervasive across all college campuses,” Angert said, adding that the numbers “mirror almost exactly the findings that the ADL and Hillel International had on their nationwide study of Jewish college students.”

Greenberg says he’s committed to doing a similar poll every five years. In the meantime, he’s felt buoyed by hearing “great success stories” like Blitstein’s remarks about his classroom experience, which he believes is what “most professors” want. But he knows that issues still lurk. In his own conversations with Jewish students, the Penn Hillel director found that “some felt a deep and pervasive sense of antisemitic feeling on campus, whereas many students did not feel that,” he says. “Some students were deeply upset by expressions of anti-Israel rhetoric on campus, and other students were more able to grapple with that and engage with it, both on Locust Walk and in the classroom.”

At the end of the November webinar, Greenberg looked ahead to “the next chapter,” detailing Penn Hillel’s efforts for “bridge-building between Jewish commu-

nities and other communities” as well as “restoring Jewish unity” after a post-October 7 rift, “ensuring that all Jewish students respect one another, are in the room together, and can build their capacities to have difficult and courageous conversations.” But perhaps more than anything else, Jews need to see Penn as a place they want to go to college. “If we do not stem the decline of Jewish students at Penn,” Greenberg told members of the Hillel community, “then, frankly, it kind of doesn’t matter what else we solve.”

Recruitment, Advocacy, and Leading with Love

The declining proportion of Jewish students at Penn has been a source of frustration for many alumni—and one that Greenberg has been trying to figure out and help solve since before October 7. At the turn of the 21st century, around a third of undergraduates at Penn were Jewish, a number that’s dropped to roughly 11 or 12 percent today, according to Penn Hillel data.

You can argue that Penn “did have sort of an overrepresentation in the second half of the 20th century, partially because some of its peer schools had quotas against Jewish admissions,” Greenberg says. Now, with an admissions shift geared toward attracting more international and first-generation, low-income students, it makes sense that the number of Jews would decline—yet “there’s some evidence,” he adds, “which seems to suggest it may have fallen at a greater rate than what would be explained by those factors.”

The percentage of Jewish undergraduates at Penn still dwarfs the proportion of Jews in the general US population (roughly two percent), but lags behind some other schools. In a 2025 report in the *Hillel College Guide* magazine, Penn’s 1,100 Jewish undergrads ranked 20th among private universities in the US in terms of total numbers. But when accounting for all colleges (public and private) and ranking it by the percentage of the undergraduate population, Penn fell to 57th (and fifth among the eight Ivies) at 11 percent.

Given the University's long history of Jewish presence, beginning with the enrollment of Penn's first Jewish student, Moses Levy, in 1772, "Penn Hillel has to do two things simultaneously," Greenberg says. "We need to advocate toward the University to ensure that the Jewish population does not continue to decline as it has over the past 25 years. And we need to simultaneously make the case to prospective students that life is great for Jewish students, and if you're considering it, we would love to have you." To accomplish the latter, Greenberg has been traveling to Jewish day schools, sometimes with a Penn admissions officer, where he tells high schoolers that "the vast majority of Jewish students at Penn would say to you that life is great for Jewish students at Penn," he says. "And if you don't take my word for that, you can talk to students, and I will connect you."

Anecdotally, Greenberg has seen a "bit of a bump" in the number of students coming from Jewish schools as well as freshmen participating in Penn Hillel's new student programs, "but we have to keep our foot on the gas," he says, noting it will take time to collect new data on Jewish enrollment. (The University itself does not track the religious identity of applicants.)

It's an important issue for Penn's current students, too. Greenfield, now in his senior year, says that he has friends who have transferred from American universities to Israeli ones because they feel more comfortable there, but if everyone makes that decision, "then there's not going to be any more Jewish students here." Bernstein notes that the thriving Penn Hillel was one of the main reasons she applied to Penn and that "luckily, there are a lot of proud Jews on this campus, and we're not going anywhere."

Maya Harpaz C'25, who served as Penn Hillel's president as a senior and before that was president of the Penn Israel Public Affairs Committee (PIPAC), saw the same level of campus pride before graduating, even after instances of antisemitic vandalism. "If anything, I think it made

"Luckily, there are a lot of proud Jews on this campus, and we're not going anywhere."

people feel prouder to be Jewish," she says. "You would think the opposite, that people would take off their Star of David necklaces and take off their kippahs. But I saw on average people displaying more signs publicly of their Judaism."

After being elected president by her peers during one of the most challenging periods in Penn Hillel's history, Harpaz went from "planning fun events" to meeting with University administrators and campus security personnel. She built out new things like a faculty mentorship program for undergraduates after "receiving lots of outreach from professors asking, *what can we do?*" And she served alongside Greenberg on the University Task Force on Antisemitism, whose final recommendations ranged from bolstering Jewish studies and incorporating antisemitism training into orientation programs to increasing support for Penn Hillel, Chabad, and other Jewish groups and "ensuring policies regarding speech and expression are articulated clearly and enforced evenly across campus," Greenberg notes. (Greenberg also says he pushed for the University to "do a better job of recognizing and engaging with the Jewish community and Hillel as a cultural group" rather than a purely religious one, since many students "primarily identify their Jewishness as a culture.")

In her close work with Greenberg, Harpaz found the Penn Hillel director to be "really great at balancing the nuance of the situation that we have been facing," she says, "and he's done a great job building relationships across the board with students, administrators, alumni, and board members."

One person with whom Greenberg has formed a close relationship is Chaz How-

ard C'00, the University chaplain and vice president for social equity and community, who also served on the antisemitism task force. "He's just a lovely human being," Howard says. "He's very smart, funny, kind, easy to talk to, down to earth—the kind of person whom I'd enjoy being friends with even if our paths here didn't cross at Penn."

Although Howard's chaplain's office works closely with Penn Hillel, as it does with all of the University's religious groups, Penn Hillel functions as its own nonprofit organization, making it especially gratifying for Howard to see how much Greenberg has fought to improve the University. And during a "uniquely challenging time," the Penn chaplain believes Greenberg "navigated it as best as anyone could have."

"Gabe is very clear-sighted, and by that I mean he's clear about what he believes but he also sees other perspectives clearly and can humanize and even love people who radically disagree with him," Howard says of Penn Hillel's leader. "I've seen him sit down with Jewish students across the political spectrum. I've seen him sit down and journey with Palestinian Arab students, and with parents and alumni and University administrators and politicians and the media."

"It's very hard to do, and I know it was also hard on Gabe, but he did it all with grace and love. He never stopped loving, and that's something I deeply admire about him."

Greenberg plans to continue to lead in that manner—and is hopeful that over the next century Penn Hillel will continue to "stand as a beacon of joyful Jewish expression, dynamic pluralism, academic equity, and cross-cultural leadership," as it has for so long.

"It must remain both an accessible front door for everyday connection and a bastion of support during times of friction," he says, "ensuring that every Jewish student at Penn can proudly, safely, and authentically explore and grow in their identity."

PlayMaker

The cofounder of New York Stage & Film—which has helped launch *Hamilton*, *Hadestown*, and hundreds of other projects since 1985—is tackling another medium right now: TV. With her new MGM+ show enjoying glowing reviews, yet still on the bubble for a second season, Leslie Urdang C’76 reflects on the high points of her 40-year career as a theatre and film producer—and the challenges of making stuff in 2026.

By Molly Petrilla

When the renowned actress Laura Linney was filming her latest TV show—an MGM+ series called *American Classic*—she often looked toward one specific chair on set.

Sitting near the monitor, her face framed by long dark curtain bangs and headphones at the ready, the show’s executive producer Leslie Urdang C’76 “was always there in a way that felt supportive and never intrusive, never judgmental,” Linney says. “It’s a huge relief when you have a leader like that.”

Linney’s not the only one who thinks so. Over the last 40 years, hundreds of writers, directors, and actors have found a steadfast and encouraging presence in Urdang, who is both an accomplished theatre and film producer and a cofounder of New York Stage & Film, a widely acclaimed incubator of new plays and movies.

“When she is working closely with an artist, she’s one of the most ferocious champions for them of anybody I know,”

says Johanna Pfaelzer, New York Stage & Film’s former artistic director. “There aren’t that many [producers] who do it with the depth and commitment that she does.”

The results speak and sing for themselves. Through New York Stage & Film, Urdang has helped bring the world *Hamilton*, *Hadestown*, the Pulitzer-winning play *Doubt*, and hundreds of other new theatre and film projects. She’s also produced over a dozen movies, including *Beginners* (2011), which won Christopher Plummer an Oscar and a Golden Globe, and *Rabbit Hole* (2010), which scored an Oscar nomination for Nicole Kidman.

“Good material drives me,” Urdang says. “When you find good material, there are always great directors and actors who want to get involved, even if you’re doing it independently and paying them less money.”

American Classic, which debuted in March and marks her foray into TV, is the latest of those driven-by-good-mate-

rial projects—and it came straight from an idea Urdang dreamed up in late 2018.

Imagine the actor Kevin Kline, she thought, playing a big Broadway star who has to return to his hometown after facing a scandal. Imagine that his family owns a community theater. Imagine that his brother is still living there, married to the woman they both loved.

Almost eight years later, that’s exactly what audiences are watching, with Kline in the role she envisioned for him, Linney playing his sister-in-law, and Urdang’s husband Jon Tenney as his brother.

“It’s a show about friendships, about theatre, and about the power of art in our lives to bring people together, remind them of the best in themselves, and make people feel less alone,” Urdang says. “I think that’s a really valuable thing to put into the world right now, and it felt very satisfying.”

There’s even a Penn nod. Miranda—Kline’s character’s niece on the show—is torn between pursuing an acting career



NEW YORK STAGE
WHERE
BROADWAY
THEATER
FILM &
TELEVISION
BEGIN
SUMMER SEASON
A Morise L...
Perform...

in New York or attending Penn, where she's been accepted. Eventually she starts to come around, admitting that Penn's theatre scene is actually "kinda cool," with its rich extracurricular options instead of a conservatory setting.

As a longtime Urdang collaborator and friend, *American Classic* showrunner Michael Hoffman was fully aware she went to Penn. So when he was looking for a college where theatre is mainly student-run, Urdang's alma mater sprang to mind. "That was definitely because of my experience at Penn," she says—and that Penn experience also planted the seeds for Urdang's own future career.

Though never an actor herself, Urdang fell in love with the performing arts while growing up in Queens.

She was the second eldest of six children in a blended family. Her mom—a Jewish immigrant who escaped from Nazi Germany at age three—had "reinvented herself as this American girl," Urdang says. The family rarely talked about her mom's experience, but still, Urdang and her biological sisters discovered they were all having the same nightmares about crossing an ocean with bombs dropping over them.

"They say children of people who escaped Nazi Germany often carry the experience. It's passed down in the DNA in some way," she says.

She started ballet when she was four years old, and three years later, joined the School of American Ballet. "Ballet was very formative to my aesthetic and my appreciation of rigor and discipline and form and beauty," she says. "It gave me a great deal of self-possession and joy."

Dancing in George Balanchine's annual *Nutcracker* extravaganza came to define her Decembers. "That's what Christmas was," she says. "It was elegant, filled with music and sparkles and late-night dancing and doing your homework on the subway going home."

But it also meant trade-offs: after-school dance lessons six days a week; missed

family trips, especially during *Nutcracker* season. At 15 years old, she had to decide between the professional-ballerina path or exploring other interests—specifically college and politics.

The other interests won. Urdang transferred from the High School of Performing Arts to her local public school and continued on to Penn as a political science major, with plans to take the LSAT and ultimately go into politics. In the meantime, she choreographed and directed campus productions purely for the fun of it.

Directing *Godspell* in particular left a mark (see sidebar). It was a Quadramics show—and the then new student group was rarely granted use of the Annenberg Center theaters. Those were the domain of the more established Penn Players. *But why?* Urdang wondered. Annenberg's black-box Hal Prince Theatre would be perfect, she thought, for the *Godspell* she imagined.

She approached Todd Haimes C'78 ["The Roundabout Way," Nov/Dec 2015] and Jed Bernstein C'77, two heavy hitters on the Penn Players scene. "I want to do it here," she told them. "Why don't we get to do it here? We're all in the same school, paying the same tuition." She outlined her vision for *Godspell* in the Prince. The Players agreed—"and wound up being very helpful," she adds.

Before Urdang cast him as *Godspell*'s Jesus, Max Mayer C'77 sat behind her in a class on the American novel. At first, the future filmmaker admired her shiny brown hair. Then he came to know her as "smart, creative, tireless, persistent, and loyal," both at Penn and now. "She will always tell you almost exactly what she thinks, which is very, very rare in our business," he adds.

In one of their earliest conversations, Urdang told Mayer that she was going to become a senator. She went to work for one on Capitol Hill after graduating from Penn, but it wasn't what she'd pictured. "I'd go home and cry at night," she remembers. "I missed the deeper connection to human beings. I thought

going back and working in the arts was where you did that."

So it was on to the School of Drama at Yale, where she completed the theatre-management program with an eye toward producing. (She also left with a collection of future-star peers, including actors Tony Shalhoub and Mark Linn-Baker, both of whom appear in *American Classic*.)

New York Stage & Film grew out of her master's thesis at Yale, and in 1985, became a joint endeavor with Mayer (post-Penn) and Linn-Baker (pre-*Perfect Strangers*). The nonprofit plucks artists out of the New York City pressure cooker and drops them into the Hudson Valley. There they can finetune their plays or films through readings, workshops, full productions, and labs.

"There's a need for a place to develop new work that feels safe," Urdang says. And after 40 years and still going strong, "the fact that [New York Stage & Film] is still useful is very, very satisfying."

Launching a brand-new arts company would leave most people steeped in stress, but Urdang remembers a distinct lack of panic when she, Mayer, and Linn-Baker founded New York Stage & Film. "It was a fearlessness of youth and not knowing all the problems you're going to face," she says. "We just had an idea, and we thought we could do it. I felt very determined."

The trio hopped in a car and drove around "looking at everything from barns to college campuses" to find a home within a hundred miles of New York City for the summer. They settled on Vassar College in Poughkeepsie—close enough for New Yorkers to get there by car, far enough north to feel like another planet.

Their first season offered three plays and three readings, including a production of *Savage in Limbo* by playwright John Patrick Shanley, still at the dawn of his career. "Shanley agreed to have faith in our little company," Urdang says.

After *The New York Times* came to review *Savage in Limbo*, Urdang and Shanley

stayed up late, waiting for the paper to hit newsstands. Then they sat together on the curb of a New York sidewalk, reading and, in Urdang's case, weeping. "It was this dismissive, terrible review," she says. "I was bereft. And Shanley was consoling me."

He'd experienced the sting of a bad review before, and he also knew that his play was strong enough to still find audiences. "And he was absolutely right," Urdang says. "The play is a classic play, and we were sold out every night."

Even with a tough *Times* review, by the end of that first season, New York Stage & Film "was working, it was alive, it was vibrant," she remembers.

And it's still solidly kicking. This summer, the organization was headed back to Poughkeepsie with eight new plays and three new musicals—including one about Jean-Michel Basquiat from John Legend C'99 ["Making a Legend," Jan/Feb 2005], and a new Andrew Lloyd Webber piece. "Then there will also be projects by people who've never heard their words out loud," Urdang says.

"We think there's a great value in bringing a range of emerging and established artists together," she adds. "The more established artists are often refreshed by the enthusiasm and passion of the younger artists, and the younger artists learn so much from the more established artists."

In addition to play readings at the Annenberg Center via Penn Live Arts this past fall, New York Stage & Film has also "brought a lot of Penn alums through our doors," Urdang says. That list includes Marc Platt C'79 ["Passion Plays," May/Jun 2006], who workshopped a play with them in 2012, and Ken Olin C'76, who has directed and acted in multiple pieces.

"We've often worked with people when they were doing their first or second things, or just at the beginning of hatching a piece of work," Urdang notes. They held a workshop of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* when the second act wasn't even finished yet. ("We all knew something extraordinary was happen-

"Being a producer, you wake up every morning and try to figure out how you're going to make something happen."

ing," she remembers.) Shanley went on to write and win a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award for *Doubt*, land an Oscar for *Moonstruck*, and create many other plays and movies. Jon Robin Baitz, now a two-time Pulitzer finalist, has premiered numerous works there, too.

"She has a really good eye for talent," Pfaelzer says of Urdang. "There are people whose earliest work she has responded to who now are considered titans in the industry, and who she continues to work with decades later. I think that speaks to their respect for her as well."

As a veteran Broadway actor, Linney can't remember exactly when she first heard about Urdang—but she'd known of her for decades before filming *American Classic*.

"Leslie's sort of legendary for New York Stage & Film and what she created there," Linney says. "Not many people of my generation—particularly women—have stepped into a type of producer role the way that she has. She created a company and a movement, really."

Linney notes that within the city's theatre world, "everyone knew about [New York Stage & Film] and everyone wanted to be a part of it. ... From the outside looking in, it always seemed like a very nurturing place where people have a lot of fun."

Still, by the mid-1990s, Urdang was ready to try Hollywood. She landed a deal producing movies with Fox, which meant she could stay in New York and keep working with New York Stage & Film, too.

But even on film, her theatre side continued to shine through. First, she turned Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into a 1999 movie starring Kevin Kline, Stanley Tucci, and Calista Flockhart. 2011's *Rabbit Hole* came from a Manhattan Theatre Club play. In 2018, she adapted Chekhov's *The Seagull* into a film. And

in 2020 she produced *Wild Mountain Thyme*, based on a Shanley play, led by Emily Blunt and Jon Hamm.

"It's not intentional," she says. "I think I'm drawn to literary material—and I've also steeped myself in reading plays and seeing plays over the years. ... Going back and forth between the film and theatre worlds has been such a blessing, and I'm so grateful for it."

Whether it's making a movie or mounting a play, many people aren't quite sure what producers do. They're the ones who accept Tony awards for Best Play or Best Musical and Oscars for the best movie winners, but that's the only time you'll see them center stage.

"Being a producer, you wake up every morning and try to figure out how you're going to make something happen," Urdang says. "There are no rules, and you're reinventing the wheel all the time."

There's planning, executing, urging, and sometimes cajoling. "I've watched Leslie tackle so many dilemmas," says Pfaelzer, who now runs Berkeley Rep. "Whether it's the sudden loss of funding, an actor who pulls out of something at the last minute, a writer who violently disagrees with a note. She can be incredibly persuasive."

Even as the student director of *Godspell*, "she just knew what she liked," says Mayer, "which is great for producing, actually. ... And if she sees a problem, she'll figure out a way of addressing it."

"She was creative about how to get what she wanted to do done," he adds, "which is also the definition of a good producer."

Urdang describes her "unconscious drive," possibly passed down through her mom's genes, to "make the world safe and gather people." She's the one who wrangles family and friends for get-togethers. Who keeps in touch with colleagues for decades after a project. And as a producer, she strives to help artists feel supported.

"I'm just always relieved when I'm around Leslie because she is so smart and she is so capable and she is wise," Linney says. "She's a terrific leader. ... She just makes everyone feel safe and appreciated."

But even with her deep experience and many triumphs, Urdang isn't immune to her industry's current challenges. "It's a miracle when anything gets made these days," she says.

That includes *American Classic*. Between its engaging premise, strong writing, and all-star cast, Urdang was surprised when only one streamer offered to make a pilot. And because MGM+ is smaller than other streaming services, "a lot of people still haven't heard about the show or found it yet," she says. Despite strong reviews and enthusiastic audience responses, a second season was still in doubt in August. (In addition to MGM+, the first season is streaming on Amazon Prime through the end of September.)

She's also been running into roadblocks pursuing her next indie film project. "The old model's not working unless it's a huge genre movie or a big movie-star vehicle," she says. "So what comes next? What can we do that's different? How do we keep doing good work that we care about?"

They're tough questions that all of her industry is wrestling with right now. But as she sat on the *American Classic* set one memorable day, Urdang wasn't thinking about the hard stuff. She was watching Kline rehearse his Shakespeare lines. Admiring a 94-year-old costume designer, who came out of retirement for the show and was stringing beads onto a dress that needed just a bit more sparkle. She was welcoming an actor who'd run straight over from Broadway, where he was performing in *Hell's Kitchen*.

"I looked around the room and my eyes filled with tears," Urdang remembers. "I said, this room is filled with gold, and we created this room."

And so she keeps going. This work matters too much to her and brings her too much joy not to. "It means something to me to tell stories," she says. "It's so human, and I think these days, to be reminded of our humanness is really fulfilling and moving and vital."

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

Day By Day (By Decade By Decade)

The enduring magic of Penn's 1975 *Godspell* production.



In 1971, the musical *Godspell* opened off-Broadway.

With music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz—fresh out of college and still decades away from creating *Wicked*—it fused New Testament parables with joyous music, thrifted costumes, and vaudeville gags.

Day by day, *Godspell* danced along for over 2,000 performances before moving to Broadway in 1976. By then, Leslie Urdang C'76 had gone to see it multiple times. "I loved the spirit of it, the energy, that it was about community and family," she says, "and I loved the music and the stories within the story."

That's why, in late 1975, Urdang chose *Godspell* for her directing debut with Penn's student theatre group Quadramics. The group was still new at the time—just two years old, and focused on Quad-only productions. The Penn Players, meanwhile, had been around since 1936, producing professionally directed shows.

"It was sort of a small, not-that-well-known group on campus," Marc Platt C'79 remembers. "There was kind of an underdog feeling to the whole enterprise."



But if there's such a thing as a smash-hit college production, Penn's *Godspell* was it. The performances all sold out. "We had to create standing room and there were wait lists," Urdang says. She describes standing ovations, "lots of tears at the end," and "one big, shared community experience of connection and joy. ... I think the fun we were having spilled over to the audience."

All of which is noteworthy—but the names inside its program push that production into legendary territory now.

Urdang, the director, went on to a major career in theatre and film (see main story). And so did a significant portion of the rest of the cast and crew. From producing Broadway and Hollywood hits, to running major arts organizations, directing and acting in movies, TV and stage productions, and writing some of the biggest films of the last 40 years, the Quadramics *Godspell* credits would leave anyone wondering what was in the Annenberg Center water fountains that year.

The show marked its 50-year anniversary last winter, and we caught up with some of its cast and crew to learn more about this all-star endeavor.

Penn didn't have a Theatre Arts major until 1985. Instead students relied on campus groups like Quadramics to both perform and learn how to organize a production.

■ ■ ■

"Student theatre at Penn was a space that was not in any way inhabited by teachers. We did the plays we wanted to do. There was no professional oversight. We were young and passionate about the



theatre and acting—and there was nobody to squelch that by telling you the ‘right’ way to do it.”

“I couldn’t sing, so I wasn’t in [*Godspell*]. And I didn’t know much about musicals. My investment in it was kind of peripheral. This was very much Leslie’s wheelhouse.”

“Marc Platt had a beautiful voice. That was certainly a big deal. I didn’t know Marc very well then, and we didn’t cross paths again until he was an executive and I was doing something in Hollywood, probably *Thirtysomething*. I certainly remembered him. Then all of a sudden, he was a big executive.”

Ken Olin C’76

Role: Assistant Director

Future credits: Directed on TV’s *The West Wing*, *Alias*, *Tracker*, and *This Is Us*, among many other shows. His acting credits include *Thirtysomething* (with a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actor in a TV drama), *Brothers & Sisters*, and *Hill Street Blues*.

*Platt was a first-semester freshman when he was cast to perform the soulful ballad “All Good Gifts.” It was his first show at Penn and also his introduction to Stephen Schwartz, with whom he would later work as producer of the *Wicked* musical and films.*

■ ■ ■

“There’s a song toward the end of the first act, ‘Light of the World.’ We would each take a cup of what was supposed to be wine and give it to someone in the audi-



ence. I remember giving it to the woman who would eventually become my wife, Julie Beren [Platt C’79].”

“I didn’t perform much after *Godspell*, but I did direct and then produce [student shows]. A lot of the issues and problems that you solve are smaller scale but not completely dissimilar to issues and problems you solve on a bigger scale when you’re producing a Broadway musical or a film.”

“This particular experience is so vivid, and it meant so much to me. I still think of it very fondly and feel connected to these people. On the anniversary of our opening, I would reach out to Leslie and others and say *it’s been 10 years, it’s been 20 years*. It’s just amazing how all these folks remained in some ways intertwined and went on to do interesting, exciting, different professional things. How we all shared that moment in time is quite extraordinary.”

Marc Platt C’79

Role: Cast member and soloist on “All Good Gifts”

Future credits: Producer of *Wicked*, *La La Land*, and *Legally Blonde*, among many other Broadway and film hits.

The Godspell group bonded quickly. Several were friends already going into the show, and many of them have stayed in touch through the years, both personally and professionally. Max Mayer and Urdang started New York Stage & Film together; Olin directed there. Vicki Reiss often encountered them—and Platt—in the theatre world. Platt and Gary Ross teamed up on potential projects, and for many years had neighboring offices on the Universal lot. The number of cross-collaborations is dizzying.

■ ■ ■

“It probably cured me of ever wanting to stage manage again. There wasn’t really a part for me in the show, and I wanted to



hang out with my friends, so I told Leslie I’d stage manage. Not an easy gig to learn on the fly. I directed other plays while I was at Penn but I think it was a great experience doing just the nuts and bolts of a show.”

“I’ve stayed in touch with most of the people who were in that show. Max Mayer and I have remained good friends. We went backpacking in the Sierras last year. I’ve stayed in touch with Leslie and Ken Olin over the years. Obviously, I’ve seen Marc Platt a lot in a business context, and we are friends as well.”

“It was a really good time and a very good show. Fortunately, I have not heard Max sing in falsetto since then.”

Gary Ross C’78

Role: Stage Manager

Future credits: Wrote the screenplays for *Big*, *Seabiscuit*, *Pleasantville*, *The Hunger Games*, and other major movies.

Godspell is a joyful show that values enthusiasm and ensemble spirit over technical perfection.

When their Jesus couldn’t hit a top-note harmony due to a cold, no one minded. When some of the cast came in with limited dance experience, their choreographer understood.

■ ■ ■

“I studied dance from a very young age, and I started choreographing shows in junior high. This was a rock musical, and so of-the-moment. The music was thrilling—it just cried out for choreography. I remember being easily inspired by the brilliant songs and the wonderful cast. This is also a show where peo-

ple were not cast for their dance abilities. We did not do any dance auditions for this show. It was not supposed to be a show with polished dancers.”

“With Marc Platt being so involved in theatre, our paths have crossed numerous times. I remember when we were at an industry luncheon together, and he was there with Stephen Schwartz. Marc jokingly introduced me as ‘my *Godspell* choreographer Vicki Reiss.’ I got a huge kick out of that.”

“*Godspell* has played a very important role with me emotionally, sentimentally. It was a big deal at a very nascent time in my life. I had no sense that I was going to be in the arts going forward. But I was completely consumed by the energy of this production. It continues to feel like an early spark in my life that got me excited about working in the theater world. This was very special to me, and I feel very fortunate to have been there at that moment in time.”

Vicki Reiss C’77

Role: Choreographer

Future credits: Executive director of the Shubert Foundation—the country’s largest provider of unrestricted support for nonprofit theaters and dance companies—since 1993.

Urdang had a strong vision for her take on Godspell, heavily inspired by the production she’d seen multiple times Off-Broadway. She took her leadership role seriously—and her vision for it landed with her fellow Penn students.

■ ■ ■

“Doing the show was kind of like being a rock-and-roll star, because the audience just went crazy. There were people seeing it multiple times. Occasionally it felt like a wall of noise at the end of songs, and at the end of the show, people were cheering. It was really quite amazing.”

“In 1975, there was still a counterculture that the student body had a connection to. *Godspell* had that kind of revolutionary, things-could-be-better feeling to it. We’d just come out of Watergate. There was contempt for the government. This show was about self-rule and making up your life with a group of people.”

“I remember auditioning for it. Leslie and I were friends by then. I thought that she kind of wanted me to do it, but I knew that Marc had a better voice. I sang one of the songs. Leslie said, ‘That was good, could you do it again? And this time do it better.’ So I laughed and did it again. I don’t know if it was better or not, but she finally decided to cast me.”

Max Mayer C’77

Role: Jesus

Future credits: After a stint as an actor, he went on to direct dozens of plays, TV episodes, and several indie films, as well as to cofound, with Urdang and (non-alum) actor Mark Linn-Baker, New York Stage & Film.

As director, Leslie Urdang was Godspell’s convener. She’s still close to many of her cast and crewmates—and the memories from that production are deeply ingrained.

■ ■ ■

“I didn’t know how to do tech rehearsal, really. So I asked Ken to help me run the tech rehearsal and I let him set all the light levels. Then we stepped back and did a run-through and I was like, ‘Oh my god, Ken, this is a musical comedy. I know that’s not your thing, but we have to bring up every light level, like, five to eight points,’ because it was this moody, darker patina that he’d put over the whole show.”

“I was not a good director. I had fantasies of being a director, but despite how beautifully the show turned out, it was much more about casting the right people and filling the room with a kind of joy and energy.”

“I remember Marc buying me a thank-you gift during the show. He said, open it during my song. He sort of sang ‘All Good Gifts’ to me from the stage during one of the performances, and I opened the gift, which was an opal ring. It was just a very loving, fabulous time.”

“Because there wasn’t a standard theatre major at Penn, you were forced to invent how you’re going to tell your stories, and to use all the skills and lessons from your other classes to be entrepreneurial and resourceful. And if you love the arts, that’s a great combination to go out and

then run studios or become producers or found things and make things happen.”

Leslie Urdang C’76

Role: Director

Future credits: Film, TV, and theatre producer; cofounder of New York Stage & Film.

The number of alumni from Penn’s 1975 Godspell production who went on to major careers in entertainment is a mystery even to the alumni themselves. What was so special about that moment in time? How did it breed so many big names in theatre, TV, and film?

■ ■ ■

“For my part, I’ve always thought it was simple: We inspired each other. I

mean, I truly was amazed at how good my fellow performers were. And I think we sort of reached a critical mass, where just being in the same show with these folks made everyone stronger, convincing us we could actually have a career in show biz.”

“I got drafted [into *Godspell*] by Leslie after they’d already had a few weeks of rehearsals. I think the original guy they had didn’t work out for some reason, and Leslie knew that I lived and breathed performing and would jump at the chance to get on stage again.”

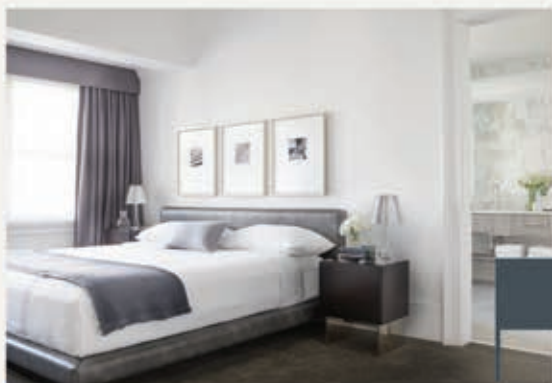
“On opening night, during my big number, I went up on my lines and instead of the actual lyric (‘We pray for sanc-ti-ty!’), substituted the rather ridiculous ‘We pray for you and me-ee-ee!’ At which point I heard a very inappropriate and loud outburst of laughter from the middle of the audience. Still singing, I looked up through the lights and saw both Leslie and Vicki doubled over in their seats. In that moment, I felt like the biggest idiot in the world, of course, but I also knew that I would be graciously forgiven for my screw-up. Leslie was the best kind of director. Kind, direct, and she never raised her voice.”

Ron Darian C’77

Role: Cast member and soloist on

“We Beseech Thee”

Future credits: TV writer/producer whose resume includes *Mad About You*, *Frasier*, and *Seventh Heaven*. He also performed in the original production-run of *Grease* on Broadway and worked as a stand-up comic. —MP



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Old Time Rock & Roll

Calendar

Annenberg Center

pennlivearts.org

Sep. 25–26 Alonzo King LINES Ballet

Sep. 27 John Cameron Mitchell

Oct. 2 Michael Mayo

Oct. 8–11 Jake Broder: UnRavelled

Oct. 15 TM Krishna

Oct. 17 Gravity & Other Myths:
Ten Thousand Hours

Oct. 18 Ants on a Log &
Mélibssa Smith: Alphabugs

Oct. 23–24 Ballets Jazz Montréal

Oct. 30 Arun Ramamurthy Trio &
Rudresh Mahanthappa Hero Trio

Nov. 1 Niladri Kumar

Nov. 5–7 Nritygram Dance Ensemble

Arthur Ross Gallery

arthurrossgallery.org

Open daily

**At Liberty: Life in the City
of Brotherly Love During the
Early Republic**

Through Dec. 13

ICA

icaphila.org

**The Condition of Being Near
Wilmer Wilson IV: SKIRL!
Waste Scenes: Maia Chao and
Fred Schmidt-Arenales**

All Sep. 26–Feb. 21

Morris Arboretum and Gardens

morrisarboretum.org

Open daily, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Sep. 5–6 Magic Railway Weekend

Sep. 12 Small Trees for
Small(er) Spaces

Sep. 26 Hidden Gems Tour

Penn Libraries

library.upenn.edu

**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 December

Penn Museum

penn.museum

Sep. 23 Penn Cultural Heritage
Lecture: Economics and the
Future of Heritage

Pennsylvania Hospital Museum

pahmuseum.pennmedicine.org

Open Wed.–Sun., 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

World Stage

worldstage.live

Sep. 4 Elefante

Sep. 7 American Aquarium

Sep. 10 Alicia Witt

Sep. 12 INAYAH

Sep. 16 Rend Collective

Sep. 18 Greg Farnese

Sep. 19 Saint Harison

Sep. 20 The Calling

Sep. 25 Jenna Raine

Sep. 26 Ken Jones Comedy

Oct. 3 Ms. Jade

Oct. 13–14 Brian Fallon

Oct. 17 Ali Amran



Planting Penn

An arboreal campus history.

The 95 representatives of Penn's Class of 1971 who returned for their 55th Reunion this past Alumni Weekend found a campus utterly transformed since their own Commencement. From Levine Hall to Lauder College House, from the Neural and Behavioral Sciences Building to the Singh Center for Nanotechnology, the University has spent the past half-century building too many structures to list. But for members of the Old Guard parading between College Hall and Van Pelt Library, perhaps the most welcome change was one often overlooked in accounts of Penn's development: the shade of so many stately trees.

It's easy to take for granted now, but the proportion of Penn's core campus covered by tree canopy more than doubled between 1970 and 2012—from 8.7 percent to 20.5 percent. And that doesn't count the profusion of London planetrees, poplars, oaks, dogwoods, sweetgums, weeping willows, dawn redwoods, and other species that leaf out over Penn Park. With 6,500 trees and shrubs



Penn's Sylvania:
The Campus as Landscape
Edited by Frederick Steiner
GRP' 77 GFA'86 Gr'86 and
Ignacio F. Bunster-Ossa GLA'79
Penn Press, 200 pages, \$49.95

comprising more than 240 species, the University's urban campus has been a certified arboretum since 2017. As detailed in *Penn's Sylvania*, out from Penn Press in September, the path to the present idyll was long and frequently unshaded.

In his original 1749 *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania*, Benjamin Franklin envisioned "That a House be provided for the ACADEMY, if not in the Town, not many Miles from it; the Situation high and dry, and if it may be, not far from a River, having a Garden, Orchard, Meadow, and a Field or two." Yet it was only in 1872, upon relocating from central Philadelphia to 10 acres of farmland west of the Schuylkill River, that the University of Pennsylvania came into real

estate conducive to Franklin's original conception, as Witold Rybczynski, the Martin and Margy Meyerson Professor Emeritus of Urbanism, observes in the first of six chapters authored by a collection of 10 Penn alumni and faculty.

College Hall and Logan Hall (now Claudia Cohen Hall) went up in a flash, followed by Frank Furness's University Library (now the Fisher Fine Arts Library) in 1890. But "except for a few poplars and an occasional struggling street tree," observes Weitzman School of Design practice professor emeritus Laurie Olin Hon'19,

(Left) *Castanea molissima*, Chinese chestnut, Hamilton Walk; (right) *Fagus grandifolia*, American beech (front) and *Celtis occidentalis*, common hackberry (rear), James G. Kaskey Memorial Park.



period photographs show that “there was barely a twig near any of the buildings.” That changed after the 1894 appointment of Charles Custis Harrison C1862 G1865 Hon1911 as provost—thanks to his wife, Ellen Nixon Waln Harrison. Over the next 18 years, Olin writes, “she directed and supported—largely with her own money and that which she raised from others—the planting of the entire campus.” Consulting with biology faculty to breathe arboreal life into spaces including Hamilton Walk, Smith Walk, and the BioPond (now James G. Kaskey Memorial Park), “she transformed the university.”

Yet as Rybczynski observes, when the trustees commissioned a campus-planning report in 1913 from Paul Philippe Cret, the eminent Penn professor of design issued a scathing verdict. “Growth has proceeded without plan and through mere accretion,” he wrote, “into an ever-increasing confusion.”

Penn’s campus tree canopy has more than doubled since 1970.

Cret’s proposal, a thousand-foot-long grassy mall extending from College Hall north to Chestnut Street, never came to fruition. Campus development ground to a halt nationwide during the Great Depression and only sprang back to life after the Second World War with the advent of the GI Bill.

Penn’s subsequent landscape development owed much to two men who joined Penn’s School of Fine Arts faculty in the mid-1950s. Ian McHarg, who re-established the University’s Department of Landscape Architecture, produced a plan to transform Woodland Avenue between 36th and 37th streets into what Olin calls a “series of interlinked garden rooms” planted with magnolias, London plane

trees, and Korean stewartia. Then, in the early 1960s, landscape architecture professor George Patton converted a trolley-tracked asphalt thoroughfare into a cobblestone walkway lined with Japanese zelkova trees. Locust Walk was, in Olin’s estimation, a “master stroke that almost instantly transformed the campus from a near-random assortment of buildings on city streets into a campus with an interior.”

But as the building boom of the 1960s proceeded, and the maturation of Ellen Harrison’s plantings gradually left “many once magnificent trees now diseased or dying,” as Graduate School of Fine Arts dean Peter Shephard observed in a 1977 report, “no major replanting efforts had been undertaken to recapture this great exterior canopy.”

Penn’s Sylvania pays ample tribute to the sustained efforts to reinvigorate the campus landscape since then. The 1977 report catalyzed the redevelopment of

Detail from blueprint of existing trees on Penn campus indicating species, c. late 1920s.



College Green into Blanche Levy Park, which enriched the preexisting palette of historic trees with plantings of native red oaks, tulip poplars, Kentucky coffeetrees, red maples, Sargent's cherries, and other species under the supervision of Shephard, Olin's design practice Hanna/Olin, and Andropogon Associates (founded by Penn landscape architecture faculty members Colin Franklin GLA'67, Carol Franklin GLA'65, Leslie Sauer CW'69, and Rolf Sauer C'67 GA'71). Chapters by Olin and Susan Weiler GLA'83 detail the development of additional landscapes.

Lara A. Roman C'04, Theodore S. Eisenman Gr'15, Robert Lundgren GLA'82, and Chloe Cerwinka C'00 LPS'19 tackle the question "Who Cares for the Campus Trees?" in a chapter that doubles as an ode of gratitude to the University's Division of Facilities and Real Estate Services (FRES). After all, trees are ever vulnerable to death and disease, and climate change adds to

the stressors. Yet “Penn campus trees rarely die in place,” the authors marvel. Between 2003 and 2014, for instance, slightly more than a third of all trees were removed, and an equal number replanted under the supervision of FRES personnel.

Catherine Seavitt, the Martin and Margy Meyerson Professor of Urbanism and current chair of the landscape architecture department, contributes an idiosyncratic homage to the pawpaw tree, whose swiftly perishable fruits can be harvested by people who know where to find them on campus (or know how to use FRES's online Penn Plant Explorer map). Ignacio F. Bunster-Ossa GLA'79 adds a 50-page black-and-white photo essay to the volume he coedited, and his fellow editor Weitzman School Dean Frederick Steiner bookends the text with an introduction and afterword.

And the new cohort of undergraduates joining the University community this fall

Briefly Noted

FAMILY SPIRIT

by Diane McKinney-Whetstone
CW75 (Amistad, 2025, \$26.99).
The Maces are a Philadelphia
family of clairvoyants with issues.
After a harrowing premonition,
Ayana must decide whether to
schisms by enlisting the help of
aunt.



THE HARDEST, LONGEST RACE: Henry Ford and the Cross-Country Contest That Changed America

by Eric Moskowitz C'01
(St. Martin's Press, 2026,
\$31.00.) A Pulitzer-winning

journalist recounts the first true coast-to-coast automobile race in the US, in 1909. Car manufacturer Henry Ford wanted to prove that his Model T could go the distance—but its victory was tainted by fraud.



HUMAN RAISED: Nurturing Connection, Curiosity & Lifelong Learning in the Age of AI by Dr. Dana Suskind

GM'98 (Dutton, 2026, \$32.00.)
As AI enters nurseries,
playrooms, and classrooms,

parents are being sold a “smart” childhood at every turn. Suskind, a professor of surgery and pediatrics, offers a timely guide to parenting in the age of AI.



HAR MAR: Stories

by Hilal Isler GrEd'05
(Northwestern University
Press, 2026, \$24.00.) In her
debut story collection, Isler's
characters are all on the
verge of something—success.

rebellion, revelation. Shifting between Turkey and the US, these stories trace the lives of women living in-between.

Visit thepenngazette.com for more *Briefly Noted*.

will make their own small contribution to the landscape that now offers such rich shade to spring reunion-goers. Since 2011, each freshman class has helped to select and plant a tree on College Green. The Class of 2029 planted a cucumber magnolia near the entrance of Van Pelt Library, a few paces away from the Carolina silverbell selected by the Class of 2028. After conducting their own vote, the Class of 2030 will plant a new set of roots on Homecoming Weekend.—TP

Revolutionary, Rocker

Franklin goes electric in *The Sound of America*.



The *Sound of America*'s Benjamin Franklin is a far cry from the bald-pated elder statesman of 1776. As depicted in the new musical by Randall Lane C'90 and Todd Schwartz—which premiered at Philadelphia's Fringe-Arts on July 1 and played through the month at the flagship of the city's annual alternative theater festival—Ben has an impressive head of dark curls under his tricorn or beaver fur hat and presents himself as the original rock star. (“Before the Beatles or Elvis ... Before Chuck Berry or Nirvana ... There was only me. Ben Franklin.”)

The version of Penn's founder (not referenced, sadly) in *The Sound of America* rises from rebellious teenage runaway to indie-darling singer-songwriter to global arena-rock sensation; there's even a second act disillusion/dissolution-and-redemption arc that plays out just in time to turn back

the “British Invasion” and declare America's rock and roll independence.

Echoing the familiar story, Franklin runs away from Boston and indentured servitude to his half-brother James (Tito Jackson to Ben's MJ in the musical's terms) but, along with his famous three loaves of bread, arrives in Philadelphia bearing an acoustic guitar hand-decorated with a kite. Lane has fun analogizing Franklin's early days as a printer and local acclaim with *Poor Richard's Almanack*—when he was still pseudonymous, however.

*Poor Richard knows a penny saved's
a penny earned*

*Poor Richard knows the best investment's
what you learn*

But who knows Richard?

Lightning strikes when, well, a bolt of lightning electrifies Franklin's guitar,

sparking (!) a wave of international acclaim and a swelled head for Ben, who breaks from his band The Leather Apron Club and sets off for France as a solo act, but instead abandons himself to indulgence, including fathering an illegitimate son, identified as WTF.

Meanwhile, back home Franklin's best friend and business partner Hugh Meredith and common-law wife and soulmate Deborah Read attempt to hold the line against British “Harp Hellion” Lord Alexander Wedderburn (front man for The Redcoats), who declares that, while America may have invented it, “rock and roll belongs to the mother country.”

Franklin's timely return signals a battle of the bands, followed by reconciliation and the formation of a “supergroup” incorporating Wedderburn (who switches to electric guitar), with WTF as an opening act (a happier ending than real-life Franklin and his loyalist son William ever managed). In a last-minute cameo, Roger Daltrey appears on video as the “Royal Governor”; proceeds from the production support The Who lead singer's cause Teen Cancer America.

Gazette editor John Prendergast emailed with Lane about *The Sound of America* and how Franklin really was—and is—a rock star. Their exchange has been lightly edited and condensed.

Why Franklin? Why you? Why now?

Anyone who went to Penn feels Franklin's shadow; as an American history major, me more than most. We live in a time when I think it's natural to pine for great leadership—whether business, cultural, or politics—and with every decade, Franklin looks better, wiser, more selfless within all three of those. This country could use 100 of him right now.

Did you start this with the nation's 250th anniversary in mind? How did the connection with Philly and Fringe-Arts come about?

The 250th was just a lovely coincidence. There hasn't been a breakthrough

rock musical in a long time and our goal about two years ago was to take a stab at one. We figured we'd make some music we like and if others did too, we'd raise money and go the traditional route: off-Broadway, with dreams of Broadway. Once we got close to finishing last winter, though, it was hard to look at the calendar and not see the obvious: a show about Philadelphia's most iconic citizen, in the birthplace of our country, on its 250th birthday. Philly could be our off-Broadway. It felt like Ben willed it.

After we shared our Spotify soundtrack and script, three different Philadelphia theaters made firm proposals, including the Kimmel Center, which was flattering. FringeArts made the most sense for a rock show—great vibe and acoustics and there's a bar attached to it. Plus, it's precisely under the Ben Franklin Bridge!

Where did the conceit of Franklin as a rock star come from?

I obviously knew Franklin's story coming out of Penn, and Walter Isaacson's biography positioning him as the "first true American" was foundational. Hearing him say nice things about *The Sound of America* on *Morning Joe* was surreal. But Isaacson's thesis could be pushed further and grander: more than just our first citizen, he was the first rock star. The lyricist for colonial America. A preening performer, who became the first globally famous American. He toured the world. He had fans. He had groupies. He had an illegitimate son. He soaked up the limelight. He got fat in exile in France. Once you start looking through that lens you can't unsee it.

The analogy between Franklin writing the *Poor Richard's Almanack* and being a singer-songwriter works very neatly. Things get a little messier in the second act, and it's hard to imagine Franklin ever really being idle, but the rock and roll story has its requirements. How did you approach the history part of it?

Every story needs an arc, and Franklin's late-life adventures in Europe provided

"He toured the world. He had fans. He had groupies. He had an illegitimate son."

that opening. He was perceived then as a skirt-chasing dilettante who was enjoying the good life in France while the country fought for independence. It turned out that Ben was just saving the day yet again, in his own way, cajoling France into the war. The ultimate comeback. Ditto his castigation in London [when Franklin appeared before the Privy Council in 1774] at the hands of Lord Wedderburn, our villain. We stripped these ideas down, but they're directionally correct. Rosalind Remer [senior vice provost for libraries, collections & archives at Drexel University], who curated the federal Benjamin Franklin Museum in Old City, is a coproducer. Her job essentially was to scour the script and keep me historically honest.

Not to fact check too closely, but William Temple Franklin is Franklin's son William's illegitimate son, not Ben's. Was the WTF reference—used at several points in the show—too good to pass up?

Yes! When I first gave the script to Ros, I told her flat-out: I tried very hard to be historically accurate, certainly directionally so, but I'm acknowledging one asterisk in advance. One generation of middle-name skipping. The very definition of too good to pass up. And I'm sure Poor Richard would have approved.

Talk about the role of headgear—especially the beaver hat, which is a great prop. It was supposed to show Franklin as a frontiersman, right? And yet it also seems perfectly at home in the high Sixties.

Yes, Franklin employed that in France to rebrand himself as a man of wild America, to curry favor. Your analogy holds, as he looks like a self-indulgent

rock star at the moment we segue from his tricorn-hat earnestness.

How did the musical style develop? What were your and Todd Schwartz's main musical influences?

Todd and I are both rock nerds, and we speak in shorthand—"this one should have a *Pet Sounds* vibe," or "that needs a Stone Temple Pilots riff." We tried to bring in a lot of elements—blues, heavy metal, punk—at the correct plot points. That said, Todd was a professional rock frontman and has a professional studio in his basement in Brooklyn, and all those weekend jam sessions took place under a poster of The Who at the height of their powers. A top three band for both of us. To have Sir Roger Daltrey attached to this project—with the coolest title, "Royal Governor," and the coolest video cameo—well, it's one of the best pinch-me moments of my life.

What's it been like for you seeing the show being performed? How has it been received?

It was at Penn, and *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, that I got used to people digesting things I helped produce. But to observe people react in real-time, that's new, and the magic of live theater. So much love from Philadelphia, from Visit Philadelphia to Federal Donuts, which made a special *Sound of America* Ben-themed treat. The reviews have been terrific, mostly notably the *Inquirer*, which has helped set up the next act.

Do you have plans to take the show to another venue or do anything else with it in the near future?

Two different groups have now approached us about taking this bigger—one in New York, one nationally. Very flattered, very excited. We're going to weigh options quickly, but one way or another, Ben Franklin, in this rock star incarnation, again gets to tour the world and bask in the adulation.



Partners Against Parkinson's

What one couple is building to
empower people with Parkinson's disease. ▶

In 2018, Derek Bandeen and his wife Bonnie Miao Bandeen C'80 WG'85 were ready to start the next chapter of their lives.

Their four kids were out of the house and they had both recently retired after long, accomplished careers at Morgan Stanley. Derek had run the bank's equity division globally and managed thousands of employees. Bonnie served as the global head of Asian equity and European emerging markets trading.

They were embarking on new adventures, such as enrolling as fellows at the Advanced Leadership Initiative at Harvard, where they lived in student housing and took classes to figure out how to contribute to the social good. "We had so much fun," Bonnie says. "It felt like we were renaissance people who were just learning things."

Then the diagnosis came: Parkinson's disease.

After a tremor in Derek's hand worsened, he sought out neurology specialists who delivered the news. "I didn't even go with him, because we thought there were going to be more tests," recalls Bonnie.

"It was such a hard thing to tell Bonnie," says Derek, who was 55 at the time and feared that the disease promised "to fundamentally change the next 20 years of her life."

Their lives changed in many ways one would expect. There were tests and doctor's appointments and learning how to manage symptoms. But their lives also changed in an unexpected way: in February the couple opened

the 6,800-square-foot Bandeen Center in midtown Manhattan. The first initiative of the Parkinson's Wellness Foundation, a nonprofit they founded in 2024, the center is a place to help people with Parkinson's at all stages of their journey to live full, active lives.

It offers workout classes including yoga, tai chi, and dance to improve physical skills like mobility and flexibility. There are support groups for mental health needs, nutritionists to help with diets, and voice therapy classes to strengthen vocal cords. There is an events space for putting on theatrical productions and a café for hanging out. "The idea is to have all the resources people with Parkinson's need under one roof," Bonnie says.

"I think the communal part has actually become the most important part," says Derek. "I can't tell you how much it helps just to talk to other people who have it." He notes that most people with Parkinson's don't know anyone else with the disease, making it an extremely lonely condition. The center also offers lectures and support groups for spouses, caregivers, and children.

The process has been stimulating for both of them. "I want to build something where my husband can benefit, and Derek wants to build something that serves the greater good. So we are both fulfilling our interests," Bonnie notes. "We want to build something that could help a lot of people with Parkinson's."

Bonnie was born in Taiwan into a half-Chinese, half-Korean

family. Her father was a Shanghai refugee who fled the Communist takeover in 1949. Her mother was a survivor of the Korean War. She spent most of her childhood in Okinawa, a small island in Japan, where she taught herself English by watching *The Sound of Music*.

Seeking a challenge, she decided to enroll in an American school in Wallingford, Pennsylvania, for her senior

computer science major, and they nearly fell off their chairs laughing because they don't see me as technologically competent," she says. She pivoted to Asian studies and economics, subjects in which she excelled.

After graduation, she applied for jobs in international business. "Almost every job I applied to, I got an offer, I think because my background is so complicated," she says. She ended up taking a

"The idea is to have all the resources people with Parkinson's need under one roof. ... I want to build something where my husband can benefit, and Derek wants to build something that serves the greater good."

year. "I wanted to show my parents I could get straight A's in an American high school," she says. Despite her guidance counselor's declaration that she wasn't Ivy League material—Bonnie scored in the high 700s on the math section of her SAT but only a 480 on the verbal part—she decided to apply to nearby Penn. She still isn't quite sure how she got accepted. "Some really lucky streaks happened to me," she says.

Her first year at Penn was rough. She tried to major in computer science, a subject she struggled with so much that she received a letter warning that she would be put on academic probation if her grades didn't improve. "I told my kids about 10 years ago that I thought I should be a

position with Wells Fargo in San Francisco. She was there a few years before heading back to Wharton for her MBA.

After her second Penn graduation, she accepted a job at Morgan Stanley, where she met Derek (who had attended Duke for both his undergraduate degree and his MBA) on her first day of work. They were two of seven people in the same training class, and the cohort went out together several times a week. Despite being on opposite sides of the trading floor—she was on the international desk, he was in derivatives—they started dating and, within a year, decided to get married.

Derek was already in a senior position growing the derivatives business, and

Alumni

Bonnie was running Asian trading globally. She was the only woman on the floor and the only minority. “I can’t tell you how many times I wanted to cry in the bathroom,” she says. “It was very locker room. They shouted at you. I remember hearing guys making fun of me.” But she persevered and eventually earned their respect. “I clawed my way with hard work and diligence,” she says. “I even made a few friends who looked after me.”

In 1993, Morgan Stanley transferred them to London, where they ended up staying for two decades while raising four kids (all of whom attended Penn). Bonnie also stayed active with her alma mater, serving on Penn’s Board of Trustees from 2014 to 2024. She also served on Wharton’s Board of Advisors from 2016 to 2023 and remains on the Trustees’ Council of Penn Women.

After Derek’s Parkinson’s diagnosis, they tackled it as a team. Bonnie researched everything she could find on the disease, determining that exercise and diet were most important. In 2020, she joined the board of the Michael J. Fox Foundation, the world’s largest nonprofit funder of Parkinson’s disease research. That’s when she realized that most support for patients was focused on finding a cure rather than managing symptoms and improving quality of life.

They did find two wellness centers, one in Massachusetts and one in Ohio, but both were small operations and neither was geographically practical. “When we walked into the Cleveland one, Derek

leaned over to me and said, ‘You know what, this is the first time I’ve been in a building where everyone has Parkinson’s,’” remembers Bonnie. That’s when they knew they had to open their own.

They returned to Harvard for a second fellowship in 2022, this time with a specific mission. They spent six months interviewing neurologists, speaking with patients, meeting with foundation CEOs, and assembling a 10-person volunteer committee. They raised \$4.6 million from 71 friends to form the Parkinson’s Wellness Foundation to create a community for people affected by Parkinson’s, before signing a lease in midtown Manhattan for the Banded Center.

They decided to charge for membership and structure it like a gym: a day pass for \$40, a monthly pass for \$220, and a yearly pass for \$2,000. The center also provides discounts to those who can’t afford the membership fees.

Though it has only been open for about six months, there are already expansion plans; the team has taken over an additional 2,200 square feet next door. Bonnie and Derek are keeping careful records of their research and decisions so that the model could be replicated elsewhere.

“If you look at Parkinson’s, it affects one percent of the population aged 50 and over,” Bonnie says. “It’s the fastest-growing neurodegenerative disease, so this is something that is going to need to grow.”

—Alyson Krueger C’07

Tomide Awe WG’17



On Her Own Terms

A former owner of a luxury handbag brand celebrating African heritage is now helping other women build businesses.

Growing up in Nigeria, Tomide Awe WG’17 watched her mother do something quietly radical.

In a country where educating daughters was often considered less important than educating sons, Awe’s mother had obtained her own education against the odds and was determined to help her children do the same. “She understood what education had opened up for her,” Awe says. “She wanted to make sure we had access to those same possibilities.”

That lesson—that access changes the direction of a

life—became the thread running through everything Awe would go on to build.

She arrived at Wharton in 2015 intending to become an investment banker. An internship at Credit Suisse in London cured her of that idea quickly. “It taught me that I hated banking,” she says. What Wharton gave her instead was something more useful: permission to follow her curiosity. She took classes based on her interests, eventually majoring in entrepreneurial management and strategic management. She

also began quietly developing a business idea, testing concepts in entrepreneurship classes and gathering feedback from classmates who became her first focus group.

That idea became Olori, a luxury handbag brand pairing traditional African textiles with a social mission:



every bag sold funded a month of education for an under-resourced girl in Africa. Awe had grown up surrounded by Nigerian fabrics at family weddings and gatherings, and she wanted to find a way for women anywhere to carry that beauty with them. The handbag felt right, practically and symbolically. “You’re carrying our handbag, and you’re actually lifting another girl out of poverty,” she said at the time.

She built Olori the way she would build everything: in the margins. During Wharton classes, she developed the concept through entrepreneurship exercises. During holidays, she traveled to Nigeria to meet with artisans and prototype designs. Back on campus, she ran surveys and held focus groups. By graduation, launching felt like the obvious next step.

What followed was seven years of running two lives at

once. Olori grew into a six-figure business, earned coverage in *Glamour*, *Bustle*, *Mic*, and *The Business of Fashion*, won the FedEx Small Business Grant, and raised roughly \$22,000 through Kickstarter before its official launch. Awe ran it while holding senior strategy and operations roles at Twitter and then Meta. “If I was not able to use certain skills in my role, I could come home and be the head of marketing, the head of operations, the head of product, and the CEO,” she says. “I developed range in ways that my job alone would never have allowed.”

But when she married and became a mother, the equation shifted. A difficult pregnancy forced hard choices about what she could sustain. Olori, which had begun following traditional fashion industry cycles with seasonal collections and growing inventory demands, had lost much of the joy it once gave her. She paused the business. “I have made peace with the fact that what existed before may not be what exists in the future,” she says. “I am comfortable with it being parked right now because the old version no longer fits my life.”

The corporate chapter ended painfully, too. In 2023, deep stress and depletion led Awe to take medical leave from Meta. For three months away from work, a therapist told her she was in a depressive state. “That was shocking because it was not language that had ever been used to describe me before,” she says. The ex-

perience cracked something open. Through therapy, she completed an exercise centered on values. The one that rose above everything else was freedom. “I realized how trapped I felt and how much of my life had been built in ways that left me feeling caged,” she says.

She returned to work but knew she would not stay. She began researching, writing on LinkedIn, and quietly coaching women who wanted to build businesses alongside their corporate careers. When she was eventually laid off, she did not go looking for another role. Instead, in July 2025, she officially launched *On Your Terms*, a coaching platform for high-achieving women navigating the gap between leaving a successful career and knowing what to build next.

The women she works with are not short on ambition or ideas. They are short on direction. “They stay intellectual,” Awe says. “They have several ideas, and rather than choosing one and testing it, they remain in planning mode. They create documents, build frameworks, compare possibilities. But they start confusing the quality of their thinking with evidence that the idea will actually work.”

Her methodology moves through three phases she calls Conviction, Strategy, and Build. In the first phase, she gets everything out of a client’s head and onto the table: their ideas, fears, financial realities, family responsibilities, and capacity. Together they evaluate business directions against

personal and commercial criteria, from the client’s strengths and energy to market demand and speed to revenue. Strategy follows: defining the customer, the problem being solved, the pricing, and the simplest path to revenue, tested against real conversations with potential buyers rather than guesswork. Finally, Build turns the strategy into a focused 90-day plan built around the client’s schedule, energy, and responsibilities. “The goal is not to manufacture certainty before they begin,” Awe says. “It is to gather enough evidence to choose one direction thoughtfully, understand why it fits, and stop splitting their attention across several possibilities.”

The results suggest the framework works. Shezal Baig, founder of the home goods and jewelry brand SAÉA, came to Awe wanting to launch her first product line. She crossed \$10,000 in revenue within her first five weeks. In the year that followed, she secured \$25,000 in grant funding, generated more than 1,000 sales across Etsy and her own website, sold out multiple times, and attracted boutique retailers.

Awe traces the throughline of her career not as a series of pivots but as a single thread she kept picking up in whatever time was left over. “I have always been drawn to helping people build a life beyond the limits they were handed,” she says. “I just kept doing it in the margins.”

Now, for the first time, she is building it in the open.

—Tasmiha Khan



Pitch Perfect

The CEO of the FIFA World Cup NYNJ Host Committee helped make this summer's tournament a big success.

After 120 tense minutes of soccer, the referee blew the whistle at MetLife Stadium, declaring Spain the winner of the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup and officially drawing the tournament to a close.

Among those cheering in the crowd was Alex Lasry C'09, the CEO of the NYNJ Host Committee, the local organizing body responsible for logistics surrounding the eight matches played in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

During the 39 days of the expanded 48-team, 104-match tournament spanning

cities across the United States, Mexico, and Canada, Lasry had a vitally important role at one of the marquee sites. In New York and New Jersey, he was in charge of safety and security, transportation to and from the stadium, and fan engagement for an event that brought billions of dollars of economic impact to the region. (Everything that happened inside the stadium, from the first-ever World Cup final halftime show to the controversial ticket sales currently under investigation by the attorneys general of New

York and New Jersey, was run directly by FIFA and outside his purview.)

For the World Cup final on July 19, the culmination of the largest and highest-attended single-sport tournament in history, Lasry and his team worked with officials on a safety plan for President Donald Trump W'68 and other heads of state as they watched the game surrounded by 80,000 spectators.

Earlier in the World Cup, on June 13, he had to figure out what to do when nine buses transporting fans back from the Brazil-Morocco

game at MetLife Stadium had to be abandoned in Manhattan during the New York Knicks championship celebrations, with some being set on fire and vandalized. "That was honestly probably the biggest thing we had to deal with," he says. "It was scary but everyone was safe and fine, and we ended up giving the bus drivers a suite for the game as a thank you."

Lasry's committee also set up fan fests in some of New York City's most iconic locations, including under the Brooklyn Bridge and at Rockefeller Center. For the final, he helped put together one of the world's largest World Cup watch parties: 50,000 fans in Central Park.

"It's probably the best job I've ever had," says Lasry,

which is a big statement considering he's had some pretty good ones.

Lasry, who grew up in New York, knew he wanted to attend Penn from the moment he visited his older sister, Samantha Lasry C'07, during her freshman year. "I fell in love with the school and applied early," he says.

He landed a single in the Quad, which gave him his own space but made it harder to make friends, so he tried a variety of sports. He thought he would join sprint football but only made it through one practice. "I went out one night for new student orientation and overslept for the next practice," he recalls. "I was like, *I don't think this is for me.*" He instead started showing up at the Pottruck Center for pickup basketball, where he ended up making most of his closest friends, and later played intramural basketball, winning a championship his senior year.

He joined Beta Theta Pi, which proved useful when he met his now-wife Lauren Markowitz Lasry C'09—who was friends with many of his fraternity brothers—at Smokey Joe's. "I took a sip of a beer she had just ordered," he says. "She thought it was funny, which was a good thing. I know it could have gone terribly."

A political science major, Lasry interned at Senator Chuck Schumer's office while still at Penn, finding "the energy and excitement of politics in DC to be super fun." After graduation he

returned to Washington, DC, for an internship in the Obama White House, working for senior advisor Valerie Jarrett from 2009 to 2011. He helped Joshua DuBois and Mike Strautmanis on the earliest stages of what became the My Brother's Keeper initiative, which created communities for boys and young men of color. He also worked with actor Kal Penn, who was an associate director in the Office of Public Engagement and who taught at Penn in April 2009 (and who this summer joined Lasry at a World Cup game).

In 2012 Lasry went to NYU for business school and two years later joined the Milwaukee Bucks after his father, hedge fund manager Marc Lasry, purchased the NBA franchise. He spent the next 12 years there as a senior vice president, helping negotiate the public-private stadium partnership, developing the Deer District with a fully unionized, living-wage workforce, and leading Milwaukee's successful bid for the 2020 Democratic National Convention. (It went primarily virtual because of the pandemic, but the effort helped the city land the Republican National Convention four years later.)

Lasry missed politics and in 2022 ran for a US Senate seat in Wisconsin (he ended up dropping out before the Democratic primary) before working in the Biden administration's US Department of Commerce as deputy assistant secretary for travel and tourism. In that role, he

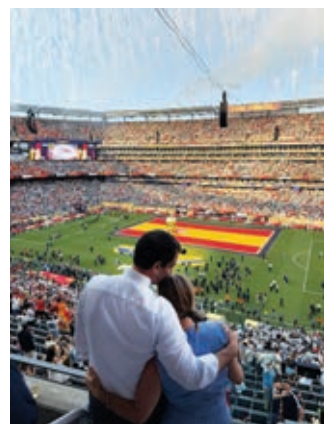
helped expand the government's visa interview capacity by more than one million appointments ahead of the World Cup and Olympics. That helped set the stage for his World Cup job—though when Tammy Murphy, the chair of the board of directors of the NYNJ Host Committee, called and asked him about it, he couldn't believe it. "I thought at first they were asking me to buy tickets or a suite or something, to be like a sponsor," he says. "Even when they said, 'We're looking for a CEO,' I was like, 'Oh great, I'm happy to get you some names.'"

One of the more challenging parts of his job was building a mobility plan after MetLife Stadium's parking lots were repurposed for fan zones and security. Lasry and his team helped set up a shuttle system that moved 12,000 to 20,000 fans per game and worked with New Jersey Transit to expand capacity to 40,000 people per game. (There was an initial uproar over the train's ticket prices, which were eventually reduced.)

With eight matches, he had the opportunity to improve plans as the tournament progressed. At an early game, he had each staff member talk to 20 fans to find out what was working and what wasn't. "We kind of learned that our directional signs weren't good enough, and people didn't know where they were supposed to go," he says. "We also figured out we didn't have enough volunteers."

There were certainly some job perks, particularly attend-

ing the games. "Morocco–Brazil, our first game, was a special one. My dad's from Morocco, so having that was really, really special," he says. "Germany–Ecuador was super, super fun because Ecuador had to win to advance. And so seeing the elation and excitement from all the Ecuadorian fans and the team after the game was very meaningful." In addition to the star-studded final featuring Argentina's Lionel Messi, MetLife Stadium also twice hosted global superstars Kylian Mbappe of France and Erling Haaland of Norway, who captured the hearts of many fans during a stunning upset of Brazil.



Soon Lasry will plot his next steps. But in the meantime, he is going to relax and reflect on the massive success of the world's biggest sporting event. The day after the tournament ended, he posted a photo on Instagram of him and his wife at the World Cup final trophy celebration with a quote from Marvel's Thanos: "I finally rest, and watch the sun rise on a grateful universe."

—Alyson Krueger C'07

"I have been a supernumerary in 31 productions at the San Diego Opera since 2001."

—Richard "Dick" W. Bridy W'69

1953

Janet Lubowitz Kronfeld C'53 turned 95 in July, shares her daughter **Linda Kronfeld C'78**, a retired senior philanthropic advisor at Penn. Janet is also the mother of **Julie Kronfeld C'82** and the grandmother of **Natalie Gay C'12**. At her birthday party, Linda shared some words about her mom, including these: "You still grocery shop and cook for yourself—and prepare your meals by plugging into your phone whatever you have in your fridge to get a recipe. You work on your strength and balance—your trainer has told you that you are in better shape than some of his 70-year-old clients. And, cane in hand, nobody can book it faster out of the Kimmel Center the minute the last orchestra note has been played. You read voraciously. ... Your memory is still firing on all cylinders. ... You are engaged with the world. ... You are still making new friends. ... You are one for the record books!"

1963

Judy Alpert Goffman Cutler CW'63 GEd'64 writes, "After more than 50 years spent discovering, collecting, and championing the work of America's great illustrators, I have published a memoir reflecting on that journey." Her new book is titled *Reframed: How Seeing Value in Overlooked Art Changed My Life*. Judy, who is also founder of the National Museum of American Illustration in Newport, Rhode Island, says, "Looking back, I never could have imagined that a lifelong passion for an overlooked field of American art would lead to the founding of [this museum] and help bring renewed recognition to artists such as Norman Rockwell, Maxfield Parrish, J. C. Leyendecker, N. C. Wyeth, Jessie Willcox Smith, and so many others." From

the press materials: "Judy's memoir is an inspiring story of curiosity, perseverance, and an unwavering belief in the value of art that others had forgotten. Through remarkable discoveries, lifelong friendships, and decades of determination, she recounts how she challenged the art world's dismissal of illustration and helped restore America's great illustrators to their rightful place in the history of American art."

1964

Deborah Elwell Arfken G'64, professor emerita of political science and public service at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, received a distinguished alumni award from the College of Wooster this May. She is also the coauthor of "Findings and Practical Guidelines for Interim Leaders," a study of 24 interim CEOs in the Chattanooga, Tennessee, region, published in *S.A.M. Advanced Management Journal* in 2024. The article was reframed and published in May 2026 in *Blue Avocado*, an online magazine for nonprofit organizations (see tinyurl.com/Arfken2). Deborah is an active member of the Rotary Club of Chattanooga and serves on the board of directors for WTCI-PBS and the Erlanger Hospital Advancement Council.

Capt. Robert W. Boyce EE'64 reflects, "After four amazing years in the NROTC unit at Penn, I received my bachelor's degree in May of 1964 and was advised that I had to complete a third midshipman cruise, which I missed between my freshman and sophomore years. Recognize that I had already been accepted in the US Navy's nuclear submarine program, but off I went on a cruise that visited western European ports and allowed me to qualify as an Engineering Officer of the Watch. I returned to Penn and was commissioned as an ensign in the Navy on

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

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

July 27 and got married on August 1. I spent the next 26 years in various assignments including six years in command of two submarines (*Sea Devil* and *Florida*). I then spent 10 years in the nuclear industry, including as plant manager of the Limerick (PA) Generating Station and director of quality assurance. When I was told I would have to move to Chicago, I retired and taught AP physics, chemistry, and calculus at Malvern Prep for 16 years and Archbishop Carroll for five years. Throughout these three careers I was guided by my mentor, Dr. Joseph Bordogna ["Obituaries," Mar/Apr 2020]. I am now enjoying the benefits of retirement with my complex family, wives Loretta for 31 years and Cheryl for 28 years, nine children, 19 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren. I look forward to a forthcoming book (*Up from the Wrong Side of the Tracks*), as the son of 5th- and 6th-grade-educated parents who can succeed in the greatest nation in the world."

Ruth Fine GFA'64 has a solo art exhibition at the Bryn Mawr College Library, on view through late December 2026, with an opening celebration on September 9, from 4 to 6 p.m. Included are prints, drawings, paintings, and illustrated books.

Wayne A. Rebhorn C'64 graduated *summa cum laude* with a BA in English from Penn in 1964, got a PhD in comparative literature from Yale in 1968, and became a professor of English at the University of Texas (UT) in 1968, where he taught until 2020. At UT, he was named the Celanese Centennial Professor of English in 1987 and the Vacek Chair in English in 2018. In 1990, he was awarded the Howard R. Marraro Prize for the best book on Italian literature in the preceding two years, pre-

sented by the Modern Language Association of America for his book *Foxes and Lions: Machiavelli's Confidence Men* (Cornell University Press). In 2014, he was honored with a prize from the PEN Center USA for the best literary translation published in the preceding year, for his translation of Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron* (W. W. Norton & Company). Throughout his career, Wayne was granted fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Guggenheim Foundation, and he was invited to lecture at several universities and meetings of learned societies throughout the US, France, Germany, and Italy.

Stuart Resor C'64 writes, "Dear classmates: It was sad a while back to see no Notes in our Class of 1964 column. But it's much sadder to sense the loss of the Class, particularly the guys, to early old age or just fading out. Also to see the obituaries, mostly the guys. I left Penn in May of 1964 and did not miss the cold and blustery winters. But as I began my Harvard graduate studies in architecture, I encountered a much colder, more brutal winter up there. The Penn architecture program had prepared me very well for the next phase of my education, with courses in perspective drawing, drafting and lettering skills, and overall concept and design skills. The Harvard students coming into the graduate school had little to none of these skills. The Cambridge winter was fierce and unrelenting, and I was very pleased to get out of that and on to California as my new home. Now Bonnie and I are in Suffolk, Virginia, to be closer to family. Not too bad of a winter here! I would love to hear from classmates. Or just put more Notes in our column."

David B. Zwirn C'64 L'67 writes, "In the spring of 1964, I took Professor **Ray Abrams Gr1931**'s fine course on the Family (Soc. 4). One day, a female student complained that women were not allowed to wear slacks in the library, while the men could enter totally unkempt. A man in the back called out, 'You're lucky you get in at all.' Ten years later, I was a graduate student at the University of Virginia. When a history professor heard that I had gone to Penn, she exclaimed, 'The University of Pennsylvania—that's the school where women can't wear pants to the library!' I trust things have improved since then."

1966

Bruce Endy C'66 writes, "After graduating Penn, I went on to law school. I spent my legal career representing working people, first in the Neighbor Legal Services program and then as a union-side labor lawyer. When I retired in 2014, I decided it would be fun to write about some of the many people who walked into my office after being fired for one reason or another." In *Saving Harry: Justice, Work, and Unions*, Bruce writes about some of the many cases he tried, labor unions in general, and their place in society.

1967

Susan Evans Hertz G'Nu'67 writes, "I went to Penn Nursing for my master's degree in psychiatric nursing from 1965 to 1967. I would love to get in touch with my classmates from that program." She invites alumni contact at susanevans822@gmail.com.

Bobbi Penneys Susselman Laufer CW'67 is celebrating "44 years selling travel all over the world" and specializes in very remote destinations. If you'd like to join her tiny group (with a maximum of 6–8 people) to east Greenland and Iceland in September 2027, contact her at bobbilaufer@yahoo.com.

Sidney Perkowitz Gr'67 writes, "In 2024, I reported to Alumni Notes that I had received an award for my popular science writing and outreach. I'm happy to announce, and grateful, that my writing career continues to flourish, most recently in four new books: *A Degree in a Book: Physics* (published 2026); *The Essential Book of Quantum Physics* (forthcoming 2026); *A Science Panorama: Essays on Science, and on the Scientists We Know—or Should* (forthcoming 2026); and a second edition of my book *Hollywood Science: Movies, Science, and the End of the World*, in print since 2007 (forthcoming 2027). I can be reached through my website, sidneyperkowitz.net."

Steve Schorr W'67 has been named one of the San Diego County's Volunteers of the Year for 2026. He writes, "After retiring from a career as a chief financial officer for several companies, I began working for the San Diego County Sheriff's Office Volunteer Patrol. To date, I have logged over 8,000 hours patrolling the cities of Encinitas, Solana Beach, Del Mar, and Rancho Santa Fe, California."

1968

Dr. Neal Kassell C'68 M'72 GM'79, founder and chairman of the Focused Ultrasound Foundation, has received the inaugural Lifetime Impact Award from the International Society for Therapeutic Ultrasound. The award honors individuals whose work has fundamentally shaped the development, adoption, and global impact of focused ultrasound. He was profiled in the *Gazette's* May/June 2022 issue for his work with the foundation.

Peter Strick C'68 Gr'72 has been elected president of the Society for Neuroscience for a three-year term. Peter is chair of the Department of Neurobiology at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School. He has previously been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences.

1969

Katie Barney GEd'69 is the author of a new book, *Nantucket: Coming Home*. Katie spent almost every summer growing up on Nantucket, Massachusetts, where her parents met in 1944 and both sets of grandparents lived. She writes, "Growing up back then included carefree days on the beach, bicycling, meeting interesting people, and being with family." Katie found out her Mayflower ancestors' families were the first English settlers on the island in 1659. Her family later got into the whaling business and many of the historic homes were built by them. Eliza Starbuck Barney (1802–1889), noted suffragette, abolitionist, and genealogist, was Katie's great-great grandmother. In the book, Katie reminisces about growing up on the island and also its history. She adds, "One of the things I so enjoyed about writing this book was looking back on my time at Penn and some of the fabulous friends I made. They are all mentioned in the book, but all have left us sadly, including **Leila "Taffy" Griswold CW'69**, **John Lathrop C'69**, and **Tom Bispham C'67**."

Richard "Dick" W. Bridy W'69 lives in Cardiff by the Sea, California, and is an active commercial real estate investor, developer, asset manager, expert witness, and a former Marine Corps Officer. Recently, he has ventured into the realm of writing poetry with two books, *Poetry of the Human Condition* and *Are You a Grumpy Old Man?*

He writes, “I have been a supernumerary in 31 productions at the San Diego Opera since 2001. In 2015, three weeks after the Great Earthquake in Nepal, I ventured solo to Kathmandu and took on the task of building a temporary school in the Himalayan foothill Ramechhap District, a part of Bagmati Province. In my spare time, I accrued two master’s degrees and a doctorate, cycled over 27,000 miles, and skied at 37 resorts in the United States, Canada, and Europe. While at Penn, I was a DEKE [Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity] with those relationships still active after six decades. Ginny and I have been married for 53 years and have two successful and well-educated children and four talented grandsons. Classmates can contact me at dick@dbigroup.com.”

Joseph H. Cooper W’69 L’72 shares that his perspective on the novel and film *Captains Courageous* was featured in the May 2026 issue of the Kipling Society’s triannual journal, in an article titled “A Grand Banks Route in Pursuit of Livelihood, Rescue and Reform: Rudyard Kipling’s Voyage into Cod-Fishing.” The journal’s editor wrote, “This number opens, unusually, with a lively dialogue between an enthusiast for *Captains Courageous* and a young grandson, who knows little about Kipling but is willing to learn. Their conversation, including an illuminating comparison of the book with the 1937 film, brings out the book’s strengths.” The article was excerpted from Cooper’s forthcoming picture book *How’d They Do That? Grandparents Answer Questions About Pursuits and Routes*, due out this winter. Also excerpted from the book is Cooper’s appreciation regarding Sir Ernest Shackleton’s 1914–1916 Antarctic expedition, which was published May 28 by *The Naval Review*. The editor’s note reads, “Through an imagined Socratic dialogue, the author conveys to the younger generation the heroism of Shackleton’s rescue of the *Endurance* crew in August 1916.”

Jeffrey J. Greenbaum W’69, an attorney at Sills Cummis & Gross, has received the 2026 Daniel J. O’Hern Award, presented by the New Jersey Commission on Professionalism in the Law (a cooperative effort of the New Jersey State Bar Association, the New Jersey judiciary, and New Jersey’s law schools). This award honors an attorney who is a well-respected member of the legal community and exhibits integrity,

competence, high ethical standards, career achievement, and service to the bar and/or community. Jeffrey is chair of the Class Action Practice Group at Sills Cummis & Gross, where he has worked since 1977.

1971

Terence Patterson SW’71 shares that he has resided in San Francisco since graduating from Penn. He was assigned as a captain in the Medical Service Corps at the Presidio of San Francisco and served as a lieutenant commander in the US Public Health Service in Seattle and Washington, DC. He obtained his doctorate in counseling psychology at the University of San Francisco and was a tenured professor there from 1990 to 2019, where he directed two doctoral programs in psychology and served as the chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. He also was an instructor at UC San Francisco and served as president of the APA Society of Couple & Family Psychology and the Northern California Association for Family Therapy. He has authored numerous professional articles and book chapters, and most recently coauthored *Real World Couple Therapy* with Cognella Publishing. He is currently practicing as a licensed California psychologist and a Board-certified couple and family psychologist in San Francisco. He is married and has one daughter and one grandchild. He says he remains “a proud Quaker” and is “grateful for all the doors Penn has opened” for him.

1972

Jody Rubin Pinault CW’72 G’79 Gr’83 see **David Pinault G’81 Gr’86**.

Dr. Harold Pincus C’72, professor of psychiatry and health policy and management at Columbia University and also the codirector of Columbia’s Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, reports that the Irving Institute has been awarded a seven-year, \$75 million Clinical and Translational Science Award from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences at the National Institutes of Health. This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the Irving Institute. Harold writes, “This grant helps us develop better methods for tracking exactly which scientific programs are working, and just as

importantly, which ones aren’t, so we can make our research more efficient and impactful.” He also shares that he and his wife **Ellyn Roth CW’74** “were recently blessed with three grandchildren!”

Deborah R. Willig CW’72, a managing partner at the Pennsylvania labor, employment, workers’ compensation, and family law firm Willig, Williams & Davidson, has been named a 2026 Pennsylvania Super Lawyer by *Super Lawyers* in the category of Employment & Labor. In addition, she has once again been named among the Top 50 Pennsylvania Women Attorneys, Top 100 Philadelphia Attorneys, and Top 100 Pennsylvania Attorneys by *Super Lawyers*.

1973

Abigail Schade Gary CW’73 a retired copywriter, has published a new novel, *Too Many Mothers*, which she cowrote with three friends. Abigail explains, “Each of us wrote in the voice of one of four daughters who have the same father but two different mothers. The crisis they face when their father announces he’s marrying again brings out secrets and resentments that have been festering for decades.”

1974

Geoffrey L. Greif SW’74, professor emeritus of social work at the University of Maryland, has published *Interracial Marriage: How Diverse Couples Navigate Relationships in a Divided Time* with Columbia University Press. The book is based on interviews and surveys with close to 600 people in mixed marriages. He gave a book talk at the Philadelphia Free Library in June. It is his 17th book.

Michael E. Jones WG’74, a professor emeritus in the department of digital media and legal studies at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, has coauthored a new book with Michael Caballes, titled *What Art Is Now: Creativity in the Age of AI*, from Bloomsbury Publishing. From the press materials: “This thought-provoking book examines how artificial intelligence is reshaping the way we define, create, and experience art. Blending philosophy, law, neuroscience, and cultural history, the authors investigate how AI challenges traditional notions of authorship, originality, and artistic value.”

Tony McKinley C'74 writes, "My recently published *Glimpses of Gibbon I: Reader Guide to The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is written for the intellectually curious of all ages who have always wanted to enjoy this classic work of literature and history. My book is an invitation to dive into the wisdom and wonder of Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. This reader's guide is designed to invite you to read the original work by recounting some of the highlights of each chapter and providing you with generous samples of Gibbon's brilliant writing. *Glimpses* Vol. 1 begins with Gibbon's chapter 1 on the 'Five Good Emperors—98–180 A.D.,' and ends with chapter 38, where he declares the Empire's 'total extinction in the West' after 476 A.D. The book is available on Amazon in paperback, e-book, and audiobook."

Ellyn Roth CW'74 see **Dr. Harold PinCUS C'72**.

1975

David F. Borbas Nu'75 has been hired as vice president of research and head of data management for Abcuro, located in Newton, Massachusetts. He writes, "Abcuro is advancing first-in-class programs in autoimmunity and cancer in which highly cytotoxic immune cells play a critical role. After working in critical care for more than 20 years, I was able to start working in drug development, involving a lot of biotechnology compounds and gene therapy. It is a wonderful way to engage with the scientific community and patients as we search for cures and help for diseases. I continue to enjoy working and living in San Francisco. I have lived there since 1975 and have been married since 1984. It would be great to hear more from other classmates!"

Linda Stern Kass PT'75 has released her fourth novel, *World News from Waverley High*. The story takes place at a midwestern urban high school during one school year, 1969–1970, told through the eyes of a precocious teenager named Lena Rosen. The book "chronicles the spirit and soundtrack of that volatile year for Lena and her classmates as they wrestle with baffling questions about identity, belonging, and purpose, made more urgent by war and the fight for social justice," explains Linda. She adds, "As the owner of an independent bookstore, Gram-

ercy Books, I'd so appreciate if those who wish to purchase a copy do so from their local independent bookseller." Her author tour includes stops in Columbus, Cleveland, the Chicago area, and East Hampton and West Nyack, New York. Linda's previous three novels (*Tasa's Song*, *A Ritchie Boy*, and *Bessie*) are also historical fiction.

1976

Diane Young Uniman C'76 is an attorney-turned-author, motivational speaker, and blogger under the name of Princess Diane von Brainisfried, where she writes a "tongue-in-chic" happiness lifestyle blog from a funny princess point of view." She reports that she recently published her second book, *Blessings Without Stressing! Jewish Home Celebrations Made Easy for Interfaith and Jewish Families*. She writes, "It's a warm, funny, and welcoming guide to Jewish home celebrations created especially for interfaith families and anyone who's ever felt like a fish out of water at a Jewish holiday table." Diane's first book, *Bonjour Breast Cancer—I'm Still Smiling! ... Wit, Wisdom & Optimism for Beating the Breast Cancer Blues*, won several awards, including the Independent Author Network Book of the Year Award for Outstanding Non-fiction. She has also been published in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Diane is a certified positive psychology life coach and a certified Laughter Yoga leader, and she earned a certification from Yale in the Science of Well-Being. She loves giving wellbeing seminars for corporations, healthcare organizations, and community groups. Diane has also written several screenplays and musicals that have been performed Off-Broadway and at the Lincoln Center and New York Fringe Festival. In her spare time, she enjoys "reading, singing opera, studying French, and cooking tasty vegetarian meals for family and friends." Diane shares that she is a "wife and proud mother of two sons and grandmother of five," and she recently "received the title of Dame from the ancient Royal House of Savoy."

1978

Linda Kronfeld C'78 see **Janet Lubowitz Kronfeld C'53**.

1979

Scott Reisfield C'79 has authored a new biography with a feminist lens, *Greta Garbo*

and the Rise of the Modern Woman. He writes, "The book tells the story of how and why Garbo became an exemplar to women regarding romance, sex, and independence. Using new research and family resources, a powerful and consequential Garbo is revealed."

1981

David Pinault G'81 Gr'86, professor emeritus of religious studies at Santa Clara University, has authored his third novel, *Earth Dragon Run: A Spiritual Entertainment* (Ignatius Press), on wildlife trafficking in Africa and Southeast Asia. The story is inspired by animal rescue work he undertook together with his wife, **Jody Rubin Pinault CW'72 G'79 Gr'83**. Author Michael Norton called it "a vastly entertaining thriller. Imagine *The Magnificent Seven* set in present-day South Africa and Cambodia, where a ragtag band of heroes find themselves in a deadly battle of wits against one of the most powerful manifestations of evil in today's world."

1982

Julie Kronfeld C'82 see **Janet Lubowitz Kronfeld C'53**.

Dr. Jeffrey McGovern C'82 is the author of a new book, titled *Holy and Medical Men and Women of the Catholic Church*, which contains reflections on saints who have worked in the medical field. He continues to work in pulmonary and sleep medicine for Allegheny Health Network in Erie, Pennsylvania. He writes that his five daughters "are in possession of their sheepskins," and he and his spouse **Kathleen O'Malley McGovern G Nu'90** welcomed their two grandchildren this year, Maxwell and Nora.

1983

Henry C. Oviedo GEE'83 shares that he emigrated to the US in 1977 to escape General Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile. He joined SEPTA in 1979 as a transportation engineer, where he worked for 15 years. SEPTA paid for his studies at Penn. Henry writes, "Now, at this point of my life, I am happy, healthy, and still very strong at 91 years old." Remembering his time at the Moore School of Electrical Engineering, he shares, "Dr. Chen and Dr. Foley were the most important teachers, providing us the technical learning for the difficult system engineering courses. They

were extraordinary teachers who guided us through difficult subjects on high mathematics and complex electrical circuits studies." Henry enjoys his retirement in Maryland and has written a short novel about life in the Chilean nitrate mines, which he says is "almost my biography."

1984

Andy Beaulieu EAS'84 W'84 has self-published a humorous, full-length novel, *The Trouble with Tiki*. He writes, "When a prop tiki statue on the movie set of a Don Beachcomber biopic sends young aspiring actor Gilley Martin spiraling through time, he must navigate three generations of his family's chaotic history and resolve some complex trouble he caused decades before his own birth—all while crafting the perfect Zombie cocktail. It's available on Amazon in print and Kindle, under my author pen name 'Andy Richard' (mine has too many notes)."

Judy Sandler C'84 has released her debut memoir about her son's descent into severe mental illness, titled *What Kind of Mother: A Reckoning*. From the publisher, West Virginia University Press: "The book chronicles Sandler's initial denial of her truth, her painful awakening to mental illness in her family, and her eventual acceptance that she cannot save her son—only he can save himself."

1986

Jean Chatzky C'86 writes, "I've got a new book coming out September 8. *The Forever Paycheck* takes aim at that moment in time where we stop earning and have to ask ourselves: What now? What happens after we've shoved money into our retirement accounts for decades and have to deal with trying to make the money last as long as we do? The answer, it turns out, is really complicated. Spending is not just hard tactically (and the landscape of the markets combined with required minimum distributions, Medicare penalties, and the desire to take care of people and causes we love makes it so). It's also a bit of a nightmare psychologically, particularly for people who were taught never to spend their principal, but even for those who weren't. Flipping the switch to spending after saving for 40 years or more is so hard that many retirees simply aren't doing it. They're living less well than they could as a result. I spent the last two years puzzling out a solu-

tion that I think makes sense. It's not the same for everyone of course. It's nuanced, based on the personality and resources of the reader. But it's the roadmap I'm going to follow if and when retirement ever comes for me." Jean is a financial journalist and founder of HerMoney Media, which aims to improve women's financial literacy and wellness. She was featured in our May/June 2019 issue ("Jean Chatzky's Money Story").

Bruce John Riddell GLA'86 is pleased to announce the publication of his third science fiction novel, *Mermaine: The Second Wave*. He writes, "It's a magically spun tale of intrigue on the Maine coast that pits Mainers against alien beings and mermaids in an epic battle to save Humankind. Read it closely and you may even glean a strong environmental moral with the story."

Sarah Rosenson L'86 is the author of the newly released *Fan Fiction on the Book of Genesis: A Guide to Close Reading of and Creative Writing on the Bible*, published by Cherry Orchard Books, an imprint of Academic Studies Press. In the book she discusses questions left open in the first book of the Bible, and includes questions for the characters in the stories, which can serve as prompts for conversations or creative writing. She writes, "It is perfect for anyone interested in reading Bible stories through a new and creative lens, people who enjoy creative writing and want to challenge themselves to write fan fiction/midrash on the Bible, and people who teach classes on the Bible and want ideas for discussion topics and questions." Find out more on her website, sarahsclass.net.

1987

David L. Richter W'87 EAS'87 L'92 recently left his position as executive vice president and partner with Atwell, following its sale to a private equity firm, and he has since been named CEO of BE&K Building Group, a general contractor based in North Carolina.

1988

Ellen M. McCabe Nu'88 GNu'91 Gr'19, an assistant professor at Hunter College's Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing, has been named a 2026 Academy Fellow by the American Academy of Nursing. She and her cohort of nurse leaders were "recognized for their substantial contributions to improving health

outcomes and ... are poised to continue transforming health and health care for years to come," according to the press materials.

1989

Dr. Steven Scherer GM'89 see **Erich Sirkowski CGS'07**.

1990

Lara Nichols C'90, an energy regulatory attorney, has joined Troutman Pepper Locke's Energy Regulatory Practice Group as a partner in the Charlotte, North Carolina, office. Lara is a former senior vice president at Duke Energy.

Kathleen O'Malley McGovern GNu'90 see **Dr. Jeffrey McGovern C'82**.

1991

Scott Kurashige C'91, a scholar, educator, and president of the James and Grace Lee Boggs Foundation, has authored a new book, *American Peril: The Violent History of Anti-Asian Racism*. From the publisher, University of California Press: "This probing account shines a new light on the problem of anti-Asian violence and inspires us to build lasting solidarity. ... Written in the radical spirit of Howard Zinn, *American Peril* represents the culmination of thirty-five years of study and activism."

Laurie E. Smith C'91 writes, "I'm delighted that my newest book, *The Flow Habit: Creating Peace, Passion, Purpose, and Everyday Miracles*, was recently published by Hay House/Penguin Random House and is now being translated into Chinese, Spanish, Swedish, and Slovene! I've been enjoying speaking, writing, and teaching workshops on all things related to the flow state, and spreading the idea that following our passions is the key to emotional well-being and success."

1993

Norberto A. Garcia L'93 shares that he was "sworn in on May 14 as president of the New Jersey State Bar Association for the 2026-2027 term, becoming the first foreign-born president in the association's history." Norberto is a partner at Blume, Forte, Fried, Zeres & Molinari, and he previously served as president of the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, which promotes law-related education and public understanding of the

legal system. A certified civil trial attorney, he has been recognized as a New Jersey Super Lawyer annually from 2013 to the present. In addition to his work with the New Jersey State Bar Association, he also previously served as president of the Hudson County Bar Association and was a trustee of that organization from 2000 to 2013, and he currently chairs the Hudson County Civil Practice Committee. He serves as a trustee of the Hudson County Bar Foundation and has been active in the Hudson County Inns of Court since 1996, where he previously served as a master. Among other accomplishments, he served on the New Jersey Supreme Court Office of Attorney Ethics, District VI Fee Arbitration Committee from 2004 to 2009, chairing it in 2009. From 2005 to 2008, he served on the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Affairs. He also shares that his twin sons, Alexander and Andrew, are entering their senior year at Wharton (Class of 2027).

1995

Bijal Choksi W'95 and Bonnie Davis have authored *Still Human: How to Build Organizations Where Leaders and Teams Thrive with AI*. Bijal and Bonnie are co-founders of HuWork, a leadership and organizational development firm that helps companies build cultures with a strong human edge. From the book's description: "Through real-world examples, reflective insights, and actionable tools, *Still Human* helps leaders and teams understand when technology should enhance human capability and when human judgment, connection, and leadership must take the lead."

Mike Singleton C'95 has published his first book, a children's poetry book that helps kids build resiliency, optimism, and appreciation for others' differences. He adds, "In addition, my coaching soccer career includes serving on a World Cup and a Gold Cup technical committee and having coached multiple youth soccer national teams."

Eric Stock C'95 and **Brooks Mackintosh C'95** report that they reunited with many Penn friends in New York to celebrate the opening of **Gabriel (Rutman) Mann C'95's** new Broadway musical, *The Lost Boys*. Gabe and his bandmates in *The Rescues* wrote the music for the show, and they were nominated for two Tony Awards. The show received a leading 12 nominations in all. Also

on hand were **Aaron Frank C'94**, **Sean McGrath W'95**, **Harry Paschalidis C'95**, **Chris Prokop C'95**, **Steve Rosenberg C'95**, **Amon Seagull C'95 EAS'95**, and **Jamey Tesler C'95**. Eric and Brooks write, "All alums are encouraged to see this great new show at the Palace Theater."

1996

Kristin Havranek EAS'96 and two other scientists-turned-attorneys have cofounded an AI-native intellectual property (IP) law firm, Antheros Legal. From the press materials: "Built specifically for life sciences startups and the investors who back them, Antheros serves companies driving breakthroughs in therapeutics, medical devices, tissue and cell engineering, food technology, diagnostics, and digital health. Combining AI-powered workflows with deep sector expertise, the firm designs IP strategies that protect ideas and build defensible patent estates that move as fast as science does."

Carin O'Donnell WEv'96, a shareholder at the law firm Stark & Stark, has been sworn in as president of the Pennsylvania Association for Justice for 2026–27. Carin concentrates her practice on wrongful death and other catastrophic injury matters, including construction accident cases, as well as institutional sexual assault cases.

Joanne Pasternack C'96 shares that she has "coauthored a children's book with Pro Football Hall of Famer, San Francisco 49ers legend, and Ole Miss great Patrick Willis, featuring illustrations by Dustin Canalin. *Patrick Willis: Journey to the Hall of Fame* chronicles Willis's improbable road from Bruceton, Tennessee, to Canton, Ohio, sharing a story of perseverance, purpose, and opportunity. Copies are available on Amazon and at patrickwillisfcf.org/book. All proceeds support the work of the Patrick Willis Community Fund." Joanne is president and CEO of Oliver+Rose, a consultancy focused on amplifying the voices of professional athletes around social impact and social justice. Her daughter, **Kira Bardin C'30**, joins Penn's Class of 2030 this fall.

1997

Justin Ginnetti C'97 G'97 writes, "Last night, I dreamed that David Delaura [the late Avalon Foundation Professor Emeritus in the Humanities] had volunteered me to join

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him in providing a colleague with '10 pages of written feedback' on something. At first, I was terrified: any former grad student of David's knows that this means 10 single-spaced, exacting, insightful, and also very generous commentary based on a sustained engagement with the colleague's text. Then I realized I was dreaming, and I took the moment to thank David for being such an extraordinary mentor and role model."

1999

Patrick Shilling C'99 has been named global head of litigation, in addition to his current role as Americas general counsel, at UBS Group AG.

2000

Laura Nagle G'00 has released a new translation of the 1913 novel *Confidences*, by the Bolivian feminist poet Adela Zamudio. From the publisher, Bucknell University Press: "Now available in English for the first time, this translation captures the lyrical qualities of Zamudio's prose as it vividly depicts how sexism, religious dogma, and prejudice prevented women from shaping their own destinies."

2006

Edward "Eddo" Kim C'06 and Clara Lee are coauthors of a new cookbook, *Korean Soups: Recipes for Soups and Stews That Nourish, Restore, and Delight* (Workman/Hatchette Publishing). Eddo writes, "In this book, we want to bring people closer to Korean ingredients and food and invite them to learn more about how our culture and cultural stories are embedded into each dish."

2007

Erich Sirkowski CGS'07 writes, “I came to Penn as an employee and left as an alumnus. Over five years on staff, I matriculated into the Master of Liberal Arts program, and studying neuroscience under **Dr. Steven Scherer GM’89** remains my proudest professional accomplishment. He taught me to be accepting of all people, and to build redundancy into everything. Both lessons have outlasted the science alongside them. Penn also gave me an entrepreneurial reflex I never lost: to ask not just how something works, but what could be built from it. In industry, Merck gave me a foundation of scientific rigor, and at GSK I pioneered the complex *in vitro* modeling group. I left the corporate track in 2023, but a scientist doesn’t stop being one. I kept returning to a truth from my earliest biology lectures: that living cells are ultimately bound by basic physical constraints. This January, I founded AquaGen BioSolutions to test a different oncology framework. Rather than chasing tumors through endless genetic mutations, we target a cellular dependency that conventional therapies ignore. We are testing it first against the cancer with the worst outcomes, because if an idea is wrong, it should fail where failure is quickest to see. For now I am an army of one. I might fail, but I am moving forward anyway, the truest thing Penn nurtured in me. And I no longer want to do it alone. If this premise speaks to you, I would be glad to hear from you. This community shaped me, and I am hoping it will help me finish what it started.”

2009

Abby C. Emerson C’09 is the author of a new book coming out this fall, titled *From Antiracism to Abolition: Professional Learning for Liberating Schools*. According to the publisher, Harvard Education Press, the book is “a guide for school leaders, equity facilitators, and educators aiming to transform schools into truly equitable and liberatory spaces.” Abby also shares that she is transitioning to a new role as assistant professor of childhood education at Hunter College, CUNY starting in the fall.

2011

Apurv Gaurav GFA’11 was issued a US Patent titled “Deterministic offline code remediation with ledger-verified replay and tem-

plate-based patch generation.” Apurv writes, “The work focuses on deterministic code remediation, replay verification, template-based patch generation, and ledger-backed auditability for AI-assisted software workflows. [My] broader work focuses on AI trust infrastructure, enterprise reliability, AI governance, and safer AI-assisted systems.”

Jessica M. Goldstein C’11 has released her debut novel, *Retro*, from Penguin Random House. She writes, “*Retro* is about a struggling, down-and-out actress who gets a job as a ‘Time Travel Agent’ at a start-up that takes wealthy tourists on vacations to the past.” On October 8 at the Kelly Writers House, Jessica will be in conversation with Anthony DeCurtis “whose Arts and Pop Culture writing seminars I took as a student and guest-lecture every semester as an alum,” she adds. Jessica is a longtime journalist who reports culture pieces for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Marie Claire*, and *Vulture*, among others, and writes satire for *McSweeney’s Internet Tendency*, including “a most-read piece about our fair university and the college admissions bribery scandal” (see tinyurl.com/JGoldsteinMcSweeney).

2012

Natalie Gay C’12 see **Janet Lubowitz Kronfeld C’53**.

2013

Simone Stolzoff C’13 is an author and journalist who has released a new book, *How to Not Know: The Value of Uncertainty in a World that Demands Answers*. From the publisher, W. W. Norton & Company: “From our careers to our politics to our personal lives, the future is unknown. ... [This book] will help you prepare for and even appreciate the uncertainty that surrounds us.” Stolzoff was featured in the article “In the Balance” in the Jan/Feb 2023 issue of the *Gazette*.

2019

Ioannis Rutledge GEng’19 writes that he is “proud to announce the launch of Rutledge & Co. Real Estate, a boutique brokerage serving clients across all of New York.” After several years in the industry, Ioannis drew on his systems engineering background to build a firm “centered around transparency, responsiveness, and thoughtful client service—applying the same analytical rigor and prob-

lem-solving mindset [I] developed at Penn to navigating one of the world’s most complex real estate markets. Penn taught me how to think in systems. Real estate is ultimately about understanding interconnected moving parts—markets, people, timing—and finding the most efficient path to the right outcome for my clients.” Ioannis welcomes connections from fellow alumni.

2020

Elizabeth Agee C’20 has authored a debut novel under the pen name Elizabeth Ese. *A Drop of Color* will be published by Scholastic in November. From the publisher: “[This] is a powerful coming-of-age story about Black girlhood, identity, friendship, betrayal, first love, and the burden of trying to thrive in environments that refuse to fully see you.” The novel is based on Elizabeth’s own experiences as a Nigerian American teenager, and the experiences of many young women of color she interviewed around the world.

Manasi Gandhi GL’20 and **Dr. Mark Sikov M’21** were married on June 21 in Newport, Rhode Island.

2021

Dr. Mark Sikov M’21 see **Manasi Gandhi GL’20**.

2022

Meghan Garrity Gr’22 has published a new book, *Mass Expulsion: The Politics of Forced Population Removal*, with Oxford University Press. From the press materials: “[The book] examines why and how governments expel ... when and where expulsion occurs, who is targeted, and what regimes are most likely to expel.” Meghan is an assistant professor of international security and law at George Mason University.

2023

Chris Bittinger GrEd’23, an assistant professor of practice at Purdue University and a corporate trainer, has released a new book, *The Practice of Authentic Coaching: Models, Skills, and Organizational Applications*, published by Kendall Hunt. From the book’s description, it will help readers “unleash the transformational power of coaching in your organization by developing the one instrument that matters the most: yourself.”

1942

Neysa Cristol Adams CW'42, Bala Cynwyd, PA, a former high school teacher, investment advisor, and trustee at several foundations; June 26, at 104. As a student at Penn, she was a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority and the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. As an alumna, she was a longtime volunteer for her class, established several awards and programs with her husband, the late Arlin Adams L'47 Hon'98, and received the Alumni Award of Merit in 1994.

1948

Dorothy Rose Gerbarg Barzin Ed'48, Kingston, NY, a former leader at many local nonprofit organizations, including the League of Women Voters and Planned Parenthood; July 30, at 100. One daughter is Darcy Gerbarg CW'70.

Gerald J. "Jerry" Spiewak W'48, West Palm Beach, FL, former owner of a manufacturer of uniforms, outerwear, and high-visibility apparel for public safety agencies; Nov. 29, 2024. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Mu Sigma fraternity and the swimming team. One child is Alan E. Spiewak C'71.

1950

Andre G. Beaumont WG'50, Millsboro, DE, a retired president of the Council on Career Development for Minorities, a nonprofit dedicated to the career advancement of minority college students and graduates; Dec. 16, 2023. He served in the US Army during World War II.

Philip R. Murray W'50, Camp Hill, PA, March 31. He retired from the US Department of Defense. At Penn, he was a member of the choral society and the swimming team.

Beverly Sher Polin Ed'50, Willow Street, PA, a retired kindergarten teacher; April 15. At Penn, she was a member of the choral society.

1951

Mercer B. Barrows C'51, Lake Wales, FL, a retired executive at a travel company; May 27. He served in the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry, a unit of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Phi fraternity (St. Elmo's Club), Friars Senior Society, and

the sprint football and lacrosse teams. His wife is Joy Price Barrows CW'63.

Barbara Schwartz Berkowitz Ed'51, Merion Station, PA, March 25.

Dr. C. John "Jack" Bryer V'51, West Chester, PA, a retired large animal veterinarian; July 5, at 100. He served in the US Army Air Corps during World War II. Two children are Jeffrey B. Bryer C'73 and Suzanne Bryer Levy Nu'78 GNu'81 GrN'86.

Clifford C. R. Hood C'51, Philadelphia, founder of a public relations and advertising firm; March 30. He served in the US Navy and the US Naval Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, the Glee Club, the choral society, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, and ROTC.

Hugh Jefferies Ed'51, Prairie Village, KS, retired owner of an HVAC manufacturers' representative company; March 29. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, the basketball and baseball teams, and Sphinx Senior Society.

Gloria Woolever Kundrat HUP'51 Nu'61, Berwick, PA, a retired nurse for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Health and the Berwick School District; April 12. Earlier in her career, she worked at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

Deborah Harber Rose Nu'51, Weston, MA, a former nurse; March 1. One son is David Richard Rose C'77.

1952

Dr. Irwin R. Fisch C'52, Walnut Creek, CA, a physician specializing in hematology and oncology; April 16. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

Philip B. Fisher Jr. L'52, New York, a retired attorney; April 16.

Rev. Chase S. Hunt C'52, East Lansing, MI, a Presbyterian minister; Dec. 1. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Psi Upsilon fraternity, the Glee Club, and the sprint football team. His wife is Suzanne Mahn Hunt Ed'54.

Janice "Jan" Auritt Oser CW'52, Rhinebeck, NY, a retired bank supervision officer at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York; March 9. At Penn, she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society and editor in chief of the women's newspaper.

Notifications

Please send notifications of deaths of alumni directly to: Alumni Records, University of Pennsylvania, Suite 300, 2929 Walnut Street, Phila., PA 19104

EMAIL record@ben.dev.upenn.edu
Newspaper obits are appreciated.

Robert M. Silverberg W'52, Roslyn, NY, retired founder of a packaging company; April 23. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of *The Daily Pennsylvanian* and ROTC.

1953

Rosalyn Yaskin Abrams CW'53 G'54, Edison, NJ, a former cytotechnologist; April 17. One son is Joseph C. Y. Abrams C'78 W'78.

Dr. Sydney E. Pulver M'53 GM'57, Philadelphia, a former professor of psychology and psychiatry at Penn; March 23. He served in the US Army during World War II. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity. His daughter is Susan Pulver Mardinly GEE'81.

1954

Martin Abrahams W'54, Sarasota, FL, a retired accountant; Feb. 19. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity.

George J. Besi W'54, Athens, Greece, May 16. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and Penn Players. His daughter is Anna-Maria Besi C'91.

Lloyd R. Currier C'54, Hackensack, NJ, president and CEO of a hospital; May 9. He served in the US Navy.

Samuel Humes IV WG'54, Williamstown, MA, retired founder of the Council of Governments, which coordinated local government actions in the Washington metropolitan area; April 11. He also taught at Queens University, Nova Southeastern University, Rider College, Boston University, and other institutions.

Lawrence C. "Larry" Levey C'54, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, a retired executive at a glass and packaging manufacturer; April 10. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity and the sprint football and wrestling teams.

John W. "Jack" Sarappo ChE'54, East Windsor, NJ, a retired chemical engineer; April 17.

Dr. Robert G. Somers C'54, Lafayette Hill, PA, a retired surgical oncologist; March 24. He served in the US Air Force.

At Penn, he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

Richard A. Speer W'54, Beachwood, OH, former president of a company that manufactured environmental products such as those that clean up oil spills; May 3. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity. His daughters are Susan Speer Zenn C'83 (Dr. Michael R. Zenn C'84) and Ellen Speer Davis W'85, and one grandchild is Robert D. Davis W'13.

Evelyn Schufer Spiegel Gr'54, Hanover, NH, professor emeritus of biology at Dartmouth College; Feb. 29, 2024.

1955

Anthony J. Desiderio Jr. W'55, Monmouth Beach, NJ, retired owner of an Oldsmobile dealership; May 1. He served in the US Army.

Ann Marie Stefanowicz Finch CW'55, Wilmington, DE, April 15. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority.

Ronald L. Fradkin W'55, Baltimore, former president of his family's business, the Al Fradkin Company, and cofounder of a consumer credit counseling service; April 20. Later in his career, he was a commercial real estate broker and utility consultant. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, and the equestrian club. Two children are Michael J. Fradkin W'79 and Richard E. Fradkin W'85.

Stanley J. Maziarz W'55, Delray Beach, FL, retired senior consultant for a construction firm; April 29. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity.

Dr. Earl C. Pebley V'55, Belleville, PA, a retired veterinarian; April 12. He served in the US Air Force Veterinary Corps.

1956

Muriel Tennis Asbornsen G'56, Albany, NY, a retired architect; April 15.

David E. Connor Jr. Ar'56, Wake Forest, NC, April 16. He served in the US Army.

John B. Frantz G'56 Gr'61, State College, PA, professor emeritus of history at Penn State University; May 2. His daughter is Kyle J. Frantz C'92.

Kay Selner Price PT'56, Thousand Island Park, NY, a physical therapist and caregiver; April 14. She was also a volunteer EMT and

ambulance driver. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, the choral society, the swimming team, and the Pennguinettes synchronized swimming team. Her sister is Sally T. Selner CW'59.

1957

Gail Sullivan Karpinski Cornell CW'57, Foster City, CA, a former math and science teacher, and later a project manager for a civil engineering firm that constructed landfills; April 9.

Sandra Baker Fritz HUP'57, Benton, PA, a longtime school nurse and co-owner with her husband of a retreat center; May 5.

Esther Taylor Glaser CW'57, Scranton, PA, a retired schoolteacher; April 17. She also taught classes on dyeing, weaving, and spinning wool.

Connie Glass Kay Ed'57, Rydal, PA, an art and antiques appraiser, and a co-owner of a costume jewelry business; May 9. At Penn, she was a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority and WXP. One daughter is Sally Kay Hochhauser C'82 (Scott J. Hochhauser C'82), one grandchild is Mae A. Hochhauser W'14; and her sister is Caryl Glass Levin CW'63 (Michael A. Levin W'63 L'66).

Vesta "Tiki" Osler Mereshon CW'57, Blue Bell, PA, Jan. 5, 2025.

Kenneth R. Olofson W'57, Winter Springs, FL, a retired mortgage loan officer; March 22. He served in the US Navy. One son is Richard H. Olofson W'87.

James J. Pelts W'57, Glencoe, IL, March 8, 2023. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

Richard M. Sharp C'57, Camarillo, CA, a mathematics professor at California State University; Oct. 1. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity and WXP. One son is Richard H. Olofson W'87.

M. Melvin Shralow ME'57, Haverford, PA, a retired lawyer; April 2. At Penn, he was a member of the sprint football and rowing teams, and he was a Franklin Scholar. His daughter is Donna Shralow Nadel C'82, and two grandchildren are Sean M. Nadel C'13 and Alison R. Nadel C'15.

Dr. Herschel J. Sklaroff C'57 M'61, New York, a retired physician and professor of internal medicine and cardiology at Mount Sinai Hospital; April 1. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity. His sister is Rachel S. Strauber CW'59 (Donald I. Strauber C'57).

Elizabeth Forsythe Ziegenfus DH'57, Newtown Square, PA, a dental hygienist, realtor, and floral designer; March 25. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. One grandchild is Elizabeth F. Gully C'16.

1958

Dr. Thomas A. Courtenay M'58, Shelbyville, KY, a retired pediatrician and philanthropist; March 28. He served in the US military during the Korean War.

David B. Dyche Jr. WG'58, Osprey, FL, a former banker; Sept. 27.

Lynne Hyman Kupperman Ed'58, Aventura, FL, a former elementary school teacher; April 5. At Penn, she was a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority. Her daughters are Wendy S. Kupperman-Ruden DH'82 and Carolyn A. Kupperman C'84, and her grandson is Jacob B. Ruden C'15.

R. Wallace Lord WG'58, Glenwood Springs, CO, a ski instructor and operator of a ski company's electronic timing systems; April 18. He also taught computer classes at a community college. He served in the US Navy.

Albert G. Mikalauskas EE'58 GEE'68, Wallingford, PA, retired vice president of commercial operations at PECO; April 22. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of the baseball team.

Walter H. Offermann W'58, Lititz, PA, retired executive of an insulation company; April 5. He served in the US Air Force Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity, the rowing team, and ROTC. His wife is Shirley Vandegrift Offermann PT'58.

Joan Goldstein Pilchik Ed'58, Melbourne Beach, FL, former counsel for the New York City Board of Education; Feb. 15. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority and WXP. One daughter is Lory S. Pilchik C'89.

Dr. William M. Rambo M'58, Mount Pleasant, SC, a retired professor of general surgery at the Medical University of South Carolina; April 11.

Jack B. Tobin C'58, Aventura, FL, a retired real estate manager; April 3. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity and Penn Players. His wife is Amy Ehrlich Tobin DH'62.

1959

Dr. Fredric B. Bauer C'59, Northlake, IL, a retired pediatrician; May 3. He served in the US Army Reserve and the US National Guard.

Constance A. Eastburn CW'59, Doylestown, PA, a former teacher and an assistant to the registrar of the Harvard Business School; March 29. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

Thomas G. Foster WG'59, Largo, FL, April 4. He worked at companies such as Procter & Gamble and Ford Motor Company, and he owned several small businesses. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

Robert N. Garrison Ar'59, Moorestown, NJ, a retired architect; April 2. He served in the Pennsylvania National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity.

Robert P. Goldstein W'59, Atlanta, March 23. He worked in the commercial printing industry. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, Friars Senior Society, and the tennis team.

Dr. George W. Heisey V'59, Lebanon, PA, a retired veterinarian; April 4.

Kenneth A. Jacoppi W'59, Setauket, NY, a lawyer specializing in wills, estate law, and real estate law; April 12. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity. His children include Lynne Jacoppi Stotz W'83 and John J. Jacoppi C'89 (Necole Thurber Jacoppi C'88).

Dr. William L. Mullan Jr. V'59, Clinton Township, MI, a retired veterinarian; April 5. He served in the US Navy Reserve.

George R. Stephan W'59, Lancaster, PA, former assistant credit manager at Carpenter Technology; May 2. He served in the US Navy.

1960

William C. Napper WG'60, St. Augustine, FL, a retired executive at Methode Electronics and co-owner of a travel agency with his wife; April 19.

Dr. Louis J. Petrie C'60, Moorestown, NJ, a retired anesthesiologist and pain management physician; March 23. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, and the football and rowing teams.

Perry Rothaus W'60, Philadelphia, retired president of a flooring company; April 21. At Penn, he was a member of

Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity and the golf team. One son is Michael S. Rothaus W'82.

Lillian "Lee" Schabhuttl Shields Nu'60, Garden City, NY, a retired professor at the Medical College of Ohio in Toledo; March 25.

1961

Arthur S. Diamond W'61, Fredericksburg, VA, a retired logistics general manager for the US Army; February 11.

Paul "Chico" Euwer Jr. WG'61, Laughlintown, PA, president of a family foundation; March 23.

Barney C. Guttman W'61, Delray Beach, FL, a retired investment banker; June 14. He served in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity and *The Daily Pennsylvanian*. One child is Lissa B. Guttman C'94.

Edward H. Kaplan W'61, Washington, DC, a real estate developer, retired chair of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission, and former president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington; March 27. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity.

Dr. Martin J. Kimmel D'61, Roslyn, NY, April 10.

Dr. John D. Lewis M'61 GM'65, Shelburne, VT, a retired obstetrician-gynecologist and residency training director at the University of Vermont; Feb. 10. He served in the US Army.

John F. Newsom III WG'61, Richmond, VA, a retired bank executive; March 24. He served in the US Navy.

Richard E. Tustian GCP'61 GAR'62 GFA'62, Gaithersburg, MD, former planning director for Montgomery County, Maryland, and a professor of city planning at several colleges; April 1. He was also an adjunct professor of city and regional planning at Penn. As a student at Penn, he was a member of Psi Upsilon fraternity. His wife is Jeanne Borie Tustian CW'62.

1962

Leon Goldstein W'62, San Francisco, CA, a former menswear salesman; Feb. 1. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity.

Louis P. Silverman L'62, State College, PA, a lawyer; April 1. He served in the US military.

Margaret S. Williams CW'62 GED'85, Newtown Square, PA, a retired remediation

specialist for Delaware County, Pennsylvania; April 24. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Delta sorority, Penn Singers, and the choral society.

1963

Jonathan B. Baker L'63, Vancouver, BC, Canada, an attorney; June 18, 2025.

Dr. Sidney Breibart GM'63, Atlanta, a pediatric endocrinologist; July 9, 2025. He served in the US Army.

Stuart M. Levine L'63, Weston, CT, a lawyer and president of a trucking delivery company; April 13.

Col. Robert M. Novogratz WG'63, Alexandria, VA, a colonel in the US Army; April 11. He served during the Vietnam War.

Louise Twining O'Malley CW'63 CGS'93, Berwyn, PA, Dec. 20. Earlier in her career, she worked in a veterinary lab at Penn.

1964

Dr. James W. Ebert V'64, Sierra Vista, AZ, a retired research veterinarian at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Oct. 9, 2024. He worked on a team that was responsible for developing the hepatitis B vaccine for humans. His wife is Dr. Deborah Derdzinski Ebert V'66.

Louis C. "Buddy" Hano III W'64, York, PA, a retired life insurance agent; July 2, 2024. His sister is Nancy S. Hano W'68 GrEd'75.

Louise Lynn Jones GEd'64, Media, PA, a retired reading specialist and teacher of social studies and language arts; April 25.

Christopher D. Olmstead C'64, Atlanta, a retired attorney; July 8. He was an avid collector of political buttons and Penn memorabilia, and his "Pinup Boy" montage of Penn buttons was featured in the "Window" section of the Sep/Oct 2016 issue of the *Gazette*. He served in the US Army Transportation Corps. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity, the wrestling team, and ROTC. His brother is Dr. Edwin J. Olmstead C'69 M'73.

David C. Patten L'64, West Chester, PA, a retired attorney and former longtime solicitor for Pennsbury Township, PA; March 26.

Denis A. Russ W'64, Miami Beach, FL, former president of the Miami Beach Community Development Corporation; April 12.

1965

David M. Chamberlain W'65, San Francisco, CA, retired CEO of several corporations, including Shaklee, Stride Rite, and Genesco; April 28. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity.

Daniel M. Jacobson W'65, Brookline, MA, a retired bank executive; Jan. 29. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Delta Phi fraternity.

John C. Miller WEv'65, Southaven, MS, July 16. He worked for FedEx.

Dr. Jon L. Rauch D'65, North Miami, FL, a retired endodontist; May 1. He was also a longtime councilman for Bay Harbor Islands, FL. He served in the US military.

Paul F. Roth GEE'65, Pittsburgh, April 30.

Eleanor Hamilton Sienkiewicz GED'65, Bozeman, MT, a former teacher, writer, art historian, and master quilter; May 10. One son is Alex C. Sienkiewicz C'97.

Dr. J. Robert Smith M'65, Tucson, AZ, a retired hematologist; March 3. He served in the US Air Force in the Vietnam War.

1966

Dr. John J. Cappello D'66, Weston, CT, a retired dentist; April 2. He served in the US Army Reserve.

Dr. Jay P. Goldsmith D'66, New York, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon; June 18. His wife is Marjorie T. Goldsmith GED'66, and his son is David J. Goldsmith C'93 G'93. One grandchild is Molly L. Goldsmith C'28.

1967

Roger J. Burns W'67 WG'70, Chapel Hill, NC, a retired business management consultant; April 8. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity.

Michael A. Cantelmo ME'67, Warren, OH, a retired engineer at a steel company; May 6. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity.

Dr. W. Taylor Johnson GM'67, Wilmington, NC, a retired dermatologist; Feb. 25, 2025. He served in the US Navy.

William J. Manikas C'67, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, a retired attorney; Dec. 8.

Hewitt B. McCloskey Jr. GLA'67, Fort Myers, FL, a retired landscape architect; April 1.

Thomas W. Merrick Gr'67, Saint Petersburg, FL, a retired senior advisor on popu-

lation and reproductive health at the World Bank; March 18.

Joel H. Roache III Gr'67, Salisbury, MD, a longtime faculty member at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore; April 28.

Katharine McDowell Watson CW'67, Warrington, PA, a representative of Pennsylvania's 144th Legislative District; April 22.

1968

Lt. Col. Nancy A. Asquith Nu'68, Dover, TN, a retired pediatric nurse and professor of nursing at several colleges; May 3. She served in the US Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War.

Hon. Dennis P. Blake C'68, Haddonfield, NJ, an administrative law judge for New Jersey; April 1. He served in the US Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and the football team.

Frank M. Boka ChE'68, Chagrin Falls, OH, a chemical engineer; April 16. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity, and the track and cross country teams.

Joseph E. Gerber Jr. W'68, Springfield, VA, a former FBI agent; April 20. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.

Donald K. Joseph L'68, Elkins Park, PA, a former lawyer and law professor; April 17. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity. His daughter is Rachel M. Joseph C'02.

Charles K. Orner WEv'68, Bechtelsville, PA, a retired security manager for Bell Telephone and a longtime school bus driver; Oct. 23. He served in the US Navy.

Dr. William J. Solomon V'68, New Freedom, PA, a retired veterinarian; May 5.

Michael J. Torpey Jr. W'68, Cape May, NJ, March 30. He worked at IBM. He served in the US Army National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Penn Band. His wife is Martha Torpey HUP'68.

1969

Muriel Cohen Efron CGS'69, Zichron Yaakov, Israel, a retired law librarian who worked at libraries around the world; May 25, at 100. One son is Neil C. Efron C'83.

Patrick J. Finnegan C'69, Southampton, PA, a retired engineer at the US Naval Air Development Center in Warminster, PA; April 7.

Arthur F. "Bud" Hirsch W'69, Bryn Mawr, PA, former vice president for operational services at Penn who later became a commercial real estate executive; April 16. As a student at Penn, he was a member of ROTC and the Sphinx Senior Society, and he was the 1969 student recipient of Penn's Alumni Award of Merit. He served in the US Navy. One son is David Hirsch W'06.

Jeffrey W. Kobrick L'69, Oakland, CA, an attorney; June 22.

Kevin M. Magane C'69, Truro, MA, a home builder; March 21. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

Zandra Lee Price CW'69, Decatur, GA, a former librarian at the Free Library of Philadelphia; April 1.

Gregory D. Roberts WG'69, Aiken, SC, a life insurance executive; April 28.

John M. Robinson L'69, Kensington, MD, a former attorney for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; April 4.

Dr. William N. Ryan M'69, Yardley, PA, a retired physician and former clinical associate of medicine at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine; March 31. His daughter is Rachael B. Ryan C'01.

Hon. David A. Scott WG'69, Atlanta, a US representative for Georgia's 13th Congressional District; April 22. At Penn, he was a member of the Onyx Senior Society.

Dr. Morton L. Silverman C'69, Warmminster, PA, a retired rehabilitation physician; Jan. 7.

1970

Jacob M. Buurma Jr. WG'70, Lynden, WA, a retired corporate accountant and financial planner; April 5.

Beatrice Goldman Milgrim CGS'70, Vero Beach, FL, March 31. She worked in donor relations for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia. Her stepdaughter is Ellen L. Milgrim GED'73 GrEd'82.

Mary C. Miller GNu'70, Brookline, PA, a retired professor of nursing at Duquesne University; May 6. She served in the US Navy and the US Navy Reserve.

David B. Sklansky W'70, Las Vegas, a professional poker player known as "The Mathematician" and author of books on poker, blackjack, and general gambling theory; March 23.

Thomas E. Williams WG'70, Marblehead, MA, retired president and CEO of a

plastic film supply company; April 20. At Penn, he was a Joseph Wharton Fellow.

Kathleen McKenna Winter FA'70, Monroeville, PA, an accomplished painter, specializing in portraits, still life, and landscapes; June 9. Two children are Sherl Joseph Winter III CGS'83 GFA'86 and Genienne Winter Navarro GED'89.

1972

Joan Carville Chardon GED'72, Philadelphia, a retired supervisor at the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare; March 13.

Manville G. Duncanson Jr. Gr'72, Oklahoma City, OK, professor emeritus of dental materials at the University of Oklahoma; May 2. He served in the US Army Dental Corps.

Paul S. Marshall WG'72, Wallingford, PA, a retired professor of finance at Widener University; March 4.

Dr. Lawrence K. Spitz M'72 WG'76 GM'73 GM'75, Philadelphia, former medical director of the Health Evaluation Center at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, founder of the Penn Executive Diagnostic Center, and an adjunct professor in the Perelman School of Medicine; Dec. 6. Later in his career, he founded Pattern Analysis, which uncovered insurance fraud for clients nationwide, and he also became an acclaimed ceramics artist. His wife is Carol S. Klein WG'76.

Laurel J. Welt CW'72, Fredericksburg, VA, a former paralegal; Nov. 8, 2023. As an alumna, she was a volunteer for her class.

1973

Ricard L. "Ric" Hammitt WG'73, Ambler, PA, a real estate developer; July 7, 2025. His brother is Keith R. Pagnotto-Hammitt Gr'07.

Howard S. Levine W'73, Voorhees, NJ, a retired accountant and former vice president of internal audit for Bally's Casino and Hotels nationwide; Jan. 21. At Penn, he was a member of Sphinx Senior Society and coeditor of the yearbook. His wife is Susan Levit Levine CW'74 GED'74.

1974

Dr. William B. Kemp GD'74, Chesterfield, VA, an endodontist and professor of dentistry at the Virginia Commonwealth University; April 17. He also helped pioneer the

field of animal dentistry, working on tigers, elephants, rattlesnakes, monkeys, and other animals. He served in the US Navy.

1975

Dr. George R. Albin III C'75 GED'75, St. Louis, a retired dentist; Feb. 23. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity and the Glee Club. His wife is Patricia Blaszcak Albin OT'76.

Kent S. Bernard L'75, Westport, CT, retired vice president and assistant general counsel at Pfizer; March 20. He was also an adjunct professor of law at Fordham University.

Leslie Booth Faust GED'75, Annapolis, MD, a teacher of Spanish and English as a Second Language; Oct. 16.

Gordon R. Keehn G'75, Raleigh, NC, a software engineer at IBM; March 1.

Joseph J. Radvansky Jr. GED'75, Lansdale, PA, a mathematics teacher at La Salle College High School; March 29.

1976

Brian T. Higgins C'76, Wayne, NJ, a retired lawyer; April 16. At Penn, he was a member of *The Daily Pennsylvanian*.

Joyce Hackett Sanyour C'76, West Chester, PA, an attorney specializing in intellectual property and patent law; April 27. At Penn, she was a member of the field hockey and track teams. Her sister is Judith Hackett Doll C'76.

Dr. Donald A. Schon GM'76 GM'78, Phoenix, AZ, a nephrologist; May 2.

Doran J. Twer ASC'76, Jenkintown, PA, a management consultant; March 26.

1978

Dr. Robley D. Bates III GM'78, Richmond, VA, a retired urologist and surgeon; April 6.

Andrew S. Brenner C'78 W'78 WG'79, Amawalk, NY, a Wall Street executive and accountant; March 3. As a student at Penn, he was a member of the cheerleading team and Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. As an alumnus, he was a volunteer for his Class and the Basketball Sports Board.

Gail Altsher Jasne W'78, White Plains, NY, an accountant and healthcare consultant; March 23.

Cipora Katz SW'78, Huntingdon Valley, PA, former director of psychiatry at Allegheny University Hospital; March 31.

Karen "Linda" McCarthy C'78, Wakefield, MA, Feb. 26.

William F. Simms III L'78, Philadelphia, a lawyer specializing in personal injury and real estate law; July 23, 2025.

1979

Michael T. Di Camillo CE'79 GCE'85, Abington, PA, a retired senior program manager at SEPTA; March 27. He later became an engineering consultant. His children include John A. Di Camillo C'06 and Adela M. Di Camillo Nu'08.

Robert B. Goebel W'79, Scarsdale, NY, a real estate lawyer; March 15. At Penn, he was a member of the tennis team.

Morris "Morry" Goldstein WG'79, Las Vegas, founder of Nevada Slots and Supply; March 8. Earlier in his career, he served as deputy mayor of Mount Laurel Township, NJ.

John A. Luke Jr. WG'79, Richmond, VA, chairman and CEO of Westvaco Corporation, a paper and packaging company; March 14. He served in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War.

Daniel S. Rosenbaum C'79, New York, a magazine, newspaper, and book editor, and a playwright and rare books dealer; Dec. 5. He worked for media outlets such as *Tennis* magazine, *Rolling Stone*, *Vogue*, and *The New York Times*. At Penn, he was a member of UTV and a sports editor at *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, where he broke the story that the University was ending its varsity men's ice hockey program. His brother is Eli M. Rosenbaum W'76 WG'77 ["Profiles," Nov/Dec 2022].

Margaret P. "Peggy" Wallace GNu'79, West Roxbury, a retired nurse; MA, April 26. She served in the US Air Force Reserve as a flight nurse during the Vietnam War.

1980

Melanie Brown Oates WG'80, Newtown Square, PA, a professor at the University of the Sciences and Chatham University; March 1.

Kerry S. Schuman W'80, Philadelphia, an attorney; May 7. His wife is Jill Evantash Schuman C'81.

Dr. Harvey A. Snyder GM'80 GM'81, Philadelphia, a cardiologist who pioneered the use of heart catheterizations; April 8. One daughter is Juliette G. Snyder C'14.

1981

Linda Garland Ahern GEE'81, Osterville, MA, a senior computer analyst at Smith College; March 1. Her husband is John F. "Jack" Ahern GLA'80.

Evelyn L. Bundick WEv'81, Philadelphia, a former VA medical center radiology administrator, African American Genealogy Group cofounder, and retired US Labor Department investigator; Feb. 22. Her husband is James H. Bundick II WEv'80.

Richard A. Kinder WG'81, Pittsburgh, a professor of business at Washington and Jefferson College; March 7. He served in the US Army.

Sr. Margaret M. McKenna Gr'81, Philadelphia, a member of the Medical Mission Sisters; April 22. She led nonviolent direct-action groups and established a program for those recovering from addiction, among other initiatives.

Miriam Ray Twiname GNu'81, Newtown, PA, a retired school nurse; March 8.

1982

Steven C. Feinstein W'82, West Chester, PA, an attorney; March 21.

Jose O. F. Noronha WG'82, Scotch Plains, NJ, a retired telecommunications engineer and real estate property manager; April 28.

Joel S. Weiner WG'82, New Hope, PA, a former executive at Tower Group; June 5, 2025. His daughter is Julia M. Weiner C'02.

1983

William M. "Bill" Andersen WG'83, Phoenixville, PA, a farmer and real estate executive; Oct. 31. His wife is Elizabeth Dibble Andersen WG'85.

Edward W. Chin WG'83, Glen Allen, VA, a senior credit and risk officer at a bank; Sept. 9, 2025.

T. Kevin Massey WG'83, Scarsdale, NY, a retired sales manager at IBM who later became an administrator of a Christian Science care facility; March 23.

1984

Douglas S. Arnold WG'84, Avon, CT, an executive who managed physician groups in Illinois, Connecticut, and other locations; March 8. At Penn, he was a member of the Wharton Follies.

Karen M. Cox WG'84, Oak Park, IL, a retired manager at Blue Cross Blue Shield; Sept. 20, 2025.

Dr. Randall A. Frey V'84, Millersville, PA, a retired veterinarian; March 28.

George M. May W'84, Philadelphia, a retired CEO for a charter school; Dec. 21. At Penn, he was a member of the basketball team.

Charles H. Shuman GEE'84, Philadelphia, a professor of mathematics and statistics at Drexel, Temple, Penn State, and Widener Universities; March 30. At Penn, he was a member of Mask & Wig. His brother is Dr. Stephen K. Shuman C'77.

1986

Stephen P. Duprey Gr'86, Whitehouse Station, NJ, a cancer and pharmaceutical researcher; Feb. 16. His wife is Margaret P. C. Duprey GNu'82.

Dr. Peter C. Rakestraw V'86, Tubac, AZ, a retired equine surgeon; March 26.

1987

Daniel J. Mackell Jr. WG'87, Greenwich, CT, a financial executive; March 3.

Ursula Lisbeth Muehlechner WEv'87, Wayne, PA, retired vice president of finance for UGM Medical Systems; April 1.

Devon "Dee" Carlin Pierce GLA'87, Charlotte, VT, a landscape architect; Feb. 3.

Kaye Hood Pollock Gr'87, Willow Street, PA, a former high school principal; April 16.

1988

Maribel "Pidge" Waldo Molyneaux Gr'88, Swarthmore, PA, a retired English professor at La Salle University; March 5.

Akio Onishi WG'88, Ota-Ku, Japan, Aug. 16, 2025.

1990

Steven T. Lampe W'90 WG'98, Blue Bell, PA, an investment manager; March 13.

1991

Thambidurai Muthukumaraswamy ("T. Kumar") GL'91, Washington, DC, a human rights activist and former director for international advocacy at Amnesty International; Jan. 19. His advocacy work was inspired by his years spent in Sri Lankan prisons for his work as a Tamil resistance leader.

Michael W. Nivasch C'91, Lakewood Ranch, FL, a hedge fund trader; Feb. 14. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity and the football team, where he was part of the 1988 Ivy League championship squad.

Stewart A. Schoder III G'91, Glencoe, IL, retired chief financial officer of Christ the King Jesuit College Preparatory School in Chicago; April 4.

1994

Larry J. Hochendoner G'94, Dauphin, PA, former Dauphin County commissioner and executive director of the Philadelphia AIDS Consortium (later known as World Healthcare Infrastructures), a non-profit that helped set up HIV/AIDS clinics in seven countries; March 23.

Charles A. Kromer G'94, Collingswood, NJ, a retired transportation planner for SEPTA; Jan. 18.

1995

Jonathan D. Morris C'95, Roslyn, NY, a lawyer specializing in mergers and acquisitions; May 2024. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity. His father is Richard J. Morris W'66.

David C. Rode W'95, Allison Park, PA, a professor of social and decision sciences and a former management consultant; March 11.

Michael F. Voorhees G'95, Lambertville, NJ, a retired hospital administrator; April 18.

1996

Thomas J. Rollando G'96, Vero Beach, FL, a portfolio manager; April 7.

Michael T. Upshur C'96, Fuquay Varina, NC, a retired project manager in the financial services industry; April 11.

1997

Frederick J. Gesiorski G'97, Malvern, PA, April 8. He worked in finance at Lyon-dellBasell chemical company.

Kevin O'Malley C'97 WG'04, Santa Barbara, CA, former part-owner of the San Diego Padres and an owner and operator of minor league baseball teams in California; June 30. He was also the founder of the investment firm Carmelina Capital Partners. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity, Friars Senior Society, and the baseball team. He comes from an

iconic baseball family; his father is Peter O'Malley W'59 and his grandfather was the late Walter O'Malley C'26, the two of them combining to own and operate the Los Angeles Dodgers for a half century.

Sean R. Seagreaves C'97, Coatesville, PA, a compliance consultant for Allstate Insurance and a youth wrestling coach; Feb. 19. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity and the wrestling team.

John J. Sweeney GEd'97, Media, PA, a retired elementary school teacher; April 9.

1998

Rochelle "Shellie" Levy Sherman GGS'98 CGS'02, Pittsburgh, a former Penn administrative assistant, as well as a weaver, painter, printmaker, photographer, collagist, and mixed-media artist; Aug. 29, 2025. She served in the Graduate School of Fine Arts Office of the Registrar from 1985 to 1989, then moved to the program in architecture from 1989 to 1993, and finally was an administrative/academic coordinator in the fine arts department from 1993 to 1999.

1999

Patricia R. Adams CGS'99, Flourtown, PA, a retired Penn administrator whose career spanned multiple departments and who most recently served as director of human resources for Penn Nursing; June 12. She joined Penn's staff in 1985. Her career included positions in the Wharton School, Information Systems and Computing (ISC), and ultimately the School of Nursing. In 1995, she served on the Task Force to Restructure Computing Services Across Penn, which brought Penn into the internet age. At Penn Nursing, she led several initiatives, including the Staff Awards Program, Professional Development Week, and the annual performance review process, among many others. She retired from Penn in 2022.

Rachel A. Beberman C'99, Richmond, TX, March 30. She worked at a mental health facility.

William J. Cohen GCP'99 GFA'02 Gr'03, Wilmington, DE, a professor of ecological planning and environmental design at Temple University; May 1.

2000

Rebekah Goldstein Giannakos GNu'00, Silver Spring, MD, director of occupation-

al health at the University of Maryland, College Park; March 23.

2001

Srinivas S. Nandury WG'01, Summit, NJ, cofounder and CEO of Summit Insights Group; March 30.

2004

Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss Gr'04, Bala Cynwyd, PA, a former provost of Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion; March 3. She made history as the first woman to ordain rabbis in the Reform movement.

2007

Ibraheem Basir C'07 WG'12, Brooklyn, NY, founder and CEO of A Dozen Cousins, a manufacturer of ready-to-eat rice and beans inspired by traditional Creole, Caribbean, and Latin American recipes; March 4.

2015

Thomas S. Caldwell Jr. Gr'15, Carrboro, NC, a software developer and data analyst in the department of biostatistics at the University of North Carolina; March 21.

Faculty & Staff

Patricia R. Adams. *See Class of 1999.*

Gloria Woolever Kundrat. *See Class of 1951.*

Victor H. Mair, a professor of Chinese language and literature in the department of East Asian languages and civilizations in Penn's School of Arts and Sciences; June 28. He came to Penn in 1979 and taught courses on Buddhist popular literature and on the vernacular tradition of Chinese fiction and the performing arts. In 1990, he led a faculty push to rename Penn's department of Oriental studies to the department of Asian and Middle Eastern studies. He researched, lectured, and published peer-reviewed articles on the influence of Sanskrit meter on Chinese poetry, the tangled relation between oral Chinese and its script ["Gazetteer," Mar|Apr 2014], and the multifaceted history of tea ["Steeped in Tea," Jan|Feb 2010]. During the 1990s, he organized an interdisciplinary research project, partly funded by Penn's University Research Council, on the Bronze Age and Iron Age mummies of Eastern Central Asia. His efforts resulted in three television docu-

mentaries, a major international conference, numerous articles, and a book (as well as a *Gazette* feature in our Jan|Feb 2011 issue, "When West Went East"). He held visiting professorships at the University of Hong Kong, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, the Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University, and Duke University. His son is Thomas K. Mair C'94.

Louise Twining O'Malley. *See Class of 1963.*

Patrick Papadopoulos. *See Class of 2009.*

Dr. Sydney E. Pulver. *See Class of 1953.*

Dr. William N. Ryan. *See Class of 1969.*

Rochelle "Shellie" Levy Sherman. *See Class of 1998.*

Dr. Lawrence K. Spitz. *See Class of 1972.*

Richard E. Tustian. *See Class of 1961.*

Daniel R. Vining Jr., Haddonfield, NJ, professor emeritus of regional science at Penn; April 19. He was on the faculty at Penn from 1974 to 2006. Despite a devastating stroke in his early 40s, he kept researching, writing, and working with students until he retired. He served in the Marine Corps Reserve during the Vietnam War, and as a volunteer English teacher at a high school in Vietnam from 1966 to 1968. Two children are Dr. Ella Rutledge Vining M'01 and Dr. Daniel K. Vining M'03 GM'07 (Susannah H. Vining L'06).

Eric S. Weinberg, Philadelphia, professor emeritus of biology in Penn's School of Arts and Sciences; March 24. In 1979, he joined Penn's faculty as an associate professor of biology, becoming a full professor in 1996. At Penn, he was among the first to clone, sequence, and characterize histone genes, helping to define how genome organization and transcriptional regulation unfold during early development. These studies, which involved work with sea urchins, established him as a leader in the emerging field of molecular developmental biology. Later, he pivoted his research and became an early adopter of the zebrafish as a model for vertebrate development, contributing to foundational work on embryonic patterning, axis formation, and gene regulation. During his time at Penn, he also taught in the College of Liberal & Professional Studies and in the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine. He retired in 2019. His daughter is Tanya Weinberg Yahana C'94.

Classifieds

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Provost Charles Custis Harrison C1862 G1865 Hon1911 watches over chess players in Houston Hall. The first player at the far back is William H. Hughes C1909, and the one second from the front is Isaac Ash L1908. Other players are from Columbia, Harvard, and Princeton.



Cable Chess Clash

On February 8, 1908, the editors of *Old Penn* (this publication's predecessor) lamented that "the condition of chess at the University is not at all what it should be." Not only were the chess tables in Houston Hall taken up by checkers players, but many of the chess pieces left on the tables were "broken or carried off as souvenirs."

But on March 21 of that year, the chess club became the center of attention as the eighth intercollegiate international cable chess tournament commenced in Houston Hall and Windsor Court Hotel in London, respectively. And the Americans—including Penn's

own William H. Hughes C1909 and Isaac Ash L1908—emerged victorious.

"Never has any chess match attracted quite the amount of national attention," boasted *The Daily Pennsylvanian* (Oct. 1, 1908). An estimated 5,000 attendees watched at some point during the day at Houston Hall, while reports from London claimed an even larger audience there.

Players sat alone at tables, waiting for their international opponents to make their moves, which were conveyed over a transatlantic telegraph wire. A referee kept a close eye on each side, and the audience followed along in Houston

Hall with large replicas of chess boards hung on the wall.

On one side of the Atlantic, students from Penn, Columbia, Princeton, and Harvard represented the United States; on the other, students from Cambridge and Oxford represented England.

Dimming the luster of victory somewhat for Penn's contingent, Hughes lost to his opponent from Oxford and Ash's match against a Cambridge student ended in a draw, while Columbia's and Princeton's players won their games. Still, the prize—a dark oak trophy bearing a bronze shield with the flags of both the US and Great Britain—was displayed in Houston Hall for a time before it went on to other schools. —NP



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