

THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

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The Future of Prices

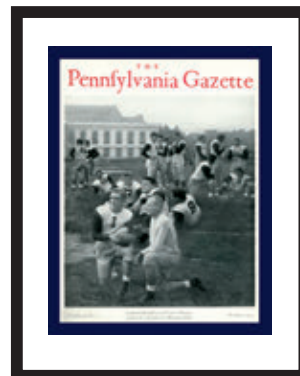
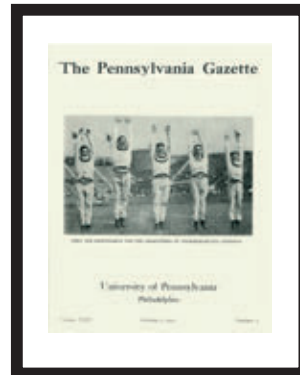
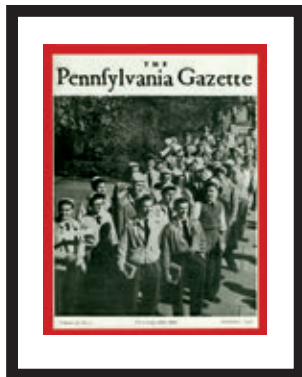
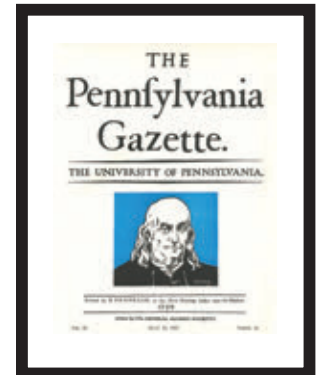
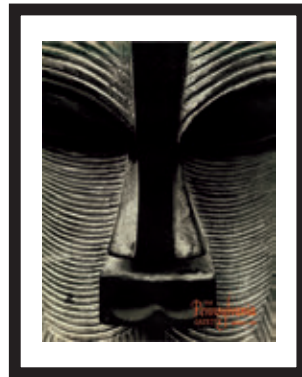
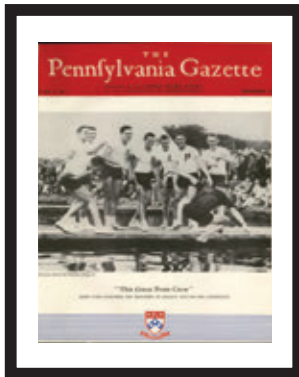
Rebecca Wells
and the Interstitium

Fan Con Pioneer
Gary Berman W'77

Inside the Quad
Renovations



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By Trey Popp

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Strange New Worlds

I thought I had come to take it for granted that my data is being collected pretty much all the time. It no longer surprises me when I say my feet hurt and my social media feed is full of ads for orthopedic shoes. But I was still taken aback by some of the examples that crop up in this issue's cover story, "High Price, Low Price, Your Price, My Price." One that sticks in my mind especially has to do with a food delivery service analyzing patrons' hunger level by their scrolling speed.

A while back we received an advance copy of consumer advocate Lindsay Owens C'06's book *Gouged: The End of a Fair Price—and What That Means for Your Wallet*, which argues against the practice of charging customers different prices for the same goods based on their personal data, sometimes called "surveillance pricing." Working with *Consumer Reports*, her organization helped uncover evidence of variable pricing in grocery stores spanning the country, leading to a petition drive calling for legislation to ban the practice and backtracking by the companies involved.

Senior editor Trey Popp came up with the idea of pairing Owens with Wharton marketing professor Z. John Zhang, who has commented favorably on the concept under certain circumstances in articles and at a Senate hearing where Owens also testified. Both were game for the discussion, and Trey guided them through the civil though spirited debate we present here.

I confess that when I started reading, Owens' position—price products, not people—seemed unassailable, but Zhang makes a cogent case, putting "personalized pricing" into the context of other types of discounts offered to consumers and claiming it can open products to larger markets, at lower prices, and with more competition. See what you think.

"Inside our Bodies: A Third Waterway" by Mary Ann Meyers Gr'76 opens with a

lovely and striking metaphor likening the body's circulatory systems to rivers as she tells the story of Perelman School of Medicine professor Rebecca Wells and her involvement in the discovery of a new circulatory system beyond the lymphatic and cardiovascular systems, dubbed the *interstitium* by Wells and her collaborator, New York University's Neil Theise.

Building on work from a century ago with the advantage of 21st-century technology, the researchers identified this new system, which seems to operate between the other circulatory systems, and confirmed that it

A food delivery service analyzed patrons' hunger level by their scrolling speed.

extends throughout the body. The article explores the implications for diagnosis and treatment, as well as the ways the discovery connects with more holistic approaches to healthcare. "The response to

our work of some experts in Chinese medicine, was to shout: 'That's what we have been talking about!'" Wells told Mary Ann.

I haven't bought a ticket to the *Trek 60* convention scheduled for November 14–15 here in Philadelphia, but I'm enough of a *Star Trek* fan that I recognized a disturbing number of the actors listed on the website as being available for pictures and autographs. (And to steal the name of a recent spinoff series for this column's title.) The event is hosted by Creation Entertainment, whose cofounder and CEO, Gary Berman W'77, is profiled by Jonathan Takiff C'68 in "Present at the Creation."

It's one of thousands of fan conventions—for many a pop-culture franchise—that Berman has mounted in the 55 years since he started the company with a childhood friend, pioneering the mammoth infrastructure of Comic-Cons, Fan Expos, etc., that serve our superhero-obsessed culture.



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Thoughts on thinkers, pro and con on Hillel article, mostly con on higher ed mistrust debate, and more.

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The Power of Connection

In the Sep/Oct 2026 edition of *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Julia M. Klein profiled three Penn powerhouse academicians ["Don't Only Connect—Get Situated and Practice Agency"]. As an outsider looking in, my initial reaction was simple: Penn houses an extraordinary collection of bestselling authors. My wife and I frequently discuss the work of authors such as Angela Duckworth and Adam Grant, so reading about their stories was particularly engaging.

As I read on in Klein's article, however, I found myself reflecting less on their individual accomplishments and more on their relationships. When I learned that Angela Duckworth had been involved in "wooing" Adam Grant to Penn, I was stunned that such a consequential connection began as a very real assignment. Likewise, as someone outside the psychology department, I never knew Duckworth had been Martin Seligman's student in graduate school. What initially seemed like a "perfect storm" of talented Penn authors revealed something deeper: the power of connection.

Pulling back the curtain, I was struck by how mentorship, collaboration, and shared purpose helped shape careers that would go on to influence millions of readers. What I appreciate most is how these scholars align their efforts to work synergistically in parallel, elevating not only their own work but their respective fields.

I am currently an associate scholar at the Perelman School of Medicine, and I recently reached out to collaborate with a Penn philosopher. While I have led a multi-



"As an outsider looking in, my initial reaction was simple: Penn houses an extraordinary collection of bestselling authors."

institutional collaboration before, this is the first project I have undertaken across disciplines, spanning rehabilitative medicine and philosophy. Seeing the interplay among the scholars profiled in Klein's article has inspired me to pursue similarly meaningful collaborations and create outcomes that extend beyond any one field.

Patrick H. Pham GEd'26, Philadelphia

Well Done

Outstanding article by Julia M. Klein. Lots of food for thought. Well done.

Thanks for maintaining such high journalistic standards in these dumbed-down days.

Christian M. Coli W'96, Fremont, CA

Still Work to Be Done, but Cause for Hope

I was glad to see the extensive article on Hillel in the most recent edition ["A Haven at Hillel," Sep/Oct 2026]. The Jewish community at Penn has contributed tremendously in so many ways to the University that an article like this was long overdue. One of the reasons that my time at Penn was so impactful was that Penn had such a vibrant Hillel, and no matter where you were within the Jewish community, there was something for you. The decrease in the Jewish population at Penn that has occurred over the past 10–20 years is distressing as is what happened at the University after October 7th.

I do know that Rabbi Gabe and the Hillel staff have been working with the University and others to correct many things that had made Penn not as welcoming to its Jewish students and staff. I learned about some of these efforts through emails and Zooms that were referenced in the article as I have always supported Penn Hillel and am a member of the Penn Jewish Alumni Network. I myself stopped doing alumni interviews after October 7th as I didn't think I could recommend Penn to a prospective student. There is still work to be done, but I do hope that in a few years, Penn will once again have a sizable Jewish population and be the welcoming place for all Jews that it was when I was a student.

Judy Lobel C'88, White Plains, NY

Noticeably Zionist Slant

I like your magazine (I spent three years at the law school, 1966–1969). I read

with interest your article on Hillel. I am from a Spanish family that has various indicia of being of Jewish background, although my family seems to have done a pretty good job of burying that connection somewhere in the distant past.

Anyway, I wanted you to hear (I am sure I am not alone in this) that your article on Hillel at Penn had a noticeably Zionist slant. How could such a long article about a service for Jewish college students not mention JVP (Jewish Voice for Peace)? It looks like Hillel is run as a service, not to all Jews, but particularly to Zionist Jews—who I suspect are by now a minority among Jews at Penn. Maybe you could run another article on non-Zionist Jews at Penn—and on Palestinians while you are at it.

Santiago Leon L'69, Miami

A Troubling Narrative

In recent years, American universities have been criticized for a lack of viewpoint diversity. The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), which ranks universities on their commitment to free speech, ranked Penn near the bottom—227 out of 261 universities ranked. When universities become intellectual monocultures, ideas are less likely to be challenged, with consequences that extend well beyond the campus.

Against this backdrop, a careful reading of your recent article “Trust Issues” [“Gazetteer,” Sep/Oct 2026] leads to a troubling narrative: (1) Faculty who influence campus culture are overwhelmingly Democrats. (2) Those faculty nevertheless do not believe that this lopsided political environment affects the classroom. (3) Universities are failing to support democracy. (4) Academia has been unfairly targeted by its critics. (5) Criticism of academia is attributed to Republicans being racist.

Attributing Republican criticism of academia to racism is symptomatic of the intellectual laziness that pervades academic culture. The larger issue is not

whether Republicans or Democrats are morally superior. It is whether universities are willing to examine themselves with critical standards.

Academia has not yet had that reckoning. Instead, it too often dismisses criticism rather than confronting the possibility that ideological homogeneity can produce institutional blind spots. Rebuilding public trust in our academic institutions requires universities to genuinely welcome intellectual disagreement—and to acknowledge that no viewpoint is entitled to immunity from scrutiny.

Mark T. Holtzapple Gr'81, College Station, TX

Elephant in the Room: Student Debt

“Trust Issues” offered an interesting discussion, but in my view the elephant in the center of the room was completely ignored.

Higher education as a thing for Americans can be traced to the GI Bill after World War II. The administration was concerned that, as happened after the first World War, returning veterans looking for nonexistent jobs would result in high unemployment and worldwide economic depression. Diverting returning veterans to college prevented the unemployment surge but also gave them educations that increased their earning power and careers that improved their work lives. Successive generations of college students expected similar benefits and found them. While they may have had loans to pay off, their improved expectations meant they could pay them off in a period similar to their time in school.

I was at Penn from 1965 to 1971. My last semester cost as much as my entire first year. Does anybody remember the graffiti from that time: *Raise it another \$100, Gaylord, we want to be first in the Ivies in something*. Rising college costs have made the benefits the veterans experienced much more elusive. I don't have statistics on this, but anecdotally I'm aware of a number of college graduates living in their parents' basements,

unemployed, absorbing groceries. Less visible is the enormous student debt they'll be challenged to pay off. This situation has to promote distrust of academia, if not bitterness, among the students and their parents.

Bill Mosteller C'71, Fairfax, VA

Willful Blindness

Elaine Maimon's flippant remark about faculty party affiliation, comparing it to a theoretical number of Republican bankers, completely misses the mark and is indeed an example of why there is loss of trust in academia. Bankers don't teach or indoctrinate our youth. While their party affiliation may indeed have an effect on who they financially support, that is irrelevant to the discussion. Her willful blindness to the idea of bias is frankly shocking. There is plenty of non-anecdotal evidence, such as seminar topics, assigned readings, etc., that clearly indicate that political bias affects what the professors are presenting and teaching. Perhaps if the leaders can't see the proverbial beam in their own eye, an outside intervention, even if forced by the government, is what's needed.

Vladimir S. Yakopson C'00 CGS'01, Puyallup, WA

Get On with Solutions

“Trust Issues” is a collection of rambling and frustrating quotes and musings that gives me a headache. Enough with rehashing, reframing, and bemoaning the public trust challenge; get on with solutions. I want to hear definitive ideas from university administrators with skin in the game.

Mostly, I disagree with lumping all the schools within the university as one entity that collectively is or is not worthy of the public trust; the university is a collection of apples, oranges, and onions. The medical or nursing schools would certainly score differently than political science or philosophy in the opinion of “large segments of the US population” when judging trustworthiness and return

on investment. So let's ID the real weak links in the trust gap and address them. Where there is trust, build on it.

Relevant to the trust issue, I was surprised to read in the *Wall Street Journal* that struggling Syracuse University eliminated 90 majors. Where is Penn on this? I personally embrace the value of a liberal education with a Penn MS in anthropology (archaeology) to complement two engineering degrees—a plan for real ROI embellished with a strong dose of enlightenment.

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

Whither the Ginkgos?

The welcome article "Planting Penn" by Trey Popp ["Arts," Sep/Oct 2026] does not mention the ginkgo trees, which were very noticeable in 1967, when I began my time at Penn. Their aroma was undeniable and indescribable. Are there any still on the campus?

Harry Winter Gr'76, Tewksbury, MA

Trey Popp responds: *I'm glad you welcomed my article about Penn's tree canopy. There are indeed plenty of ginkgo trees still on campus. You can search for their locations at tinyurl.com/PennGinkgos. I'm not sure how many are female (which drop the odiferous fruits), but I'll confess a preference for the males (which don't)!*

Road Less Traveled

In Mary Ann Meyers' excellent history of the Leonard Davis Institute, "LDI and American Healthcare" [Jul/Aug 2026], she mentions that its founding director, Dr. Robert Eilers, "created an MBA major in 1970 ... with the goal of training managers and analysts of healthcare systems." As one of the early graduates of that program, my observation is that it has evolved over the years in a very different direction than Dr. Eilers intended. Most of its graduates have gone on to careers in businesses that provide products and services to healthcare providers rather than the direct manage-

The Gazette illustration is insightful for highlighting and tying together the significance of this country's birth, its principles, and their inherent adaptability.

ment of healthcare facilities and systems. My own career in healthcare (and later public health) administration seems to have been the road less traveled among my fellow alumni.

Kevin McNally WG'76, Roosevelt, NJ

... Worth a Thousand Words

Thank you for the creative cover illustration on the USA 250th anniversary edition [May/Jun 2026]. At first, I found it interesting, then bold, then encouraging. Upon further consideration, it simply reflects insight. When independence from British rule was declared, the Founding Fathers also outlined the necessity of political separation, delineated foundational truths regarding natural rights, and described the purpose of government. They espoused principles to which a yet-to-be United States could aspire, and upon which this country could grow and flourish through the uncertainties of the future. These underlying principles were not intended as fleeting or momentary, but as fundamental to the vision for this country.

Adaptability is critical for survival; living things that might achieve the milestone of 250 years do not look or function exactly as they did at 25. The *Gazette* illustration is insightful for highlighting and tying together the significance of this country's birth, its principles, and their inherent adaptability. As this nation has expanded, the adaptability of our principles has facilitated the 250-year viability of the Founders' vision.

Any number of illustrative options might have been considered here: Independence Hall, a bald eagle, Revolution-

ary soldiers. All meaningful, but aspirational? I applaud my University of Pennsylvania for its continued efforts to be better, to explore ideas that can open minds, and to create thinkers who can respectfully and intelligently differ on the method, but not the direction intended by these founding principles.

British rule over this country was lost in 1776 when colonists took a stand that those here were best positioned and capable to self-govern. Much has changed in and around this country since then. Thank you, *Gazette*, for perhaps pricking our consciousness that continued progress as a nation, on our founding principles, is now a much more broadly shared responsibility.

Miguel Thames C'79, Philadelphia

Mill Creek Memory

"What Lies Beneath" ["Arts," May/Jun 2026] brought back a memory from when I was a grad student in architecture in the early 1970s. I lived in what I recall was the Spruce Hill Apartments at, I think, 45th and Spruce. Everything is different now. But one morning about 4:30–5 a.m., the intersection at 42nd and Locust caved in, exposing a beautiful brick culvert about 20 feet or more in diameter. It was the undergrounding of Mill Creek. Ironically, this creek had its source in the cellar of my in-laws' at the time on Broughton Lane in Villanova, just across the tracks from the Villanova parking lot. At other times I encountered the creek at, I think, the ford in Gladwyne, while it wended its way toward the Schuylkill.

It was lovely brickwork. The hole encompassed most of the intersection, and due to the early hour, no cars fell in and no one was injured.

I am an architect in Washington, DC, now, and for one of my projects I have had to engineer foundations to protect a similar 20-foot brick sewer (not a creek, a sewer), and it regularly brings back that memory.

Stephen duPont C'73 GAR'76, Washington, DC



Brooding Season

The summer of the mourning doves. ▶

By Kathryn Levy Feldman

It started innocently enough in late March. When I opened the garage doors one morning, I saw a long twig dangling from the electric motor. I pulled on it, thinking it might scrape someone, and discovered it was firmly anchored. I figured it was caught on something, so I just clipped the end and forgot about it.

About a week later, I heard a noise coming from the garage: a high-pitched cooing sound that I thought might be the generator alarm. I went to investigate and found a plump bird sitting in a nest on top of the garage door motor. Another bird was pacing in the driveway, but scampered away when it saw me. The cooing, meanwhile, continued. My summer renters had moved in.

At first, I thought they were pigeons. They were smooth and gray and bobbed in that pigeon jerk when they walked. But a quick Google search told me they were mourning doves. They mate for life, build their nests in eaves or out-of-the-way places, can have as many as six broods per season (more than any other native North American bird), and usually lay two eggs in each brood. The parents alternate twelve-hour shifts sitting on the eggs. And yes, they coo.

This has been the summer of the mourning doves. Each successive brood gets a little more comfortable with us. The mother and I are on respectful terms. She keeps a fierce watch on my every movement as I come and go throughout the day, and I have come to recognize her when I spot her walking around my back patio or on the driveway. When she sits on the nest, she faces west, toward my car. Her mate faces east, toward my husband's car. He puts his head under his wing. She stares straight ahead. We have not named them, although I have taken to saying, "Good Morning Mama," and sometimes, "Hello." She just keeps staring straight ahead, not even scanning the horizon.

Each brood takes about two weeks to hatch and two weeks to fly the nest. It is

They are the most respectful tenants; there is very little sign of their presence on our cars.

truly remarkable. During the egg-sitting vigil, the father will pace in the driveway waiting for his shift to begin. The first go round, he appeared around seven o'clock at night—although I never actually saw them change places. When she laid the second clutch, he perched on the door of my husband's car as if to cheer her on. There was a lot of cooing and occasionally a shudder, which I can only presume was the actual release of the egg. Satisfied all was well, he flew away. I assume the mother eats (mostly seeds, according to Google) when she isn't sitting and vice versa. Once the babies hatch, I have seen her feeding them from her mouth. She leaves the nest for a few minutes at a time to forage.

During one of those forays, I climbed up on a ladder to see the babies. They hatch without feathers, looking scrawny, and are about two and a half inches long. One faced north, the other faced south, and they fit together like a perfect puzzle. After about a week, you could see little heads poking up. After two weeks, they were at least six inches long and covered with feathers. My grandchildren were fascinated with the first brood. They climbed up to see the babies and then returned the next weekend only to find they had flown away. We could hear so much cooing in the backyard that we knew they hadn't gone far. My grandson grabbed a pair of binoculars to try and spot them, but no luck. Within a week,

the mother was back laying more eggs.

One morning about two weeks after the second brood had hatched, I opened the kitchen door to the garage, to find two birds on the step staring up at me. "Not a good idea," I told them, shooing them back. "You need to go the other way." They scurried under my car and eventually emerged to waddle out of the garage. The next morning, I found one wandering around my front steps and the other in the driveway. I later spotted the parents on my back patio, presumably discussing the antics of their wayward offspring. And then one night, my husband forgot and put the garage door down. When I realized it the next morning and opened it, I was quickly greeted by a deafening symphony of cooing from the garage, as if the mother bird was scolding me. "I didn't do it," I found myself telling her. "He forgot."

Soon enough, there were more eggs in the nest.

There are many meanings associated with mourning doves that take up residence in your house. Some say deceased relatives are coming to pay a visit; others that they are symbols of peace and new beginnings. Since they begin to lay their eggs near Easter, many have interpreted them as symbols of hope. I marvel at how clever they are. Their nest is shielded from the weather, which was fierce this past spring, and away from predators like crows that have been known to steal these eggs. They are the most respectful tenants; for some unknown reason, there is very little sign of their presence on our cars. And except for the occasional cooing, which stops when babies are hatching or growing, they are silent.

For now, I am grateful to watch nature unfold in all its unhurried, yet structured, glory. The birds know what to do and when to do it, and in between they wait. Maybe that is the lesson: slow down; keep looking ahead; and when it's time, you will go.

Kathryn Levy Feldman LPS'09 writes frequently for the *Gazette*.



Mitigation Mission

Seeking solace in small acts of construction.

By Alexei Dmitriev

America has had a credibility problem in the Muslim world since the “war on terror” began 25 years ago. Lately, that problem has turned into a crisis. In 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine, I couldn’t just watch from home, so I went to help Ukrainians fleeing the war. That work was about solving immediate problems faced by refugees: food, shelter, papers, and onward travel [“Way Station,” Nov|Dec 2022]. After the US attacked Iran, I also felt a need to do something constructive. But this time around I did not volunteer to feed or shelter the needy, nor did I want to deal with politics. My aspirations were modest: I would use my school-teacher’s vacation to help kids in Pakistan improve their English. I speak some Urdu, I have been to Pakistan before and feel comfortable there, and I am an English for Speakers of Other Languages

teacher in Maryland. I felt I was a good fit for the undertaking.

Once in Pakistan, I confronted an overwhelmingly pervasive narrative: America comes to the Muslim world to destroy. As bombs fell on Iran, convincing my new Pakistani friends that Americans meant well was an uphill battle. So I gave up on putting a positive spin on America and started using my English classroom to teach the kids something I have come to value since emigrating to the US from the Soviet Union in 1985: the freedom and capability to form and voice independent thoughts. I wanted to get them talking about topics they understood—like friendship, character, and relationships—and coax them into expressing their opinions. My plan was to make open discussion the dominant method of learning.

For a month, I taught in three Aghosh orphan-support homes run by the Alkh-

idmat Foundation: one in Murree with high school boys, one in Gilgit with elementary and middle school boys, and one in Chitral with a co-ed elementary and single-sex middle and high school. These were not the elite boarding schools of Islamabad, Lahore, or Karachi. They were dorms for fatherless boys coming from remote villages—the demographic most receptive to the idea that America is waging a crusade against Islam. I also taught at Alkhidmat Foundation-run schools for girls in Chitral, who are usually the first to drop out when war, inflation, or displacement strains a family.

Pakistan’s constitution promises free and compulsory schooling to all children aged five to 16. Yet most government-run schools in Pakistan do not have enough teachers or resources, and students are funneled toward rote memorization: *repeat after me, memorize the passage, regurgitate it on the exam*. This method produces students who can recite dutifully but flinch when asked a question that demands a real answer. Some 77 percent of Pakistani children face what the World Bank calls “learning poverty,” the inability to read and understand an age-appropriate text by age 10. I rose against that model and invited my students to express themselves.

It did not go well at first. The repeat-after-the-teacher mode was so ingrained that to my question “What color is your shirt?” the answers came back, “What color is your shirt green.” To further complicate matters, most of the kids spoke a local language at home, so my Urdu was sometimes better than theirs—which made it even harder to get a point across when we ran up against the limits of their English. Nobody volunteered to speak. The boys especially were mum. Some had been publicly embarrassed by teachers for giving wrong answers, so silence felt safer. English grammar was a manageable obstacle; the lack of confidence loomed much larger.

I met each group where they were. I asked the youngest kids in Gilgit to build

their own questions—*Do you like cricket or football?*—before teaching them how to answer. With the middle group, every *why* needed a *because*, and every *because* needed an explanation they could support, often with an example from their own lives. The older boys and girls read Angela Morgan’s “In Spite of War” and Wordsworth’s “The Daffodils,” and I asked them things like: *What do you think wealth actually is? What does your inward eye see? Does the idea that lilies are powerful enough to make us forget about wars mean anything here, in Chitral, today? Why—or why not?*

I explained that memorized answers are powerless against life’s hardest questions. And that the habits imported from diligently doing Islamic studies, where they had to memorize Arabic passages they didn’t understand, were not applicable to math, science, Urdu, and English—the subjects where they actually had ability to reason.

So I taught them to ask questions, weigh evidence, and sustain their opinions. One moment that stayed with me came during a conversation about friendship. Saad, whose red hair and green eyes evoked the theory that descendants of Alexander the Great’s soldiers still inhabit these parts, asked, “What do I do if I see my friend fighting?” It would have been easy to give him the expected answer—tell a teacher, stay away, don’t fight—but instead I asked him what he thought. He wrestled with it. If it was his friend, he said, shouldn’t he help him? But then we talked about whether helping a friend meant helping him fight or helping him stop. What if his friend had started the fight? What if someone else was being hurt?

Eventually, Saad landed on a conclusion. “I think you should stop your friend, because being his friend doesn’t mean you should help him do something wrong.” It was a small moment, but it was exactly what I had hoped for. He wasn’t looking for the answer I wanted him to repeat. He was trying to construct an answer of his own—and defend it.

I hope that long after a girl named Syeeda stood in front of the class to proudly read her own rendering of “In Spite of War,” she will remember the American schoolteacher who told her she was smart, and insisted she form her own opinion when everything around her told her to recite. If 13-year-old Zaid remembers someone who taught him that his own stuttering “because” mattered more than someone else’s flawless recited line, perhaps he will retain a lifelong tool capable of withstanding radicalization. Even if his note of appreciation to me read: “Sir, you teach at me and I am learned.”

For a few weeks, we tried to practice another way of being.

One month. Nearly 300 children. Hundreds of questions posed and answered. Still, towards the end of my stay I wondered if I was making their lives harder.

What would happen after I left? They’d return to classrooms where memorizing is still safer than questioning, where the “right” answer still outranks an original one, and where a kid who would want to ask *why* might be ridiculed. And let’s say I did give them a glimpse of a school where students’ opinions counted. What good was that in a world where bombs continued to fall?

At the beginning of all this, I’d nursed certain idealistic hopes. Maybe a boy who learned to be comfortable questioning his teacher would one day question a Taliban recruiter. Perhaps a girl who learned that her own “inward eye” has intrinsic value might be less willing to roll over before a patriarchy bent on keeping her at home—safe from the West’s purported threat to her modesty and faith. This

seemed like the only way I could possibly try to mitigate the effects of a war I didn’t choose and couldn’t stop.

But the truth was that we shared the same predicament. My students and I lived in a world over which we had very little control, albeit in different countries. We all confronted forces vastly larger than ourselves, and none of us could know whether our efforts would ultimately make any difference. So that couldn’t be the point. There was no use in pretending that a classroom could undo an injustice like war—or that interrupting the next cycle of radicalization and conflict was a responsibility to be borne by Pakistani orphans. The point had to be simpler: to learn how to build something when you know that the world around you is collapsing.

A question, an argument, a friendship, and a child saying, “I think—because” are absurdly small things when compared with airstrikes. But they are acts of construction, and construction matters when so much else is being destroyed. For a few weeks, we tried to practice another way of being with one another: questioning rather than obeying, reasoning rather than repeating, building rather than breaking.

I went to Pakistan hoping that I could give these children something that would make their lives better. But I left far less certain, because that assumption proved harder to sustain. There was one fundamental benefit, however: we were together when we endeavored to make something decent out of a world none of us had chosen. We won’t know whether the world takes note. But it is a way of establishing a measure of meaning and dignity when hopes for global peace are fading.

I now meet with my Chitral students once a week via Zoom. We cannot change the world, but we can keep building something in the part of it that we now share.

Alexei Dmitriev G’88 has contributed to the *Gazette’s* Views section for more than 20 years.

Hospice Vigil

Trying to give my mother a good death.

By Angela Nissel



*May 30: Give morphine every two hours.
Family in agreement.*

*May 31: Pitting edema in all extremities.
Pt has difficulty swallowing liquids.*

I didn't know what pitting edema is. I no longer had the need to look up every complicated medical word I didn't understand. The words the nurses wrote didn't reflect the small miracles that seemed to happen the more time ticked on. Yes, "Pt has difficulty swallowing liquids"

was a sign that my mom had almost reached the end, but it was also one of the first times in my life she let me help her without arguing. I'd wet a washcloth and hold it to her lips, watching her face relax as the moisture hit her tongue. If it's true that hearing is the last sense to go, then she also heard my brother and me play a game of who could find the earliest memory to thank her for. My brother thanked her for not killing him when, at four, he brought a sprinkler inside the house to cool off the TV.

Even with the high dosage of morphine that kept her asleep most of the day, that morning, my mom's eyes shot open and followed an unseen person around the room.

"Who is that?" she asked. Her suddenly open eyes didn't hold fear, just curiosity, like she'd spotted someone waving to her and she couldn't place the face. Whoever my mom was seeing was as real to her as I was.

"Who are they?" Mom continued, as if whoever was in the room had suddenly invited more people along. This time her voice was more politely concerned, like she was improperly dressed for whatever party was about to start in her bedroom. As her eyes scanned the unseen people, our crowded room felt a bit brighter, joyful even, much like it does when you're in the presence of a friend who "lights up a room." Whoever these friends visiting my mom were, they carried warmth, they were welcoming, and they apparently had delivered gifts.

"They brought me roses," she said, her eyes crinkling into a smile.

I'd been filling up time by reading what happens when someone is actively dying. It was as helpful as speed-reading *What to Expect When You're Expecting* when you're already on the delivery table. But still, I did gather that hospice patients often hallucinated about taking a trip or seeing loved ones. Yet this didn't feel like a hallucination. Jade, the afternoon nurse, didn't call for backup or grab for a sedative. It seemed normal to her. She smiled at my mom.

"They bought you roses? Sounds like people are excited to see you," she said.

"It's all the mothers and babies you helped at the hospital," I said, guessing as to who would be in such a large heavenly welcoming crowd like the one in the corner of my room, then hating that I'd stupidly suggested that all the patients my mom helped were dead. Still, she nodded as if she trusted me and closed her eyes again, still smiling at the roses only she could see.

June 1: Assisted with positioning. Patient remains uncomfortable with uncontrolled symptoms.

“Uncontrolled symptoms” to me reads like my mom was thrashing in pain. Instead, her uncomfortableness manifested in small signs, like a furrowed brow or a soft hum.

Jade motioned me into the living room. Once there, her voice took a stern tone.

“Sometimes people like to pass away alone,” she said. I took this to mean that hovering over our mom 24/7 does not make for a good death. But I knew I was staying in that room until Mom woke up and told me herself to leave. She didn’t. So I stayed.

I wondered if Jade was correct and my mom wanted to be alone. But I also knew that was a mother-daughter spat I was determined to win, so I pushed that thought away and drank more caffeine to stay awake.

June 2: Pain unable to manage with 20 mg morphine 2 hrs PRN. New order. Sbl patch will send tomorrow to avoid overdosing of morphine.

Don’t ask me what a Sbl patch is. All I know is Jade ordered it once my mom’s throat made a whistling noise with each inhaled breath. Jade called it a death rattle. Death, apparently, was no longer a taboo word once it was this close.

“The death rattle doesn’t mean she’s in pain. It just means other parts of her body are shutting down,” she assured me. “She’s ready to go,” she added in a way that, again, hinted that my brother and I needed to scram. My brother and I ignored the hint.

“You remember when we fought with hot sauce?” my brother asked Mom.

We were now digging into the deep cuts end of the memory pool, reminding her of things she probably would rather forget, like having to take a day off from work when she found hot sauce burning my retina after my brother and I had a food fight.

Death, apparently, was no longer a taboo word once it was this close.

My mom continued rattling and defiantly hanging on.

Jade pulled me into the kitchen. “She’s waiting for you to leave the room. Sometimes parents don’t want to burden kids with seeing them pass away.”

I nodded as if taking her words to heart, but I was thinking, *Damn, even in her last moments my mom wants to protect me from what she thinks is a burden. We are in a literal fight until the death over her own death.* Again, I ignored Jade and vowed to stay in the fight. I borrowed another of my mom’s favorite sayings: My house, my rules.

“Mom, you can go if you’re ready. I’m going to stay right with you.”

She kept on breathing, like she was stubbornly determined to hold on longer than I could.

June 3: Pt in transition. Maintain pt comfort.

My brother and I stood over Mom as she slept, just like we did when we were kids and would ignore her pleas for a little more rest. Every time she furrowed her brow, we shot looks at each other: *She’s giving in, she wants us here.* Still, she kept hanging on. It was the death version of two kids in the back seat continually asking, “Are we there yet?”

“Wanna get some air?” my brother asked. Both my brother and I needed a break from the all-night heavenly tug-of-war. A while later, as we reentered the house to take our usual spots on the floor, Jade blocked our way to the bedroom.

“She’s leaving,” Jade whispered, her arms stretched across the door’s thresh-

old to guard my mom’s privacy. I raised Jade’s arm above her head and held it up like a drawbridge while my brother and I passed under it. We both knelt on opposite sides of our mom, taking each of her hands in one of ours.

“You can go now. We’ll be fine,” my brother said, smiling at Mom. Her face scrunched up. She took another labored breath. Then another. I imagined Jade looking at me disapprovingly like my old babysitters. *Child, if you don’t let your mom be ...*

“This is your room forever, Mom. You can haunt it,” I said. Because I wondered if she was scared and I knew a joke would make her feel more at ease.

“You taught us how to be good people, we’ll take care of each other,” my brother said. He reached out for my free hand so all of us were joined together. My mom’s whistling breaths came in spurts with a long pause between each one. It was as if each one took considerable effort, but effort she was willing to give.

“You go relax in heaven. It’s pretty over there,” I said and that was not one of my lies. I was certain that where she was going was prettier than what she’d been through. A single tear welled up in her eye and fell down her cheek. The next whistling breath we were waiting for never came.

“She’s gone,” Jade quietly announced, and I turned, having forgotten Jade was even in the room. Her face was streaked with tears. I thought, *She does this every day and she’s crying. We must have given Mom a good death.* With the single tear still staining her cheek, my brother and I kissed our mom one final time. I would hold on to that tear; it taught me that words don’t need to be spoken for them to be heard. That tear contained everything left unsaid. It meant our mom loved us more than we could ever imagine and that she was proud of us. We’d done well.

Angela Nissel C’98 is the author of *Good Grief, Pass the Bread, Mom is Dead* (Amistad, an imprint of HarperCollins publishers, 2026), from which this essay has been adapted with permission.



Navigating the Nocebo Effect

Pharmaceutical side effects often resist biological explanation. Sociology may hold the key to superior understanding—and better patient outcomes.

By Jason Schnittker

In an era when pharmaceutical drugs play an ever more central role in medical care, side effects remain a mystery. Virtually everyone will experience some side effects, even from over-the-counter medications, and any television viewer is aware of the many unintended consequences of prescription medications they might never take. Yet side effects are also routinely ignored—by doctors, patients, and regulators—partly because the mechanisms that cause them

are so poorly understood. They cut across systems and symptoms—from headaches to gastrointestinal distress to pain—even though drugs usually have a specific therapeutic target far removed from those symptoms. And the link between drugs and adverse reactions can be tenuous. For some scientists, the side effects of medications are simply everyday symptoms that have been wrongly attributed to a drug, mostly by patients. After all, when most people experience numerous

daily symptoms as a matter of course, it is easy to blame at least some of them on a pill you swallowed with breakfast.

So the medical profession tends to regard side effects by looking the other way. When the benefits of modern pharmaceuticals are so clear, why worry about the small risk of discomfort or, even better, a symptom that another drug can alleviate?

This is a mistake. Side effects might seem superficial—or even bizarre—but, after cost, they're the leading reason why people stop taking medications. And side effects in and of themselves lead to physical and emotional suffering. Given evidence suggesting that vulnerability to side effects is on the rise within the US population, and that younger generations appear to be more susceptible than their predecessors, it is time to take side effects seriously.

Attempts to do so, however, encounter an immediate impediment: the standard tools for testing drugs. For the most part, scientists (quite understandably) seek to understand why drugs work as intended—not their many unintended consequences. The efficacy of a therapy is measured by how well it achieves a desired outcome, one that has been specified ahead of time; trials are not designed to determine whether a new drug systematically triggers a potentially unlimited list of symptoms, most of which could not be imagined in advance. (Researchers compile possible side effects by tracking adverse symptoms reported by patients, but these overlap significantly with symptoms that are already common in the general population, like back pain, fatigue, and headaches.) For that reason, it is often the case that the active ingredients of a pill can explain very little about the side effects people experience.

Yet this challenge need not defeat us, because there is strong evidence that when it comes to side effects, social factors matter at least as much, and arguably more, than any biological process. Duy Do Gr'20 and I

Views

have studied pharmaceutical side effects from a sociological perspective, using a variety of data sources, from data on pharmaceuticals and their active ingredients, to historical information on the drug approval process, to surveys of patients about their experiences.

The results are illuminating. People who are anxious and who have lost a sense of control over their lives report far more side effects. Our research shows that the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine were much more common among people worried about the consequences of the pandemic, including that they might lose their job. The social process behind side effects means they sometimes emerge in surprising ways. Although older people take more medications and metabolize drugs more slowly, younger people often report more side effects, in part because younger cohorts report more anxiety. If we accept that

young people are an especially anxious generation, we should also expect them to report more adverse drug events.

Patterns of this sort are premised on the nocebo effect, the flip side of the placebo. Nocebo effects occur when a consumer's negative expectations or beliefs, rather than the active ingredient of a drug, produce negative outcomes. Like other studies, we find that the nocebo effect is powerful and not at all isolated. A 1963 review of over 60 published studies found that 23 percent of patients participating in the placebo arm of clinical trials reported side effects. More recently, a 2017 study published in *Lancet* found that muscle-related side effects—perhaps the most well-known side effects of cholesterol-lowering drugs—were apparent *only* when patients and their doctors knew they were taking statins. In other words, according to this study, muscle pain in statin treatment—no matter how severe and consequen-

tial—likely reflects a nocebo effect, the expectation of that precise side effect among people certain they are taking a drug that produces it.

This dynamic is found across many different drugs. A 2009 study in *Cardiology* reported that among men who are aware that betablockers can cause erectile dysfunction, the drug produces that side effect in 32 percent of cases, whereas among men unaware of this side effect, it occurs in only 13 percent. The list goes on, indicating that some of the most common side effects are likely nocebo effects and, indeed, precisely when a drug develops a reputation for side effects, those expectations can produce side effects in new patients.

But this is only the start. Recognizing the existence of the nocebo effect only opens the door to even more questions. Where do our expectations come from? Why do they spread? Who exactly experiences the nocebo effect? How can doctors predict who will react poorly to a treatment, and what should they do about it? One reason the nocebo effect is so common is that the many positive expectations that people hold regarding pharmaceuticals operate hand in hand with the intuition that a powerful drug must have side effects. Research has shown that the placebo effect has grown over time, likely because people have stronger expectations of, for instance, relief from pain or depression, producing a stronger placebo effect in trials of analgesics and antidepressants. These expectations are not off-base—pharmaceuticals have played a demonstrable role in improving life expectancy. But the nocebo effect has probably grown as well, precisely because people see a link between effective drugs and strong side effects. Yet a side effect is no less consequential when it is imagined than when it is real. The side effects reported by patients should be taken more seriously than they are. When side effects are ignored, they exert more influence, not less. Patients might prefer a different

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drug when they experience a side effect thought to be rare. When a physician fails to warn a patient about a side effect, that side effect is more concerning.

If we accept that side effects are common, consequential, and social in origin, we also need to grapple with the ethical dimensions of prescribing. Physicians are obligated to tell patients about any risks, but informing patients about specific side effects increases the risk of experiencing them. Patients who learn about myalgia are far more likely to report muscle pain. But ignorance is no solution, nor is withholding information. Evidence indicates that informing patients about the nocebo effect can help to reduce side effects (and patients generally understand how it might work). Knowing that psychological distress is correlated with side effects can also increase the value of treating mental illness. Ultimately the pharmaceutical armamentarium is better served when

physicians play an active role in reducing side effects, when preparing their patients to both recognize the benefit and contextualize the risk.

Our healthcare system will soon need to grapple more seriously with the significance of side effects, whether we are prepared for it or not. The pharmaceutical industry continues to innovate, and new drugs rarely have fewer side effects than their predecessors. Regulatory agencies might be increasingly willing to accept risk, as when they endorse a “right to try.” Polypharmacy has grown, often involving combinations of drugs we know little about. We are certainly no less informed about side effects than we used to be. Pharmaceutical advertisements often contain far more information on side effects than the diseases they are intended to treat. People are aware of risk in a way they almost never were before. And, as with much else, Americans are increasingly getting

their health information from social media and other non-expert sources.

Many side effects will defeat attempts to identify specific causes. But if we take the social ecology of side effects more seriously, we will be better able to use the drugs that we have. In this regard, the social production of side effects presents an opportunity. When side effects are produced by the social and psychological circumstances of patients, it is possible to reduce them by diminishing a patient’s anxiety or by changing the therapeutic approach. Taking side effects more seriously need not limit innovation. To the contrary, it might allow for a nimbler—even a more precise—clinical enterprise, one that puts efficacious drugs to good use.

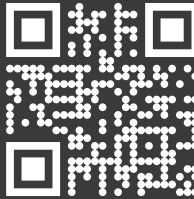
Jason Schnittker is a Penn professor of sociology and the author, with Duy Do Gr’20, of *Side Effects: The Social Ecology of Adverse Drug Reactions* (Columbia University Press, 2026).



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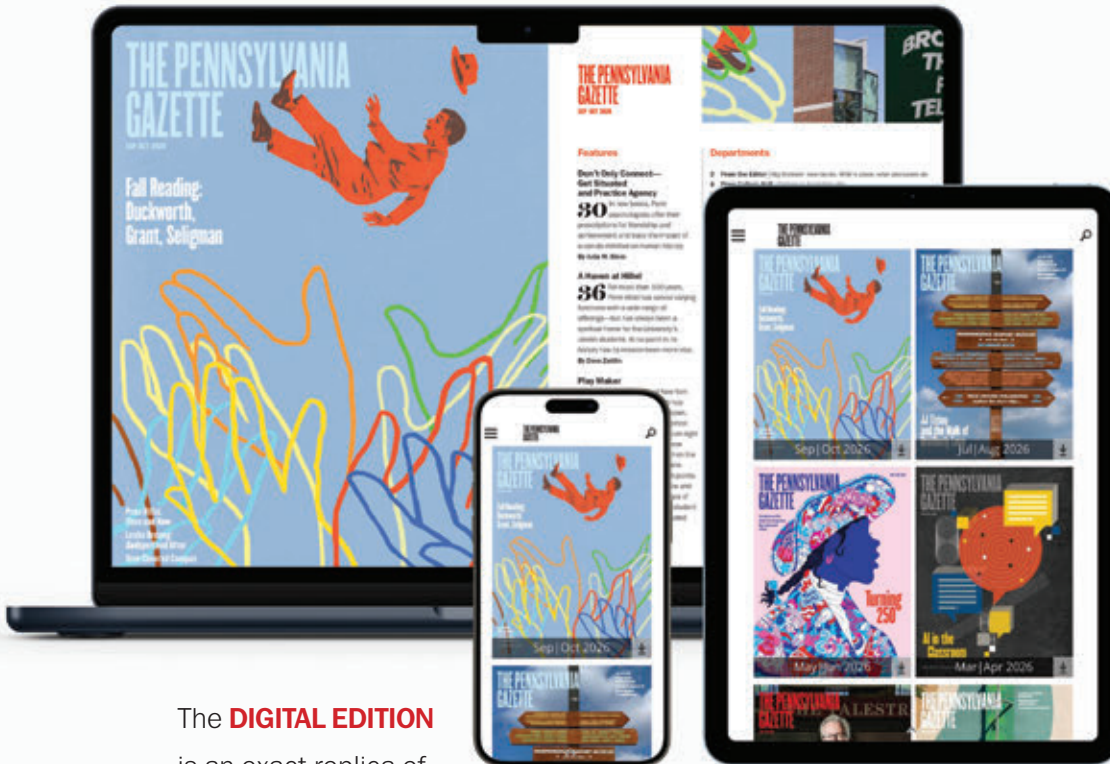
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New Amenities, Same Old Charm

Inside the historic Quad's
multiyear renovation project. ▶



When Mark Kocent C’82 GCP’91 GFA’91 arrived at Penn as a freshman,

he lived in one of the highrises, which he found to be “very cool” coming from a small town outside Pittsburgh. The next two years he also had a “great experience” living in the historic Sigma Chi fraternity building on Locust Walk. But when he got his class ring, which was engraved with a picture of the venerable Quad-rangle dormitories, Kocent felt like something was missing. “I thought, *Wow, I never lived in the Quad*,” he says. “So I applied to be an RA and lived there as a senior ... not knowing at the time I would be there for eight more years after that.”

Over those nine years living in the Quad’s Ware College House—as a resident advisor (RA), graduate student, administrative fellow, and finally

in a faculty apartment when his wife Linda Kocent Nu’84 GNu’88 joined the nursing faculty—he fell in love with the charm of what he calls one of Penn’s “most iconic assets.”

And now, as the University Architect, he oversaw a yearslong renovation project to ensure that the time-honored home for first-year Penn students will remain just as iconic for current and future generations of Quakers.

The goal of the three-phase renovation project, which began in 2023 and was completed this fall, “was not to change the feel of the place but really restore it as much as possible,” Kocent says. The scope ranged from replacing windows and roofs to improving the mechanical systems behind the scenes.

The University’s oldest residential facility, the Quad was designed in 1895 by ar-

chitects and Penn faculty members Walter Cope and John Stewardson in the Collegiate Gothic style, inspired by England’s Oxford and Cambridge universities [“Old Penn,” Jan/Feb 2019]. But “what’s fascinating to me was that it was built over a period of almost 60 years,” says Kocent, noting that it wasn’t fully enclosed until the 1950s, with its unbroken architectural perimeter completely surrounding its famed inner courtyards. That meant that some of the Quad’s residence houses had different kinds of roofs and windows. The old chimneys and “famous steam tunnels” running under the two-block-long building also presented unique renovation challenges.

“The first priority is the envelope, so keeping water out is really important,” Kocent

says, adding that with the tunnels and utility connections, “we were able to clean out a lot of antiquated equipment and upgrade it so it’s easier to access and maintain.” And although the chimneys and fireplaces are no longer in use, “they really stand out as part of the historic character of the building,” Kocent says. “So we spent a lot of money securing them structurally and then enclosing them at the top, so there was no water infiltration.”

For the renovations, the University hired the architectural firm Beyer Blinder Belle, led by Elizabeth Leber C’91, who had lived in the Quad. “So she understood the building and had a personal connection to it, which was nice,” says Kocent, noting that he worked closely with the architects as well as with the

Bathrooms in the Quad were also expanded and re-designed for all-gender use. And all of the bedrooms were

Some of the Quad's design has inspired newer dormitories, Kocent adds, noting that the private inner courtyards at Lauder College House and Gutmann College House echo aspects of the "Baby Quad" at the Quad's eastern end. And while the University will continue to design modern new buildings, it will also reinvest in historic dorms like the Quad to ensure that it remains "in good working condition," Kocent says, for decades to come. —DZ

Dressed for the occasion in colonial-era garb he referred to as his “Minuteman outfit,” Emanuel called Franklin’s speech, delivered before the delegates voted on the text, one of the “great American short speeches,” ranking it alongside Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and Kennedy’s inaugural address. The speech started with Franklin reflecting that as he

had gotten older, he had come to respect others' opinions more; proceeded to note that all participants had had to give up some of their own ideas for government; and closed with a wish that "the spirit of compromise should prevail on this," Emanuel said. He also quoted from the letter of transmittal that Washington, as president of the convention, sent to Congress, which referred to the "mutual deference and concession, which the peculiarity of our political situation rendered indispensable."

"Why are they both at this moment, at the end, talking in these ways about compromise, about not getting everything you want?" Emanuel asked the panelists—whose responses, slightly edited and condensed, are below:

"They know that ratification is still ahead, so this is the hard part."

—STACY SCHIFF

Schiff: Well, they know that ratification is still ahead, so this is the hard part. No one knows what has gone on in that room, and, you know, [the Constitution] says "We the people," but the people have absolutely no idea what they're about to sign up for or not sign up for [because delegates had been sworn to secrecy during deliberations]. So there's a big leap that has to take place, and it's Washington, I think, who says that how this is built, how this

makes its way out into the world, is going to determine whether ratification succeeds. So they're getting out ahead of the troops here.

Franklin's speech starts out in this kind of lovely homespun way, but then it evolves essentially to the sense that government depends on the people believing that their government is good, and that the officials of that government are wise and have integrity, and that is the pillar on which government rests. And in between, there's a little poison pill, where he basically says, "I think this constitution, which we've just devised, will last for *a course of years*"—which is an interesting locution—"until despotism sets in, which will only happen, essentially, if the people get to the point where they are so corrupt that they require despotism." It's a kind of discordant chime in the distance.

Amar: The first words, "We the People"—that is yet to come. That's the ratification process. All these guys do is issue a proposal on September 17, 1787. And it's been

"It's an astonishingly democratic moment ... and it could have been voted down."

—AKHIL AMAR

secret up to that point, but on that day the ban of secrecy lapses, and they're allowed to now talk about [it]. Franklin's speech isn't just for the people in the room. It's the

GIFTS

Penn Medicine and SAS Receive Large Donations

The University in September received landmark gifts from Stanley Middleman to support early-stage breakthroughs at Penn Medicine and from Gabriel Gilinski C'08 and his wife Stephanie Gilinski to advance educational affordability at the School of Arts & Sciences.

Middleman's \$50 million gift will establish the Middleman Center at 3600 Civic Center Boulevard and create the Middleman Fund at Penn Medicine, designed to advance the institution's most promising scientific discoveries.

The newly named Middleman Center—originally built as an office tower in 2018 on the western edge of Penn Medicine's campus and later expanded into a state-of-the-art research facility—will "bring together biomedical researchers, physicians, medical students, patients and experts from engineering, business, and other areas of the University of Pennsylvania," Penn President J. Larry Jameson said in a release. The gift will also accelerate work on therapies for cancer, autoimmune diseases, infectious diseases, and other serious conditions.

Middleman—the founder and CEO of Freedom Mortgage, one of the nation's leading mortgage lenders, and an owner of the Philadelphia Phillies—has previously made gifts to Temple University, his alma mater, and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. This donation marks his first major philanthropic commitment to Penn Medicine, whose corporate council he recently joined.

Meanwhile, the Gilinskis' \$22.5 million gift will establish an endowed scholarship for undergraduate students in the College, including those who come to Penn from Latin America. It will also create two endowed professorships, as well as a visiting professorship, across the departments of history, political science, and economics.

Gabriel Gilinski, who lives in Miami with his family and chairs the board of Grupo Nutresa, one of Latin America's preeminent food companies, noted in the announcement that "across Latin America, access to education creates lasting change for families" and that "Penn gives international scholars a place to bring their own perspectives and experiences."

"Penn is at its best when we bring talented students together with outstanding faculty and give them the opportunity to learn from one another," Jameson said. "Gabriel and Stephanie's generous commitment expands access to a Penn education while investing in the scholars whose outstanding teaching and research enrich our academic community."

beginning of the ratification process, and [Washington's] letter of transmission is the ratification process.

And this is the Big Bang of the modern world. They put the thing to a vote up and down the continent. They didn't do that with the Declaration of Independence, or the

Articles of Confederation, or any of the state constitutions in 1776. Rome never did that. Greece never did that. The Brits never did that. The Swiss never did that. More people are allowed to vote on the Constitution than had ever been allowed to vote on anything before in human history.

In eight of the 13 states, property qualifications for voting are lowered or eliminated. In New York, all adult free male citizens get to vote on the Constitution, pro or con—no race tests, no literacy tests, no property qualifications. Wow, those aren't the ordinary rules for New York. So it's an astonishingly democratic moment. Franklin is very proud of that.

And it could have been voted down. It passes by a very narrow margin in state after state—and yet the people who lose acquiesce. They don't march on the national capital on January 6. And although Pennsylvania is a slightly different case, in almost all the other states the people who win let the opponents speak their piece. Intense emotion, but no one dies in this year in political fighting.

It's astonishing that we did that, once. Maybe we could do it again, but we need to study how that happened before. And without Franklin and Washington saying, *We vouch for this, none of us got what we wanted—even we didn't*, and without the spirit of conciliation, [it wouldn't have happened].

And the biggest objections are that the House [of Representatives] is too small, and there's no Bill of Rights. And so, when Washington gets elected, he says, "Well, let's actually make sure that the House is bigger, and let's give the opponents the Bill of Rights that they want." The losers are not sore losers. The winners are not sore winners. They listen to the losers and bring them on board. —JP



An Epic Beginning

The Class of 2030's "Penn odyssey" kicks off for bold new explorers.

Between earning their admission to Penn and starting their college classes, the Class of 2030 faced a different sort of intellectual challenge.

In welcoming first-year and transfer students to the University, President J. Larry Jameson shared with them three riddles during the late-August Convocation ceremony that formally began Penn's 286th academic year.

- *What could a starfish, a spaceship, and the packaging in your Amazon deliveries have in common?*
- *How might something dangerous, like venom, save more than a million lives a year?*
- *Why is an ancient poem, 3,000 years old, new today?*

"The answers," Jameson told the crowd that had gathered at Franklin Field, "will reveal something fundamental, even exhilarating, about Penn."

Delivering his final Convocation address before stepping down from office in June, the Penn president didn't expect the students to ace the pop quiz, noting the first riddle was especially challenging. The answer: a team at Penn Engineering, led by materials science professor Ling Li, recently found that the skeleton of a chocolate chip starfish senses and concentrates light, which "could inspire next-generation materials that are tough, lightweight, and responsive to the environment," Jameson said. "It might protect passengers during space

flight and precious cargo in your household deliveries."

The answer to the second riddle also informed the University's newest students of a recent faculty discovery: Penn Medicine researchers used AI to explore more than 40 million peptides found in snake and spider venom to "synthesize powerful new antibiotics ... that could counter antibiotic resistance and ultimately save millions of lives," Jameson said.

And the last ("the easy" part of the test) spotlighted Penn classics professor Emily Wilson, whose renowned 2017 translation of Homer's epic [*An Odyssey for Our Time*, Mar|Apr 2018] made headlines (and sold more than a million copies this year) with the release of the summer blockbuster film *The Odyssey*. "Timeless human stories endure because new generations find ways to share and learn from them," Jameson said, adding that "these examples

are just three stars in the vast constellation of Penn's research and the student experience."

The Penn president encouraged the Class of 2030 to find more—and to make their own mark on the University as their "Penn odyssey" begins. "Like Odysseus in the face of setbacks and challenges, you will persevere," he said. "You will have fantastic adventures. You will see and do wonderful things. It will be epic."

In his welcome remarks, Penn Provost John L. Jackson Jr. also went deep into history, reminding the students that their time at Penn will be "astonishingly brief" when compared to "Penn's 286-year run" or the universe's 13.8 billion years.

"But during your brief time here," he said, "you have the chance to do something extraordinary: to experiment intellectually, to push yourself ideologically, to question your assumptions, and to learn how to engage the world with both rigor and humility."

In addition to taking advantage of "everything Penn offers," including a trip to "our one-and-only Palestra," which will soon mark its 100-year anniversary, "my advice to you," Jackson continued, "is to cultivate both humility and empathy. And to develop habits of mind that allow you to navigate political times without being negatively consumed or debilitated by them. To learn how to listen deeply, argue honestly, and recognize the humanity in people whose experiences and worldviews differ profoundly from your own." —DZ

After 33 Years, a New Public Policy Center Leader

Dolores Albarracín takes the reins from founding director Kathleen Hall Jamieson.



It doesn't look any different from the outside—same glass and aluminum façade, same lustrous wood panels layered beneath. But inside the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC), which fronts the 36th Street walkway between Locust Walk and Walnut Street, an unprecedented shift occurred this summer.

Since its founding in 1993, when it was housed within the Annenberg School before getting its own building in 2009, the hub for communication scholarship and public policy has had the same director: Kathleen Hall Jamieson. This

past July, after 33 years at the helm, Jamieson stepped down from that role, though she'll still remain at APPC.

Her successor is Dolores Albarracín, a social psychologist who focuses on policy issues at the intersection of psychology and communication and has been the Amy Gutmann Penn Integrates Knowledge (PIK) Professor since 2021.

"I'm very proud that the policy center is being led by Dolores," says Jamieson, Penn's Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor of Communication. "There's not a person in the world who's more qualified to address the nation's

needs at this moment in time with the resources we have available at the policy center."

"It's really motivating and interesting to have this opportunity to lead the center," Albarracín notes. "I come with a unique background that feels really central and connected to all the issues that are covered within APPC."

That includes her career-spanning research on what makes communication effective, and how it can prompt changes in beliefs and behavior. "In my work, I've looked at attitudes and persuasion from virtually every important angle," she says.

"I've dedicated significant time and effort to understanding how to create attitudes that have a higher probability of actually shaping decisions."

The 200-plus articles and book chapters she's written delve into those questions and many other subjects, too. Albarracín has also published three volumes of *The Handbook of Attitudes*, along with a book about how and why people create or believe conspiracy theories, and *Action and Inaction in a Social World: Predicting and Changing Attitudes and Behavior* (2021).

Her expertise is an ideal fit for APPC, Jamieson says—especially right now. "As we see this change in the political environment, she is at the top of her field, looking at how to address misinformation," Jamieson says, "and figuring out how to use communication to implement policy."

Albarracín has been directing APPC's communication science division since 2021, which she'll continue to do. It's one of the policy center's core areas, along with democracy, climate, health, and several other realms within a complex organizational chart that's sprouted many new branches since APPC opened in the early 1990s.

Jamieson was already dean of the Annenberg School for Communication (ASC) in 1993 when she helped secure a major gift from Walter Annenberg W'31 Hon'66—then the largest in Penn's history. Of his \$120 million donation, \$100 million endowed the ASC; the other \$20 million created the policy center.

From the beginning, APPC prioritized public relevance. It aimed to help scholarship shape public policy, with a focus on four areas at first: political communication; information and society; children and media; and health communication.

By the mid-2000s, Jamieson had grown APPC into a larger enterprise—including establishing FactCheck.org in 2003.

"We know that public policy can have massive impacts. But how should we communicate a new policy?"

"We wanted to provide a corrective in the political process to he said/she said journalism," she says of the website. Reflecting on her 33-year tenure, Jamieson ranks FactCheck.org among her proudest achievements. "We helped found the fact-checking movement in the United States."

The nonprofit site focuses on evaluating—and often rebutting—the accuracy of claims made by politicians. It's always been aimed at journalists who are covering controversial topics on tight deadlines and desperately need trustworthy facts.

Independent experts have named FactCheck.org among the country's least biased fact-checking sources. And while it's now directed by Lori Robertson GL'19, herself an experienced journalist, Jamieson remains both invested

and involved. "I continue to be the one who does the final check on everything that they put out before it's actually posted," she says. "And I'm continuing that role."

As Jamieson molded APPC into a public policy powerhouse, Albarracín was fresh to the US from her native Argentina. She enrolled at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as a PhD student in social psychology. That's where she began to study how communication and persuasion can impact human behavior.

Albarracín became a professor of communication and psychology at Penn in 2012. After leaving for several years, she returned as a PIK Professor in 2021. She holds appointments in both the Annenberg School and the Department of Psychology, and she also directs Penn's Social Action Lab.

Once she settles into her new role, Albarracín plans to launch a policy communication initiative through APPC. "We know that public policy can have massive impacts," she says. "But how should we communicate a new policy? What makes those communications most impactful? I think this is an area that really needs to be addressed."

She'd also like the center to connect with more policymakers. Her goal is to establish boards for both policymakers and community members to help determine APPC's priorities at the city, state, and national levels.

And within Penn, "we really want to branch out as much as

possible and invite broad participation by faculty members across all sectors," she says.

Jamieson, meanwhile, will focus on science communication. When the National Academy of Sciences awarded her its Public Welfare Medal in 2020—its highest honor—"I promised myself that I would spend the remainder of my career trying to be worthy of that award," she says.

"Science is under threat right now from many fronts," she adds. "It's increasingly important that all hands are on deck trying to protect the integrity of science and the ways it's communicated."

But that's not the only challenge APPC's incoming and outgoing directors see. There's the unpredictable trajectory of AI; an undermining of public health and vaccination trust; climate change denial; a political discourse so polarized that there are now scholars of polarization (one of them at APPC); and continued attacks on academia, research funding, and scholastic freedom. Still, Albarracín says she maintains optimism for her adopted country.

"I was born in Argentina during a military dictatorship, so I have firsthand experience with living where freedom of speech is suppressed," she says. "I've always felt incredibly grateful to have come to a country where I felt all of that was protected."

"I feel a lot less certain of that today," she adds, "but I continue to have hope and a significant degree of trust in American institutions."

—Molly Petrilla C'06

Career Anniversary

The forerunner to Penn Career Services was established 100 years ago, with student fees and an employer-oriented focus.

Katherine Griffith Faulkner Ed'32 GEd'36 was well educated for a woman in the 1930s and well prepared to succeed in her chosen field of physical education.

We know this because the University Placement Service—established 100 years ago in 1926 and renamed Penn Career Services in the 1990s—kept a summary of Griffith's academic, professional, and personal background on file after she graduated.

In many ways, the summary is similar to résumés assembled by jobseekers today. It provides a headshot of Griffith looking appropriately serious and listed the two degrees she earned at Penn—a bachelor's degree in health and physical education and a master's degree in physical education. The summary included Griffith's on- and off-campus athletic activities and affiliations, her four previous employers, and 10 succinct recommendations from professors and colleagues.

But certain content would never be included now. Notably, the summary supplied personal information about Griffith, including her nationality (American), age (28), marital status (single), church membership (Lutheran), height (five feet, five inches), weight (114 pounds) and “health” (excellent).

“It was much more of a place-

ment mechanism to match students with jobs. The office actually got paid if it placed a student,” says Barbara Hewitt GrEd'02, who has been executive director of Penn Career Services since 2018 and at the University since 1998.

“That was interesting to me because it's certainly not how we work at all today,” she adds.

“We see ourselves as connec-

tors, but we won't even solicit particular students for jobs. We want to get the opportunities out there to everybody and we want all students who are interested to apply. Then the employer makes the decision. So it was a really different process there for sure.”

Penn has one of the oldest university career services offices in the country, behind

Princeton University's “Self-Help Bureau,” founded in 1912, and Yale University's “Placement Bureau,” established in 1919. The personal information collected from Griffith and the department's employer-oriented job placement process in the early

20th century illustrates how much Penn's career guidance services have adapted to the times over the past century.

In September of 1926, Penn's trustees voted to establish the University Placement Service, and named Clarence E. Clewell, an electrical engineering professor, as its first director. Clewell, who headed the office until 1950, explained the early progress of the new office in a 1930 *Gazette* article, boasting that in only a couple of years “contacts have been developed with more than 3,000 firms scattered throughout the country, and the qualification records of several thousand Alumni are in its files.”

At the time of the Placement Service's founding, Penn had nearly 6,400 students, including 1,335 women, most of whom were enrolled in the School of Education, according to Penn Career Services research. Penn seniors and alumni like Griffith completed a form to create a profile of their credentials for the Placement Service to submit to employers looking to hire. Registration and placement fees were waived for seniors looking for their first job after



Early in its history, what is now Career Services kept files of students to share with potential employers—and earned a bounty from the students if they were hired.

graduation. “Our understanding is that the credentials were kept on file and sent to employers for consideration. The file was then sent back to the Placement Service by the employer after review, indicating whether they had hired the individual or not,” Hewitt says.

Alumni were assessed a \$2 registration fee by the Placement Service, a \$1 fee to renew their registration each year, and a placement fee once they accepted a position to help fund the office. Alumni hired for a full-time position paid the equivalent of “[o]ne week’s salary, based on 52 weeks in the year, payable within 30 days of the date of starting work,” according to a Placement Service document. Those hired for part-time and temporary positions paid “5 percent of the money earned, payable monthly during the first ten weeks.” Alumni accepting commission-based sales jobs paid “5 percent of the money earned during the first twenty weeks of work in the position.”

During the 1927–1928 school year, Penn students secured 587 full-time and 2,000 part-time jobs through the office. The 1929 stock market crash and subsequent Great Depression derailed some of the office’s momentum, but as students dropped out in droves, the Placement Service worked with the Student Aid Office to boost the number of students in work-study jobs.

As World War II, which helped reinvigorate the US economy, drew to a close, Clewell took charge of the University’s new Personnel

Index to collect the occupational records of 13,000 alumni returning home from military service who would soon be looking for work. At the urging of Penn’s College for Women, the University agreed to hire a placement officer specifically for female students

of Arts & Sciences, Penn Engineering, School of Nursing, and Wharton. Alumni from those schools and programs have access to career-related digital resources, a job board, and career advisor appointments.

Staff talk with students about their interests, help

sophomore year.’ But now there’s a lot of very early recruiting by employers, and if they’re not thinking about it earlier, they might lose out on opportunities.”

To mark Penn Career Services’ centennial, the office held a celebration in late Sep-



and alumni in the late 1940s. By the late 1960s, Placement Service counselors discussed the Vietnam War military draft and its potential impact on students’ career plans.

“We are so tied to the external world and what’s going on,” Hewitt notes. “You have to be pretty in tune with that to be a good career services office.”

Today, Penn Career Services takes an educational approach to working with students as the career resource center for undergraduate on-campus degree programs in the College

and alumni in the late 1940s. By the late 1960s, Placement Service counselors discussed the Vietnam War military draft and its potential impact on students’ career plans.

them explore various career paths, teach them how to network, and assist in résumé writing, says Hewitt. The office holds approximately 10 career fairs a year and conducts information sessions with employers for students. Hewitt says the biggest shift she’s seen in the past 20 years is the increasing importance of students gaining work experience through internships. “We used to say to students: ‘Don’t worry about what you do freshman year. Maybe you don’t even have to worry

tember and is seeking alumni input to create the “Career Advice from 100 Alumni Compendium,” a collection of insights from Penn graduates across industries, geographies, and class years. A description of the project and a link to a survey can be found at careerservices.upenn.edu/advice-from-100-alumni.

The compendium will be shared online. “It’s a way to bring the larger Penn community into this whole 100-year celebration,” Hewitt says.

—Samantha Drake CGS’06

Freshman basketball player Isaiah Carroll with his mom Nkechi Okoro Carroll C'98, a TV showrunner featured in the *Gazette* in 2019.

Legacy Class

Isaiah Carroll, the son of two Penn alums, leads a star-studded batch of newcomers primed to take the Quakers to the next level.



As a freshman at Penn, Jon Carroll C'99 made sure to get men's basketball season tickets, making a lot of noise from the student section as Ira Bowman W'96 led the Quakers to a share of the Ivy League title.

A little more than 30 years later, he'll once again have season tickets at the Palestra. But this time, he says, "I'll be a little closer to the Penn bench." It'll be a better view, after all, to watch his son, Isaiah Carroll, take the court for his alma mater.

"It blows my mind," says Jon, who lives in Los Angeles with his wife Nkechi Okoro Carroll C'98, a showrunner for the television sports drama *All American* ["Running the Show," Jul|Aug 2019]. "Any time someone asks about him, since he committed, I have just the biggest smile on my face. I was just there as a fan. He actually gets to step on that floor and experience it."

While Jon and Nkechi both loved their time at Penn, meeting for the first time at

Convocation—"She was one of the first Black women I ever met who had a British accent," Jon laughs—they didn't push their son to go to college there too. And after a standout career at Los Angeles high school basketball powerhouse Harvard-Westlake and then at New Jersey prep school Blair Academy, Carroll had the opportunity to play at a big-conference program.

But he chose Penn and the Ivy League over several other offers last September, becoming the program's highest-rated recruit this decade. When he Facetimed his parents to share the news, "that was probably the happiest I've seen them in a long time," Isaiah says. His dad was driving when the call came in and later joked that he nearly crashed the car. "I definitely was like, *This is one of those calls where I need to pull over*," recalls Jon, who grew up in West Philadelphia and whose mom, brother, and sister still live just a short drive from Penn's campus. "I certainly had a great experience at Penn. My wife had a great experience at Penn. We have lifelong friends that we still consider our village to this day. And for him to make that decision when we never pushed it at all ... it meant everything."

Carroll says he never thought Penn would be his landing spot when he was at Harvard-Westlake. At one point, playing college basketball *anywhere* might have seemed far-fetched. He played baseball for most his childhood, until tearing his meniscus and switching to basketball early during the

pandemic. "We had really become a classic baseball family," says Jon, but believed that his son had the work ethic—along with having "won the height lottery"—to succeed at a new sport.

Isaiah eventually became a key player at Harvard-Westlake but didn't get much attention from colleges until he took a year at Blair Academy, which allowed him to get "bigger, faster, and stronger," Isaiah says, while also "letting a lot of the East Coast schools see what I have to offer."

With such a deep and talented roster, McCaffery knows "expectations are high" in his second year.

Penn head coach Fran McCaffery was one of the coaches who saw potential, and he believes the freshman's arrival could be a shot in the arm for a program that stormed to a surprise Ivy League tournament championship in his first year in charge last season ["Sports," May|Jun 2026]. "He's different than some of the guys we have," McCaffery says. "He can dribble, pass, and shoot. He's got length. He's six-seven. He's bouncy. He really defends. He's just a winner, and we're thrilled to have him."

Carroll is a key component of a freshman class that also includes six-foot-five guard Ethan Lin. Both were ranked among the top seven players coming out of New Jersey last season. "I know a lot of people have expectations for us coming into our first year, and I think we're both excited to

meet and exceed those expectations,” Carroll says. But they’ll have to carve out playing time on a deep roster that includes four returning starters in junior point guard AJ Levine, senior sharpshooter Michael Zanoni, senior big man Auggie Gerhart, and star senior TJ Power, a first-team All-Ivy forward who had a performance for the ages to lift the Quakers into March Madness last year.

Carroll calls Power’s Ivy tournament showing “special,” saying that he watched it on TV while locked “in the defensive stance with the rest of the team” from his living room. Now, he’s excited to take the floor with Power, who “definitely has a target on his back,” Carroll says, “but I think he’s also the guy who’s going to be able to rise to the occasion and lead us back to where we were last year.” The freshman is equally excited to play with the other veterans, including Zanoni, whom he calls the best shooter he’s ever played with.

For their part, Power, Zanoni, and the rest of the upperclassmen have embraced a leadership role in welcoming in Penn’s promising newcomers—not only six freshmen but a pair of transfers who are poised to make big impacts, Sir Mohammed (Notre Dame) and Dorian Glogovac (Caltech). “They’re so good with the young guys,” McCaffery says. “They’re competing with each other, but they’re still great mentors.”

With such a deep and talented roster, McCaffery knows “expectations are high” in his



Head coach Fran McCaffery huddles with his team—including freshman Isaiah Carroll, far left—during the Red and Blue intrasquad scrimmage on October 10.

New Hall of Fame Class

In late September, a new batch of 10 men and women were inducted into the Penn Athletics Hall of Fame during a ceremony at the Inn of Penn. It’s the 14th class of inductees since the inaugural class in 1996. The members of it are as follows:

Alexis Borden C’15 SOFTBALL
Don DelGiorno W’78 MEN’S LACROSSE
Ibrahim Jaaber C’07 MEN’S BASKETBALL
Meg Markham C’15 WOMEN’S LACROSSE
Kris Ryan C’02 FOOTBALL
Dani Shepherd C’14 VOLLEYBALL
Carl Shine MTE’59 Gr’68 MEN’S TRACK & FIELD
Rick Springman EAS’02 Gr’09 WRESTLING
Chris Swanson W’16 MEN’S SWIMMING & DIVING
COACH: Bill Wagner SPRINT FOOTBALL AND BASEBALL, DIRECTOR’S AWARD

second year. The Quakers were picked to win the Ivy League in the preseason media poll, and Carroll can’t help but dream of “the next step of getting that first-round [NCAA tournament win],” which hasn’t been done at Penn since before his dad was in college. “It’s definitely something that’s on all

of our minds, especially mine,” he says, adding that the Ivy tournament being hosted at the Palestra during the gym’s 100th year carries extra motivation.

Jon Carroll says he joked with McCaffery that his son’s freshman class—the head coach’s first recruited group at Penn—reminds him of the “golden era that I remember” from the 1990s, specifically the class of Mike Jordan C’00, Matt Langel W’00, and Geoff Owens C’01 that sustained the program’s dominance after key departures.

“So I just can’t wait to see it all play out,” says Jon, who plans to come to as many games as his and Nkechi’s busy careers in California permit. An educator who earned a master’s in education from Drexel and a doctorate in urban education from UCLA after graduating from Penn (where he was a varsity swimmer), Jon is the founding head of school at Jabali Acad-

emy, a new private school focused on African cultural pride. He previously was the middle school dean at Harvard-Westlake while Isaiah was there, serving as the public address announcer during his basketball games.

Nkechi, meanwhile, has several projects in the works following the recent conclusion to *All American*’s eight-season run. She was invited by Penn Alumni to be a featured guest and speaker at Penn Spectrum Weekend in October to discuss her creative journey.

“They’re both incredible,” McCaffery says. “His mom and dad are just really interesting people to talk to. It’s easy to see why [Isaiah] is the way he is.”

Isaiah says his parents exemplify the value of a Penn education, and that their success has “only driven me to work harder.”

“I just hope to leave the same kind of lasting impact on the community that they made while they were here.” —DZ

High Price Low Price Your Price My Price

Consumer advocate Lindsay Owens is leading the charge to protect Americans from the depredations of “surveillance pricing.” Wharton marketing professor Z. John Zhang thinks a ban would hurt the very people it means to help. Fresh off testifying at a Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearing on the issue, the alumna and professor go toe-to-toe debating what Congress should do next.

By Trey Popp

IT was September 2025, Americans were “rip-roaring mad about grocery prices,” and Lindsay Owens C’06 suspected that the fix was in. So the nonprofit advocacy group she leads, Groundwork Collaborative, launched an experiment. Teaming up with *Consumer Reports*, it recruited 437 volunteers to shop for groceries on Instacart, an online platform where people can order items from stores like Safeway, Kroger, and Target. Starting at the exact same time, each volunteer filled a virtual basket with the same 20 items for pickup at the same location. The test was run on five selected stores in four cities: Seattle; Saint Paul, Minnesota; North Canton, Ohio; and Washington, DC. Working in synchrony, the volunteers filled their individual carts and took a screenshot of the prices they would be charged for each item.

“Then we crunched the numbers—and that’s when things got weird,” Owens recounts. “Nearly 75 percent of the items in those Instacart baskets varied in price from one shopper to the next. A dozen Lucerne eggs at the same Safeway in Washington, DC, cost \$3.99 for some shoppers and \$4.79 for others—a 20 percent increase. Across the board, the average price difference for the same items was around 13 percent, but some shoppers were charged as much as 23 percent more. For certain products, there were as many as five distinct prices.”

When it made the front pages of *The New York Times* and the *New York Post* that December, this revelation struck a chord. “Tens of thousands of consumers

signed a petition urging lawmakers to put a stop to these pricing practices,” as Owens writes in her new book *Gouged: The End of a Fair Price—and What That Means for Your Wallet* (Viking, 2026). Then “the Federal Trade Commission, under President Trump, launched a formal investigation” into what the company had initially characterized as “limited, short-term, and randomized tests to help retail partners learn what matters most to consumers and how to keep essential items affordable.”

Instacart, which had also publicly maintained that it was “always transparent about pricing”—despite having told shareholders in 2023 about using a “machine learning-driven tool” called “smart rounding” that exploited instances of “low price sensitivity” to drive “millions of dollars in annual incremental sales”—swiftly recognized that it was embroiled in a PR nightmare. After all, most workaday grocery shoppers probably felt like Alex Tolley, a 71-year-old retired teacher who’d been one of Owens’s volunteers. “We just assumed that the listed price was the price for everyone,” he told *Consumer Reports*. “All prices should be the same for everybody, whether you’re rich or poor.” On December 22, Instacart backtracked with an announcement pledging to end “item price tests” and ensure that henceforth customers shopping “for the same items, at the same time, from the same store location on Instacart” would “see the same prices—period.”



"It was a remarkable reversal," Owens writes in *Gouged*, celebrating the "citizen-led investigation and the groundswell of consumer backlash it unleashed." But she intends the book as a warning, not a victory lap. Many of the threats Owens perceives to consumer welfare—from competition-eroding corporate consolidation, to potentially collusive algorithmic price-fixing, to the use of technological and legal restraints to block people from repairing products they own—do not yet have happy endings. And the specter of what some critics call "surveillance pricing" is sparking consternation across the political spectrum.

Are we headed for a future where brick-and-mortar retailers will marry electronic shelf labels with AI algorithms to raise prices on over-the-counter allergy medications in tandem with local pollen levels? Are online merchants already using your personal data—about your location, or your smartphone model, or your hunger level or upcoming funeral travel or pregnancy status as inferred from your browsing history—to charge you extra for a DoorDash order or bereavement flight or baby car seat? Owens hopes not but has amassed enough examples to fear that we've already crossed into troubling territory.

She has company. On August 4, shortly before her book was published, US Senator Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) chaired a Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearing on "AI surveillance pricing," which he called "the unholy trinity of everything Americans hate: spying on people, ripping them off, and taking away jobs." Owens, who was an economic policy advisor for US Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) before serving as chief of staff and legislative director for Congressional Progressive Caucus Chair Pramila Jayapal (D-Washington), was his leadoff witness.

"With surveillance pricing, big tech has reinvented the ripoff," Owens said in the hearing. Personalized pricing isn't new,

she allowed. Before the widespread adoption of price tags in the 19th century, "sellers used to haggle with customers, sizing them up to decide how much to charge them." But 21st-century technologies have turned the tables on consumers who've long assumed that the price of eggs may vary by time and place, but not according to the identity of the buyer. "Companies can now purchase, track, and analyze your personal data at a previously unimaginable scale and clip. They catalog your location, your purchase history, and even your cursor movements to better predict exactly how much they can charge you."

Owens laid out a litany of documented examples, along with an unsettling hypothetical. "Imagine you're the parent of a sick child. It's midnight. You ask Walmart's AI shopping assistant, Sparky, to suggest a thermometer and some Tylenol. Sparky knows that your purchase is urgent, potentially leveraging that vulnerability to overcharge you," she said. "As agentic commerce reshapes how we shop online, with AI agents starting to gain access to our habits, our purchases, and our personal conversations, the risk of being ripped off is only poised to grow."

Owens called for banning personalized pricing, citing Groundwork Collaborative public-opinion surveys suggesting that more than three-fourths of Americans agree. "Clear and transparent prices are essential for a functioning capitalist economy," she said. "It's not too late to preserve fair pricing in America. We can start by pricing products again rather than people."

But not everyone sees it that way. Wharton marketing professor Z. John Zhang also testified at the hearing, where he was the lone voice in favor of much of what Owens opposes. "Personalized pricing is not intrinsically sinister when viewed through the lens of economics," he said. "Research shows that it can intensify competition [and] reduce profits," ultimately benefiting consumers.

As Zhang later argued in an opinion piece for *The Hill*, "surveillance pricing" sounds ominous, but the menacing phrase "can obscure the central paradox: Different prices can look unfair, but one price for everyone can be even less fair."

"A uniform price feels neutral because everyone sees the same number," Zhang explained. "In practice, it can exclude people who would buy at a lower price while preserving access mainly for wealthier or less price-sensitive consumers. The visible unfairness of price variation must be weighed against the invisible unfairness of exclusion."

Citing common practices like "student discounts, off-peak fares, targeted coupons for a price-sensitive shopper, [and] lower subscription tiers," Zhang observed that "personalized pricing can make mutually beneficial transactions possible. The consumer who would not buy at the uniform price gets a lower offer, the firm gains a sale and consumer access expands."

The key, he argued, is maintaining competitive marketplaces and consumer agency. "A hidden surcharge imposed because an algorithm concludes that a loyal or vulnerable customer will not leave is different. The economics may be related, but the legitimacy is not." Likewise, "pricing built on deception, illegal discrimination, privacy abuse, exploitation of sensitive data or monopoly power deserves scrutiny and, where appropriate, prohibition."

But he urged lawmakers not to heed Owens's call for an outright ban. "Personalized pricing is a powerful competitive tool that can improve affordability," he contended at the Senate hearing. "We should guard against abuses such as abusive surveillance and market power, but not reject a pricing tool that can benefit consumers and society."

As it happens, the Senate hearing was something of a warmup match for Owens and Zhang, who had accepted the *Gazette's* invitation to a friendly debate several weeks before they testified. On August 26 they joined senior editor Trey Popp on Zoom for a moderated conversation.



Over the course of nearly two hours of sparring, it emerged that Owens and Zhang had arrived at Penn at the same time. Zhang, who grew up in China and is now the Tsai Wan-Tsai Professor as well as the founding director of the Penn Wharton China Center, began teaching at Wharton during the first semester of Owens's freshman year. But that was about the only thing they had in common—apart from the good-natured civility they both brought to the conversation. “I really appreciate the fact that Lindsay is very passionate about advocating on the behalf of consumers,” Zhang professed. “And I really enjoyed reading the book,” he added, complimenting Owens’ knack for enlivening her arguments with light humor, “even though I actually disagree with just about all the premises.”

Here are some highlights of their wide-ranging and sometimes elliptical conversation, which has been edited (and occasionally reordered) in the interest of clarity and concision.

Gazette: Everybody likes the idea of a fair price, but it's not the easiest thing to define. What is a fair price?

Owens: Three economists asked a version of this question in a paper back in the 1980s. They gave consumers several hypothetical scenarios about pricing and asked whether they thought it was fair or unfair. Eighty-two percent of people said that it was unfair for a hardware store to raise the price of a snow shovel the morning after a blizzard. Ninety-one percent of people said it was unfair for a landlord to hike a tenant's rent after he learned that the tenant got a job very close to the rental house. So consumers actually share a very common understanding. It's not that Republicans and Democrats have different views of how fair pricing works. By and large, people feel like prices should reflect the underlying cost of making an item, and of course a little bit of profit for the company. But when pricing starts reflecting dynamics that are unrelated to the underlying cost of a good—like supply



“Clear and transparent prices are essential for a functioning capitalist economy.”

— Lindsay Owens

constraints, or the fact that a company has you over a barrel because it's snowing outside and you really need the shovel urgently—that is a bridge too far for people.

Zhang: If you go back to medieval times, churches were involved in regulating pricing, and there was something called a ‘just price.’ And that was cost plus 5 percent, which was essentially your profit. So you can make a living, but you cannot make a killing.

But a lot of problems arise when you set prices only based on production cost. So the next idea of fair pricing is voluntary exchange: I charge a price, and if you like it you pay it; if you don't like it, you walk away and go somewhere else. If it's a voluntary exchange at a given price, that essentially is the fair price.

I agree with some of what Lindsay said. In fact, the shovel case, that's what we teach, too. If you raise your price after a big snow, that just takes advantage of something consumers have no control over—if they have absolutely no option for anything else. But if they *do* have other options, and you raise your price, that probably is a fair game. So there are nuances.

Gazette: What are dynamic pricing and personalized pricing, and how are they related?

Zhang: Typically, prices are variable. One of the ways they can vary is over time. That's called dynamic pricing. You can also vary the price across different customers. That's called segmented or personalized pricing. Consider airline travel: business travelers tend to buy tickets closer to departure, but leisure travelers tend to buy way ahead of time. The whole

reason you want to do personalized pricing is because you know that price sensitivity is different across different customers. But an individual customer's price sensitivity can change over time, too.

Owens: Look, I don't think fair pricing means frozen pricing. We want competitive, dynamic markets, and changing prices is a big piece of that. But prices need to be predictable. That helps people budget. Prices need to be transparent. That helps people comparison shop. And prices need to be the same for different people at the same place at the same time. You and I shouldn't pay different amounts for the same loaf of bread at the same Kroger, for example.



“Different prices can look unfair, but one price for everyone can be even less fair.”

— Z. John Zhang

Gazette: What are the conditions under which dynamic pricing works best?

Owens: I think dynamic pricing works really well when it is used to allocate genuinely scarce goods. An empty seat on a plane is worth nothing after departure. So filling it at a lower price point beats leaving it empty. I also think dynamic pricing can be a nice way to eliminate food waste. Electronic shelf labels have been used in Europe, alongside dynamic pricing, to mark down perishable foods—using a lower price point to get them off the shelf instead of throwing them in the trash.

My concern around dynamic pricing is that increasingly, we're seeing it used in scenarios where resources aren't scarce: we don't have an allocation issue at play, a company just thinks it can charge you more.

Zhang: I agree that you find a lot of dynamic pricing in the context of some sort of a capacity constraint and scarce resources. Hotels and airlines all have some kind of capacity constraint. Utilities also use a lot of dynamic pricing. But dynamic pricing is not just to allocate scarce resources to the people who want them the most. Ultimately, you want to make sure that resources will go to people who *value* them the most.

Owens: But we're in the midst of this affordability crisis, and for some consumers, even if they value something greatly, they can't purchase it at that price. And when it comes to what I think of as high-frequency dynamic pricing—when prices are changing really rapidly, and when that intersects with household staples—that becomes a real challenge for families.

Zhang: We both agree that affordability is a big issue, and something that politicians should address. Inflation is a big factor to blame for the affordability crisis. And in the US, income disparity has become a real problem. But the problem with relating affordability to either dynamic pricing or personalized pricing is this assumption that somehow when you use dynamic pricing, prices always go higher. In reality, dynamic pricing helps to make more low-priced goods available. So it can be a way to address the affordability issue, not the other way around.

Look at the airline industry, and the reactions people had after deregulation in 1978. Everybody hated this variable pricing. They thought firms were gouging customers and jacking up the price whenever they wanted. But over the years, competition has intensified. There are more and more airlines, and they all use very sophisticated pricing tools, and ultimately consumers benefited, society benefited. In fact, the cumulative profit of aviation firms is very minimal—like, in nominal terms, 20-some billion dollars altogether since the beginning of civil aviation until now.

Owens: I think John is rightly leaning in on competition as being a salve for this kind of problem. And in the abstract, broadly speaking, I agree. But I think these practices undermine competitive markets. Personalized pricing helps segment customers, right? And that actually means that you don't necessarily have to have the most competitive price—because you're able to figure out who the less price-sensitive folks are and charge them more.

I think that also can undermine the important function that the budget shopper plays in the American economy. It's actually the budget shopper, who's balking at high prices and going to lower priced offerings, that drives competition. But when budget shoppers are segmented, they can no longer do their job of helping to discipline prices in the market. Personalized pricing practices are not very transparent to consumers, which undermines competition. And there are aspects of them that rely on information asymmetries, which I think undermines the ability for markets to be competitive.

Gazette: John, is Lindsay onto something? Are there ways in which personalized pricing can impair competition in ways that are not economically optimal?

Zhang: No, I think the effect is exactly the opposite. What Lindsay's saying is if I have a single price, the marginal consumer will determine that price. That's true. But she's also saying that the price based on the marginal consumer is going to be low, simply because a lot of customers out there cannot pay more. But even in a monopoly situation, a firm will face a tradeoff between the margin they'll lose by lowering a price versus the additional volume they'll gain. And the universal conclusion of the economic literature is that the firm will charge a way higher price than what's socially optimal. If you let a firm just optimize their trade-off between margin and volume, ultimately they're going to charge a high price.

Given that, there is a lot of room to expand down below. But to do that, you've got to have multiple prices. In fact,

all the research suggests that personalized pricing can intensify price competition. Imagine we have competing firms that both know Trey likes a certain product. If I can identify you, and the competition can identify you too, then we're all going to bid for your patronage. So you're going to be subject to competitive offers from everywhere. That definitely is a lot more competitive situation than if you pay a fixed price from one firm.

The key here is that there has to be competition in the marketplace. If you have a pure monopoly, then everything Lindsay says is right.

Owens: I think a lot of what ails the US right now stems from the fact that the market economy isn't functioning in the most healthy way. People feel like companies are not just passing along their rising costs, they're going for more—partially enabled by the fact that markets *aren't* perfectly competitive, that industries are more consolidated, that there are more asymmetry opportunities to take advantage of consumers.

And I think there is a way in which single uniform pricing—which John thinks erodes competition—really acts as a shield, because firms have to compete for budget-conscious shoppers, and that drags the price down for everyone. Whereas price discrimination allows firms to fight potentially very aggressively for the comparison shopper—pushing them targeted discounts—while stiffing everyone else who's not price sensitive. So I'm not quite sure that personalized pricing actually works in the pro-competitive way that John outlines. I think there are ways in which price competition is actually more vigorous in a uniform pricing context.

Gazette: It would be pleasant to think that the way personalized pricing would work is that all these companies will essentially be saying, "How can we set the perfect price that Trey is just going to love?" But I can't help but think about a recent investigation of how Target was changing prices based on where people

were located when they used the Target shopping app. One thing it revealed was that when people checked from the parking lot of a Target, the price of a baby car seat went up by about \$75. Because they're already right there and ready to pick it up. Now, as a parent, I can remember that virtually the moment my wife got pregnant, we were flooded with mail that made it clear that any number of companies knew exactly when we were going to have a child. So I find it a little bit unsettling that the moment a company can determine that I need a car seat, then they can potentially use personalized pricing to realize that my willingness to pay has suddenly gone way up, and take advantage.

I've also personally experienced being offered different prices based on whether I checked from my desktop computer at work or my laptop at home. Another thing that's repeatedly happened to me is that I land in the Philadelphia airport and bring up Uber to compare it to the flat taxi rate. Then I walk through the terminal to the sidewalk, and the second time I check, it is invariably a higher price. Because they've learned something about my need for a ride, presumably. Which makes me think that the only way to get the best price is, paradoxically, not to check it to begin with—because the mere act of checking a price seems to work against me.

Zhang: Did you check any alternatives?

Gazette: No. Perhaps I should have checked Lyft—but presumably they would be using the same tools, otherwise they're leaving money on the table, right?

Zhang: Yeah, those kind of things have happened. For instance, when you check from university versus at home, and get a different price, that was reported a long time ago about Amazon. A University of Michigan professor was shopping for some book, and when they looked from the school, it quoted 20-some dollars, but at home the price was lower. If you want to look for examples of abusive pricing, you're going to find a lot of them. It's a big marketplace, with lots of transactions.

But abusing customers is not that easy.

“Abusing customers is not that easy. Customers are smart.”

—Z. John Zhang

Customers are smart. So by and large, I think most reputable firms don't do this. They want to actually do well by their customers, because that's the only way for them to do well for themselves in the long run.

Owens: What we are talking about is an increasingly sophisticated way of slowly but surely overcharging you for everything in your shopping cart—using technologies to turn the dial here, tweak it there, and squeeze out a few more pennies. The sum total is companies getting better and better at extracting all of the consumer surplus. And leaving us with less. That explanation is perfectly consistent with pleasant CEOs saying they're just 'innovating in the pricing space,' and getting a little better at ascertaining willingness to pay and maximizing revenue. That's great for shareholders and good for their bonuses, but it's not necessarily good for consumers or for the economy.

Gazette: John, you made an interesting observation at the Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearing. You said that if a consumer is willing to pay \$4 for something that costs \$2 to produce, but a firm comes along and charges \$5, the sale doesn't occur, and so the social value is lost. And conversely, if firms are allowed to charge multiple prices to different kinds of people, then they'll charge a lower price to more price-sensitive consumers and thereby expand access to the product. That sounds great. But here's a different hypothetical question. If it costs \$2 to produce something that I value at \$4, but most or even all the sellers in the marketplace have used the same third-party data broker to determine that I'll actually pay \$5 if push comes to shove—so that becomes the only price that I'm offered—what's the social value calculus then?

Zhang: That's a very good question. Collusion is something that some firms always want to do. There are bad apples out there. And whether you do collusion through a handshake in a smoke-filled room, or whether you are actually doing it with an algorithm, it's all against the law.

Gazette: But what if they don't need to collude? What if the data is so good, and the algorithms so sophisticated, that they can all just find my personal absolute pain point?

Owens: The thing that strikes me is that we see personalized pricing being used when a company ascertains that they think we've got enough money that they can bilk us—or that we want something badly, or need it urgently. We have seen Expedia charging users from high-cost cities more than users from low-cost cities for an identical hotel room in Manhattan, for example. Basically a company can take a peek into your wallet and then decide the price—rather than setting the price based on the market.

“We have seen Expedia charging users from high-cost cities more than users from low-cost cities for an identical hotel room in Manhattan.”

—Lindsay Owens

There was also an example from ProPublica, a while back, of Princeton Review targeting Asian American households and charging them more for test prep services. They were using geo-targeting to figure out the percentage of Asian American households in a particular geography and then charged more for test prep services there. And that wasn't about income—there wasn't a similar case of charging wealthier white people more—it was about an assessment of Asian American households' willingness to pay extra to do well on tests. So I think, over and over again,

what we see is the ability to prey on desperation, and the ability to use information that in many cases is unfairly gathered, to charge someone more.

A lot of companies have applied for patents, filed patents, and received patents for surveillance pricing technologies. DoorDash has been developing technology, according to their patent, to create an “agitation index” to tailor their pricing and recommendations based on how hungry they think you are, using measures that include how quickly you scroll through the menu, for example. The Federal Trade Commission did a study of surveillance pricing and found that MasterCard and Revionics and Accenture were selling surveillance pricing tools to 250 major companies throughout the US. So that’s a lot of companies who are buying these tools, presumably to use them in some way or another.

So there’s reason to worry if you’re a new parent who needs a car seat, or a parent who has a sick kid and needs to get a thermometer and Tylenol *right now*.

Zhang: All those examples make sense if you assume that consumers have no alternative. But the moment you have an alternative, you’re going to see that, in fact, companies are all going to bid for your patronage. No matter how much money you have in your pocket, I want to make sure it’s on my side and not on the other side, right?

Owens: I also think that all of this may be about to change a little bit as agentic commerce becomes more integrated into American shopping. Because we would potentially be moving from a world in which companies were mostly relying on behavioral data and inferences about us to estimate our willingness to pay—our purchase history, what we hover over, what we click on, data they buy about us from another retailer—and instead, increasingly, moving into a world where a company can ask us how much we need something. And we might tell them, right? Not realizing that the price will be impacted, potentially.

“With AI agents starting to gain access to our habits, our purchases, and our personal conversations, the risk of being ripped off is only poised to grow.”

— Lindsay Owens

Zhang: Agentic purchases are really a reason we want to *keep* personalized pricing. As shopping bots become more intelligent, it will become much easier to get into situations where two competitors will bid for your patronage—way more than before. So in that kind of a situation, you actually want a firm to set a personalized price. If they set a single price, it would actually shelter a lot of customers from competition, reducing competition instead of intensifying it.

You want to give firms more weapons to compete against each other. And you want them to be flexible. In fact, the whole reason why the airline industry has made very little money, cumulatively, is because their pricing is just way *too* flexible. And when you have a too-flexible pricing system, what happens is that companies throw darts at each other, and hurt each other—but consumers ultimately benefit from that. That’s something that I think a lot of people don’t realize.

Gazette: John, you’ve written that dynamic pricing shifts power to savvy consumers, that “those who monitor fluctuations, book at the right time, or shop across platforms can consistently secure lower prices.” And that “in a dynamic pricing world, knowledge is power.” If knowledge is power, can consumers possibly get the upper hand over companies that are buying and selling their data on a minute-by-minute basis?

Zhang: Any time you face change, there is fear. But my research has looked into this since the 1990s, and, by and large, the direction we are going is ultimately going to be beneficial to consumers, beneficial to society, and beneficial to firms.

Imagine how much inefficiency we have created just because firms want to set multiple prices. For instance, not long ago, I’m sure you clipped a lot of coupons out of Sunday newspapers. That turned out to create a huge amount of fraud and waste—on top of all the efforts on the part of consumers. Now firms can say, *I know, Trey, that you’re price sensitive; I’m going to give you a targeted coupon*. That improves efficiency so much. More importantly, when competing firms use personalized pricing, the last line of defense for the firm is your preference for one of them. Even if they can look at your wallet, and they know how much money there is in there, ultimately you’re going to go to the company you prefer. In that world, good firms that do good customer service and command customer loyalty will win. But if you ban all that, you’re going to reduce competition, and actually shelter the inefficient and bad firms.

Gazette: John, when a website asks to track your data, do you opt out? Or do you say, “Hey, take as much as you want, because that’s just going help me?”

Zhang: I never opt in. Because I’m a price-insensitive customer—I don’t look at the price, so I don’t want people to know that! I mean, consumers want to be strategic. Ultimately, I think personalized pricing will benefit people who are price sensitive. It will make the people who are price insensitive worse off. There’s no question there—unless there’s huge competition.

Owens: I don’t think it should be the job of consumers to duck and dodge and bob and weave and try to outsmart these new pricing technologies. Do I think consumers who are price sensitive should comparison shop? Absolutely. That’s a great tool. But all of the technologies we’ve talked about today make comparison shopping harder. With personalized pricing, you don’t know the price at each store, you know *your* price at each store. Dynamic pricing—volatile pricing—makes comparison shopping really difficult.

Most Americans have experienced this, trying to comparison shop with airline tickets. You look one day, you want to talk to your spouse, and the next day everything's changed, and you have to start the process all over again. This is incredibly onerous. We don't want to live in a world where you have to hang upside-down by your fingernails on a Tuesday to get a good airline price, and a world in which there's a Points Guy for every item in your shopping cart: a guy that teaches you how to get the best deal on milk, a guy that teaches you how to get the best deal on ice cream, a guy that teaches you how to get the best deal on shampoo. This is not the world that we want to live in.

Zhang: The problem is that if consumers are not voting with their dollars, the market economy is not going to function no matter what you do. Which means that if you actually put them in an environment where they have more agency—they have more opportunities to take advantage of—over time people will learn to look for low prices. By the way, the airline industry is a perfect example. Nowadays, everybody knows when to book and how to get low-priced tickets.

I grew up in a country where the government told us, 'Don't worry about the price, we'll fix prices for you.' And that happened—with disastrous consequences.

Gazette: Some kind of legislation is expected to be introduced in Congress about personalized pricing. What do think it should include? What should it leave alone? Or should we even have any national legislation at all?

Owens: I am very supportive of a ban on surveillance pricing. At its core, surveillance pricing is the practice of spying on you to overcharge you. So a legislative proposal that eliminates a company's ability to use personal information that they collect about you, that they buy about you, to set a price just for you—is a really great first step. Will that solve every pricing problem or everything that vexes consumers? No. But I think it's a good

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first step. Many states are moving in that direction, in whole or in part. California is sending legislation to Governor Newsom's desk. *[Editor's note: Despite being on the cusp of passage, California's high-profile bill died in the State Assembly several days later in the face of industry opposition.]* New York has legislation on Governor Hochul's desk. New Jersey has taken a small step in this direction.

Gazette: Given all the state action, do you think that national-level legislation would be productive?

Owens: I think it might be more important now, because the variation at the state level is pretty considerable. The lottery of where the stork drops you in the US shouldn't determine whether or not a company can rip you off. I'm also supportive of privacy protections upstream, so that companies can't gather that much data about you in the first place.

Zhang: If the government really wants to act, the action should be on the data collection side. There has to be consent: Do I want you to share the information with anybody else, and can you keep the information forever, and all that. I think there is already law on all that. Nowadays, you see a lot of apps ask, *Do you want me to track what you do?* And you just say no, right? You have a choice. Number two, it is really very important to maintain transparency. The reason is that firms need data about consumers to serve them, and consumers need good information about firms in order to vote with their dollars. I think the government should mandate that if you do personalized pricing, you better let people know. And that way, firms would justify why they're doing it. I really like what

New York does: it basically says that if you use personal data to set a price, you better let a consumer know.

Owens: The current New York law was a mere disclosure law. If you log into a website or an app, a firm that uses your data to set pricing has to include a little disclosure that says, *This price was set by an algorithm using your data.* It's a really good first step, but doesn't go far enough.

Zhang: If you go ahead and ban personalized pricing, I think inadvertently you're going to create an affordability issue, simply because firms are going to offer less discounts, and less frequently.

Owens: The economy isn't functioning in a way that's maximally advantageous to society or to consumers. While nickel-and-diming consumers all day long might not be illegal, I think we do have to ask the question of whether that's the society and the economy we want to live in, and whether that's what we should be rewarding—whether in the business school at Wharton, or in the boardrooms where CEOs and CMOs can brag about the new technologies they're bringing to bear to do personalized pricing to extract more from consumers.

In the book, I give a lot of examples of ways in which I think the rip-off has been reinvented by technology companies, but what John said earlier is right. A lot of these practices have been around for a really long time. I just think new technologies are supercharging them, making them harder to spot, and coinciding with this period in which high prices are particularly concerning for American families. And look, we just lived through a once-in-50-year period of high inflation. I think the conversation about prices is going to be with us for at least another decade. The debate that John and I just had, the topics that we're thinking about are going to be flourishing debates in Congress, in business schools and universities, but also among the American public. I think we're really just in the beginning phases.

WITHIN OUR BODIES: A THIRD WATERWAY

The discovery of a circulatory system called the interstitium that operates “in between” the lymphatic and cardiovascular systems has profound implications for the diagnosis and treatment of many conditions—and may forge new links between Western, Eastern, and other traditional medicines.

By Mary Ann Meyers

Rebecca Wells grew up in New England—in Northampton, Massachusetts, a town that lies alongside the Connecticut River; a few miles north in the village of Millers Falls, named for the adjacent river; and in Cumberland, Rhode Island, on the banks of the Blackstone River. The waterways of her childhood and the Quinipiac River running through New Haven, where she lived as a young adult, were once significant for transport, trade routes carrying canoes of American Indians for centuries before European colonization.

They serve as a handy metaphor for the internal channels in the human body: the lymphatic system, the cardiovascular system, and a third system, recently described and characterized in groundbreaking work by Wells, a professor of medicine at the Perelman School of Medicine, and Neil Theise, a pathologist at New York University. Known as the *interstitium*, it is a

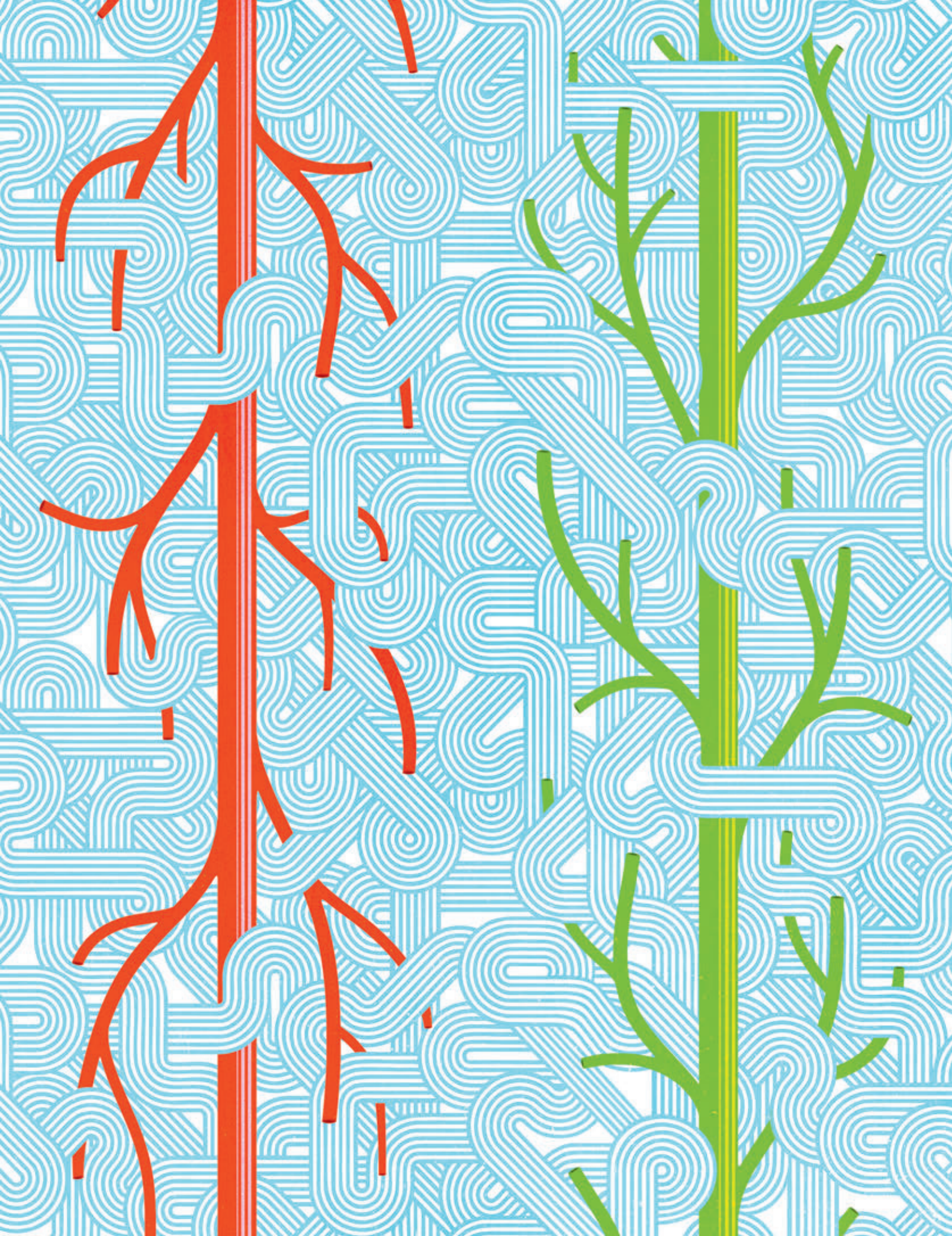
fluid-filled conduit, akin to groundwater, constantly in motion and surrounding and connecting all parts of the body, including the blood vessels and lymphatics. Their finding greatly expands our understanding of human anatomy and holds promise for advances in the diagnosis and treatment of cancers and other diseases as well as to an increase in knowledge of growth, maturation, and aging.

The existence of the lymphatic and cardiovascular systems has been recognized since the 17th century. The lymphatic system, which removes excess fluid from tissue and returns it to the bloodstream, was first described by Italian physician Gaspare Aselli, who performed a vivisection on a dog in 1622 and recounted his observation in a report published posthumously five years later. Aselli anticipated the monumental discovery of the systematic circulation of the blood through arteries, capillaries,

and veins—the cardiovascular system—made in 1628 by the English physician and anatomist William Harvey.

The groundwork for Wells and Theise's investigation was laid at the end of the 19th century by an American anatomist and pathologist, Franklin Pierce Mall. In research as a postgraduate student at the University of Leipzig and then as a professor at the new Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Mall discovered that a network of very thin and delicately woven fibers, made of a complex of protein molecules, forms a tissue framework supporting all the cells of each intestinal organ.

Florence Sabin, Mall's postdoctoral student and one of the 20th century's foremost anatomists, contributed significantly to several of his historic findings. As a Hopkins medical student nine decades after Sabin entered the school's fourth class, Wells knew of her illustrious predecessor—the first woman elected to



the National Academy of Sciences—but years would pass before she drew on Mall's work in her own collaboration with Theise.

Wells had majored in molecular biophysics and biochemistry at Yale, graduating *magna cum laude* in 1983, and chose Hopkins for medical school because, as she put it, “it seemed like the right fit.” Her residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston was followed by an eight-year stretch of research and clinical fellowships, first in nephrology and then in gastroenterology, at Brigham and at Harvard Medical School. For three years during this period, she was also a visiting scientist at the Whitehead Institute, considered the world's leading institution for research in molecular biology and genetics.

In laboratories at these institutions, Wells took a deep dive into the complexities of several proteins, the macromolecules that build, repair, and regulate nearly every system in the human body, supporting structure, metabolism, immunity, and communication. Her papers, now numbering more than 150, detailed her investigations of a surface protein found in many mammal tissues that plays a role in cell activation and growth; another protein's involvement in the movement of amino acids across cell membranes and its role in human inherited disease; and the chromosomal location of a gene expressed primarily in the segment of the kidneys responsible for reabsorbing glucose in the bloodstream.

Wells next spent four years on the faculty of Yale Medical School before joining the Perelman School faculty as an assistant professor in 2002. Promoted to full professor in 2017, she became vice chief for research in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology two years later. In 2021 she was named codirector of the Center for Engineering MechanoBiology, a National Science Foundation-funded center with the goal of developing a research and educational program integrating concepts in the physical sciences, engineering, and biology.

Wells's lab studies the intersection between the extracellular matrix (the scaffolding that holds tissues together) and the response of tissues to physical force in the context of wound healing, using the liver and biliary tree (a branching network of bile ducts connected to the liver, gallbladder, and small intestine) as model tissues. This work led to an ongoing project examining the mechanics of the scarred (fibrotic and cirrhotic) liver and the impact of scarring on the development of liver cancer, as well as projects on the pediatric disease biliary atresia. Her most cited article focuses on the resistance to deformation (mechanical rigidity) of extracellular tissues, a factor that influences cell behavior and disease progression. Wells describes the goal of her research as developing “a unified and comprehensive model of liver and biliary fibrosis”—the gradual scarring of these tissues caused by long-term injury.

Wells and Theise first met when she was a junior faculty member at Yale and Theise was on sabbatical from NYU working in the lab next to hers. They became friends with shared professional interests, but it wasn't until 2016 that they began to collaborate. Theise and a colleague, David Carr-Locke (also a former colleague of Wells), were exploring an unusual structure Carr-Locke observed in the bile duct. A leader in the field of therapeutic endoscopy who is now professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine, Carr-Locke had used confocal endomicroscopy, a powerful new technique for examining real-time microscopic and histological features inside the body that combines the benefits of endoscopy (a procedure to examine internal bodily structures at close range) with that of laser microscopy.

Theise had questions about the fluid-filled structure he thought he observed, and asked Wells for help. He brought some slides to her lab at Penn for her group to examine using yet another microscopy technique that pro-

duces high-resolution images of biological tissues without the need for fluorescent dyes or stains. Wells says she still remembers the two of them sitting in a completely dark room with Gordon Ruthel, the technical director of the Penn School of Veterinary Medicine's microscopy core, and cheering when the images came on the screen showing the detailed architecture of collagen in tiny canals that connect some of the organs in the digestive system.

Wells and Theise first detailed their discovery in a 2018 article in *Nature*. The two scientists, along with Carr-Locke, gastroenterologist Petros Benias (co-chief of endoscopy at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School), and other colleagues reported on the structure and distribution of a hitherto unrecognized channel in human tissues that appeared to be a widespread, fluid-filled network of collagen and elastin fibers—proteins that work together to provide strength, support, and elasticity to tissues throughout the body.

Using confocal endomicroscopy to enhance resolution and contrast, they observed a previously underappreciated fine mesh of fibers in sinuses, the digestive and urinary systems, the skin's middle layer, and the supportive soft tissues around major airways leading to the lungs, blood vessels, and muscles. They dubbed it the *interstitium* because it's between things—a layer between the surface and something deeper. In essence, what they saw, as Wells put it, was a “fluid-filled highway with significant roles in lymph production (the fluid flowing through interstitial spaces enters lymphatic vessels of the lymph system) and potential impacts on cancer, edema, and fibrosis.”

The natural movements of the body—the pulsing of heart and blood vessels, the rhythmic squeezing that moves food through the digestive tract, the flexing of muscles—appeared to push fluid through the network of spaces supported by a lattice of connective tissue proteins. Their initial study raised for its



authors a multitude of questions: What were the characteristics and drivers of the fluid flow? Were signals emitted during the process? Did the interstitium, reactively distensible or compressible, act as a shock absorber protecting tissue from stress-related damage? How and why do cancer cells spread through these spaces? Could direct sampling of the interstitial fluid be a diagnostic tool?

At the least, their findings necessitated reconsideration of many of the normal functional activities of different organs and of disordered fluid dynamics in the setting of disease. Most importantly, their hypothesis was that the pattern they observed, with 21st century tools unavailable to Mall and Sabin, suggested that widespread layers of the body thought to be solid connective tissues instead contained fluid-filled spaces, comprising a previously unknown third fluid-filled system in the body. But more work was

needed to show that these spaces were continuous throughout the body.

Tattoos gave Wells and Theise the experimental evidence they needed to confirm that the interstitial spaces in the human body are unbroken networks across tissues and organs. Their landmark study published in *Communications Biology*, an open-access journal of *Nature*, described research using human tissue samples that showed non-biological tracers (tattoo ink and silver) injected into the interstitial spaces of the colon or applied to the skin penetrated deeper than expected and could be tracked into adjacent tissue compartments and tissue, indicating connectivity. Wells's team had previously identified hyaluronic acid, a large and water-associated chain of sugar molecules that is a major component of the matrix outside of cells, in interstitial spaces. Theise was able to have tissues stained to show hyaluronic acid connections with-

Tattoos gave Wells and Theise the experimental evidence they needed to confirm that the interstitial spaces in the human body are unbroken networks across tissues and organs.

in and between tissues and surrounding nerves and vessels, confirming the presence of a continuous fluid-filled matrix.

The reason no one had seen these spaces before, Wells and Theise agree, is because of the common practice in medicine of examining “fixed” tissue, meaning that when tissue is prepared for microscopic viewing, it has been treated with chemicals and dehydrated, collapsing the connective protein meshwork surrounding once fluid-filled compartments of tissue and making them appear solid, an assumption about the nature

of human anatomy that held for decades. Looking at live tissue with confocal endomicroscopy upended the old view. Wells, Theise, and their colleagues recognized that the fluid-filled spaces in living tissue corresponded with “cracks” seen in the solid areas of fixed tissue sections on microscope slides.

It led to what Wells called “the recognition of a continuous third system throughout the body”—a previously unmapped waterway, perhaps more comparable to the sponge-like system of groundwater than a river but clearly connected to the river-like networks of blood vasculature and lymphatics. The interstitium wasn’t passive, simply holding tissues together; rather, as Wells said, “it guided cells into their proper anatomic organization,” serving as a vast communication network in the body that is four times the size of the cardiovascular system in terms of fluid flow.

The implications of the discovery of the previously unknown feature of human anatomy made by Wells and her colleagues are potentially profound. Their findings could increase our understanding of a variety of conditions and diseases, from how scars form after injury to what triggers some aspects of Crohn’s disease to how certain cancers and infections spread. Further studies are needed to determine the details of the interstitial route taken by some migrating tumor cells as they metastasize to distant parts of the body.

Because of its pervasiveness, Wells knows that the interstitium is “a necessary compartment through which cells enter and exit nearly all tissues” in many human malignancies. She and others are developing ways of determining how malignant and infectious diseases might alter interstitial spaces, including what molecular signals might be sent along the internal pathway, which Wells has come to see as a “signaling hub,” and the means of blocking those that lead inevitably to further tissue and organ damage. Wells is hopeful that further research on the

interstitial network will lead to a better understanding of disease trajectories but also to a better understanding of human development and aging.

The developmental origins of the interstitial spaces are not fully understood, but the pathways they form are one of the earliest structural developments in the body. Moreover, the fact that simple multicellular organisms—for example, the jellyfish-like hydra—have anatomical structures with similarities to the interstitium, Wells notes, “is consistent with the interstitium being the most primitive of the three circulatory networks.” It probably arose early in the evolution of animals. As she and Theise wrote in a recent article in the *Annual Review of Cell and Developmental Biology*, “function as a multicellular organism, not just an aggregate of cells, requires an extracellular means of transmitting intercellular signals.” Given the resemblance of mammalian interstitial spaces to continuous extracellular spaces in plant tissues, including plant cell walls, moreover, they suggested that the latter might have arisen by convergent evolution whereby unrelated species evolve similar traits or adaptations in response to similar environmental pressures.

As a matter of human cultural evolution, particularly cross-cultural exchange, the researchers are intrigued by the possible link that their description of the interstitium suggests between traditional and nontraditional Western medicine and, especially, between Western and Eastern medicine. The worldwide attention paid to the papers Wells and her collaborators have published on their ongoing studies is opening up a more extensive conversation about the connections between Eastern and Western understandings of physiology.

Wells notes that amidst all the accolades they received from their scientific peers were “observations from some in the osteopathic and integrative health communities that their findings weren’t

really so novel after all, as the interstitial network was simply a concept not captured in allopathic medicine.” These views “were not far off the mark,” she says, recalling that “in medical school, we threw away connective tissue as not worth our attention. It was considered a biological byproduct. Modern medicine is guided by cell doctrine,” she explains. The theory is a foundational principle in biology stating that all living organisms are composed of cells, that the cell is the basic structural and functional unit of life, and that all cells arise from preexisting cells. “It left little room for the idea that there might be a continuous and multiscale network of open channels filled with fluid,” Wells says.

But prior to the invention of the microscope in the mid-17th century, there was a debate that went back to Greek philosophy and medicine about how the body’s parts were organized and how they functioned together that included hypothesized intermediate spaces or regions that are perhaps best understood as a concept of “between-ness.” Physicians associated with the medical writing attributed to Hippocrates generally understood the body as a network—cavities, channels, pores, membranes, vessels—facilitating the movement of air, blood, phlegm, bile, or other humors. These spaces were hidden but not fully empty; rather, defined by their contents, and in the view of Greek physicians, integral to the body’s mechanics and physiology. Surviving fragments of the fifth century BCE works of Alcmaeon of Croton, the first recorded practitioner of human dissection and one of the earliest figures to integrate natural philosophy with medical practice, helped establish the idea that anatomical function depends upon connections through intermediate pathways. Plato presents the body as intrinsically porous, and his famous and enigmatic concept of *chōra* is viewed by many modern scholars not as a receptacle but as a kind of “generative between” through which everything comes into existence. Not merely anatom-

ical features, the intermediate spaces provided a key to both a medical and a philosophical understanding of the human form and how the body functioned as a living and unified whole.

In our own day, osteopathic philosophy and practice are based on the idea of communication between bodily systems and the interrelationship of structure and function. Osteopathy not only emphasizes the body's self-healing capacity but also the interconnection of body systems. Osteopaths recognize that fasciae (one part of the interstitial system) not only delineate anatomic features but believe they simultaneously connect the entire organism into one functional unit.

But whatever the discovery of the interstitium may come to suggest about a possible new linkage between the allopathic and osteopathic schools of Western evidence-based medicine, the correlates to the ancient Chinese practice of acupuncture are provoking widespread interest. Wells notes that "the response to our work of some experts in Chinese medicine, was to shout: 'That's what we have been talking about!'"

Most historians believe acupuncture originated in China about 3,000 years ago. It spread to Korea in the sixth century, then to Japan, and later to Europe and the United States. In the 20th century, as acupuncture was gaining acceptance in Western countries, practitioners sometimes set aside spiritual elements that appeared to conflict with scientific knowledge and focused solely on the practice of inserting one or more thin needles into specific sites on the body surface for therapeutic purposes. Although most commonly used for pain relief, acupuncture may also be applied to treat a range of conditions, generally alongside other therapies.

Early acupuncture theory drew on concepts central to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), such as *qi*, usually translated as 'energy'. *Qi* was believed to flow from the body's primary organs to the "superficial" tissues—the skin, muscles,

tendons, bones, and joints—through channels called meridians. Wells cites a study in which fluorescein dye injected into the forearms of volunteers at an acupuncture point "tracked along the meridian lines in a pattern that," she says, "maps very well to the interstitium."

Chinese scientists have suggested other ways in which traditional Chinese medicine may correspond to the interstitial system. One hypothesis is that the classical TCM concept of the "Sanjiao-Mocou" system is analogous. In TCM theory, the enigmatic tri-part San Jiao (Triple Energizer or Triple Burner) is regarded as the

"The response to our work of some experts in Chinese medicine, was to shout: 'That's what we have been talking about!'"

largest of the six Fu-organs, all of which are considered yang organs, meaning they are hollow and primarily involved in the transmission, transformation, and excretion of food, fluids, and waste. The San Jiao has been related to the interstitium of the visceral organs in terms of both its structure and function, according to Wells, and possibly even its developmental origin. It is considered a "waterway" like the interstitial channels. It is thought to have the ability to influence other organs and overall health, mainly through the free movement of *qi*. As scientists at China Medical University in Shenyang wrote in *Frontiers in Physiology*: "The very fluidity and openness of these contemporary anatomical models—their departure from rigid, preexisting categorical boundaries—may make them well suited to serve as a conceptual bridge between Western anatomical science and the holistic, systems-based framework of TCM."

Skilled people involved in shamanistic healing practices and aboriginal traditional medicine also recognize an affin-

ity with their own ways of understanding the body when the interstitium is described to them. "The links are speculative," Wells says, "and we need to learn more from those who have non-Western perspectives on healing. But I like to think we are moving toward a more global way of interpreting what we are doing as scientists exploring human anatomy. Maybe our work can create a kind of cultural interstitium."

In any case, it is forcing Wells and her colleagues to reevaluate and integrate existing data on many aspects of anatomy and their relevance to health and disease, including metastasis. High on the list of new questions for which they are seeking answers are ones about fluid flow. The time scale and distance of fluid movement in interstitial spaces, its velocity and diffusion, could be relevant to cell behavior, including of cancerous cells that evade normal regulatory signals. How, Wells asks, does interstitial flow connect to and interact with lymphatic and blood circulation? Will learning the details enable us to detect cancer and other diseases early and maybe predict their course?

Despite the immensity of scientific knowledge that exists about our physical selves, the picture remains profoundly incomplete. Wells is trying to add detail about structure and function—knowledge of human bodies that are, as the awe-struck psalmist wrote long ago, so "fearfully and wonderfully made." As we have learned over and over again, it is basic biomedical research, the relentless search to fill the gaps in our understanding, combined with clinical observation, that has led time and again to future cures. From Old Chatham, New York, a hamlet in Columbia County between Kinderhook Creek and Stony Kill, Wells commutes to her lab at Penn, a few blocks from the Schuylkill River, to explore the intricate design and dynamic processes of the anatomical systems that are essential to life and health.

Mary Ann Meyers Gr'76 is a longtime contributor to the *Gazette*.

PRESENT AT THE CREATION

Creation Entertainment cofounder and CEO

Gary Berman went where no one had gone before
in the expanding universe of pop culture fan conventions.

By Jonathan Takiff

Even at 70 years old and after 55 years in the business, Gary Berman W'77 is still as excited as the people of all ages who flock to his company's fan conventions—some 2,000 of them so far since he and a neighborhood pal started the venture as teenagers. “A lot of guys my age are in retirement mode, but why should I give this up? I’m having too much fun, working and developing new projects,” says Berman, the cofounder and CEO of Creation Entertainment.

Creation Entertainment celebrates all manner of pop culture, from superhero films and comic books to rock and roll and pro wrestling. While their conventions (fan cons, for short) are mostly staged in hotels, the team has also hosted gatherings on cruise ships and taken fans on bus tours in Canada and England to visit sites where their favorite movies and TV shows are filmed.

In just the past year, Creation has debuted a star-studded *Salute to Broadway* fan con in Lake Las Vegas and *Page, Screen and Everything In-Between*, defined in promotional materials as “A

Weekend of Romance in Book to Screen Adaptations” with lots of handsome hunks and pretty women from TV series in attendance. (The musicals convention underperformed—wrong location choice, Berman concedes. But many hearts fluttered at the *Page, Screen* party.) Also relatively new to their repertoire is *RescueVerse: A Salute to TV's First Responders*, featuring stars and fans of the danger dramas *9-1-1*, *The Rookie*, *Chicago Fire*, and *Fire Country*. Berman seems especially proud of his not-exactly-show-biz hit with the *Los Angeles Fitness Expo*, an inspiration that “came to me when I was doing rehab at the gym.” Expo visitors get to try out gear and cheer on competitions between the nation's leading body builders.

But Creative Entertainment's core business centers on fan conventions celebrating the science fiction, supernatural, and horror genres—which unite the rabid followers of the films and TV series, graphic novels and comics, and merchandise associated with their favorite franchises. Notably, the company has had a long and profitable relationship with the venerable *Star Trek* franchise, which

has been spinning off new shows and movie sequels and reboots for decades now. Although NBC famously cancelled the original show of the 1960s featuring William Shatner's Captain Kirk and Leonard Nimoy's Mr. Spock on the Starship Enterprise after three seasons (short of its “five-year mission”), it lived on in syndication and thrives to this day.

Once upon a time, the type of content Creative Entertainment trades in was considered outlier stuff, with appeal primarily to the nerdosphere. But those days are long gone. “Most of what we're celebrating at our conventions is now very much mainstream entertainment,” says Berman's work associate Ann Marie Segal C'06. “Look at the top 10 list of the biggest grossing movies of all time. It's dominated by superhero and sci-fi epics: *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, *Avengers: Endgame*, *Avatar*, *Black Panther*. ... And with the rise of Silicon Valley, let's face it, haven't the geeks won?” Among the big names who've shown up at Creation Entertainment conventions are George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Wes Craven, Guillermo del Toro, Jack Nicholson, Vincent Price, Ray Bradbury, and Isaac Asimov.



“Mostly for laughs,” Berman recently asked an AI assistant to share what it knew about his business. “AI said we’d ‘pioneered the modern fan convention as a gathering where fans of a show, genre, or hobby meet to chat, attend panels, see creators, trade merch, and often dress up as their favorite characters.’” Berman’s bot bestie also noted that Creation Entertainment “hosts the world’s largest *Star Trek* fan convention, holds official rights for series like *Twilight* and *Stargate SG-1*, [and] led the way with comic book conventions in the ‘80s.” But perhaps most important to Berman, it concluded that Creation was “the first to turn fan conventions into a viable business, coming up with the commercial model for events—the good practices, the show structuring and content, the pricing for activities and the concept of a traveling fan convention that bounces from city to city, like a touring Broadway show.”

“So who am I to argue with all that?” Berman says.

What the AI tool didn’t share was that Berman and his lifelong Queens, New York, neighbor/pal Adam Malin were mere sprites—just 14 years old—when they kickstarted the fan convention as we know it today.

How did it come to pass? Flashback to Manhattan in 1970. The young Gary and Adam are checking out the New York Comic Art convention—one of the first ever held in the city.

“There wasn’t much to it—just a bunch of guys hovering around merchandise tables, buying and selling comic books,” Berman remembers. “But then it got us thinking: *Hey, we could do a comics convention better than that!* We could dress up the space. Bring in celebrity guest speakers. Run talent contests. Show films all night. Encourage fans to come in costumes, honoring their favorite characters,” a gambit that would come to be known as *cosplay*. “We could have fun.”

Not long after, they ventured to the New Yorker Hotel. After scoping out the

place, they cornered a manager and asked how much it would cost to rent some meeting rooms. “The guy looked at us *kids* like we were crazy and threw out a rental figure—\$800—that he thought would scare us away,” Berman chortled.

Not a chance. The two budding entrepreneurs had already accumulated most of that room ransom with profits from other childhood ventures. “I’d been collecting and selling old coins,” Berman recalls. “Adam had a paper route and was trading comic books—he was a real expert on that subject. And we’d both done very well with a miniature golf course that we set up on a vacant lot near our apartment building—until a mean neighbor took out her garden hose and washed it away.”

“The guy looked at us *kids* like we were crazy and threw out a rental figure—\$800—that he thought would scare us away.” Not a chance.

Adam’s dad (a commercial artist) agreed to cosign the rental agreement for the convention space and coughed up additional startup bucks. Gary wisely placed classified ads for the event in the back of comic books. Adam somehow managed to persuade Marvel Comics illustrator/storyteller Jim Steranko, famous for his work on *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* in the 1960s, to be their special guest.

Launched in 1971 on Thanksgiving weekend, “when kids were home from school,” their *Creation Comic Art Convention* pulled in 800 people at \$1.50 a ticket, managing to turn a profit. “We were on our way,” says Berman.

By the time Berman landed at Penn in the fall of 1973, the pair had executed two more, bigger comic book shows. They’d also introduced “a pretty popular fanzine about comic art that sold thousands of copies,” he adds.

But Berman downplayed his business experience in his college classes, keeping it a secret from professors—even the one teaching what he recalls as Wharton’s new and then only course in entrepreneurship. Friends at Penn knew what he was up to, though, and were very supportive. “There were times when I thought Gary should be the one in front of the class, teaching,” says his classmate and lifelong friend, Alan Berkowitz W’77 WG’82.

Berman’s dorm room in High Rise East doubled as the company’s headquarters. “I remember walking into Gary’s dorm room with dinner I’d made—meatballs and spaghetti—and there was nowhere to put the food down or sit,” Berkowitz recalls. “Gary had poster boards spread out all over the place. He was pasting together advertising layouts and display materials for his next fan con—this was in the pre-computer-graphics age—and gabbing long distance with Adam Malin, who was in school at Stony Brook. Later I realized it was like Michael Dell selling personal computers from his dorm room when he was in college. Pretty much the same thing.”

Other classmates also traded resources and expertise. Berman recalls helping one develop an end-of-term project for his entrepreneurship class, and “in return he helped me with statistics and data science, which came harder to me.” For his own project in that entrepreneurship final, Berman remembers proposing “a restaurant that only served desserts. It’s a real thing now.”

All the while, Berman’s and Malin’s side hustles continued to grow in stature and popularity, with more grandiose branding names. *Big Comicon Creation. Creation Comic Book & Pop Culture Convention*. Attendance climbed to 5,000 for the three-day event they staged during their senior year over Thanksgiving weekend 1976 at New York City’s Statler Hilton. *The New York Times* headlined its coverage “2 Collegians Get an ‘A’ in Comic Book.”

Berman (second from left) and partner Adam Malin (second from right) with *Cobra Kai* creators Josh Heald, Jon Hurwitz, and Hayden Schlossberg; program for

Creation Entertainment's first comic book convention in 1971 (admission \$1.50 a day); and a convention mashup of fan favorites from the 1980s.



It helped that these pop culture celebrants were riding a big wave of interest in comics, which were becoming more sophisticated and reaching a wider audience than in earlier decades. Modern comic book history is generally broken down to a golden age running from the late 1930s to the 1950s, which saw the introduction of familiar figures like Superman, Batman, Captain America, and Wonder Woman, followed by a silver age in the 1960s and a bronze age starting in the 1970s. Comics in the latter eras offered a more sophisticated breed of superheroes and villains. These were characters who reflected the times, paraphrased Shakespeare, fell in love, suffered psychological stress, and even admitted failure. The artwork was far more daring and imaginative too, breaking out of the comic book panel, surrealistically blowing minds, and helping fuel the Pop Art movement. So the books had become socially acceptable for “grown-ups” to read, analyze, and trade—with early, landmark titles by the leading comics publishers Marvel and DC fetching thousands of bucks at auctions.

Once graduated, Berman and Malin plunged deeper into their alternate uni-

verse. “We started staging comic shows in multiple cities,” Berman says. “We got into retail. Dedicated comic book shops had become a thing, supplanting the traditional newsstand distribution system.

At one point there were 3,000 in the country and we had four ourselves. The stores became our Ticketmaster, selling tickets to our shows.”

In 1979, the pair experienced an epiphany, Berman recalls. “We’d invited Walter Koenig—Ensign Chekov on the original *Star Trek* series—to a comic convention. People went wild, swamped the room, much more excited than they ever were for visiting comic illustrators, inkers, and writers.”

So the duo started to shift gears, adding new fan cons dedicated to *Star Trek*, the British hit *Doctor Who* as it gained traction in the US, and other sci-fi TV shows that brought comic-book-style characters to life. Their star-studded enterprises really blasted off with the arrival of the follow-up series *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (TNG) in 1987. TNG premiered in



syndication, meaning that it was bought and broadcast (as management saw fit) by individual, local TV stations rather than being locked into a weekly time slot on a national network. “We could now efficiently buy TV spots just in the markets where we were holding conventions,” Berman says.

At the peak of *Star Trek*’s popularity in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Creation Entertainment was organizing upwards of 110 *Star Trek* conventions a year, often running three or more in a single weekend. “We’d have William Shatner in New York and Leonard Nimoy in New Haven on a Saturday. Then they’d flip, trade locations on Sunday.”

Eventually the Hollywood community figured out that the hardcore fans who frequented the cons were ripe for promotions about upcoming sequels and primed to buy show-related merchandise—action figures, coffee mugs, all kinds of goodies to take home. “Paramount granted us a merch license, initially just for *Star Trek* cast photos,” Berman says. “Then other studios noticed and started to do the same. We really jumpstarted a huge business in collectibles.”

Last summer's sold-out *Star Trek* convention in Las Vegas was the biggest ever, says Berman, marking 60 years of the never-say-die franchise, which to date has spawned about two dozen different TV series and movies. It also marked Creation Entertainment's 25th *Star Trek* Las Vegas convention.

You can get a pretty good sense of what a *Star Trek* convention is like (and a fleeting glimpse of the promoters) by watching William Shatner's shot-on-location, 2012 documentary *Get a Life!* Yes, the title was derived from a classic *Saturday Night Live* sketch wherein an exasperated Shatner puts down a trivia-obsessed Trekkie. "But he's never really uttered that line at one of our conventions," muses Berman. "And we've never found Shatner difficult to work with at all."

While *Star Trek* has proven an exceptionally stable subject for Creation events, other fan conventions themed on TV series and film franchises have waxed and waned in popularity. Past partners have included famous and niche properties such as *Xena: The Warrior Princess*, *The X-Files*, *Stargate*, *Twilight*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Game of Thrones*. Relatively late into its run on PBS stations, the BBC series *Doctor Who* became a huge draw, sparking 42 Creation fan cons just between 1984 and 1986. Much more recently, *Cobra Kai*, a martial arts comedy-drama that serves as a sequel to the *Karate Kid* films of the 1980s, earned two Creation Entertainment showcases in 2025 and 2026. Streamed on YouTube and Netflix from 2018 to 2025, the series was cocreated by Josh Heald W'00, Jon Hurwitz W'00, and Hayden Schlossberg ["Arts Blog," May 2019].

Pickup by a streaming service can revive a dormant series and its stars' careers, making them fan con-friendly again. The same goes for new projects undertaken by a series star or a sudden surge in social media attention. "We've helped with the latter," Berman says. "We

know of at least one actor whose character was about to be written out of a series. After she came to a convention and got fans talking her up online, the showrunner put her back in for the next season."

At present, Creation Entertainment's other hot properties are *Supernatural*, which follows two monster-hunting brothers, and *The Vampire Diaries* (about real and vampire teens in a small town, based on a book series of the same title). Although the multiseason shows have concluded production, both keep on growing their fanbases via streaming. "And their cast members love coming to our conventions," notes Ann Marie Segal. "They get a great response, and for some, we're now their major source of income. For *Supernatural* costar Jensen Ackles, it's also a chance to showcase his considerable talents as a singer and guitar player—which delights Gary."

"Live music has always been an integral part of our conventions, part of the major entertainment component that separates us from the competition," she adds. "We usually have a house band like The Roddenberries"—whose name derives from *Star Trek*'s creator/producer Gene Roddenberry, and which bills itself as "the galaxy's premier sci-fi party band"—"to entertain with original material, covers and song parodies. The band also provides backup at our talent contest."

For Creation Entertainment's regional *Trek* 60 convention being held in Philadelphia on November 14–15—the company's first foray into Philly to celebrate *Star Trek*—general admission is \$50 for a one-day pass and \$99 for the full weekend. Various special packages range from \$229 to \$850.

While cast members appearing at conventions don't generally get a share of ticket sales, series regulars do profit handsomely by pocketing fees from fan autographs and photo ops. An 8x10 glossy photo of you with a show favorite will run you \$40 to \$100, depending on the actor's importance to the show, and a group pic

with several characters might cost between \$90 and \$250. A celebrity autograph goes for about \$80. The talent quotes the exact price when you step up to the table and present what they're autographing.

How about series stars and the legendary, behind-the-camera masterminds? What do they earn for speeches, panel discussions, celebrity breakfast appearances and such? Berman is guarded on that subject, but he concedes that "the sky's the limit" for headlining talent at the larger, corporate-run fan conventions like ComiCon, FanExpo, and Galaxy Expo, whose practices he refuses to emulate.

"The real problem there is the overcrowding," he explains. "Those other shows are held in huge convention centers. Daily visitor counts number in the tens of thousands. The aisles and escalators are dangerously packed, pickpockets prowl. Worst of all, ticketholders have to enter a raffle just to score a seat for celebrity-driven events. We respect our fans, would never sell more admissions than we have seats to accommodate them, with our biggest ballrooms seating about 6,500. We don't want to run the biggest conventions, just the best."

"Gary is a very caring guy," says Segal, a former medical doctor who "gave up the stress" and found comfort in this fan culture world. "He treats everyone well."

"Our fan conventions are inclusive, offer a welcoming environment to everyone," Berman concludes. "Many a friendship has been started here, as people share their common interests, their passions. We see a surprising number come back, even from distant locations—Germany, Japan, Australia. And we hear a lot from professionals in the entertainment industry—rival fan con promoters; the *Superman* film director and head of DC Studios James Gunn—that they were inspired to jump into this world after attending our conventions. So we must be doing something right."

Jonathan Takiff C'68 writes on consumer tech, lifestyle, and entertainment.



Calendar

Annenberg Center

pennlivearts.org

Nov. 1 Niladri Kumar

Nov. 5–7 Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Nov. 4 Béla Fleck

Nov. 15 Handel at Home

Nov. 20–21 Compagnie Hervé Koubi

Nov. 22 Hot Peas 'N Butter

Nov. 22 Louis Cato

Dec. 6 Isaiah J. Thompson

Dec. 11–12 A Very Swing Out Holiday

Dec. 11–13 Sister's Christmas

Catechism

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 through Feb. 21

Morris Arboretum and Gardens

morrisarboretum.org

Open daily, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Penn Libraries

library.upenn.edu

Celebrating the History of Medical Education at Penn

Through Nov. 9

Nursing the Revolution

Through Nov. 20

To Secure These Rights:

150 Years of Women at Penn

Through Dec. 11

"My Soul is Anchored in the Lord":

A Story of Marian Anderson and Florence Price

Through December

Penn Museum

penn.museum

Open Tues.–Sun., 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Nov 3 Adventure Mode Activated: A Minecraft-inspired program

Nov 14 Penn Museum Gala:

Eternal Egypt

Pennsylvania Hospital Museum

pahmuseum.pennmedicine.org

Open Wed.–Sun., 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Above: Painting by Saif Azzuz, *Ehotama yu haki (I love this land)*, 2026.

On view at the ICA through Sep. 12, 2027.

Photo courtesy of the artist and Anthony Meier, Mill Valley.

Tough Bark

With prolonged exposures and paper negatives, Alicia Fowler meditates on the resilience of city trees.



ing way down—to commune with the trees in and around Tompkins Square Park. The 10.5-acre green space, which boasts a venerable collection of American elms, is her neighborhood idyll. Fowler has also come to love many of the sidewalk trees that shade the blocks nearby, often by triumphing over concrete, metal, and other obstacles that hem them in.

Fowler, who is a photographer in her off hours and serves as a teaching assistant at the International Center of Photography, has long been drawn to trees. But for her latest project she tightened her focus to a five-block radius centered on the park, and paid additional homage to her centenarian subjects by reaching back in time for a photographic process that's older still—and that illuminates the little-known role of trees in the history of photography. Using a 4x5 pinhole camera and an equally old-fashioned vintage 4x5 press camera, Fowler created her black-and-white tree portraits by channeling ultra-long exposures—ranging from three minutes to an hour and a half—onto paper negatives made from mulberry trees.

Two years after the French inventor Louis Daguerre produced the first photographs in 1839, capturing images directly onto silvered sheets of copper, a

Like many Penn undergraduates, Alicia Fowler W'09 loved strolling beneath the leafy branches that arc over Locust Walk. When she needed a break from her marketing and public policy coursework at Wharton, she sought respite under the cedars, cypresses, oaks, and elms that surround the BioPond at James G. Kaskey Memorial Park. That forest garden provided

an escape from the pressure of academic life, a way to slow everything down.

These days Fowler is a senior brand strategist for Google Cloud in New York. "I'm on a screen all day long at work," she says, "and then on my phone all night." The pace can be relentless. But over the last year or so, the East Village resident has rekindled her love affair with the urban canopy by looking up—and slow-

Briton named William Henry Fox Talbot pioneered a method of creating negatives on chemical-coated paper, from which any number of positive images could then be printed. Although this innovation was swiftly replaced by glass negatives, which produced sharper images and remained the standard until the late-19th-century introduction of celluloid film, the paper negative “calotype” was the genesis of the negative-positive process that dominated photography until the digital age.



“Each print carries scars, not unlike the trees they represent.”

The digital age was exactly what Fowler sought to escape. “I really wanted a process that was almost antithetical to anything I did during my day job,” she says.

She got it. “Difficult to expose, fiddly to develop, and breathtakingly delicate once dry, these negatives have humbled me,” she reflects. Not that it was any easier when the negatives were still wet in the darkroom. “It’s kind of like dealing with a wet paper towel. You just have to be a lot more careful. You really have to be present in the moment.”

Her atmospheric images, printed on 16-by-20-inch warmtone paper and exhibited over the summer at Ninth Street Espresso—her local coffeeshop, one block east of Tompkins Square Park—also revisit several specimens photographed in the 1990s by the American artist Zoe Leonard, who was also drawn to urban trees, especially sidewalk trees straining against and sometimes engulfing ornamental fences and other barriers to their growth. (Leonard, coincidentally, is the 2026–2027 Keith L. and Katherine S. Sachs Visiting Professor at the Weitzman School of Design this academic year.)

Fowler embraced the idiosyncrasies inherent in the arcane technique she

chose. “From coating mistakes to the visible fibers of the washi paper negatives, each print carries scars, not unlike the trees they represent,” she wrote in a project description.

“I was just trying to get away from that sense of a perfect negative, a perfect print,” she says. The Tompkins Trees series “still felt like photographs, but something was a just a little different. There was a softness and romanticism to them.” From the ultralong exposures, to the painstaking darkroom work, to the documentation of another 30 years of growth since Leonard snapped some of these gnarled trunks and limbs, “this felt like I was operating on tree time.” —TP





Birthplace of a Nation

A new exhibition spotlights depictions of Philadelphia during early nationhood by some of the region's most significant artists.

Measuring 16-by-30 feet and hung high on a wall in the Arthur Ross Gallery, *An Apotheosis of Franklin* certainly lives up to its name. N.C. Wyeth (1882–1945) completed the mural in 1926, when the country was celebrating its 150th birthday. Commissioned by Franklin Savings Bank for its New York headquarters, the work positions Benjamin Franklin literally on a pedestal, surrounded by patriots like Thomas Jefferson,

George Washington, and Thomas Paine. A gauzy image of Independence Hall rises through the trees behind them.

Some five decades later, the University of Pennsylvania received the painting of its founder as a donation and it's been displayed in the atrium of Hill College House ever since. Now, bracketed by three other paintings of Franklin and facing a bust of him across the gallery, it holds pride of place in *At Liberty: Life*

in the City of Brotherly Love During the Early Republic (on view through December 13). The pieces join about 35 others culled from the Penn Art Collection and borrowed from Pennsylvania Hospital, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA), Winterthur, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Tied to America's 250th anniversary, the exhibition examines the iconic and the quotidian in Philadelphia before and after the revolution. "There's a particular focus on Franklin," says curator Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, the James and Nan Wagner Farquhar Professor of the History of Art, who became the gallery's inaugural faculty director in 2024. "As America's first international celebrity, he was not only pivotal to the era but he had a special relationship with the artists of the time, who produced about 60 contemporary portraits and sculptures of him."

To portray the more everyday aspects of Philadelphia during the early 19th century, Shaw assembled a selection of prints by William Birch (1755–1834) and his son Thomas (1779–1851) along with watercolors by John Lewis Krimmel (1786–1821). The 13 works on hand from the Birches emphasize an increasingly built-out city, populated with tiny Blacks, Native Americans, and solo women walking amidst grand structures such as Christ Church and the South Street Headhouse. Krimmel's pieces instead zero in on the citizenry, offering close-up portrayals of people of color, including an oyster vendor and a group of sawyers, going about their labors.

Krimmel has been a particular favorite of Shaw's since she discovered him in graduate school. "He's one of the first artists to paint Black people in the new United States," she says, "and is very interested in the interactions of Blacks and whites in all kinds of situations and settings."

Krimmel's 1813 oil *The Quilting Frolic* opens the exhibition. In it, a diverse group—including a cat, white children, and a Black fiddler—gathers at a mid-

dle-class Philadelphia home. A Krimmel watercolor displayed nearby, depicting another Black fiddler, is accompanied by a label exhorting viewers to consider how such portrayals may have “shaped later representations of African-American musicality.” The show makes frequent use of such labels to encourage viewers to link past and present.

A more high-tech attempt to refresh American antiquity is a video by Drexel University students that documents how they used artificial intelligence to sift through historic artifacts, portraits, drawings, and written descriptions to produce a 3D digital rendering of the lost museum of Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827), which was housed in Independence Hall from 1802 to 1827. Recreations of its con-



tents include models of species like the blue winged teal; devices like the physionotrace, an 18th-century French invention that rapidly traced a subject's profile to enable speedier production of inexpensive portraits; and even the shelves that would have showcased such objects.

Actual pieces produced by the famous Peale family are another highlight of *At Liberty*. “Few historical figures are as dynamic as Peale,” says Shaw. “He established one of the first museums in the United States, cofounded its first art school [PAFA], and raised both sons and daughters who became important artists in their own right. He was a naturalist who excavated mastodon bones and attempted to reconstruct these new world mammoths for the purpose of educating citizens, and he served in the army during the American Revolution.”

Charles is represented here by his 1785 portrait of Ben Franklin sporting bifocal glasses. Two oils by his son Rembrandt (1778–1860) are included: an 1838 portrait of Mendes I. Cohen, an early American traveler to the Holy Land; and an 1808 depiction of sculptor Jean Antoine Houdon. (A 1914 cast of a bust that Houdon created in 1778 of—who else?—Franklin appears elsewhere in the gallery.) Miniaturist James Peale (1749–1831), C.W.’s younger brother, shows up in a vitrine devoted to cut paper silhouettes and watercolors on ivory.

A second case displays a small sampling from a collection of snuff boxes amassed by David H. Badger WG’65. Carved from the fruit of the Brazilian coquilla tree, they were likely made and sold by sailors (many of African descent) who plied the waters between South America, Europe, and Africa. Adorned with glass eyes and

inlaid buttons, they often assume the figures of contemporary heroes like Franklin and George Washington.

Three other paintings of note merit mention. The pastoral *Primitive Landscape* and the turbulent *Storm at Sea* were painted by Benjamin West (1738–1820)—who famously taught both Charles and Rembrandt Peale. *Portrait of Sir Samuel Romilly*, a British abolitionist, is by Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828), yet another tutee of West’s. All three come from the Penn Collection and have recently benefited from conservation efforts.

“We really wanted to highlight the University’s collection,” says Shaw. “It’s a great opportunity to place these wonderful works where people can come and spend quality time with them instead of passing them in a hall or lobby.” The gallery has also developed a set of teaching resources for students and faculty. Additionally, special events include a Homecoming Weekend conversation (November 14) between Shaw; Sylvia Yount G’90 Gr’95, the Lawrence A. Fleischman Curator in Charge of the American Wing at the Met [“Alumni Profiles,” Mar|Apr 2025]; and Jill Vaum Rothschild G’14 Gr’21, associate curator of fine and decorative arts at Mount Vernon.

—JoAnn Greco

Boys II Gentlemen

Don't B-sharp, don't B-flat, just go viral.

Things have been changing for Adam Cohen. Not his job as a cardiologist or his loyalty to Philly sports teams. Not his golf game. But the number of people who are watching him.

The other day, a stranger approached when he was waiting to tee off. “A big, strong, athletic young guy says, ‘Hey, can I ask you a question?’” Cohen remembers. That question, to his shock, was *Do you sing?*

Thomas Cappola GM’05 is getting it, too. Coworkers have started high-fiving him as he walks through the wards at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. “They’re like, ‘Dr. Cappola, I had no idea! That’s awesome!’” he says.

Ever since their men’s a cappella group exploded on Instagram this year, Cohen, Cappola, and the other 17 members of the Tonics—quite a few of whom have links to Penn—are experiencing a level of unsought fame that only the internet can bestow.

Their most popular videos aren’t slick productions or even filmed concert numbers. They’re just clips of the guys, mostly dads and grandpas, mostly from the Main Line, standing in one of their kitchens, surrounded by snacks, and singing.

And yet a 40-second video of them casually rehearsing “Werewolves of London” has racked up 4.2 million views. Several more are close behind.

Until late last year, getting a couple hundred views on one of their videos was the norm. “We had, like, 300 followers in December,” says Cappola, the William Smilow Professor and chief of cardiovascular medicine at the Perelman School of Medicine. “Once we started posting our rehearsal videos, it blew up from there. By January, we had 30,000 followers.” As of July, it was more than 87,000.

Now Cohen, who completed his cardiology fellowship at Penn, finds himself saying things like “that one only has



On a social media platform where so many people are faking it, their videos feel deeply genuine.

370,000 views.” He immediately laughs in disbelief at his own words—“*only* 370,000 views? It’s insane. It’s nuts.”

No one quite knows how they got here. Was it that share from a Los Angeles-based influencer who found one of their videos? The comment and repost from Michael Bublé, the Canadian singer who has over 4 million followers himself? Some secret meddling from the Instagram algorithm gods?

Whatever the explanation, “it’s just been unexpected, because our group was sort of under the radar for many years,” Cappola says.

The Tonics formed in 1990 when George Gephart WG’79—new to the Philly area but an experienced a cappellist—“whined and grouched about the fact that while there was a big men’s chorale in Philly, there was no small guys’ a cappella group,” by his own account. His wife, Elizabeth “Pooh” Gephart CGS’79, encouraged him to start his own.

There were eight of them at first. Thirty-six years later, most of those original members are still singing with the group—though not Gephart, who moved to South Carolina in 2017 after retiring. “Of the things we left, this one was my biggest give-up,” he says. “It’s what I miss the most, because certainly I could not recreate it.”

He’s watched the Tonics ascend from a distance. “I have a tremendous amount of pride and excitement for the group—and even just a little tinge of jealousy,” he says.

From the outset, Gephart envisioned a low-commitment ensemble that would rehearse once a week (with summers off) and limit gigs to once a month. They’d admit only skillful singers. “Nobody is coming into the Tonics who has never

sung in an a cappella group,” he says. There are alumni of Yale’s Whiffenpoofs and Princeton’s Tigertones—but so far, no former Penn undergrads. “That is *wrong*,” Gephart says. “We need Penn singers in the Tonics.”

Still, the group found modest success around Philly, gigging at private parties, professional meetings, the occasional Phillies game, and even alongside Penn’s Quaker Notes and Off the Beat. Performing with high school and college groups “keeps us young, gives us fresh ideas, and shows our collective audiences that a cappella is a lifetime pursuit,” Gephart says.

That’s apparent in their videos, too, where current members span from age 28 to 77.

Richard Chung, senior medical director at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and a professor of pediatrics in the School of Medicine, is the newest addition. He joined shortly after the Tonics took off on Instagram.

“The nice thing about the group is that whatever people do during their day jobs, when they show up to rehearsal, they’re just another guy,” Chung says. “We leave our professional obligation and standing at the door.”

But this sudden Instagram fame—accompanied by a handful of articles, radio stories, and TV spots—has been a shock to all of them. Once mostly empty, the @tonics1990 comment sections now overflow with playful jabs.

On a video of the group rehearsing Bublê’s “Haven’t Met You Yet,” which shows one member still in his scrubs: “So THAT’S why my surgeon had to reschedule.”

On another of the group standing around singing “Is She Really Going Out with Him?”: “Bad day to be a Dr. Scholl’s insert.”

Other commenters have dubbed them “JP and the Morgans,” “Boys II Gentlemen,” and “LinkedIn Park.”

“I think the comments are absolutely hysterical,” Cohen says. “I don’t think it’s mean-spirited, and they’re not that far off. But ‘not a mortgage in sight’—that’s not true.”

Most of the guys have little interest in social media—Cappola recently joined Instagram solely to follow the Tonics—and they’re old enough to handle this strange taste of fame with both Dr. Scholl’s on the ground. They have kids (and in some cases, grandkids), well-rooted careers, and a sense of perspective born of middle age.

On a social media platform where so many people are faking it, their videos feel deeply genuine. They hold beer bottles and seltzer cans. They wear whatever they happened to put on that day. Partially eaten snacks fill whichever kitchen island they’re flanking.

“I think it’s refreshing to see something that is so stripped of any pretense or trying to sell anything,” says Edward Glassman GED’16, the group’s vocal percussionist. “It’s pretty raw. We record one take.”

Glassman fell in love with a cappella as a Philly-area high schooler when he saw Off the Beat perform and stuck with it through his time at Northwestern. “Most people stop singing a cappella when they’re 22 and they’re done with college,” he says. “It’s so funny that this little rare pocket exists.”

The group’s gig requests are now “awesome and out of control,” he adds. “We’re so much busier now than we’ve ever been before. And we’re booked solid through next December, with more gig requests coming all the time,” says Glassman.

Brands have approached, asking them to drink a certain seltzer or wear a certain shirt on camera. “But we’re really trying to keep it authentic to what it’s always been,” Glassman says. “For 30-plus years, this was basically just a bunch of guys having fun in kitchens.”

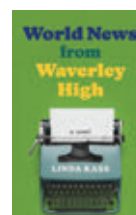
“None of us do this for what’s going on with all this Instagram stuff and publicity and press,” adds Cohen. “It’s fun, no doubt. But long after our moment in the sun has passed, we’ll still be singing, because that’s what we love and that’s who we are.” —*Molly Petrilla C’06*

Briefly Noted



HOW TO NOT KNOW:
The Value of Uncertainty in a World that Demands Answers by Simone Stolzoff
C’13 (W.W. Norton & Company, 2026, \$29.99.)

By blending engrossing storytelling, research, and practical insights, Stolzoff [“In the Balance,” Jan/Feb 2023] presents a guide to navigating uncertainty in careers, politics, and our personal lives with courage and clarity.



WORLD NEWS FROM WAVERLEY HIGH by Linda Stern Kass PT’75 (She Writes Press, 2026, \$17.99.)

It’s 1969 and high school junior Lena Rosen is taking classes in history and journalism when issues such as the Vietnam War, racism, and environmental destruction are in the news. When civil unrest breaks out at her school, the headlines hit closer to home and Lena awakens to her responsibility for the world she will soon claim.



AMERICAN PERIL:
The Violent History of Anti-Asian Racism by Scott Kurashige C’91 (University of California Press, 2026, \$27.95.) Scholar and activist

Kurashige offers a probing account of anti-Asian violence in America—from the lynching of Asian immigrants during the exclusion era to the 1982 murder of Vincent Chin to the racism fomented by the COVID-19 pandemic—and calls us to build lasting solidarity.



WHAT KIND OF MOTHER:
A Reckoning by Judy Sandler C’84 (West Virginia University Press, 2026, \$22.99.)

A mother’s memoir that reckons with her son’s descent into severe mental illness, this book chronicles Sandler’s initial denial of the 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.

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Penn Alumni Regional Clubs

Extending Penn's Reach Across the World



Penn Club of Chicago

Alumni Club Award of Merit | The Penn Club of Chicago brings Quakers in the Windy City together, united by their shared love of the Red and Blue and their enduring ties to Locust Walk. In the post-pandemic era, the club has focused on transforming itself—with a commitment to getting better each and every year. This past year, Chicago saw the fruits of those efforts, as the club reached new heights across every aspect of its mission, from leadership and membership to events and partnerships. One of the club's greatest successes has been the number—and variety—of club events. They range from annual traditions, such as a Welcome Reception for incoming freshmen and Ben's Birthday Bash, to social outings such as Thirsty Thursdays and a New Grad Beer & Brats BBQ with Wharton. Arts offerings are plentiful, including a recent trip to see *The Color Purple: The Musical*, an architecture walking tour, and an online poetry club. There are also opportunities to learn and serve, including a blood drive and a polar plunge benefiting children's charities. Notably, the Penn Club of Chicago's annual event count has steadily increased over the past six years, rising to 33 hosted events last year, attracting 350 alumni in the Windy City.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Penn Club of Boston
Penn Club of Hong Kong
Penn Club of Philadelphia
Penn Club of Shanghai



Penn Club of Miami

Innovation Award | Congratulations to the Penn Club of Miami on receiving the Innovation Award. The club has done an incredible job revitalizing its alumni community through creative programming, new ways of connecting alumni, and innovative partnerships. Their energy, creativity, and commitment to building a stronger Penn community in Miami truly embody the spirit of this award. Well deserved!

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Penn/Wharton Club
of Arizona
Penn Club of Metro NJ
PennNYC
Penn Club of Seattle

Experience the impact of Penn in *your* community.

See our listing of Penn alumni clubs and get involved: www.alumni.upenn.edu/clubs

Over 120 Penn Alumni Regional Clubs around the world serve to bring the spirit of the University to their regions. Wherever you are, you're never far from another Penn alumnus or a Penn Club. In connecting the Penn community across the globe, clubs offer opportunities for fun and socializing, networking, learning, and collaborative initiatives that impact the people and communities where they live.



Penn Club of Worcester

Community Service Award | Congratulations to the Penn Club of Worcester, the 2026 recipient of the Community Service Award. This award recognizes a club dedicated to making an impact on their local community through one or more events and provides volunteer opportunities to their club members. The Club was selected for their series of volunteer opportunities with Project New Hope, a food pantry that supports Veterans in need.

HONORABLE MENTION
Penn Club of Japan



Penn Club of Taiwan Penn Club of the UK

Engagement Award | The Engagement Award recognizes clubs that have increased engagement through a variety of events or with a single signature event. The Penn Club of Taiwan is recognized for its exceptional efforts to strengthen alumni engagement under its new Executive Committee leadership. By embracing all four Signature Events, offering a variety of monthly programs, actively engaging alumni through social media, and partnering with fellow alumni organizations on Ivy+ events, the club has significantly expanded opportunities for connection and fostered a more vibrant Penn community in Taiwan.

HONORABLE MENTIONS
Penn Club of Baltimore
Penn Club of Hartford
Penn Club of Milan
Penn Club of Westchester
and Rockland Counties



The Penn Club of the UK is recognized for its outstanding efforts to strengthen alumni engagement through a diverse calendar of events, including its popular monthly Penn After Hours pub gatherings. By creating meaningful opportunities for alumni to connect, expanding partnerships with fellow alumni organizations, and growing its volunteer leadership team, the club has fostered a more active and connected Penn community across the United Kingdom.



Franklin Field Lifer

Thanks to a last-minute audible, a passionate broadcaster marks 45 years calling Penn football games. ▶

Less than three weeks before the start of Penn football’s 150th season,

John “Hench” Murray C’66 GEd’67 ambled around Franklin Field, spotting construction work under way in the press box that had become his second home every fall.

Eager to talk about his upcoming 45th year calling Penn football games, he settled into a window table at a student-athlete fueling station, one of the newer upgrades to the still-evolving 131-year-old stadium.

His broadcasting journey, he told me then, had been fortuitous and unexpected. Little did he know it was about to take another twist.

Not long after our first chat, Murray learned that Penn would be ending its audio broadcasts and only maintaining the television ones that stream on ESPN+. At nearly 82, the longtime radio voice of the Quakers thought he’d be out of a gig, lamenting that “Saturdays will not be the same.”

But then, just days before the start of the season, he received an invitation to join Penn’s TV announcers Joe Tordy and Joe Valerio C’97 G’07 in the broadcast booth for three home games—meaning Murray would get to hit the 45-year milestone after all. Or, as he put it in an email to friends, “Not dead yet!”

For Matt Leon and Brian Seltzer C’07, who combined to serve as Murray’s broadcast partner for the better part of the last 20 years, the news was as exciting as any last-minute Quaker come-

back. “He loves Penn football with the passion of 1,000 suns,” says Leon, a KYW Newsradio veteran who until this year had moonlighted as a Penn football and basketball play-by-play broadcaster. “He loves the program, loves everybody associated with it, loves to watch film.” Seltzer—who’s also at KYW after previously working as Penn’s play-by-play voice and then as a digital content manager for the Philadelphia 76ers—agrees that Murray’s love for Penn football is unmatched. He also called him the “kindest, gentlest, wholesome soul” who has remained sharp in his analysis even after five decades in a headset. “I don’t think there’s anything else he’d rather be doing on a Saturday in the fall,” Seltzer says.

Once upon a time, Murray didn’t even want the job—though he always enjoyed football. He began coming to Franklin Field as a kid because his father Donald Murray W’37 G’40 Gr’44 only worked a couple of blocks away, first as a statistics professor and then in University administration. Murray’s older brother, Robert Murray C’63 WG’71, had followed their dad to Penn, where he played sprint football and baseball. (He later coached both teams and worked in sports information before getting into banking.)

For Hench, attending Penn may have seemed like a foregone conclusion but he had a “really good time” once he got there. He played on the freshman basketball team, where in practice he was tasked with defending class-

mate Stan Pawlak C’66, who’d go on to become one of the all-time great Penn basketball players and a color commentator (for Quaker hoops games) himself. Murray also played on the baseball and sprint football teams, enjoyed Delta Tau Delta fraternity parties, and “toyed with the idea of being a doctor” before deciding he was better suited to major in English than biology.

“I don’t think there’s anything else he’d rather be doing on a Saturday in the fall.”

After graduating, he took a year at Penn’s Graduate School of Education before landing a job as an English teacher at Philadelphia’s William Penn Charter School, which had been his fierce rival when he attended and played football at Germantown Academy. Murray began coaching football at Penn Charter, initially working with head coach Ray Dooney W’50, a former Penn football star. But when Dooney left after the 1969 season, Murray became the head coach of the storied high school program, at just 25 years old. “It was a learning experience,” says Murray, but he amassed an impressive 45–23 record there from 1970 to 1977.

At that point, he began to harbor ambitions of coaching college ball. But he was cured of that idea when a University of Virginia assistant, who was recruiting one of his Penn

Charter players, called him on Thanksgiving, while on a recruiting trip in Montana. “I said, *I don’t want to be in Montana for Thanksgiving, ever*,” recalls Murray, who instead pivoted to another one of his dreams: running a school.

In 1981, he became the head of Woodlynde School on Philadelphia’s Main Line, introducing a number of programs to boost enrollment and establish it as a leader in instruction for students with learning disabilities. (He stayed there until 1995, and after a number of other jobs, returned to helm the school from 2005 to 2009.)

That same year—1981—marked the beginning of another, more surprising, new career. According to Murray, his friend Bernie Zbrzezny W’70, a former Penn quarterback, was supposed to call Penn football games on the radio for the 1981 season but bailed out when his wife got pregnant. He asked Murray to do it multiple times, and Murray repeatedly said no. “I didn’t really want to make a fool of myself,” Murray says. But Zbrzezny had apparently already told the play-by-play man Joe Eichhorn that Murray would take on the role of color commentator, so by the time the season rolled around in September, Murray had little choice but to slide into the broadcast booth. “It’s worked out all right,” says Murray, who remains close with Zbrzezny.

In 1981, the Quakers sputtered to a 1–9 record and “I was nervous the whole season,” recalls Murray. “Sometimes

Alumni

the words come out the way you want them to. But sometimes they don't." He still got a great thrill in his first game when a 93-yard touchdown catch by Karl Hall C'84 highlighted a 29-22 Penn win over Cornell.

The excitement level ballooned the following year. With the NFL on strike, Philadelphia Eagles radio announcing legend Merrill Reese was brought in to call Penn games. "Now I was really nervous because that was the big time," says Murray, Reese's partner in the booth during a season that would become one of the most iconic ones in program history. In their final home contest of the 1982 campaign, the Quakers defeated Harvard to capture a piece of their first Ivy League title in 23 years. The game was especially memorable because Dave Shulman W'84 had two chances to make the game-winning field goal, missing the first but getting a reprieve with no time left on the clock after a Harvard penalty ["Old Penn," Nov/Dec 2022]. If you watch footage of the game, which is available on YouTube, you'll mostly hear Reese's booming voice. But Murray jumps in with a well-timed tablesetter before Shulman's final kick: *"Absolutely unbelievable. No time left on the clock. Here comes the kicking team back on the field. It's one shot for the championship."*

For the next several decades, Murray continued to make an art of knowing just the right time to offer his commentary and not step on



"To still be entertaining and fun to listen to and informative after 45 years is even more impressive than the longevity itself."

the play-by-play broadcaster's toes. "He understood the flow of the broadcast," Leon says. "We immediately picked up on each other's rhythms." He was always mild-mannered, adds Seltzer, as well as "completely egoless, and 100 percent respectful of letting the play be described before coming in with his analysis."

Yet Murray occasionally let himself be heard in the background of play calls. "There were just these utterances and noises that would come out of his mouth, good and bad," laughs Seltzer. "If it was a great play, you might hear a yip or a hand clap, or something really subtle. It never disrupted the call, and I loved those moments because I think it just captured the essence of his love and passion for the program." Leon

fondly recalls Murray "whooping and hitting the table" when Penn closed the 2022 season with a dramatic last-second win at Princeton. "It makes the call exquisite because it's just the natural emotion that he's letting out. And then I look over and he's wiping his eyes, crying from excitement and how happy he is by beating Princeton and the way they beat them."

While Murray's broadcasting and love for Penn football remained steadfast, changes were happening all around him. Penn's broadcasts moved from WXPB to several other lower-wattage AM stations over the years until finally shifting to digital streaming only in 2019. Whereas at one time Penn football fans not at the game needed to tune in to the radio to keep tabs on the Quakers, redundancies were created with the rise of TV streaming as Penn Athletics began producing games for the Ivy League Network and then ESPN+. In the past they'd have a producer or engineer on site to help, Leon says, but in recent years it was "basically just the two of us"

Hench Murray, right, called Penn football games with many broadcasters over the last 45 years—including Matt Leon, center, and Joe Valerio, left.

lugging up all the equipment and calling the streaming company to make sure everything was working properly. They were told that operational changes involving the streaming distributor led to the sunset of the Quaker Audio Network this year.

Murray figured he was nearing the end of his career anyway. Over the last few years, the climb up to the "rickety" press box hanging under Franklin Field's upper deck had become harder, and it was even more onerous at Harvard Stadium with "no rails and no elevator," Murray says. The games played in especially cold weather were never fun. Neither were some of the long road trips to New England, when he took the team bus.

But he still loved it, especially watching game film and meeting with the Penn head coach each week to discuss the previous and upcoming games. "You get to a point where your life slows down," says Murray, who lives in a retirement community in the Philadelphia suburbs with his wife. "One of the good things about doing the games is that my life never slows down in the fall."

And so, on September 26, Murray braved a weekend nor'easter and stepped inside a soggy Franklin Field for Penn's 2026 home opener against Lehigh. Because space constraints prevented a three-man booth setup, Murray filled in for Valerio for the third quarter only. Tordy announced the switch to TV viewers after halftime, introducing Murray as a "legend

and an institution on the Penn football radio broadcasts.” Murray thanked him, “because I was kind of feeling left out.” And then, just as he’s done for 45 years, he dug into his deep well of football knowledge to smartly analyze each play, quickly adapting to a new broadcast partner and some of the subtle changes moving from radio to TV (like a producer talking through the headset). Not even the awful weather, two Lehigh touchdowns that quarter, and an eventual 20–7 Penn loss could dampen his emotions.

“To still be entertaining and fun to listen to and informative after 45 years,” Leon says, “is even more impressive than the longevity itself.”

Although only calling parts of three home games and not traveling for road contests is a far lighter workload than he’s used to, Murray still feels lucky to hit 45 years—“not quite a round number, but it’s close,” he says. And, with his retirement from broadcasting on the horizon, he’s grateful that Penn allowed him to be able to go out on his own terms.

“One of the things I really admire about Hensch is you know this really matters to him,” Seltzer says. “Are there going to be people to whom this all means as much as it did for people like Hensch?”

“I think I got the best of it, honestly,” Murray says, reflecting on how his second career in broadcasting allowed him to get a close-up view of a sport he loves and a team he wants so badly to win. “I’ve felt honored to be able to do it.” —DZ



Parks Authority

A former Penn administrator now champions Philadelphia’s green spaces.

After working at Penn for 25 years, the last nine as the associate vice president in the University’s Office of the Executive Vice President, Tony Sorrentino GCP’05 found himself at a crossroads.

“I turned 55 years old when I hit my 25th anniversary. Turning double nickels is a big deal, and being in a place for 25 years is also a big deal,” he says. “I wondered if I had something in me to contribute professionally to the city at a bigger level.”

In October 2025, Sorrentino joined the Fairmount Park Conservancy as its CEO. The nonprofit organization, which was founded in 1998, operates as part of a public-private partnership with the city of Philadelphia to protect and maintain the city’s 10,200 acres of parks. It also leads and fundraises for capital projects and organizes events and programs for the public. The organization is based in West Fairmount Park in a Gothic Revival-style building known as the Ohio House, construct-

ed for the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition to house that state’s exhibit.

Sorrentino has played significant roles in Philadelphia’s civic life on and off campus. He joined Penn in 2000 as the manager of economic development in Penn’s Division of Business Services and earned a master’s degree in city planning from the Weitzman School of Design in 2005. Over the course of his Penn career, much of his work focused on urban policy, economic development, and community relations. He helped Penn launch various initiatives including the technology incubator Pennovation Works, the 30-year campus development plan Penn Connects,

and an online repository of information about the University's community partnerships called Penn & Philly ["Gazetteer," May/June 2024].

He's also served on the boards of several major Philadelphia civic organizations and authored the upcoming book *Medicine for the City*, which details how a city's academic medical districts can drive economic growth, with Philadelphia as a case study.

"I wasn't leaving Penn to go work for another university," he says. "I was wrapping up a 25-year university career to see if the lessons I learned there could be applicable at something citywide. I thought this was an opportunity that I should probably not pass up—the universe might be talking to me."

Philadelphia's park system includes East and West Fairmount Park, "one of the largest contiguous pieces of [urban] parkland in the nation," Sorrentino notes. His purview also encompasses FDR Park, Cobbs Creek Park, and 140 neighborhood parks. As head of the Fairmount Park Conservancy, Sorrentino directs initiatives that have a lasting community impact, from supporting major city events, to running popular neighborhood programs, to helping make the city's environment more resilient in the face of climate change.

During this summer's FIFA World Cup, the city staged a bustling fan festival at Lemon Hill in East Fairmount Park that featured giant screens broadcasting the games, along with concerts, interactive games, and food and beverage

"I thought this was an opportunity that I should probably not pass up—the universe might be talking to me."

ages. In advance of the festival, Sorrentino spearheaded a five-week cleanup of the area powered by volunteers and funded by Comcast.

The FIFA fan festival gave Sorrentino the opportunity to wander the Lemon Hill and Boathouse Row area, engaging with visitors from around the country and the world. "People would say, *My god, if we had this in our city, it would be unreal. To have a riverbank with these boat-houses and watching people do crew*," he recalls. "And I realized that maybe there are times we take such things for granted. Outsiders can give you a new perspective."

Philadelphia's parks also connect people on a day-to-day basis. We Walk PHL is a nearly-decade-old free walking group launched by the Fairmount Park Conservancy and the city to encourage people to pursue fitness goals and get to know their neighbors in city parks. The program "makes the city healthier and better," Sorrentino says, noting that people's "quality of life goes up and, ultimately, it's a public good."

At the same time, Sorrentino oversees the Fairmount Park Conservancy's role in helping offset the effects of climate change on the city. The organization is charged with transforming a 33-acre corner of FDR Park in South Philly into a tidal wetland. The area's redevelopment

plan, the city's first park project to incorporate climate change projections, is designed to mitigate chronic flooding problems and provide a new wildlife habitat.

"I think that there's plenty of time for us to make public policy decisions and use our land in thoughtful ways to push back on, or at least give us an opportunity to reduce, the impact that climate change is having on the population," he says. "I think an economic reason for parks to exist has to do with helping reduce climate change."

Sorrentino's wide-ranging interest in his hometown's civic life grew out of formative childhood experiences. When he was about 12 years old, his family moved from West Philadelphia to a nearby suburb, where they discovered their new neighborhood's school was closing.

"My mom, who had a high school degree and was a housewife with three children, took it upon herself to lead a campaign to save the school," Sorrentino says. "She didn't know anybody and she didn't have any social or political capital." He often accompanied his mother as she went door to door talking to people about the school and what they cared about. The campaign saved the school and Sorrentino's mother subsequently ran for a seat on the school board, which she held for more than two decades.

Sorrentino's father managed pharmacy departments at several Philadelphia hospitals and taught pharmacy students in clinical training. "He

could have made a lot more money doing other things in the pharmaceutical industry. But he liked being in a clinical setting and he liked helping people," Sorrentino notes.

"So, that's what we talked about at the dinner table—public schools and public health," he adds. "And it stuck with me. I decided at an early age that I wanted to participate in that somehow."

One of Sorrentino's favorite areas in the city's park system is Welsh Fountain Gardens in West Fairmount Park, near the Fairmount Park Conservancy's headquarters. Built in 1887 to memorialize the city's 1876 Centennial Exhibition—and honor its finance board chair John Welsh—the historic space embodies both the past and future of Philadelphia's parks. The landmark fountain hasn't flowed since the 1970s and the area has fallen off in popularity despite its location near attractions such as the Please Touch Museum and the Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center.

Plans led by the Fairmount Park Conservancy are under way to restore the fountain, add seating, and plant shade trees, all practical measures that serve the larger goals of revitalizing the public space as a connected social hub and increasing the area's climate resilience.

The project also represents a simpler objective. "It's about how you program parks that make people feel invited," Sorrentino says, "and how you create a place that people want to be."

—Samantha Drake CGS'06



Living with Purpose

Facing a rare brain tumor, a mother of two is advocating for better care while finding joy in everyday moments.

On January 31, 2020, Sundas Hashmi C'05 EAS'05 was in her kitchen frying shrimp spring rolls for her daughter's birthday party when she started

feeling off. Two days later she woke up in the hospital with no memory of the previous 48 hours. Doctors told her she'd had a grand mal seizure. "Fortunately my nanny found me,

or the house would have burned down," she says.

At 37, with two children ages two and six, she was diagnosed with oligodendroglioma, an incurable brain cancer. It was devastating but not entirely surprising. "Twenty years ago my brother had also died of brain cancer," she says, "so somehow it was always in the back of my mind that one day it

was going to come for me too." In the past she had even gone to doctors and demanded MRIs after having headaches. "One just told me I wasn't sleeping enough," she says.

Two weeks later, she underwent a brain surgery known as an awake craniotomy, in which the patient remains conscious so surgeons can monitor brain function in real time. "They keep asking

you questions, and they get more difficult. Or they tell you to move your arm or your leg, so they know the moment you can't do that anymore is when they need to stop," she explains. The surgical team removed 95 percent of her tumor.

Unlike her brother's aggressive cancer, Hashmi had a more slow-growing and treatable type of tumor. She opted not to undergo radiation and chemotherapy that could affect her cognitive skills in the long term. Instead, she decided to take a medicine for the rest of her life that would make her feel fatigued and affect her short-term memory. "Cognitively, I'm only operating at 75–80 percent," she says.

Over the past six years, she has not just adjusted to this new reality but written about it publicly, with poignant pieces in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. Her goal is to advocate for more funding for her type of brain cancer, as well as share how she's learned to appreciate small moments of beauty amidst adversity and grief. The funny part, she adds, is that before her diagnosis she hated writing. "I spent my college years avoiding writing classes."

Hashmi, who grew up in Pakistan, describes her childhood as rough, mostly because of her brother's illness. "He was diagnosed when I was 13 and passed away when I was 15," she says. "Because of the culture in Pakistan, nobody spoke about it. They just wanted to bury it, and that was the message I was given: don't speak about it,

At 37, with two children ages two and six, she was diagnosed with an incurable brain cancer.

don't say anything." She was expected to keep her head down, work hard in school, and get good grades—which she did. (Doctors have told her there's no known genetic link for brain cancer, meaning her brother's diagnosis and her own could be a devastating coincidence.)

Itching to leave home, she applied to Penn because a friend's brother had gone there. "I thought I had zero chance of getting into any school in America," she says. But she did get in, with financial aid.

When she arrived on campus in 2001, she had never set foot outside Pakistan. What she found stunned her. "Everything was just so big: the buildings, the campus, even the trees," she says. She eventually found her footing, making friends in the Quad her freshman year and joining the Pakistani Students Association.

She studied engineering, a path her mother steered her toward as a more practical alternative to medicine. "In Pakistan, everybody wants their kid to be either a doctor or an engineer," she says. "But medicine was such a long path." She enjoyed her engineering classes but loved her econom-

ics courses even more. "It was like a magic experience, a break from engineering, where my brain was so fried."

After graduation, Hashmi went into investment banking in New York but lasted only a year and a half, finding the pace "too intense" and the culture "very aggressive." She moved to a multi-family office managing wealth for a handful of clients and later became director of research for the Rattner family office, a New York investment fund founded by Steven Rattner, an investor and media commentator who serves as the economic analyst on MSNBC's *Morning Joe*. Alongside investment work, she became his fact-checker and researcher—which helped to prepare her for the writing she does today.

She left that job after her son was born in 2017, when the round-the-clock professional demands became incompatible with raising a newborn. She stayed out of the workforce until after her second child was born, and was in the middle of a job search when her diagnosis came.

After brain surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, she couldn't speak and didn't know the date or who the president was. She had no short-term memory and couldn't hold a glass of water or a spoon. Only sounds came out of her mouth, no words anyone could understand. Over time her symptoms improved, and six months later she could speak again.

Short-term memory remains her main obstacle; she relies on sticky notes and

repetition tricks. A drug she takes to manage the tumor causes significant fatigue.

It took her a few years to tell her children about her diagnosis. "My son was seven when I told him. He listened very carefully, and then he went back to his toys," she says. Telling her daughter, at age 11, was harder. "I did it on a walk to Sephora, which is her favorite place. She just wanted to know if I could die."

Hashmi reluctantly started therapy for her mental health after her neurosurgeon strongly recommended it. "When I first met her, I told her, 'I don't need a therapist. We're from Pakistan. We're strong people,'" she remembers. Her therapist encouraged her to start writing about her experience. She also volunteers with a glioblastoma advocacy nonprofit, traveling to Washington to lobby for research funding—which is difficult since the disease is rare and competes poorly for attention against more common and thus better-funded cancers.

Meanwhile, Hashmi spends much of her day enjoying the small things: walks in Central Park with her husband, playing squash with her son three times a week, watching Pakistani dramas with her daughter in the evening. She's taken up birding, using an app that identifies bird sounds in the park. "Before all of this, I would have never even looked up at the sky," she says. "Now everything is completely different."

—Alyson Krueger C'07

“How about you people I knew at Penn? I only read about you when you’re in the obituaries.”

—Bruce Rice C’73

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 21–24, 2027!

1962

Theatrice “T” Williams SW’62 has published a new book with the Minnesota Historical Society Press, *Rewind: Lessons from Fifty Years of Activism*, cowritten with David Lawrence Grant. The book offers stories and insights gleaned from T’s decades of activism “on navigating crises, building networks, and maintaining a commitment to community—from the ferment of the 1960s to the 2020 murder of George Floyd and beyond,” he writes.

1964

Dr. Edward Rossomando D’64 and **Nina Rossomando C’64** write, “Although we have both been retired for several years, we remain active in our community and continue to organize activities around our interests. One of our favorite activities is reading—everything from fiction to nonfiction—and in 2015, we founded a book club exclusively for nonfiction. The group disbanded in 2021. In the intervening years, we have joined many other book clubs, and one of the areas we found unrepresented were book clubs for reading plays. In 2025, we decided to combine our love of reading and theater and formed the Dramatic Book Club. Each month the group selects a play (usually a one-act play) for discussion. One of our members volunteers to be the director. At our meetings we discuss the play, the playwright, and members become ‘actors’ and read aloud specific sections of the play selected by the director. We often have a second reading with other club members reading the parts. In September, we began our second year. We have capped our membership at 10 and have a waiting list. We meet once a month at our local library.”

1965

Josef Nathanson GCP’65 was recently named Lambda Alpha International’s Author/Journalist of the Year for 2026. The land economics honorary society made the award in recognition of Joe’s “Regional Perspectives” columns that have appeared monthly over the past 25 years in *The Daily Record*, the Baltimore-based business and legal daily newspaper. The columns cover planning and economic development, housing and transportation, and many other societal issues that shape cities and regions. When he is not writing, you might find him painting. Joe recently had a solo exhibition of his watercolor landscapes at Brightview Hunt Valley, the senior living community north of Baltimore where Joe and his wife, Sharon, moved two years ago.

1966

Ted Underwood C’66 WG’68 see **Dr. Richard “Doc” Klussman C’68**.

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 21–24, 2027!

1967

Kate Thompson Calano CW’67 see **Dr. Richard “Doc” Klussman C’68**.

Gregg Huff W’67 has published *The Economic Growth of Southeast Asia: Trade, Globalization, and Development Since 1870* (2026). The book is his third published by Cambridge University Press. Gregg teaches Southeast Asian history and development at Pembroke College, Oxford University.

1968

Dr. Richard “Doc” Klussman C’68 shared that the Class of 1968’s Alpha Tau Omega fraternity brothers had their annual reunion in August near Cape Cod, Massachusetts. He

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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.

writes, “There were two cohosts for this gathering: **Larry Miller ME’68 WG’72** and **Karen Carr** provided all the planning and scheduling; and **Dan Calano C’68** and **Kate Thompson Calano CW’67** provided all lodging and the boating, in their Sabre yacht and recreational kayaks.” Other attendees included **Charles Wigo W’68**, **Winston Walp C’68**, **Donald Green C’68**, **David Dorsett W’68**, **Richard Lange W’68**, **Anthony Morris C’68**, **William Woodward C’68**, **Fred Nahas EE’68**, and **Ted Underwood C’66 WG’68**. The weekend kicked off with a group birthday party for everyone turning 80 years old that year. Then the group took a rented coach to Lexington/Concord and went on guided walking tours of Lexington Green and Old North Bridge. After lunch at the Colonial Inn, they had another guided tour of Wright Tavern, followed by a quick visit to Walden Pond. The next day included a cruise and, Doc writes, “a catered New England lobster bake, highlighted by the ever-traditional ATO signature cocktail, ‘Yucca Flats.’ For copyright protection, this guarded recipe will not be shared publicly! Most importantly, [there was] a standing, a cappella-style group rendition of ‘Drink a Highball’ to salute our Dear Ole Penn and simultaneously embarrass our host at his local restaurant.” To see photos and read more from Doc, visit tinyurl.com/1968ATO.

1970

Dr. Arnold R. Eiser C’70 is an adjunct professor of systems pharmacology and translational therapeutics in Penn’s Perelman School of Medicine. He is also currently an adjunct member of the Environmental Neuroscience Group of the Center for Excellence in Environmental Toxicology, and a research member

of the Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health. He has been a senior fellow of Penn's Leonard Davis Institute, an associate fellow of the Center of Bioethics at Penn, and a fellow of Penn's Center for Public Health. Arnold currently serves as an associate editor of the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* and has lectured widely on the subject of the pathogenesis and prevention of dementia. He is also on the editorial board of the *American Journal of Medicine*. His books include *Preserving Brain Health in a Toxic Age: New Insights from Neuroscience, Integrative Medicine, and Public Health* (2021) and *The Ethos of Medicine in Postmodern America: Philosophical, Cultural and Social Considerations* (2014). In 2010, he received the Parker Palmer Courage to Lead Award from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education; and in 2008, he was honored with the Laureate Award from the Pennsylvania chapter of the American College of Physicians.

Sam Schwartz GCE'70, former New York City traffic commissioner, is the author of a new thriller, *Autokill*, cowritten with Cary Pepper. Set in the near future, the novel reveals the hidden dangers posed by self-driving cars, when, according to the press release from publisher Open Road Integrated Media, "an investigation into a seemingly isolated fatal accident exposes a nefarious plot and sets off a desperate race to stop catastrophe."

1971

Robert Kosian W'71 WG'76 writes, "I have logged about four million air miles and visited over 60 countries. I have now started to document some of my more interesting trips for the *Charleston Mercury*." Read Robert's story "A Four-Day Food-Centric Weekend in Quebec City" at tinyurl.com/KosianQuebec.

Marian Sandmaier CW '71 writes, "I'm excited to be publishing a new book, *I'll Be Awesome Tomorrow: A Memoir of Chasing Perfection and Letting Go*. The book traces my own perilous pursuit of perfection while also reaching out to readers who may be struggling themselves. If you've ever felt driven to be exemplary—in your career, body, personality, relationships, anything—to the point of exhaustion, this memoir shows that you can choose a gentler, more self-embracing path."

Dr. Ellen J. Weber CW'71 received the 2025 Clifford R. Mann Presidential Medal

from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine of the United Kingdom for her work as editor in chief of the *Emergency Medicine Journal* and her contributions to global emergency medicine. Ellen is professor emeritus of emergency medicine at the University of California, San Francisco.

Michael C. West C'71 writes, "It is with the greatest possible pride that I announce to our class and the greater Penn community the establishment of the Brigadier General David G. Young, III Award for Excellence in Air Force Medicine. The award will be given annually to one junior and one senior Air Force physician, in the name of our classmate **Dr. Dave Young C'71**, in recognition of their performance as Air Force physicians. 'Doctor Dave' had a most remarkable career as an Air Force physician, culminating with his being the commanding general of the US Air Force's largest teaching hospital/medical center in San Antonio. Dave's career was one of unrivaled success in jobs of ever-increasing complexity, and he continues to this day practicing medicine on a volunteer basis in the hospital he once commanded (and for which he recently received the Chief of Staff of the Air Force Lifetime Volunteer Excellence Award for his thousands of hours of volunteer time). I have known Dave since we both arrived on campus in September of 1967. We were national rowing champions together in the 1968 heavyweight freshman crew, from which Dave went on to row in the Penn varsity eight for three years (the only member of our freshman crew to do so) and was voted captain and commodore of Penn crew by his teammates for our senior year. I initiated this effort seven years ago and was delighted when the Surgeon General of the US Air Force approved the concept in August of this year."

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1972

Glenda E. Bilder Gr'72 is the coauthor with Patricia Brown-O'Hara of *Drug Use in the Older Adult: A Guide for Nurses, Other Practicing Clinicians and Interested Older Individuals*. She writes, "This book presents a comprehensive evaluation of drug use in the older adult based on principles of pharmacology and gerontology and validated by clinical observations. The many ways aging and age-dependent diseases

influence medication efficacy, adverse reactions, and toxicities are discussed. This is also a reliable reference for the interested older adult on all types of drug use—medications to recreational to anti-aging drugs, many of which are usually covered by unsubstantiated marketing information."

Terrence J. Pranses W'72 was one of many PennPAC volunteers who received a Mayoral Service Recognition Certificate from the City of New York for his 2025 activities. Terry was a founder of PennPAC's Nonprofit Selection Team, which reviews applications for its pro bono consulting services. He urges alumni in greater New York, Philadelphia, and the Bay Area to consider joining PennPAC services there. Terry is also in his second year as cochair of the Travel Society at the Penn Club of New York. Members of the club take part in programs about exciting destinations and share travel experiences.

1973

Seth Bergmann GEE'73 writes, "In June, I participated in a one-week group cycling trip on the mountainous Croatian islands of Hvar and Korcula in the Adriatic Sea. Then after returning home, I crashed my bike and broke my collarbone. Recovery is slow but steady."

Bruce Rice C'73 writes, "I wander between Venice, Florida, and Boothbay Harbor, Maine, when not in Baltimore living in a modern family with my wife, single daughter, two grandkids, and two dogs. Retired from Wawa Inc. and feeling pretty good. Can't sprint up and down the lax field anymore but mentally still want to jump into the net at the annual Fiji island party. How about you people I knew at Penn? I only read about you when you're in the obituaries."

Bohdan D. Shandor W'73 is serving as a guest lecturer at the American University in Kyiv (AUK) and writes, "I have done so since the AUK opened its doors one week before the Russian invasion on February 24, 2022." He teaches a course titled International Business Transactions and the Use of Joint Ventures to Enter New Markets. Bohdan adds, "Recently, Ukraine's Ministry of Defense announced a joint venture program with the United States for the production of Magura kamikaze drones in the United States."

Robert M. Steeg C'73 ASC'75, managing partner of Steeg Law Firm in New Orleans,

was included in *Best Lawyers 2027* for Banking and Finance Law, Commercial Finance Law, Commercial Transactions/UCC Law, Corporate Law, and Real Estate (one of a select group of attorneys who has received this honor for more than 30 years). He was also recognized as an honoree in the 2026 *Lawdragon 500 Leading Real Estate Lawyers* guide from *Lawdragon* and was ranked in *Chambers USA Guide 2026* for Real Estate. Steeg Law was recognized by *New Orleans CityBusiness* as a Best Legacy Business 2026.

1974

Ron Klasko L'74, chairman and a founding partner of Klasko Immigration Law Partners, LLP, has been named to the 2027 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*. Ron has practiced immigration law exclusively over four decades. He works out of the firm's Philadelphia office.

Leo Levinson W'74 was honored as a "Pillar of the Community" by the Greater Philadelphia ZOA (Zionist Organization of America) at its annual Night of Appreciation dinner, together with Ambassador Jeff Bartos, Leo Terrell, Harvey Spear, and Christine Flowers.

1976

Dr. Neil J. Farber M'76, a retired internist and medical educator, is the author of *Treating a Broken System: A Physician's Cure for the Healthcare Crisis*. His book examines the human side of medicine and explains how physician burnout contributes to longer wait times, rushed appointments, and communication failures. Drawing on more than 40 years of experience as both a doctor and patient, he offers practical strategies to empower patients to advocate for themselves and help physicians reconnect with the reason they entered medicine in the first place.

Lee Levine C'76 G'76 has written a new book, *In Bad Faith: Earl Caldwell and the Fight for a Free Press*. From the publisher Cornell University Press: "In 1970, *New York Times* national correspondent Earl Caldwell—one of the first Black reporters hired to cover America's civil-rights flashpoints—was ordered to reveal what he had learned about the Black Panther Party behind the sealed doors of a federal grand jury. Convinced that testifying would destroy the trust he'd built and silence a vital source of truth,

Caldwell refused—setting off a showdown that raced from Bay Area streets to the steps of the Supreme Court. ... *In Bad Faith* reveals how legal tactics, surveillance, and media manipulation converged on a single reporter to test the nation's promises of equal justice and a free press." Lee is an attorney who has practiced, taught, and written about First Amendment law for 50 years.

Dr. Robert K. Ross C'76 M'80 G'92, retired president and CEO of the California Endowment, was honored by LA Commons at its Colors of Connection gala in October for his leadership in advancing health equity and social justice. Robert was profiled in our Jan/Feb 2025 issue as he looked back on his career of transforming healthcare for underserved communities for nearly a quarter of a century.

1978

Marc Bookman C'78, a death penalty defense attorney and anti-death penalty advocate, wrote his first novel, *Albert's Time*. Set to be published in December, it follows a public defender and the trial of a quiet, sensitive, substitute teacher accused of double murder and who insists on his guilt. According to the book's blurb, it is a "deeply realistic portrayal of a life-or-death sentencing in a capital murder trial." Marc was a Philadelphia public defender for 28 years and cofounder of the Atlantic Center for Capital Representation, which helps defense teams facing possible capital trials and aims to reduce death sentences. He was profiled in our Sept/Oct 2021 issue for another book he wrote, *A Descending Spiral: Exposing the Death Penalty in 12 Essays*.

Lawrence E. Oscar W'78 received the 2026 ORT Jurisprudence Award from ORT America, honoring the individuals in the northeast Ohio legal community who have made significant contributions to both their profession and communities. Lawrence is senior counsel and former managing partner and CEO of Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP.

1979

Rabbi Shoshana Hantman C'79 has been, since 2024, chair of Beit Kaplan: The Rabbinic Partnership for Jewish Peoplehood. Beit Kaplan is an organization of over 100 pro-Israel Reconstructionist rabbis. Shoshana, a Jewish educator for more than

four decades, has written *Passover Parodies*, *Hanukkah Parodies*, and *Choose Your Path*. She lives in Somers, New York, with her husband Richard Weill C'76. Their children are Mollie and Isaac Hantman-Weill.

1981

Gregg Coodley C'81 announces the publication of his new book, *Dump's Kingdom*. He writes, "In this satirical fantasy a young lad, a talking dog, and an out-of-work comedian join together to overthrow an egotistical king and his toadies. This fictional book is a change from my prior seven history books." For more information on Gregg and his books, visit BooksGreggCoodley.com.

Hon. Alice Beck Dubow C'81 L'84, a judge on the Superior Court of Pennsylvania since 2015, was reelected for another 10-year term in November 2025, having won in a highly contested and partisan election with over 60 percent of the votes.

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1982

Robert Carley C'82 exhibited his flags made out of discarded materials (e.g., empty beer six-packs, coffee lids, sports cones, etc.) outside of the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, Connecticut, on the Fourth of July during the country's 250th anniversary. He writes, "Fortunately, the director of security for the museum liked the work and let me keep them displayed. Hopefully, one day I will have my work exhibited inside the museum!" For the semiquincentennial, Robert also exhibited 250 photos of flags that he found while traveling across the country after 9/11—painted on houses, rooftops, cars, and statues—at the Farmington public library, also in Connecticut. In September, his show of 130 flag photos opened to commemorate the 25th anniversary of September 11 at the Slater Memorial Museum in Norwich, Connecticut, which runs through early December. He will show more 9/11-inspired photos at the Westbrook, Connecticut, Historical Society this fall. Robert writes, "I witnessed the burning towers from my office on that day and decided to document the patriotic and creative spirit that spread all over the country. It was one of the most unified times in American history."

1984

Brian Rubin W'84 has received the 2026 JH Award from the National Society of Compliance Professionals (NSCP). He was recognized for his longstanding service and the meaningful impact he has made on NSCP and its members. Brian is a partner and co-head of the Securities Enforcement and Regulatory Investigations practice at the law firm Eversheds Sutherland. He is also chair of the firm's US Pro Bono Committee.

1985

Rachel Buchman Lipschutz L'85, an attorney and philanthropist, has established the Lipschutz Women's Fund at Crossroads4Hope, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that no one faces cancer alone. Through its no-cost, supportive cancer care program, it provides cancer patients and their families with professional services that address the emotional, social, and practical challenges of cancer. In a press release, Rachel explained, "Naming the fund reflects and honors the legacy of care, responsibility, and compassion that was passed down to me by my mother and grandmother, while extending it forward into the future. I hope this fund continues to serve not only as assistance, but also as a reminder that generosity can ripple across generations."

1986

Keith Bickel C'86 writes that his third book was just published, *Scale: Why Monumental Projects Advance Civilization*. Examining 10 of history's most audacious feats of coordination and construction across five continents and 5,000 years, *Scale* uncovers the hidden logistical, social, financial, and organizational inventions societies developed as humans dared to build the impossible, and in the process advanced civilization. His prior two books are *Mars Learning* and *Mastering Uncertainty*, on military and management strategy. Keith shares that he recently celebrated "36 years of fun and marriage" with **Suzan Onel C'86**. He adds, "Our son Jake is finishing his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at the University of Miami this year, and our daughter Jordana just moved back from Glasgow, Scotland, to start her doctorate in anthropology at Penn!"

Gloria Ketterer C'86 is the author of three novels, with a fourth coming in May

2027, under the pen name Gloria Duke. She describes herself as a "paranormal rom-com author," and her titles include *There's Something Fishy About My Boyfriend* (2026), *Vampires Never Say Die* (2024), and *When Life Gives You Vampires* (2022). Learn more at her author website, gloria-duke.com.

Charles Klingman C'86 writes, "I served as the translator for a French novel, *The Tailor of Relizane*, by Olivia Elkaim, which was published in October. The novel tells an engaging story of a family of Pieds-noirs caught up in the events of Algerian independence. It was a pleasure and honor to be the one to translate this award-winning novel."

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 21–24, 2027!

1987

Lisa Krutzel Katzman C'87 is a marketing manager with Pathstone Partners, a healthcare supply chain advisory firm that was named one of the 5,000 fastest growing private companies by *Inc.* magazine. Lisa shares, "Pathstone's mission is to help hospitals nationwide reduce costs and maximize efficiencies, increasing margins to improve patient outcomes and provider/staff satisfaction." Over the last decade, Lisa has also held board positions with the Northern Virginia Penn Alumni Interviewing Committee and the DC Penn Club, as well as with the Sisterhood of Temple Rodef Shalom, including the role of president.

1990

Howie Choset EAS'90 W'90, a professor of computer science and director of the Biorobotics Lab at Carnegie Mellon University, recently went to Venezuela with a team to support recovery efforts after a pair of earthquakes hit in June. Howie and his team employed his "snake" robots to search through collapsed buildings to find survivors. The tools were able to squeeze inside areas where humans could not access and provide video footage on a mounted screen.

1991

Kathryn E. Roberts Nu'91 GNu'98, a clinical nurse specialist at Nemours Children's Health in Delaware and an adjunct clinical assistant professor at Old Dominion University, has been named a 2026 fellow by the American Academy of Nursing.

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 21–24, 2027!

1992

John Clement C'92 writes, "My latest work, *Woolly*, has just been installed in Omaha, Nebraska—marking the largest monumental-scale sculpture of my career to date. Standing 18 feet tall and 14 feet wide, the piece is built from 24-inch OD steel pipe and 1-inch steel plate, showcasing the gestural yet bold, large-scale style my work is known for. The Omaha installation also adds Nebraska to an ever-growing map: My sculptures are now sited across 28 states and 14 countries. Fun fact: With work spread so widely across the globe, the sun is always shining on one of them. My Penn connections remain strong with many former classmates becoming collectors." Images of John's sculptures, including *Woolly*, can be seen at johnclementstudio.com.

Carladenise Armbrister Edwards C'92 GED'93 recently celebrated three years as the chief administrative officer for Miami-Dade County, Florida, where she serves in the cabinet of Hon. Daniella Levine Cava, the county's first female mayor. Carladenise continues to serve on the boards of Penn Nursing and the Leonard Davis Institute, and as a member of the James Brister Society. Her daughter is a rising senior at Penn, scheduled to graduate next spring, when Carladenise will celebrate her 35th reunion.

Sherwin Gluck EAS'92 announces the publication of *From the Ashes: The Documents of a Jewish Family* and *Fixed in Silver: A Jewish Family in Photographs, 1895–1954*, completing the five-work Gluck Family Legacy Series. Published in two volumes, *From the Ashes* reproduces, translates, organizes, and provides historical context for the records preserved in the Gluck Family Papers. Its more than 1,400 pages include immigration and census records, European property documents, correspondence, wartime records, Holocaust documentation, Red Cross tracing materials, restitution records, and postwar family papers. *Fixed in Silver* reconstructs the family's history through photographs taken between 1895 and 1954, connecting the images to the letters, documents, testimony, and individual histories preserved in the collection. Both books also present Gluck's research into photographs from the Auschwitz Album that may depict

members of his family. The series also includes *Private Good Luck*, the World War II memoir of Gluck's father, Irving, a US Army infantryman; *Pappus—The Saga of a Jewish Family*, a compilation of 1,823 family letters; and *As I Remember...*, the memoir of his aunt Maria, a Holocaust survivor who came to America in 1940. The series is based on the Gluck Family Papers, which Gluck donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2019. Together, the five works preserve the family's experiences of Jewish life in Central Europe, immigration, war, the Holocaust, military service, survival, and postwar reconstruction. All five works are available on Amazon.

1993

Joshua Himes C'93 was promoted to Rear Admiral (Upper Half) by the US Navy in July. He continues to work as an Information Warfare leader at the National Security Agency in the Operations Directorate. He is proud to be joined by his son Ensign **Michael Himes EAS'26** in the family business and was honored to be the speaker and commissioning officer at the Penn NROTC Commissioning ceremony in May at Independence Hall.

1994

Dr. David L. Nathan M'94 writes, "This year marks the 10th anniversary of an organization I founded, Doctors for Drug Policy Reform (D4DPR). We are the voice of physicians who advocate a public health-based approach to drug use as an alternative to a criminal justice approach." The occasion was marked by a webinar held in David's honor, which included video segments by CNN's Michael Smerconish L'87 ["The Purple Passion of Michael Smerconish," Jul/Aug 2013], former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, former NFL player Eugene Monroe, and a host of drug policy advocates. A recording of the webinar is available at youtube.com/watch?v=mgrd-4VdzZ_c. David traces the inspiration for D4DPR back to his work as the graphics editor of the inaugural issue of the Penn Med student publication *American Journal of Ethics and Medicine* (1991). He writes, "Articles by the likes of Princeton professor Ethan Nadelmann and former drug czar William Bennett were highly influential in shaping my views on evidence-based, humane treatment of people with substance use disorders."

1998

Rachel Ehrlich Albanese C'98 L'01, co-chair of the Restructuring Group at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, has taken on a new leadership role by joining Pink Aid's Visionary Circle. The Visionary Circle is an advisory group of distinguished women executives and industry leaders from healthcare, finance, law, business, and philanthropy who will help advance Pink Aid's mission of providing emergency financial assistance to people undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

Idil Cakim ASC'98 has authored a second book, *AI for Marketing: The Consumer Perspective*. She writes, "The book explores one of the central challenges of our moment: how to mobilize audiences around AI when so few actually trust it. It examines the barriers and drivers of AI adoption through in-depth research—including my own AI Gap studies—and 10 interviews with practitioners working across the AI landscape." Idil is the founder and CEO of Iris Flex, an audience intelligence company, and has been a public speaker on media trends, influencer marketing, and communications with diverse audiences.

2001

Kristin Houston EAS'01 was named CEO of Rocketdyne, a space technology company providing space propulsion, space electronics, and power systems. She writes, "Though newly independent, Rocketdyne has a legacy spanning over 60 years, from Apollo to Artemis, and has propelled spacecraft to every planet in the solar system." Kristin is "thrilled to lead Rocketdyne into the next chapter of its storied legacy in support of space exploration, critical national security space missions, and commercial customers. And yes, as a matter of fact, it is rocket science!" Kristin was the 2025 keynote speaker for Penn Engineering's undergraduate commencement and was recently featured in *Penn Engineering Magazine* ("Engines of Exploration," 2025–2026 issue).

Aaron Karo W'01 has published his eighth book, *Elf Unwrapped: Behind the Scenes of a Modern Christmas Classic* (HarperCollins). Written with Andy Richter and featuring a foreword by actor Will Ferrell, the book includes interviews with Ferrell, director Jon Favreau, costar Zooey Deschanel, and many others who brought *Elf* to life. Aaron writes, "It chronicles the never-before-told story of how this underdog film became one of the

greatest Christmas movies of all time and makes a great holiday gift!" More information is available at ElfUnwrapped.com.

2004

Shahnaz Radjy C'04 published in September *An Orphan's Shifting Fate*, Book Two in the Song of Ayla young adult fantasy series (available on Amazon). You can connect with her on Instagram at [@smradjyauthor](https://www.instagram.com/smradjyauthor).

2005

Kathryn Keenan EAS'05, a researcher at the National Institute of Standards and Technology and an expert in quantitative MRI, has been honored with the Arthur S. Flemming Award for Applied Science and Engineering. These awards are given for exceptional civil service, and Kathryn has been recognized for her contributions that could have significant implications for healthcare by making breast MRI scans more reliable. She developed MRI calibration objects used in major clinical trials and advanced methods to validate emerging techniques such as low-field MRI and Magnetic Resonance Fingerprinting. Her innovations will strengthen breast cancer screening, reduce unnecessary biopsies, and expand access to point-of-care imaging.

2008

Julia Wilk GFA'08 GLA'08 has been named managing director for the Northern California region at Alliance Residential Company, a rental residential real estate developer. In this role, Julia will lead the origination, financing, and development of multifamily communities across the Bay Area.

2009

Julia Harte C'09 is an investigative reporter who has covered US national affairs and the Justice Department for *Reuters*. Her first book, *Americans Without Borders: The Radical Activists Who Fought for US Ideals Abroad While Facing Political Persecution at Home*, was published in October by Redwood Press, an imprint of Stanford University Press. It traces the tradition of Americans who traveled to support foreign liberation movements and revolutionary causes, and the ways they were targeted by the US government as a result.

Jarad Mason C'09 and **Ivy Mason C'10** write, "We are overjoyed to announce the birth of our son, Simon Tyler Mason, on

February 1 in Boston! Simon joins Ella Marie Mason (born in 2020) and Oliver Clark Mason (born in 2022)." Earlier this year, Jarad also earned tenure as a professor of chemistry at Harvard University.

Michael Poll C'09 is a conductor whose work spans opera, symphonic repertoire, and contemporary music. He is currently the head of orchestras at the Baltic Opera in Poland. This year, Michael released a new album, *Portraits and Serenades* (Pixaudio Records), where he conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with mezzo-soprano Simone Ibbett-Brown. It features music by Ian Venables, Odaline de la Martínez, Shruthi Rajasekar, Daniel Thomas Davis, and Edward Elgar. Michael writes, "The album places Elgar alongside four living British and American composers whose music reflects very different kinds of national identity and cultural exchange, ranging from the English countryside to Afro-Cuban and Indian narratives." More than a decade ago, Michael was profiled in the *Gazette* as a young Penn graduate and classical guitarist preparing to go to the UK on a Marshall Scholarship ["Gazetteer," Mar|Apr 2012].

2010

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

2015

Krystle Karoscik LPS'15 has been appointed CEO and board director of INNOVOTEX Incorporated, a pharmaceutical company advancing a new class of tumor-selective oncology therapeutics known as Macrocyclic Drug Conjugates (MDCs). Krystle leads the company's translational and corporate strategy as INNOVOTEX advances its lead candidate, NOVO-111, through first-in-human clinical trials. Krystle writes, "The appointment carries particular personal significance. My grandmother was diagnosed with late-stage cancer and, through access to clinical trials evaluating novel therapeutics at Penn, survived more than a decade following her diagnosis. That experience shaped my appreciation for the transformative potential of clinical research and the profound impact innovative medicines can have on patients and their families." Krystle serves as vice president of the board of directors for the Penn Club of Boston and cochairs the Women in Leadership event series to foster professional development in STEM and finance.

John A. McCabe LPS'15, a novelist and US veteran who has drawn on his experience being exposed to atomic bombs, is the author of *Reiko and the Visitor: Can Two People, One Irradiated in Nevada, the other in Hiroshima, Meet and Transform Us All?* He shares that, most recently, his book has been added to the collection at the Nagasaki Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims in Japan. The director of the memorial hall wrote, "By collecting memoirs and gathering information, our Memorial Hall aims to pass on records of the experiences of bombing survivors to future generations. The book you have donated will be preserved at the Memorial Hall as a valuable resource for future generations and will be made freely available to all visitors."

Rick Mula L'15 and Aaron Johnson were married by a Lady Elvis at a chapel in downtown Las Vegas on April 17.

2016

Kahaari Kenyatta C'16 has graduated from New York University School of Law with a Juris Doctor degree. After graduating from Penn with a degree in Health and Societies and a concentration in public health, Kahaari worked as a strategy consultant and lobbyist in Washington, DC, where his advocacy focused on pharmaceutical pricing policy, tobacco control, competition policy, and health care payment and delivery reform. At NYU Law, he interned for Judge Michael Shipp of the District of New Jersey in Trenton and for the Civil Division of the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York; served two terms as president of the Student Bar Association; was an articles editor on the *New York University Law Review* and a member of the Antitrust and Competition Law Society; and participated in a production of the law school's musical—his first since his years in the Penn Glee Club. Kahaari is beginning his legal career in the New York City office of Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP.

2018

Mitchell Chan C'18 has joined Pashman Stein Walder Hayden P.C. as an associate in its commercial litigation and appellate advocacy practices. He was previously a law clerk to Hon. Jessica S. Allen in the US District Court for the District of New Jersey.

Michael Fortunato C'18 see **Breanne Mastromarino Nu'19 GNu'25**.

2019

Jack Cartwright L'19, a personal injury attorney at Munley Law, has been selected as a Revitalization Board Member of the American Association for Justice's Board of Governors. The American Association for Justice is a nonprofit organization focused on protecting the civil justice system and victims' rights. As the Revitalization board member for Pennsylvania, Jack will focus on recruitment, engagement, and mentoring newer trial lawyers, as well as participate in voting on organizational priorities.

Breanne Mastromarino Nu'19 GNu'25 and **Michael Fortunato C'18** married on July 17, starting with a ceremony at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey, followed by a reception at the Estate at Florentine Gardens in Rivaire, New Jersey. Breanne writes, "We met on my first day at Penn at the Penn Catholic Newman Center NOVUS retreat. We invited close Penn alumni friends to the wedding and gathered on the dance floor to sing 'The Red and the Blue.'"

2024

Anand Salodkar WG'24 and **Venkat Sivasubramanian WG'24** started a company after graduating, CompFly AI. Anand writes, "We help large enterprises put AI agents to work safely, and prove the results. Our customers are Fortune 500 companies, and most of our investors are Penn alumni." Learn more at compfly.ai.

2025

Harry Cicma WMP'25 made his return to competitive tennis in July. He won the USTA Men's Open Singles Championship in New York and also advanced to the finals of the USTA Men's Open Championship in Edison, New Jersey. It was Harry's first competitive tennis event since making the quarterfinals of the Puerto Rico ITF Futures Professional Tennis Championship in 2016 with his doubles partner, Evan King. Harry continues to host and executive produce ESPN's *ESPN The Ocho*, as well as *World Tennis with Harry Cicma*, a nationally syndicated TV series.

2026

Michael Himes EAS'26 see **Joshua Himes C'93**.

1945

Charlotte Garretson Cronin CW'45, Baltimore, a retired newspaper columnist and founder of the Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum, which preserves the history of Aberdeen, MD; June 15. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority. Her daughter is Cheryl Cronin Levitan GNu'80 (Dr. Dean B. Levitan C'71 Gr'76 M'78).

1946

Mary Ellen Danley CW'46, Sun City, AZ, a retired schoolteacher; June 13, at 100. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority.

Dr. Joseph H. Goldberg D'46, Pompton Plains, NJ, a dentist; May 28.

Betty Kirshner Small CW'46, Lancaster, PA, Aug. 15, at 101. As a student at Penn, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority. As an alumna, she was a volunteer and officer for her Class, past president of the Association of Alumnae, and she received the Alumni Award of Merit in 1985. In 2001, the University recognized her family for its four generations of women graduates who were featured in a video documentary celebrating 125 years of Women at Penn. Two daughters are Sara Small Hodge CW'72 (Ian G. Hodge Jr. C'72) and Martha S. Small CW'76 FA'77. One granddaughter is Dr. Blair Hodge Pendley C'02 V'06 (Lt. Col. William P. Pendley III C'03).

1947

Clifford W. Baumbach Jr. C'47, Philadelphia, retired information technologist for the Cigna Group, a healthcare and health insurance company; May 20. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and the baseball team, and he was a volunteer for his Class.

Cynthia White Hamilton DH'47, Schenectady, NY, a retired executive secretary to the medical staff at a hospital; May 10, at 99.

Jessie Colehower Somers Ed'47, Elkins, WV, a retired kindergarten teacher; May 16, at 100.

1948

Richard L. Creviston W'48, Naples, FL, retired president and CEO of a bank; July 17, at 101. He served in the US Navy during World War II and the Korean War, and he also served in the US Naval Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Phi Omega fraternity.

Eileen Wirtshafter Leibowitz Ed'48, State College, PA, July 12. At Penn, she was a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority.

1949

Edna Ryan Gehrke DH'49, Hamden, CT, a retired dental hygienist; June 27. One daughter is Sharon Ryan Reichart DH'80.

Phyllis Ford Victor Ed'49, Delray Beach, FL, May 14, at 99. One son is J. Scott Victor C'80.

1950

Gerald J. Feldman G'50, Bethesda, MD, retired training manager for Montgomery Country, MD; March 12, at 102. He served in the US Army during World War II.

Janice Warshaw Rosenthal Ed'50, New York, a retired professional ballet dancer for the Metropolitan Opera; June 3. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority. Her son is Bob B. Rosenthal C'74.

Martin Torodash C'50, Teaneck, NJ, a retired professor of history and political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University; March 5. He served in the US military. At Penn, he was a member of WXPn.

1951

Dr. Edward Armstrong Jr. C'51, Hudson, OH, a retired oral surgeon; May 30. He served in the US Navy during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Acacia fraternity and the soccer team. One son is Edward B. Armstrong III EAS'86.

Patricia Bellwoar Campanella CW'51, Hammonton, NJ, a retired psychiatric social worker; July 2. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Omicron Pi sorority, and the field hockey and tennis teams.

Mark S. Gleeson G'51, Oakmont, PA, retired president of the Refractories Institute, a national trade association; June 22, at 99. He also authored several history books. He served in the US Merchant Marine.

Robert B. McKersie EE'51, Arlington, MA, a professor emeritus of management at Massachusetts Institute of Technology; July 11. He studied industrial and labor relations. He served in the US Navy during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity, the rowing team, ROTC, and Sphinx Senior Society.

John C. A. Rigney Jr. C'51, Drexel Hill, PA, June 6. He served in the US Army.

Notifications

Please send notifications of deaths of alumni directly to: Alumni Records, University of Pennsylvania, Suite 300, 2929 Walnut Street, Phila., PA 19104

EMAIL record@ben.dev.upenn.edu
Newspaper obits are appreciated.

1952

Florence L. Denmark CW'52 Gr'58, Oakton, VA, a social psychologist, educator, researcher, and advocate for women in psychology; May 25. She taught at several colleges including Pace University, CUNY, and Hunter College. At Penn, she was a member of WXPn and the French Club.

Hon. Jan E. Dubois W'52, Lafayette Hill, a district court judge for the US District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania; PA, May 10. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, Friars Senior Society, the swimming team, and ROTC.

David M. Gray C'52 G54 Gr'65, Ardmore, PA, retired vice president of Arcadia University; May 13. He was a pioneer in college study abroad programs and established the Center for Education Abroad at Arcadia University and the Institute for Study Abroad at Butler University. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Epsilon fraternity and WXPn. One son is Jonathan D. Gray WG'91 (Lisa Dannecker Gray WG'91).

Knud C. Hansen G'52, Wilmington, DE, June 8. He worked for the Iron Workers Union.

Henry S. Harrison W'52, Melbourne, FL, an entrepreneur who worked in real estate appraisal, adult education, healthcare, public speaking, writing, and publishing; April 17. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, the sailing team, and ROTC.

Dr. E. Gardner Jacobs Jr. M'52, Audubon, PA, a retired psychiatrist; June 5, at 100. He served in the US Navy during World War II.

Dr. Irwin Steuer C'52, New York, a retired orthodontist; May 25. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity and the fencing team.

1953

Richard M. Burk WG'53, Deerfield, IL, a former financial executive; July 24, 2024.

Dr. Alfred B. Lewis Jr. M'53, New York, professor emeritus of clinical psychiatry at Cornell; Feb. 17. He served in the US Army.

Robert J. Magee W'53, Reading, PA, a retired corporate director of employee relations; May 22. He served in the US Marine Corps and the US Marine Corps Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity and WXPn.

Marion Jackson McCreary Ed'53, West Brandywine, PA, a retired elementary school teacher; July 8. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Xi Delta sorority, and the softball, fencing, and basketball teams.

Dr. Sydney "Syd" E. Pulver M'53 GM'57, Philadelphia, a clinical professor in the department of psychiatry in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine, as well as the former medical director and a senior attending staff psychiatrist at the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital and former chief of psychiatry at Philadelphia General Hospital; March 23. After completing a psychiatric residency at the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital in 1957 he joined the hospital's staff that year. He later became a senior attending physician in 1964 and served as medical director from 1981 to 1983. He was also named assistant chief of psychiatry in 1957 and chief of psychiatry in 1962 at Philadelphia General Hospital. In 1960, he joined the faculty of Penn's School of Medicine in the department of psychiatry, eventually becoming a full clinical professor. At Penn, he taught graduate students and psychiatry residents, and taught popular courses like *The Mind in Conflict*, *Freud's Papers*, and *The History of Psychoanalysis*. In 1987, he won the Dean's Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching. He never retired from Penn and continued to teach until his death at age 98. He served in the US Army during World War II. One child is Susan Pulver Mardinly GEE'81.

Myron J. Resnick W'53, Winnetka, IL, a retired insurance executive; July 13. He served on the Board of Advisors of Penn's Institute for Law and Economics. As a student at Penn, he was a member of the Debate Council and the rowing team. One son is Clay B. Resnick C'92.

C. Ronald Scheeler W'53, Sandusky, OH, a retired managing partner at Ernst & Young; May 4.

Rosemary "Rosie" Adams Thurber CW'53, South Haven, MI, an actor and cofounder of

a theater troupe that performed for children; June 8. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and Penn Players.

George Weinbaum C'53, Philadelphia, a retired biochemist; Feb. 14. As a student at Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity and the rowing team. As an alumnus, he volunteered for his class. Three of his children are Dr. Cindy M. Weinbaum M'93, Laura I. Weinbaum G'96 (Brett H. Mandel G'93), and Elliot H. Weinbaum Gr'04, who is an assistant professor at Penn's Graduate School of Education. Two of his grandchildren are Jonah P. Weinbaum C'21 and Ariel Mandel Weinbaum, a clinical research coordinator at Penn Medicine.

1954

Yonathan Bard ChE'54, Newton, MA, a retired computer scientist at IBM; June 21.

George B. Harvey W'54, New Canaan, CT, retired president, CEO, and chairman of Pitney Bowes; July 2. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

Carl F. Oster Jr. CCC'54, Greece, NY, retired head of research for Eastman Kodak; June 7. He served in the US Merchant Marine during World War II.

Alfred J. Pankowski C'54, Jacksonville, FL, July 1. He served in the US Army Veterinary Corps. At Penn, he was a member of the track team.

1955

Salvatore "Sal" Caltabiano GME'55, Newtown Square, PA, a retired engineer at General Electric; July 9.

Richard G. Dooley WG'55, Enfield, CT, a retired life insurance executive; June 18.

Dr. Ira S. Drazner C'55 D'57, Woodbridge, CT, a retired dentist; June 15. He served in the US military. Two children are Dr. Ellen Drazner Saffir D'84 and Dr. Michelle Drazner Lipshultz D'85 (Dr. Richard B. Lipshultz D'85).

Ann Pritchard Granville CW'55, Sun City West, AZ, June 2026.

Francis J. Hartman L'55, Moorestown, NJ, a retired attorney; July 1.

Barbara Binder Levy Ed'55, Media, PA, a retired elementary school teacher; May 17. One daughter is Gayle P. Levy C'83 W'83, and one grandchild is Jason L. Liebmann W'20.

Arlene Feinstein Litvin CW'55 G'75, Bryn Mawr, PA, a former faculty member at the Hahnemann Hospital School of Medicine;

June 6. Her husband is Jerry Litvin L'54, and one daughter is Caren Litvin C'78 L'84.

Allan King Sloan GCP'55, Bedford, MA, a retired transportation planner; July 9.

1956

Rev. Francis T. Cafarelli G'56, Manchester, NH, a priest and former Benedictine monk who served as postulant director of a seminary; June 5. Earlier in his career, he worked in many positions at the University of Notre Dame.

James E. Falen W'56 Gr'70, Louisville, TN, a professor emeritus of Russian language and literature at the University of Tennessee; June 2. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity and Penn Players. His wife is Eve Niederdrunk Falen CW'62 G'64 and one son is Geoffrey C. Falen C'88 G'97.

Lois Greiss Graver DH'56, Audubon, PA, a former dental hygienist; July 27. One son is Dr. Jay D. Graver C'82 D'86.

Stephen B. Gray EE'56, Santa Monica, CA, Jan. 26. At Penn, he was a member of Penn Players.

John G. Teltsch WG'56, Sea Island, GA, a former custom home builder; Feb. 7, 2025. He served in the US military during the Korean War.

Dr. Herbert W. Wilkinson GD'56, Cedar Hills, UT, a retired oral surgeon; May 19, at 102. He was also founder of Resort Properties Ventures, a vacation home fractional ownership company. He served in the US military.

1957

Dr. Marino A. "Gus" Bramante D'57 GD'60, Indian Wells, CA, a retired orthodontist; June 12. He also taught orthodontics at Fairleigh Dickinson University and Columbia University, was the director of a bank, and was a commercial real estate investor. He served in the US Navy.

Marjorie "Margie" Sisler Brookes HUP'57, Jensen Beach, FL, a former nurse at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; April 15.

John M. Clure W'57, Clermont, FL, retired founder of a data management company; Jan. 19. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Psi Upsilon fraternity and the golf team.

Jacqueline Verna Fergione Nu'57, Charlotte, NC, a former nurse and teacher; May 13.

Dr. Lawrence S. Harte D'57, Livingston, NJ, a retired orthodontist, director of a cleft palate clinic, and founder of clinics for facial pain, sports dentistry, and cosmetic enhancement; May 15. He served in the US Air Force. One son is Dr. Douglas S. Harte D'88 GD'91, and one grandchild is Rebecca Rhode C'29 W'29.

Richard C. Marx WG'57, Miami, retired vice president of a hospital; Oct. 27, 2025. He served in the US Army.

John A. Morton GEd'57, Blue Bell, PA, retired dean of a middle school; June 21. He served in the US Army.

Dr. George P. Quirk GD'57, Houston, an oral surgeon; June 21. He served in the US Navy during the Korean War.

Howard F. Ruby W'57, Los Angeles, founder and chairman of a company that provided temporary furnished apartments; April 28, 2025. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity.

Jay H. Schultz W'57, Shaker Heights, OH, a retired movie producer and cofounder of a distributor of VHS tapes; June 13. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

Dr. John E. Weise C'57 D'62, Wyckoff, NJ, a retired endodontist; Jan. 6. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War and in the US Navy Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of the rowing team, which, in 1955, won the Grand Challenge Cup for Penn at Henley Royal Regatta. One daughter is Amy Weise Williamson Nu'02 GNu'04.

1958

Bruce R. Besser W'58, Santa Fe, NM, a property developer; Feb. 24. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity, Mask & Wig, Sphinx Senior Society, and the cheerleading, squash, and fencing teams.

Charlton H. "Chuck" Carpenter W'58, Castle Rock, CO, a retired attorney specializing in real estate and corporate law; July 1. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity, the cross country and track teams, and he was a Franklin Scholar.

John J. Grauer L'58, Hilton Head Island, SC, a retired attorney; May 12. He served in the US Marine Corps during the Korean War.

Richard I. Landy W'58, Miami, an entrepreneur in the communications field; July 12, 2024. At Penn, he was a member of Beta

Sigma Rho fraternity and *The Daily Pennsylvanian*. One son is Douglas J. Landy C'89.

John P. Polychron W'58, Winston-Salem, NC, retired president and CEO of the Planters Lifesavers Company; July 16. He also owned a flight company. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, Mask & Wig, and the swimming and baseball teams.

Jeffrey A. Wisnia GEE'58, Winchester, MA, a retired engineer and manager of his wife's speech-language, occupational, and physical therapy services business; Jan. 3.

Florence Avidon Wolfson CW'58, Peabody, MA, a retired librarian; June 17.

1959

Dr. Bruce P. Anderson D'59, Yarmouth Port, MA, a retired dentist; June 6. He served in the US Army.

Susan Gebhardt Belles Nu'59, Providence, RI, a former nurse and retired CEO of Lifespan Diversified Services; Nov. 16, 2024. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority.

Stephen S. Carp W'59, Danville, CA, a manufacturer's representative; July 24. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

Joyce Harple Goebel Nu'59 GNu'64, Honey Brook, PA, retired director of nursing at a hospital; June 3. One sister is Shirley Harple Datner Nu'59 (Charles David Datner GAR'59).

Richard C. Hartman Jr. WG'59, Naples, FL, a retired consultant for the National Association of Regional Councils, a non-profit that connects regional councils, governments, and agencies to help them work together; Aug. 22, 2025. He served in the US Army Signal Corps.

Dr. Edward B. Rotheram Jr. M'59, Mt. Lebanon, PA, retired head of the infectious diseases department at a hospital; April 24.

Robert H. Rubin L'59, Westport, CT, a retired lawyer; Jan. 25. His children include Joanne M. Rubin C'82 and Dina K. Rubin C'88.

Richard A. Schiffer W'59 L'62, Longboat Key, FL, May 24, 2025. His wife is Deana Talens Schiffer Ed'61.

Elaine Shay W'59, Rydal, PA, board chairperson of a cemetery; June 13. Two children are Robert M. Shay ME'83 and Heather Shay-Herzig C'88 (Jack J.C. Herzig GEd'94). One granddaughter is Elizabeth A. Shay C'14 EAS'14.

Dr. Steele F. Stewart M'59, Naples, FL, a retired obstetrician-gynecologist; Aug. 24, 2025. He served in the US Army.

Janet Magerman Widra CW'59, Bala Cynwyd, PA, June 15.

1960

Herbert M. Chubin WG'60, Rockville, MD, an auditor and chief financial officer for several companies; June 24. He was also an adjunct accounting professor at Northern Virginia Community College. He served in the US Army Reserve.

John G. Cleminshaw C'60, Akron, OH, retired founder of a mass appraisal firm; June 9. He served in the US Coast Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

Alyce Ford Hild Ed'60, Bloomfield, CT, retired executive director of a soup kitchen; June 16. Her husband is Dr. David H. Hild M'62 GM'66.

Frederick L. Muller C'60, Savannah, GA, an investment banker; May 19. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Psi fraternity.

Dr. Jan A. Olinginski D'60 GD'68, Dallas, PA, a retired orthodontist; May 10. He served in the US Army.

Jane Brandon Pfaff CW'60, West Hartford, CT, May 18. She retired from a life insurance company. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority.

Dr. Edwin M. Rascoe M'60 GM'62, Atlanta, a retired psychiatrist and professor of psychiatry at Emory University; June 23, 2025. He served in the US Navy.

1961

Dr. Donald M. Felber D'61, Montclair, NJ, a retired dentist; June 16.

J. Jeffrey Press W'61, Morristown, NJ, a former attorney; March 8, 2025. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity and WXPn.

Evelyn Vetterlein Wozniak CW'61, Berkeley, CA, a political organizer and former legislative aide who worked to increase recreational opportunities at the Berkeley waterfront; Sept. 20, 2025.

1962

Dr. John F. Farquhar D'62, Seaford, DE, a retired dentist; May 19.

Julian B. Feibelman Jr. C'62, New Orleans, retired head of an advertising and public relations firm; April 6.

Peter M. Hahn GEE'62 GrE'68, New York, Aug. 18, 2024. Two children are Karen Ann Hess W'85 and Paul F. Hahn EE'86 W'86.

Dr. Ernest N. Kraybill M'62, Chapel Hill, NC, a pediatric neonatologist and professor emeritus of pediatrics at the University of North Carolina; May 23.

Elliott H. Mittler W'62, Mount Kisco, NY, Oct. 9, 2024. He worked in the financial industry. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity. One daughter is Rachel Chase Mittler C'91.

Robert L. "Bob" Protzmann ChE'62, New City, NY, a retired research chemist at AkzoNobel, a paint manufacturer; March 9. He held multiple patents. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity. One daughter is Laura Protzmann C'98.

John P. "Jack" Reardon WG'62, North Weymouth, MA, former associate vice president for university relations at Harvard; June 23.

Franklyn W. Robbins W'62, Northbrook, IL, October 2025. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity and the soccer team.

Jin-Chen "J. C." Su Gr'62, Pittsburgh, a retired mathematics professor at the University of Massachusetts; Dec. 1.

Bennett P. Weinstock W'62, Philadelphia, former owner of an interior design company with his wife; Sept. 30, 2025. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity and Penn Players. His wife was Judith Weintraub Weinstock CW'62, who died July 5, 2025. His daughter is Nancy Weinstock Yecies W'90 (Michael S. Yecies C'89 L'94), and his brother is James D. Weinstock W'74.

Judith Weintraub Weinstock CW'62, Philadelphia, former owner of an interior design company with her husband; July 5, 2025. At Penn, she was a member of the Pennguinettes synchronized swimming team. Her husband was Bennett P. Weinstock W'62, who died Sept. 30, 2025. Her daughter is Nancy Weinstock Yecies W'90 (Michael S. Yecies C'89 L'94), and her sister is Alene Weintraub Alper CW'58.

1963

John H. Beal WG'63, Minneapolis, a real estate executive; June 23.

Joel D. Frankfurt C'63, West Chester, PA, January 31, 2025. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Delta Phi fraternity.

Monte Fried W'63, Mount Pleasant, SC, a retired attorney; May 16. He served in the US Army Reserve Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity and the lacrosse team. One daughter is Rachael J. Fried C'97.

Robert J. Partlow L'63, Lewes, DE, a retired lawyer; March 5, 2025.

1964

Dr. Charles B. Bird M'64, Bend, OR, retired professor and chairman at Oregon Health and Science University; March 27.

Frank Felleman L'64, Monticello, NY, a retired attorney; June 13.

John R. Gibbel L'64, Lititz, PA, a retired attorney; May 28.

Rev. William E. Hershey G'64, Albuquerque, NM, a pastor, director of a crisis clinic, and former adjunct professor at several universities; May 18. Earlier in his career, he served in the campus ministries at Penn.

Dr. Robert A. Lawton D'64, Thousand Oaks, CA, a retired periodontist; May 19. He served in the US Navy.

Dr. Donald E. Schwartz V'64, Mancos, CO, a retired veterinarian; June 10. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

Dr. Jerome S. Weisberg C'64 GM'75, Ithaca, NY, a retired rheumatologist; May 10. His wife is Pamela Diamond Weisberg CW'67, and one daughter is Georgia F. Kornblatt Nu'99.

Barbara Nelson Winslow PT'64, Scarborough, ME, a retired physical therapist; May 28. Her husband is Warren E. Winslow Jr. L'67.

1965

Aileen Kohn Beckman CW'65 GEd'70, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, a former schoolteacher and professor of education at Cabrini College; June 1. At Penn, she was a member of Penn Players and WXPn. One son is Bradley T. Beckman L'88.

Jon E. Hart C'65, Williamsburg, VA, a retired dentist; June 17. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity.

Gilbert C. Junkunc WG'65, Upland, CA, April 13.

David L. Kniffin WG'65, Wilton, CT, retired director of equity investments at the United Church of Christ Pension Boards; March 24. One daughter is Bethany Kniffin Hoogs EAS'91 (Anthony J. Hoogs Gr'98).

Audrey Zinner Nagler CW'65, Minneapolis, Jan. 22. Her daughter is Rebekah H. Nagler C'02 Gr'07 Gr'10 (Dr. Adam B. Jeffers GM'08).

Robert L. Woodson SW'65, Silver Spring, MD, a leader in the Black conservative movement and founder of the Woodson Center, which empowers low-income communities to transform their own neighborhoods; May 19. He served in the US Air Force.

1966

Hon. Donald S. Coburn L'66, Morristown, NJ, a retired judge in the Superior Court of New Jersey; Aug. 7, 2024. He served in the US Army. His wife is Ellen Jacobs Coburn GEd'66.

William T. Hangley L'66, Philadelphia, cofounder, chairman, and CEO of a law firm; June 23. One daughter is Michele D. Hangley L'98.

Dr. James R. MacBride III M'66, Spring Lake, MI, a retired physician; June 18.

John J. Serke GAR'66, Ardmore, PA, a retired architect, founder of a roofing company, and a forensic roofing consultant; May 16.

Richard A. Windatt WG'66, Essex, CT, an investment banker; May 24.

1967

Rena B. Burstein GEd'67, Bryn Mawr, PA, a retired psychologist; June 14, at 99.

Anne Mangels Farber CW'67, Santa Fe, NM, June 3. She retired from the Office of Child Development at the University of Pittsburgh.

Ellen Becker Finn SW'67, Aston, PA, a school social worker focused on serving children with chronic illnesses and disabilities; May 18.

Carol R. Hayashida CW'67, Kaunakakai, HI, a retired social worker for the State of Hawaii who licensed preschools and day care facilities; May 18.

Roger M. Leachman C'67, Portland, OR, a retired librarian; March 19. He served in the US Army.

Dr. Richard T. Lunger M'67, Arlington, VA, a retired emergency room physician; April 13, 2025. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War. One son is Richard T. Lunger Jr. C'90.

Dr. Charles B. Millstein GD'67, Brighton, MA, a retired endodontist, professor of dental medicine at Tufts University, and dental historian; June 21. He served in the US Air Force.

Hiroshi Obayashi Gr'67, Morristown, NJ, a retired professor of religion at Rutgers University; May 13. His son is Hal Naoya Obayashi C'83.

Dr. James A. Roberts D'67, Auburn, IN, a retired dentist and pilot instructor; May 20.

Ruth B. Rothman G'67, Haverford, PA, a biologist and teacher; April 9, 2023. Her children include Steven D. Rothman C'75 (Janice A. Fisher C'76) and Carol Rothman Tycko GCh'81, and one grandchild is Joshua Charles Tycko C'14.

Glenn F. Spachman WG'67, Roselle, IL, a retired village manager for several communities; April 17. He served in the US Army.

Richard R. Stover C'67, West Cornwall, CT, founder and president of a biotech company; May 26. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and the sprint football team. One daughter is Frances C. Stover C'01.

Donald M. Thompson WEv'67, Philadelphia, a retired Multiple Virtual Storage (MVS) operator for Penn's Information Systems & Computing (ISC) department; Feb. 7. His Penn career, which spanned nearly 70 years, began when he was 17 years old in 1955 and served as a messenger in the development office. In 1958, he became a clerk in the same department, where he served intermittently until 1967. That year, he graduated from Wharton Evening School and joined the staff of Penn's Institute of Cooperative Research as a duplicate machine operator. Later in 1967, he became a tech records clerk at Penn's Data Processing Office. Two years later, he became an assistant computer operator in the Data Processing Office, which was renamed University Management Information Services (UMIS) in 1972. He rose through the ranks in UMIS until 1992, when he joined Penn's department of Information Systems & Computing (ISC) as a Multiple Virtual Storage (MVS) operator. He retired from Penn in 1996 but remained at ISC in a temporary role as a computer technician until 2024. As a student at Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. His sister is Carol C. Collins SW'84.

Frances Schultz Trendler WEv'67, Brigantine, NJ, May 16.

1968

Kurt W. Lutz C'68, Yarmouth, ME, May 26.

Dr. Philip H. McKinley Jr. C'68, Winston-Salem, NC, a retired ophthalmologist; May 26. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, Sphinx Senior Society, and the rowing team.

Carl E. Wasmuth Jr. L'68, Amberson, PA, a retired attorney; May 26.

1969

Harvey W. Burden Gr'69, Williamsburg, VA, a retired Navy officer and professor of aeronautics at the Naval Postgraduate School; June 19. He went on to become a civilian engineer working on airplanes and helicopters.

Joseph B. Carder Jr. Gr'69, San Diego, retired president and managing partner of the Association of Directors of Geriatric Academic Programs; Jan. 10, 2024.

Vincent J. "Jim" Deleo PT'69, Dover, DE, a retired physical therapist and instructor of physical therapy at the University of Delaware; May 7. He served in the US Army Medical Specialist Corps during the Vietnam War.

Paul J. Forrest WG'69, Essex, CT, retired chief financial officer for Heating Oil Partners in Connecticut; June 25, 2024. He served in the US Navy.

Gordon A. Hasse Jr. WG'69, Orlando, FL, a former creative director; May 12.

Joyce Herrington Nu'69, Towanda, PA, a retired nurse at the US Veterans Administration; June 27. She served in the US Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War.

Ronald O. Klein WG'69, Southborough, MA, a retired actuary; May 25.

Robert M. Levin G'69 Gr'74, Albany, NY, former director of urologic research and cofounder of the Uro-Pharmacology Laboratory at Penn's School of Medicine; April 13. His daughter is Sharon Levin Rosenberg C'92 SW'94.

John C. Reinstein L'69, Brookline, MA, a retired lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union; June 16. One child is Sarah Reinstein O'toole C'95.

Allen H. Sheptow L'69, Bay Harbor Islands, FL, May 15.

Sidney J. Smith Jr. W'69, Georgetown, SC, a former life insurance executive; Aug. 22, 2025. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity and Friars Senior Society.

1970

Dr. Willa H. Drummond M'70 GM'74, Gainesville, FL, a retired professor of pediatrics and neonatology at the University of Florida; May 4. She also had an honorary appointment at the school's College of Veterinary Medicine, due to her work in the field of equine neonatology.

Lois Goodman Ontell L'70, Washington, DC, a retired civil rights lawyer and criminal defense attorney; June 1.

Dr. John Closs "JC" Williams GM'70, Prescott, AZ, a retired radiologist; June 6. He served in the US Navy.

1971

Alice Rockoff Agrin OT'71, Bridgewater, NJ, a retired occupational therapist for a school district; April 10. Her husband is Dr. Richard J. Agrin M'71, and one daughter is Rachel N. Agrin C'99.

George L. Granger Gr'71, Johnson City, TN, a retired professor of economics and finance at East Tennessee State University; June 6. He served in the US Air Force.

Dolores A. Hilden Nu'71 GNu'73 Gr'85, Newtown Square, PA, retired chair of the nursing department at St. Ambrose University; June 9.

Claudia Deering Hilko PT'71, Los Alamos, NM, a retired physiotherapist and folk dancer; April 26.

Orville E. Kean Gr'71, St. Thomas, VI, retired president of the University of the Virgin Islands; Jan. 19, 2025.

Oliver J. Larri Gr'71, Bala Cynwyd, PA, retired philosophy professor at Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg; Sept. 2, 2023. A talented folk dancer, he also established a folk dance program at the school and cofounded a dance hall with his wife.

Georgianne McVay Gr'71, Drexel Hill, PA, a retired professor of English, literature, and American history; April 19.

Rena Logan Poole MT'71, College Grove, TN, a retired medical technologist in the pediatric hematology/oncology lab at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh; May 22.

Marianne Sohonyay Sachs Nu'71, Annapolis, MD, a retired therapist; May 4.

Calvin J. Speight CGS'71, Cinnaminson, NJ, a retired chemical engineer; Dec. 7.

1972

Donald F. Cybulski W'72, Hudson, OH,

an attorney; June 22. One daughter is Katherine E. Aparicio C0'7.

Hon. Jacques C. Leroy G'72, Longmeadow, MA, a retired judge in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; May 25.

Jeffrey Montanye WG'72, Atlantic Beach, FL, May 23, 2025.

James T. Vernile L'72, Media, PA, a retired attorney; May 16.

1973

Susan Lee Anderson GAR'73 WG'89, Ambler, PA, June 19.

George Castelle C'73, Winchester, CA, retired chief public defender of Kanawha County, WV; July 14. He was also an adjunct lecturer at West Virginia University College of Law and a senior visiting lecturing fellow at Duke University. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity.

Duncan A. Christie WG'73, Burlington, VT, an investment banker and high school math teacher; May 1. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War. His former spouse is Ellen T. Christie GEd'72.

Edward A. Dennin WG'73, Hanover, PA, retired manager of the employee safety program at the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; June 21. He served in the US Army.

Michael Hochman GRP'73, Long Island City, NY, June 9, 2024.

Jack St. Girard Jordan L'73, Marlton, NJ, retired general counsel for GlaxoSmith-Kline; May 31. He served in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War.

Katheryn A. Lorzing Nu'73, Copley, OH, a retired hospice nurse; May 20. She served in the US Air Force.

1974

Douglas L. Purvis CGS'74, Las Cruces, NM, retired director of facilities management at Penn Vet who spent more than 40 years at Penn across multiple schools; June 19. He came to Penn in 1966 as a laboratory research technician in the department of anatomy at Penn Vet, where he supervised the preparation and maintenance of specimens for gross anatomy courses. He advanced to the position of laboratory course preparator in 1976. His anatomical preparations, which often represented particularly challenging structures and were of outstanding quality, have helped to educate generations of Penn veterinary students.

In 1979, he moved to the Wharton School's administration, where he served as manager of the school's physical plant. Three years later, he became the manager of building and engineering services for the Laboratory for Research on the Structure of Matter; and in 1986, he became assistant director of facilities at the School of Medicine. In the fall of 1988, he returned to Penn Vet, first as a construction project manager and then as director of facilities management, a position he held until his retirement in 2007. During his second tenure at Penn Vet, he initiated and oversaw hundreds of projects at Penn Vet's urban campus in Philadelphia and at the rural large animal facility at New Bolton Center. He served in the US Air Force Reserve during the Vietnam War. His wife is Nancy Minugh-Purvis Gr'88.

Pascal E. Scoles Jr. GrS'74, Lafayette Hill, PA, a retired professor of behavioral sciences at the Community College of Philadelphia; May 14.

Dr. Alan Z. Shusner D'74, Cincinnati, a dentist, rehab counselor, and insurance agent; May 10.

1975

Dr. Nabil A. Abaza D'75, Philadelphia, a retired professor of oral surgery at Drexel University; June 19.

Hon. Stephen A. Doherty C'75, Missoula, MT, a retired attorney and former Montana state senator; May 25. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Psi fraternity and the rowing team.

Bruce Macbain Gr'75, Brookline, MA, an author and former history teacher at the high school and college levels; Sept. 27, 2019. For a time, he taught at Vanderbilt and Boston Universities. He also wrote historical novels set in imperial Rome and the Viking era (c. 1000). His posthumously published political thriller, *Shanghai Blues*, features an American Creole jazz trumpeter caught up in one of the great political movements of the 20th century.

1976

Joyce D. Block SW'76, Lafayette Hill, PA, June 23.

Daniel J. Graham GEE'76, Shamong, NJ, cofounder and director of InTest; May 11.

Patricia Snyder Guth GrEd'76, Perkasio, PA, a longtime teacher and school administrator; June 2.

The Perkasio Elementary School was renamed the Patricia A. Guth Elementary School in her honor.

Jesse Phifer III SW'76, Toledo, OH, a retired psychiatric social worker for the US Department of Veterans Affairs; June 18.

Dr. Michael S. Tierney V'76, Newtown, PA, a veterinarian; May 23.

1977

Prabhudas P. "John" Chauhan WEv'77, Swarthmore, PA, former secretary and treasurer of the Manufacturers' Appraisal Company (MAC); June 3.

Robin I. Eisenberg GEd'77, Elkins Park, PA, May 16.

Marlon E. Fuentes WG'77, Orange, CA, a photographer, filmmaker, and conceptual artist; Aug. 23, 2025. He was inducted into the Smithsonian Archives of American Art.

Susan R. Pincus W'77, Southampton, PA, former secretary and treasurer of a soda and beverage systems supplier serving restaurants and commercial services; July 24, 2025. Her brother is Andrew J. Pincus W'75 WG'77.

Mark Wovsaniker W'77 WG'77, Whippany, NJ, retired senior vice president at AOL Time Warner; May 17.

1978

Richard A. DeMaria PT'78, Philadelphia, a physical therapist specializing in cancer recovery and rehabilitation; May 12.

Bryce L. Holland Jr. WG'78 L'79, Mercer Island, WA, a business lawyer; May 2025.

Clinton E. Lambert Jr. GNu'78, Thomson, GA, a retired psychiatric mental health clinical nurse specialist; May 25. He served in the US Army.

Joseph J. Malan Jr. W'78, Mount Ephraim, NJ, a paramutuel manager at Parx Casino; May 20. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and the football team.

Joseph W. Meador Gr'78, Arlington, MA, a retired professor at Northeastern University; June 21. He served in the US Army Signal Corps. His wife is Mary Dolores Vinet Meador Nu'69 GNu'74.

1979

Beverly J. Bump Nu'79, Philadelphia, retired staff nurse at Tastykake; June 2. She served in the US Air Force Nurse Corps and the US National Guard.

Eugene F. Latchford WEv'79, Spring City, PA, a former senior engineer at Lockheed Martin; June 1. He served in the US Air Force.

James E. Scheib Gr'79, Iowa City, IA, retired staff development coordinator for Grant Wood Area Education Agency; June 17.

Dr. Jeffrey H. Schimandle C'79, Oklahoma City, OK, a physician; May 1. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity and Friars Senior Society.

Steven A. Smolinsky WG'79, Chester Springs, PA, former consulting practicum region manager for Wharton Global, focusing on Africa, Middle East, and Latin America; Sep. 8, 2025.

1980

Thomas L. Fare EE'80 GEE'82 GrE'85, Doylestown, PA, a retired expert in biosensors and drug development at Merck; Sept. 23. His daughter is Charlotte M. Fare Gr'22.

Laraine J. Kazanjian-Ballard W'80, Newtown Square, PA, May 23. Her husband is Bruce D. Ballard W'80 WG'94; and her children are Armena M. Ballard C'10, Christopher J. Ballard C'12 G'12, and Michael A. Ballard W'15. Three sisters are Robin Kazanjian Williams MT'77, Nancy Kazanjian Dersimonian W'84, and Lisa A. Kazanjian W'87.

Etsuko Ueoka Lynch GrS'80, Brooklyn, NY, a social worker and founder of a summer camp for Japanese American children; June 21.

Phyllis Zimble Miller WG'80, Beverly Hills, CA, an author, playwright, podcaster, and filmmaker who worked to combat antisemitism; June 11. One daughter is Yael K. Miller C'05.

Lee A. Perselay C'80, Alexandria, VA, an attorney specializing in disability rights; June 30, 2025. He was the former disability counsel for US Senator Tom Harkin and most recently oversaw a team of attorneys at the US Department of Labor's Civil Rights Center. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity.

1981

Janet Klaw Cohen GEEd'81, Washington, DC, retired grant writer for Crispus Attucks Community Center in York, PA; January 24, 2025. Her husband is Donn I. Cohen C'51.

Deborah Irwin WG'81, Baldwinsville, NY, a former data analyst; May 20, 2025.

Dr. Thomas J. O'Laughlin C'81, Fresno, CA, a physician specializing in pain management and physical rehabilitation; May 23.

Michael H. Vasileff WG'81, Stamford, CT, cofounder and chief financial officer of Greenful, a manufacturer of construction panels made from textile and plastic waste; June 12.

1983

Carol Pfuderer Gardner Gr'83, Indianapolis, a professor of sociology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; June 1.

1985

Michael J. Carr WG'85, New York, global co-head of mergers and acquisitions for Goldman Sachs; May 12.

John E. Conway WG'85, Simsbury, CT, an entrepreneur; May 2.

David Drager-Davidoff GEE'85, Baltimore, a digital architect and software developer; Feb. 26.

1987

Mark W. Higginson WEv'87, Collegeville, PA, longtime owner/operator of a Dairy Queen; March 20, 2025.

1988

Paul J. Mayer WG'88, Middleburg, VA, founder and president of SoFi Bank, an online-only bank; June 8. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Alpha Society fraternity.

1989

Thomas "Tom" C. Gizzi C'89, Franklin, VA, a sports coach and teacher; May 28. At Penn, he was an all-Ivy lineman on the football team, helping the Quakers win three Ivy League championships and serving as a captain his senior year. He went on to play professionally in the Arena Football League.

1991

Mel John Bridgman WG'91, El Segundo, CA, a former pro hockey player who played 14 seasons in the NHL and was a captain for the Philadelphia Flyers from 1979 to 1981 and later the first general manager of the Ottawa Senators; Nov. 8, 2025. At Penn, he was a member of the Wharton Follies.

1992

Felicia L. Cianciarulo Gr'92, Coraopolis, PA, professor emeritus of biology at Carlow University; March 17.

1993

James J. Kropp WG'93, Prior Lake, MN, founder of several small businesses in the healthcare technology sector; May 27.

Sridhar N. Seshadri WG'93, Stanford, CA, president of the Stanford Medicine Cancer Center; Nov. 26. Earlier in his career, he led the medical informatics group at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, where he devised a picture-archiving and communications system to digitize X-rays that was used across the hospital.

1995

Dr. Sameer Dixit EAS'95, New York, a sports medicine physician and educator; Dec. 29, 2025. He provided coverage for many professional sports teams, including the Baltimore Orioles, the New York Knicks, USA Lacrosse, and the New York Giants. He was also on the faculty of several universities, including most recently the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York. His brother is Sandeep Dixit W'99.

2002

Paul C. Rohricht GEx'02, Kutztown, PA, a founder of several biotechnology companies and a dog breeder; Jan. 18. He was part of the team in 1996 that cloned the first animal, Dolly the sheep.

2003

Rev. Msgr. Joseph A. Tracy SW'03, Southampton, PA, a parochial vicar and senior priest in a Catholic church; April 30.

2005

Bassey L. Adjah C'05, Media, PA, May 29. At Penn, she was a member and captain of the track team and won the Ivy League long jump title in 1999.

2006

David B. Garrison WG'06, Drumnadrochit, Scotland, a systems developer for several companies; March 6.

Francine Tama CGS'06, Princeton, NJ, a retired nurse and electrologist; April 11.

2007

Andrea L. Cannon CGS'07 GEng'10, Feasterville Trevoe, PA, technical director at Penn's Clinical Cell and Vaccine Production Facility, where she specialized in CAR T-cell treatments for childhood leukemia and other cancers; May 14.

2009

Patrick Papadopoulos GEng'09, Maple Heights, OH, a mathematician, engineer, and teacher; May 22. He taught mathematics during his time at Penn and won multiple teaching awards.

2010

Andrew C. Stewart WG'10, Darien, CT, a finance executive; May 1.

2011

Darren Smith C'11, South Plainfield, NJ, billing manager for Dream Warranty and editor in chief for Vending Machine Media; April 20. At Penn, he was a member of the basketball team, where he emerged as a freshman starter on the Quakers' 2006-07 Ivy League championship squad.

2014

Stuart T. Andreason Gr'14, Decatur, GA, executive director of programs at the Burning Glass Institute, a nonprofit data laboratory; May 5. His wife is Lauren M. Andreason SPP'11.

2023

Erasmus M. Troia Nu'23, Manhasset, NY, a firefighter, EMT, and police officer; Aug. 15.

2024

Jenn Dimaya Lim GNu'24, Millville, NJ, a nurse practitioner for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; May 26.

Faculty & Staff

William J. Bank, Portsmouth, NH, an associate professor emeritus of neurology in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine; Feb. 19. Born in 1934 in Baden, Austria, he was a Holocaust survivor and came to the US at a young age. He became an associate professor of neurology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in 1967 and began a career as an academic neurologist with a focus on neuromuscular diseases. Among his many achieve-

ments, he was included in the second edition of *The Best Doctors in America*. In 2001, an art show of his paintings was featured in Penn's Burrison Gallery. He retired from Penn in 2003. One son is David A. Bank C'86.

Sidney A. Bludman, Chevy Chase, MD, professor emeritus of physics in Penn's School of Arts & Sciences; Aug. 21, at 99. He joined Penn in 1961 as a physics professor in the School of Arts & Sciences. During his time at Penn, he conducted research on supernovae and their neutrino signals. He sent a historic fax from Penn to colleagues at the University of Tokyo about Supernova 1987A, which encouraged the Kamiokande group to detect the neutrino signal from the explosion; this work later contributed to a Nobel Prize-winning project. Other research interests at Penn included covariant field theory, general relativity, properties of ultradense matter, gauge symmetries, and the rapidly accelerating universe. He served in the US Navy. One son is Lee E. Bludman W'80.

Marjorie "Margie" Sisler Brookes. See *Class of 1957*.

Andrea L. Cannon. See *Class of 2007*.

Dr. Brian S. Englander, Philadelphia, a professor of clinical radiology and interim chief medical officer of Pennsylvania Hospital; April 27. He was the Robert E. Campbell Professor of Radiology in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine and a fellow of the American College of Radiology. He began his career at Penn and was appointed chief of breast imaging at Pennsylvania Hospital in 2003. In 2014, he was named chair of radiology at the hospital, and at the time of his passing, he was serving as its interim chief medical officer. His leadership transformed the radiology department, significantly increasing access to tertiary/quaternary care for the West Philadelphia community. More recently, he helped to secure a mobile mammography unit to conduct breast cancer screening across Philadelphia. He played key roles in establishing Penn Medicine partnerships with cancer centers and medical schools in Rwanda, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Israel. He remained deeply engaged in global health projects in Haiti, Romania, Sri Lanka, and Egypt, while enthusiastically mentoring Penn trainees and international

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—John Prendergast, Editor

medical students and residents pursuing global health. His wife is Juliet McGarry Englander GEd'09, and two children are Margot P. Englander C'29 and Raphael B. Englander C'27.

Ronald E. Frank, Atlanta, former professor of marketing and vice dean in the Wharton School; July 1. He began his career at Wharton in 1966 as an associate professor, then became a full professor in 1968. He later served as the department chair, then went on to serve as the associate dean of research and PhD programs, and as vice dean of the Wharton School. In addition to his work at Wharton, he held faculty positions at Northwestern University, Harvard University, and Stanford University. He went on to become dean of the business schools at Purdue University and Emory University, and then became president of Singapore Management University. One daughter is Lauren C. Frank C'85 W'85 WG'90.

Rev. William E. Hershey. *See Class of 1964.*

Robert M. Levin. *See Class of 1969.*

Jenn Dimaya Lim. *See Class of 2024.*

Joan E. Lynaugh, Gwynedd, PA, former associate dean and director of graduate studies in Penn Nursing, as well as a professor emeritus in the school and the founding director of Penn Nursing's Center for the Study of the History of Nursing; July 10. After earning her nursing degree, she became a pioneer in interdisciplinary education and practice, alongside her physician collaborator and partner, the late Dr. Barbara Bates G'88, helping shape what has evolved into the modern role of the nurse practitioner. She was recruited to Penn in 1980 to lead Penn Nursing's new primary care nursing initiative. Among her many leadership positions, she served as associate dean and director of graduate studies from 1993 to 1996, and she held a term chair in the history of nursing and health from 1994 to 2000. Her research examined the social, economic, technological, professional, and demographic factors shaping 20th-century American hospitals, the role of women in building institutions, healthcare workforce issues, and the relationships between medicine and nursing. Perhaps her greatest institutional impact was her work establishing the history of nursing as a formal field of study. She served as director of Penn

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

Nursing's Center for the Study of the History of Nursing from 1985 to 1995, laying the foundation for today's Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. The Bates Center continues to honor her legacy through the Joan E. Lynaugh Archives and Special Collections, formally named in her honor in 2018.

Barbara L. Nichols, Madison, WI, a trailblazing leader in nursing and a former member of the Penn Nursing Board of Advisors; July 22. She broke barriers throughout her career and served as the first African American president of both the Wisconsin Nurses Association and the American Nurses Association (ANA). She served on Penn Nursing's Board of Advisors from 2011 to 2020, where she collaborated closely with Dean Antonia Villarruel GNu'82, who said, "Barbara Nichols was a visionary, a mentor, colleague, and a personal friend, whose courage paved the way for generations of nurse leaders. Her deep belief in the honor, responsibility, and power of nursing elevated our entire profession." Her lifelong commitment to equity and advocacy earned her the profession's highest honors, including designation as an American Academy of Nursing Living Legend in 2010, induction into the ANA Hall of Fame in 2022, and recognition as an

Inaugural Luminary Fellow of the Academy of Diversity Leaders in Nursing in 2024. She served in the US Navy Nurse Corps as a head nurse.

Dr. Sydney "Syd" E. Pulver. *See Class of 1953.*

Douglas L. Purvis. *See Class of 1974.*

Reed E. Pyeritz, Radnor, PA, professor emeritus of medicine and genetics in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine, Aug. 10. He came to Penn in 2001 and was the codirector of Penn Medicine's Hereditary Hemorrhagic Telangiectasia (HTT) Program. His life's work was dedicated to Marfan syndrome, a genetic disorder that can cause life-threatening enlargement and dissection of the aorta. He cofounded the Marfan Foundation in 1981 and the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics in 1991. His research and clinical work advanced the understanding and treatment of Marfan syndrome, extending patient life expectancy by 30 years. His research in identifying the role of the FBN1 gene in Marfan syndrome led to advances in the medical and surgical management of the disease. He served in the US Army Reserve Medical Corps, including during Operation Desert Storm.

Myron J. Resnick W'53. *See Class of 1953.*

Sridhar N. Seshadri. *See Class of 1993.*

Steven A. Smolinsky. *See Class of 1979.*

Donald M. Thompson. *See Class of 1967.*

Classifieds

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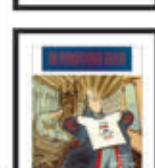


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The *Covenant* sculpture, aka the “Dueling Tampons,” was given a makeover for its 50th birthday and repainted over the summer.

Covenant Renewed

When Alexander Liberman’s *Covenant* sculpture was first unveiled at 39th Street and Locust Walk a little more than 50 years ago, it wasn’t exactly met with rave reviews.

The red abstract steel pipe “provoked a storm of ridicule, approval, apathy, *DP* humor columns, etc.,” according to an article in the November 1975 issue of the *Gazette*. The same write-up also recounted a “WXPN-organized attempt to knock it over with sound waves (it failed).”

Yet the sculpture—Penn’s largest—has endured, even while still being the subject of some ridicule as its well-known nickname, “Dueling Tampons,” might suggest.



And to mark its 50th birthday, it received a makeover.

Led by the Penn Art Collection, a two-part conservation project involved structural maintenance last year to support the sculpture’s integrity followed by a repainting of the entire piece this summer. While the 40-foot-tall campus landmark has been lightly repainted before, this marked the first time that it was stripped down to its steel surface and recoated with its original bright red hue, which had faded over time.

The \$840,000 restoration project was done in conjunction with Liberman’s estate, conservation specialists, structural engineers, and Penn’s Facilities and Real Estate Services, including University Architect Mark Kocent, who helped manage the construction and redo the landscaping around it.

One thing that still might be a challenge now that construction has been completed? “We’re trying to encourage the community to know that it’s art,” Kocent says, “and it’s not supposed to be climbed on.” —DZ



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