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MAR | APR 2026

AI in the Classroom

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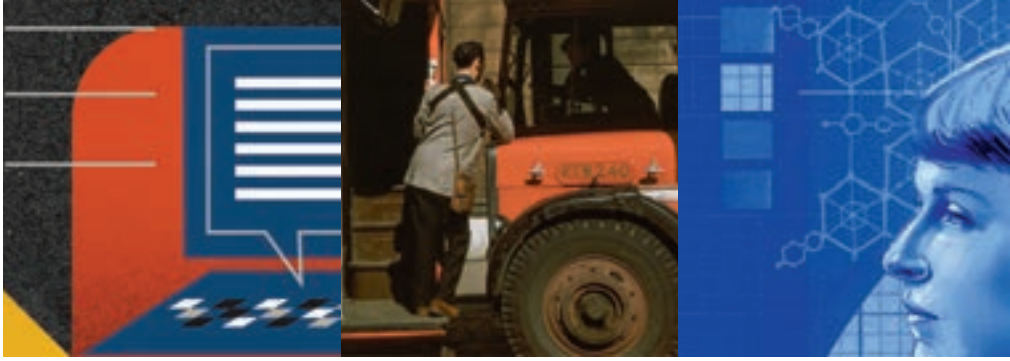

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Front Lines

When he emailed me the draft of this issue's cover story, "Hyper Text," senior editor Trey Popp called it "a dispatch from the front." He interviewed more than a dozen students and a few faculty members, sat in on classes, and otherwise immersed himself in getting a sense of how AI is working its way into the classroom and being used to help master concepts, conduct research, and write papers, etc. He also heard students describe their hesitations and questions about the technology, both in terms of their work on campus and in pursuing their future professional goals: the line between tool and crutch, and the fear of being tripped up by AI's unreliability, among other issues.

Ghrist compared AI to the advent of microscopes and all the new things they made it possible to see.

It's hardly worth noting that Penn students can be extraordinarily reflective and articulate, but I was still struck by how insightful their comments were—many from participants in the freshman seminar, "How Is AI Changing Higher Education?" that Trey visited multiple times through the semester.

I tend toward a doomy view of AI, so a comment by the mathematician and Andrea Mitchell University Professor Robert Ghrist, who has thoroughly embraced the use of AI in his teaching and beyond, was especially clarifying as a counterweight. He compared it to the advent of microscopes and all the new things they made it possible to see. "I believe we are at a similar moment—not for categories of life, but for categories of intelligence, maybe categories of consciousness," he told Trey. And eventually, "we'll get used to it."

While it might not destroy us all, AI may yet deliver the final blow to the dictionary industry, finishing the job that search engines started a couple of decades ago. In his recent book, *Unabridged: The Thrill of (and Threat to) the Modern Dictionary,* Stefan Fatsis C'85 mixes a history of the premier US dictionary maker, Merriam-Webster, and the industry overall; his experience embedded with the firm's dwindling staff of lexicographers; and additional reporting that reveals the challenges facing the field and the value of dictionaries' essential work tracing language development.

I talked with Stefan about *Unabridged* in an interview that accompanies an excerpt from the book, titled "Paper Record." That piece takes a look back to the analog age, paying tribute to the firm's "Consolidated Files," in which decades worth of word discoveries and debates among Merriam staffers—an estimated 16 million items in all—have been preserved on slips of paper. (But for how much longer remains to be seen.)

Also in this issue, "A Degree Too Late" highlights the first women to be awarded degrees in architecture from Penn. The most prominent figure among them—Lin Huiyin ["The Story of Liang and Lin," Nov|Dec 2019]—was awarded her degree posthumously by the Weitzman School in 2024, which sparked a further investigation. Authors Sidney Wong and Annie Liang-Zhou GFA'26 (Lin's great-granddaughter), who have clearly combed the archives, share the stories of some other pioneers.

And in "The Eye of Denise Scott Brown," Jon Caroulis traces the life and career of the iconic planner and architect, with special attention to the influence of her photography. A recent book, *Encounters*, brings together some 400 images from the 1950s through the 1970s, several examples of which are included in the article.

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EDITOR John Prendergast C'80
SENIOR EDITOR Trey Popp
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Dave Zeitlin C'03
ASSISTANT EDITOR Nicole Perry
ART DIRECTOR Catherine Gontarek
PUBLISHER F. Hoopes Wampler GrEd'13
215-898-7811 fhoopes@upenn.edu
ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR Linda Caiazzo
215-898-6811 caiazzo@upenn.edu

EDITORIAL OFFICES
The Pennsylvania Gazette
3910 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111
PHONE 215-898-5555 FAX 215-573-4812
EMAIL gazette@ben.dev.upenn.edu
WEB thepenngazette.com

ALUMNI RELATIONS
215-898-7811
EMAIL alumni@ben.dev.upenn.edu
WEB www.alumni.upenn.edu

UNIVERSITY SWITCHBOARD
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NATIONAL ADVERTISING
IVY LEAGUE MAGAZINE NETWORK Heather Wedlake
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McCaffery Was Always a Great Recruiter

I graduated from La Salle College High School two years after Fran McCaffery ["Full Circle," Jan|Feb 2026], but didn't really know him at all, and am sad that I saw "White Magic" play in only a couple of high school games. I watched a lot of Big Five basketball on TV as a kid and played in one grade school game at the Palestra one Saturday morning, scoring just one basket at each end. After enrolling at La Salle High, I tried out three years for their basketball team but was cut each time. I had attended three years of summer basketball camps under La Salle University's Paul Westhead and Dave "Lefty" Ervin and had developed a deadly accurate jump shot during my high school years, but my 5-11 height, foot speed, and ball handling were my weak points, which kept me from the squad. I settled for playing some CYO ball, but that was basically the end of my basketball "career," if you could call it that. But when it came time to choose a college in the winter of 1979, I was accepted to six schools (Lehigh, Villanova, and Drexel among them), but I chose Penn—mostly because of the superior financial aid package they offered me (mom was a low-income widow). But maybe an almost equal factor was my excitement in watching Penn's hoops team reach the Final Four and thinking I would perhaps be a firsthand witness to a Penn basketball dynasty during my undergraduate years. I remember feeling excitement when Fran transferred to Penn from Wake Forest. Even though my direct interactions with him were basically zero, I would have to list him as a contributing factor to both my interest in basketball at that time, and my matriculation to Penn.

"An almost equal factor was my excitement in watching Penn's hoops team reach the Final Four and thinking I would perhaps be a firsthand witness to a Penn basketball dynasty."

Jim Finney EE'83, Cinnaminson, NJ

Behind the Scenes at the Suntory Ball

In the recent article about Fran McCaffrey, passing mention was made of the games played in Japan by Penn basketball in the 1981–82 season. The tournament was to be called the Suntory Ball. The reality is that those games, and the stories around them, are far more interesting than the writer of the article knew, or for that matter, everyone else as well.

In the summer of 1981 I was assigned to the athletic department by the Penn development office. I got that assignment partly because I had previously managed the J. William White Training House for Athletics, and also because my academic field of study at Penn had been Japan. Early on I offered my services to the athletic director at the time, referring to my Japan experience in particular. He assured me that everything was well in hand for the trip, and not to concern myself with it. Shortly after, it was decided by the development office that I should go to Japan ahead of the Penn delegation and arrange for Penn alumni there to be involved.

The size of the Penn travel group became rather enlarged. The team, coaches, trainer, equipment manager, and a medical doctor were to be joined by a half-dozen cheerleaders. The latter were to bring along a recording of Penn songs to be played at a welcome banquet, the games themselves, and a post game farewell event. Penn's then vice president for development and his wife signed on, and a number of parents made their own arrangements. I continued to offer any assistance in the planning but was always reassured that everything was in order.

Two days before my own departure for Tokyo, the athletic director appeared and dropped all the passports for the Penn delegation on my desk with the comment that he had forgotten to ar-

range visas and would I kindly take care of the matter? To participate in an athletic event, or entertainment, required a special visa in Japan that normally might take several weeks. I had one day. I took the train down to Washington, DC, and made my way to the Japanese Embassy. Fortunately, I knew several people there, and they agreed to expedite the visas. They would be ready the next day … when I was in the air, already on my way to Tokyo. I arranged for a colleague at Penn to pick the passports up in my absence. Oh, and the captain of the team that year had an expired Jamaican passport. A Penn colleague had a relative working in that embassy, so a new passport was issued, and a visa entered, in remarkably short time.

I arrived in Tokyo and made first contact with alumni in the Penn and Wharton Clubs. I decided to pay a courtesy call to the organization that was sponsoring the tournament. Who were we to play? Louisville and Oregon State, both ranked in the top 20 in the country at the time. My visit to the sponsors raised immediate concern. I was told that as they had run out of money and had failed to reach the necessary levels of corporate sponsorship, they were about to cancel the whole thing! With the Penn delegation about to board a plane for Japan, I could not let that happen. I asked the organizers to give me 24 hours before they took any action. I immediately contacted Penn alumni, especially those from Wharton, and in less than 24 hours all the required financing was available, assuring that the tournament would go on as planned. No one was to be the wiser. That it might have all come apart was never mentioned.

There were, however, other issues to welcome the team. As originally planned, all the teams were to be welcomed to Tokyo by the governor at a reception at city hall. The organizers, however, had been unable to arrange that reception. I, fortunately, knew Tokyo's governor, so the Penn delegation got an audience. I had even arranged for a 'Liberty Bell' with an inscription from the mayor of Philadelphia to be presented to the governor.

At the welcome banquet there was quite a crowd. Each team was brought to the front with their accompanying staff and parents, and the recorded music from their schools was played—but not Penn, because the cheerleader who was supposed to bring our recorded music forgot it in her dorm room. Unfazed, I had the Penn group assemble in the front and asked alumni in the crowd to stand. Nearly half those in the audience stood—we had a turnout. We all sang "Fight on, Pennsylvania" and "The Red and Blue." None of the other groups sang along with their music, but the Penn family in the audience, and our delegation, all knew the words and the music.

Penn lost both games, but only by eight points to Louisville. But Penn left an impression that the others had not.

Thomas T. Winant G'69, Port Saint Lucie, FL

Well Done!

Really enjoyed "A Clockwork Orange," the piece on the Glasgow Subway, which we've ridden ["Rabbit Hole," Jan|Feb 2026]. The four-foot track gauge is, I believe, unique, not something that fell out of favor. We didn't know of the new equipment fleet nor its automation.

Always enjoy hearing about Andrea Mitchell—whose receiving the Beacon Award from the Trustees Council of Penn Women was covered ["Gazetteer," Jan|Feb 2026]—and whom I think of as a contemporary even though I didn't know her when I was at Penn.

Well done!

Bill Mosteller C'71, Fairfax, VA

My Jaw Dropped

"Back to the Office—but Make It Better" ["Gazetteer," Jan|Feb 2026] asserts that "companies should admit that they were too slow to bring employees back ..."

Oh, were they? My jaw dropped when I read that. Even if that's right on the social science, it's dead wrong on the biological science.

The COVID-19 pandemic killed at least a million people in the United States alone in its first two years. Businesses were closed to reduce the mass death and disability, and they were kept closed or restricted to prevent even more. Like it or not, closing businesses was terrible for livelihoods, but it saved a lot of lives—never mind that so many lives were lost anyway. Rushing people back together before it was demonstrably safe to do so would have killed and disabled many more.

"Closing businesses was terrible for livelihoods, but it saved a lot of lives."

If in-person work was so critical, workspaces could have been made reasonably safe. But they weren't. On average, mitigation was staggeringly poor throughout the Western world, improving haltingly at best even when more information emerged. And on top of that, people could have taken effective precautions to protect themselves and each other, but not nearly enough of them did. Although fewer people are getting sick and dying of COVID-19 since the acute phase of the pandemic, that is mostly because of luck and despite skill.

Saying offices should force people back together because it's better for business ignores huge, inconvenient, tragic facts on the ground. I don't doubt that the authors did good work—in fact, I used to work in Professor Peter Cappelli's department, so I know he knows what he's talking about. The problem is that the findings don't match the real world, where human beings are prone to airborne illness, one of which was—and is—more dangerous than we all wished.

It would be nice to forget how devastating the pandemic was. But if we do, we dishonor the memory, and we do no better next time. As so many of us have learned the hard way, it is better to have public health and not need it than to need it and not have it.

Chris Drake GrW'13, Brookline, MA

Remarkable Resemblance

Rui Rui ["Arts," Jan|Feb 2026] is a remarkable sculpture—but no mention of the resemblance to the moai statues of Rapa Nui (Easter Island)? All that's missing is the stone hat for her Easter bonnet. Wish I could walk around it.

Peter A. Korn WG'63, New Rochelle, NY

See the online version of this story at our website, thepenngazette.com, for a simulation of a walk around Rui Rui.*—Ed.*

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Raging Bull

"I was likely the only woman large animal vet in Utah, and I still had a lot to prove."

By Linda Rhodes

Illustration by Carmen Segovia

It was late on a Thursday afternoon in 1979 when my office phone rang. "Hey Dr. Rhodes, it's Jeb here." I couldn't place the name.

"Jeb? Are you at the dairy?"

"No ma'am. I'm down at the bull barn. Can't find Doc Nelson."

Oh, right. That Jeb. "What's up?"

"You gotta find him, and he needs to come RIGHT NOW! We got a bull down here that is bleeding mighty bad." I could hear the panic in his voice.

"Jeb, listen, Doc Nelson is out of town. What's happening down there?"

I heard him groan, "Okay, then, you come. Can't talk. Gotta get out there. Honk when you pull up, and I'll let you in." He hung up.

Jeb and I had met briefly a few months into my large animal internship at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. He was in charge of the dairy bull stud business. As a brand-new graduate of Penn's School of Veterinary Medicine, class of 1978, I was on call for emergencies when my boss, Dr. Lamar Nelson, wasn't around. But the staff was still not used to a woman veterinarian. In fact, I was likely the only woman large animal vet in the whole state and I still had a lot to prove.

Bleeding really bad. Let's see. Sutures, largest gauge I have. Bandages. Cotton. Ropes. What else? Fluids. The drive was a blur, and I realized I hadn't checked for tranquilizer in the truck, but it must be there. I always kept a bottle. I screeched up to the office building honking the horn. Jeb came running from the back.

"Okay, come on."

"What happened?" I asked, jumping out of the truck and opening the back to grab my equipment.

"Bull got cut up really bad, bleeding like a stuck pig. Tried to attack a front loader!" He grabbed my gear, and we dashed around back.

I didn't hear the full story until later. A new employee had locked the bull into his stall and opened the back gate into the concrete pen outside. He drove the small yellow front loader into the pen to scrape the manure, just how he had been taught. The pens each have a door where the bottom and the top can be closed independently. Often, while the bull is restrained in the stall, the top half of the door is left open for fresh air.

I climbed into the pen and walked around the great bull's head, wading through a puddle of clotting blood.

This bull could see the little front loader coming into his territory—and he didn't like it. The problem was the new guy neglected to put the steel reinforcing bar across the lower door to the pen. Without the bar, the door shattered after only a couple of large head butts, and the bull was in the pen, challenging the little yellow front loader for dominance. He wasn't going to cede one inch of his territory to some little party toy of a machine. When the bull charged, the terrified worker jumped off and barely missed being crushed. He scrambled over the fence. The bull put his head under the blade of the front loader and shook his mammoth neck back and forth in a magnificent display of dominance. The front loader blade was sharp steel and at each shake, the blade bit into the skin and then the neck muscles of the crazed bull who ignored what must have been significant pain. Finally, the overwrought beast lost enough blood that he collapsed.

By the time I ran up, blood had spurted and pooled into a shallow lake on the concrete.

"Doc, over here!" a cowboy yelled.

The bull's tremendous bulk heaved as he sucked in air. He lay on his side, eyes closed, his enormous chest moving up and down. One look and I realized no tranquilizers were needed—the bull was almost dead from blood loss. If I gave him fluids to get his blood pressure up, he would bleed more but maybe revive—and kill me. If I didn't, he might die soon. Fear and possibilities—too many possibilities—raged in my head. The whole crew quieted down, watching to see what would happen next.

Bleeding was the most critical thing to consider. I knew I had to stop it before anything else. Packing the huge wound would give me time to think. I climbed into the pen and walked around the great bull's head, wading through a puddle of clotting blood to look down into the gaping hole that had been carved by the front loader blade. The cut was about a yard long, curving over his massive neck, and at least 10 inches deep, through layers of large muscles.

Multiple blood vessels spurted little red fountains. The entire wound was awash in blood. No possibility of neatly tying off the bleeders. At least it looked clean—a clean cut from a steel blade, no manure or embedded dirt. I didn't have enough cotton or a big enough needle. The supplies I needed were in the truck.

"Jeb, I'll be right back. You get some hot water."

I sprinted to the truck and pulled out rolls of cotton, needle holders, a package of heavy-duty catgut and the biggest curved suture needle I could find and dashed back.

"What do you want me to do?" Jeb asked.

"Does he need blood?" one of the technicians yelled.

Of course, he needs blood, I thought, but there is no goddamned cattle blood bank to call.

"You gonna give him a shot?"

"You need iodine?"

Everyone had a suggestion or opinion. I ignored them, knowing I had to handle this and make sure no one got hurt in the process. I ripped open several rolls of cotton and stuffed them into the wound.

They disappeared. Two more, then two more. Finally, the blood stopped gushing.

"Jeb, lean on this cotton with your arms."

He nodded, climbed on the bull's back and sat there like a bull rider, leaning both his big forearms on the cotton rolls, starting to soak red. Maybe I could get some stitches in and then start IV fluids. The bull was not dead yet—I could see he was still taking shallow breaths. I threaded the large surgical needle with the catgut and cut off about a yard. I tried to act calm, but my hands shook. My mental picture of this bull waking up from the pain of me plunging the big needle into his neck muscle was terrifying, but there was no time for a local anesthetic. Jeb had been leaning on the cotton rolls for about five minutes, and the worst of the bleeding had slowed. I gingerly reached into one side of the wound and removed enough blood-soaked cotton to get a stitch deep into the interior muscle. I tried to remember the suture pattern that would take the most tension. The thick muscle pulled together as I tightened a big suture and tied a sturdy surgical knot, and then another and another—individual sutures for strength.

At least the first madness of the emergency was under control. My suture job wasn't pretty, but it stopped the bleeding. After 15 minutes I finished suturing the deep muscle layer. At each bite of the needle, I pulled some of the blood-soaked cotton out of the wound. The technicians watched, standing outside the pen, peering through the steel fencing. The bull's breath was shallow and ragged, but he was still breathing.

The skin next, sutures not pulled too tight, but tight enough to close the wound. The leathery skin was much harder to sew, and I discarded a couple of needles because they blunted from poking through that tough hide. The big rough catgut was the biggest suture material I had ever used—it felt like twine. I was about two inches away from finishing the skin suture across the wound when I heard the bull snort and stir. After so much blood loss, how could he wake up without fluids? He would be one sick bull unless I could get some into him before he completely woke up.

"Who can run to my truck and grab some fluids?" Jeb was still mounted on the bull, dabbing the remaining blood that was leaking from the wound.

"What do you need?" one of the guys asked, and I told him where to find the bags—I needed as many as he could carry. I threaded the needle with more catgut to finish the last few inches of stitches when the bull opened his eyes.

Jeb yelled, "He's waking up!" and deftly jumped off the bull's back and over the fence. I grabbed my needle holder and took a step back as the bull heaved himself to his feet. My initial a sense of relief—*He's alive!*—was rapidly followed by *Oh shit.*

He swiveled toward me and lowered his head into attack posture.

The groggy bull could barely stand. He looked around the familiar pen, turned his head and saw me. Even in his weak and wobbly state, his testosterone-crazed brain said, *Charge!* He swiveled toward me and lowered his head into attack posture. Each of my carefully laid sutures popped with a loud crack as he flexed his neck down, and I watched the incision gape open again.

"Doc, run!" Jeb yelled, but I was already flat out.

I vaulted over the fence just as he crashed into the steel poles. The ground shook, and the bull went down in a heap. He had knocked himself out. I grabbed the fluid bags the tech had brought from the truck and jumped back into the pen. His wound oozed blood. At least my sutures had slowed the bleeding. I didn't know how much time I had before he woke up again, but I was determined to get some fluids into him. Jeb was right there with me, holding off the giant jugular vein while I plunged the needle in, hooked up an IV, and climbed up on the fence above the bull. Jeb and I sat up there, taking turns holding the fluids and changing the bags as they emptied. If the bull woke up suddenly, we'd both be on the right side of the fence.

The wound gaped open but the blood, thank God, was just a slow drip at the bottom corner. The suture job in the neck muscles was holding enough for the blood to clot, but my God, that wound was ugly. When the last fluid bag was empty, Jeb and I climbed down from the fence. With the big beast still unconscious, I took one more chance and went back in the pen to administer a mighty injection of penicillin—a full two bottles worth—and puff some yellow sulfa powder into the wound. Jeb and I looked at each other.

"You have a little blood on your face," he said, grinning. We both were soaked in blood, my glasses speckled red, hair clotting, coveralls smeared. I smiled.

"Let's see how long before this brute wakes up again," I said, expecting that he would wake up but knowing there was still a chance he wouldn't after so much trauma.

A long 20 minutes passed, and finally the bull heaved himself onto his chest, still too wobbly to stand, slowly moving his head, eyes blurry, from side to side. Maybe he'd knocked a bit of sense into himself and decided he'd had enough. He laid quietly, his breath ragged. By now, the late afternoon sun was low, the drama over. The poor new guy who had been on the front loader had gone to the emergency room for a tetanus shot. He'd been more than a little scraped up in the scramble.

I was a mess, sweaty and shaken from the ordeal. Bull blood dried under my fingernails, and it would take a good soak in the tub to get rid of it. I didn't know where Jeb was, probably cleaning up in the men's room. I hadn't had a chance to thank him. I stripped off my

coveralls, threw them on the floor of the truck cab, and climbed in to drive home.

Heading north up the valley, I didn't know if I had succeeded or failed. I went over the things I could have done differently and the things that could go wrong—infection, chronic draining wound, muscle damage, kidney failure. Sighing, I decided to call it a success for now. When I'd left, the patient was alive.

The story spread throughout Logan quickly. A bull attacking a front loader and then almost bleeding to death, combined with the lady cow vet handling the emergency, was big news. Doc Nelson returned the following week and heard most of the story at church.

"Heard you had quite a situation over at the bull stud place," was all he said.

"You chose the right time to be away."

Laughing, he patted my shoulder and said, "At least the patient lived, and no one got killed."

A couple of months later, I drove south to see how my monster patient had fared. On tiptoe, peering into the bull's stall, I looked at the back of his neck. Amazingly, it had healed. A thick line of scar tissue ran behind his ears and a deep V-shaped depression on his massive neck indicated where the cut from the front loader blade had been, but he moved easily around his stall, pawing and snorting.

I heard the door slam, and Jeb came down the hall.

"That's him, alright! Don't he look fine? Just as mean and feisty as ever!" Jeb reached out his thick hand and we shook. "You don't have to wait until Doc Nelson is out of town to visit again," Jeb said, winking.

"Please, no more emergencies."

"You got it, Doc."

I had earned that "Doc," and I was proud of it.

Linda Rhodes V'78 is the author of *Breaking the Barnyard Barrier: A Woman Veterinarian Paves the Way*, © 2026, from which this essay is adapted by permission of the University of Nevada Press.

Illustration by Juan Bernabeu

Communion with the Dead

"The thought I often squelch now surfaced."

By Joanne B. Mulcahy

An almost-full moon hung low in the sky, illuminating the misty road to Arócutin, a Purépecha pueblo of about 700 people on Lake Pátzcuaro in central Mexico. On the night of November 1, my husband, Bob, and I left the nearby town of Pátzcuaro at 2:15 a.m. Friends had advised us to get to Arócutin's panteón, or cemetery, around 3 a.m. By then, the main flood of tourists would be gone, while families honoring their dead would remain.

Bob and I had been living part-time in Pátzcuaro for 30 years. Yet this would be our first experience of El Día de los Muertos—an intertwined celebration of life and death that is a cornerstone of Mexican national identity.

Moonlight slanted over Pátzcuaro's red-tiled roofs as we drove through the nearly empty town. A few celebrants wandered home from bars or the local panteón. We soon hit a wild party at the turnoff for the docks to Janitzio, an island in the center of the lake. The Pátzcuaro region draws Muertos tourists from all over the world, but Janitzio is especially renowned. Hundreds of people milled about, many with painted faces and skeleton costumes. Impromptu

stands sold beer and tequila, tacos and carnitas. A mariachi band in red-sequined outfits competed with boom boxes. We crawled through a line of cars so long that we contemplated turning around, but we were loath to give up so easily. Then, as suddenly as a scene change in a theater, the road to Arócutin opened, silent and shadowy.

We passed Huecorio and a few other pueblos, weakly lit by smoldering candles in empty roadside cemeteries. Our headlights probed the unnerving darkness as we crept through the countryside. We'd expected a horde of celebrants at the church of Santa Muerte in Santa Ana Chapitiro. Surely this was a night to honor the folk saint of death! Once the domain of prisoners and outsiders, and long shunned by the Catholic Church, Santa Muerte now draws tourists and locals to the shrine. I scanned the darkened buildings and registered no signs of life.

My anxiety spiraled. What did I fear? We knew that carjackings can happen on deserted roads in Michoacán. Some people worry that an uptick in political violence imperils Muertos traditions here. Drunk drivers threaten in all parts of the world, but we had encountered few cars. A dread of something deeper hovered. I tamped it down.

Arriving at Arócutin, we parked and began the steep ascent to the panteón, huffing our way through silent streets. Even the dogs stayed mute, eyes fixed warily on us. I thought of scenes from Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo*, the famous novel said to have launched magical realism. The story follows a man searching for his father in a village inhabited entirely by the numerous and very dead offspring of his *papá*. The book brims with an eeriness that engulfed me now.

Finally, flickering candles signaled the panteón entrance. An altar at the threshold honored the "animas olvidadas"—forgotten souls. I made the sign of the cross, an automatic response borne of a Catholic upbringing. My mood shifted immediately to reverence.

The day before, I'd helped friends in Erongarícuaro, a larger pueblo on the lake, clean and decorate graves in their panteón. We chatted as we pulled weeds and spread bright orange marigolds, *cempasúchiles*, the flower ubiquitous during Muertos. Petals fluttered everywhere. A few strays landed on my jacket. I tucked them into a pocket, a shimmering hidden treasure. In Arócutin, the marigolds mixed with purple *flores de terciopelo*, some woven into the image of Christ on the cross. On each grave, offerings of Coca Cola, mescal, or Negro Modelo rested alongside baskets of fruits covered by bright embroidered cloths. I marveled at the splendor, embellished by a sea of blazing candles.

We joined about 30 other people following the dirt paths snaking through the panteón. Some were Mexican tourists, others clearly foreigners like us. A dozen local families clustered around their grave sites. Two old Purépecha women wrapped in *rebozos* dozed near a fire; a few men shared a bottle of tequila. Children played in one corner, leavening the solemnity of the scene.

Hybrid forms of indigenous and Catholic symbols adorned the church adjoining the graveyard. A wooden Christ on the cross wore the apron traditional to Purépecha women, embellished with purple and gold sequined flowers. An Indigenous man in a huge wool poncho stood guard, his face serious and his eyes watchful. He nodded when he noticed my tears. Despite my lapsed church-going, the symbols and scents of Catholic churches in Mexico always resurrect childhood veneration. I was now deep into an experience I had not expected or fully prepared for.

I knelt at the altar for a long while, pondering loved ones we've lost these past few years. November marked five years since my mother's death during the COVID outbreak. The pandemic had robbed us of a group ritual for more than two years. Finally, on a rain-soaked July day, we buried her in the small Vermont town where she'd grown up, next to my father who had preceded her by a decade. Now, a fierce grief returned. Had I done enough to show my love and gratitude while they lived? I rarely get across the country from our home in Oregon to visit their graves. I fought tears of regret, longing to slip into communion with the Dead.

Would a collective gathering with my siblings, cousins, and other relatives create solace? What do rituals offer? In Arócutin, I felt connected to some unseen force. The veil between life and death, memory and forgetting, light and darkness felt porous. Cloaked by that sensation, I longed to linger. But I also feared that the gathering light of dawn would dispel the feeling. We left before sunrise.

Everything about Muertos exemplified what we stand to gain by seeking out landscapes and cultures different from our own. An early experience with death in the US remains one of my most indelible childhood memories. One fall day, the nuns gathered our elementary school class to pay homage to a Catholic prelate in downtown Philadelphia. We filed silently past his coffin, his perfectly embalmed body cloaked in white silk vestments and a mitre. He seemed like a wax figure. I don't remember a single conversation in school or at home about this encounter, or about the passing of our beloved grandparents that followed.

Years later, living with Bob in Derry, Northern Ireland, we attended a wake for a relative of our host, Helena. Bob had recently joined me after helping to care for his mother before she died. That staggering loss was still raw when we entered the Donegal home of Helena's relatives. The kitchen filled with friends and family laughing, drinking, and sharing the "craic"—that classic form of Irish storytelling. Upstairs, the air was somber, the body of the deceased laid out on a four-poster bed. Bob, unprepared for the sight of this old, white-haired woman, burst into tears. His reaction triggered sympathetic looks—and later, on the drive back

to Derry, a lighthearted joke from Helena about "emotional Yanks."

Though I didn't know it then, this mix of gaiety and a weighty reckoning with death echoes Mexican attitudes. As in Mexico, Irish traditions blend ancient practices, in this case Celtic, with Catholic beliefs. Sharing the sustenance of stories, food, and drink celebrates Irish lives in ways that resonate with the Mexican experience.

In contrast, denial still dominates in much of the US. We bury consciousness of death long before we entomb our bodies. I hadn't expected how powerfully our trip to Arócutin would confront me with the inextricability of death from life.

I watched Bob carefully negotiate the dark, misty road back to Pátzcuaro. Joy hummed through me as I pondered our 33 years together. We still map our hopes and adventures side by side, carry them forward, and relive them in story. We do so as though we will always emerge to plan the next phase. The thought I often squelch now surfaced: losing him would shatter me, something I fear far more than my own demise.

Octavio Paz, famously and controversially, proclaimed that Mexicans "laugh at death." Nothing in that laughter assuages individual grief. Yet the more I acknowledged my fears, the louder the thrum of joy. In foregrounding death and loss, Muertos affirms life.

Rituals often accommodate such contradictions. They highlight but also mitigate suffering. In Arócutin, the flowers spoke for souls otherwise "olvidadas." *He once thrived*, they say. *She was loved. They are not forgotten.*

At home, I placed a few of the marigold petals from the Erongarícuaro panteón in my desk drawer. Sometimes I take them out to ponder how this once brilliant flower now rests desiccated in my palm. A memento mori deepens the wonder.

Joanne Mulcahy C'77 Gr'88 is a frequent contributor to the *Gazette* and the author of *Marion Greenwood: Portrait and Self-Portrait—A Biography*.

Prescribing Affordability

To address the "affordability crisis" in healthcare, beware of lobbyists and take lessons from the states.

By Alex Garlick

The leaders of both parties appear to agree that the United States is facing an "affordability crisis," with healthcare at its core. In mid-January Democratic Senate Leader Chuck Schumer declared, "Americans are in the middle of a healthcare emergency." The next day President Donald Trump W'68 basically agreed, saying that over the past decade or so Americans have "paid more money for healthcare every single year—more and more the premiums went higher and higher." But there's no agreement on how to make healthcare more affordable. According to Schumer, Republicans "have no plan to solve the health crisis that's been brewing under their watch." Trump, who has long blamed Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act, has lately responded with concepts such as cutting kickbacks to Pharmacy Benefit Managers, imposing pharmaceutical price controls, and mandating increased transparency for insurance companies.

In my book *Pre-Existing Conditions: How Lobbying Makes American Health Care More Expensive*, I show that some of these ideas have already been tried in the states, with varying degrees of success. For example, in 2017 the Nevada legislature passed a bill to increase the transparency of the pharmaceutical supply chain, including the kickbacks to Pharmacy Benefit Managers. But following heavy lobbying from the pharmaceutical industry it was vetoed by Republican Governor Brian Sandoval. This is a consistent pattern. Cost containment policies such as these are routinely defeated or diminished in a similar fashion across nearly all the states, by the same culprit: lobbyists representing the healthcare industry.

Illustration by Rich Lillash

How do they do it? Informational asymmetry plays a part. For example, when Massachusetts lawmakers looked to contain healthcare costs in 2012, they decided they could either address the prices of services or focus on whether certain healthcare services were being "overutilized" by patients. The major hospital network, now known as Mass General Brigham, held information about both of these issues—but their lobbyists only presented information to legislators about their preferred solution, "overutilization." Sure enough, the lobbyists were able to steer them away from legislating on the prices of services.

Lobbyists can also win by making policy debates more complex, which discourages the media and public from engaging with the story. For example, in 2017, Wisconsin lawmakers looked to expand the "scope of practice" of nurse practitioners (NPs) in the state. Medicare reimburses NPs at 85 percent the rate of physicians for performing the exact same procedures, so it reduces costs. But the Wisconsin Medical Society and American Medical Association opposed the expansion of NP scope of practice because it reduces the revenue available to its members. This alliance managed to steer the legislative debate away from clear financial calculations toward amorphous claims of patient safety, despite a lack of evidence to support their claims. Cost containment reforms usually die in darkness.

Though the odds are stacked against them, advocates can find paths to reform. One issue where states have gained traction over the pharmaceutical industry has been on the pricing of insulin. This hormone and its purification method was patented over a century ago, but its price more than tripled in recent decades. In 2020 Minnesota passed a law on the back of a reform effort based on the case of the late Alec Smith, a 26-year-old diabetic man who died after rationing insulin in the face of high costs. His mother led a coalition in creating the Insulin Safety Net Program, which provides a one-time 30-day supply of insulin for no more than $35 to residents facing an emergency. While 28 states have enacted out-of-pocket caps for insulin, Minnesota's ambitious insulin program made waves because advocates focused the debate on the tragedy of Smith's death and linked it to the price-gouging of some pharmaceutical companies, giving the media and public a narrative that was more compelling than fiscal analyses. Lobbyists would rather operate in the shadows.

Second, states can use transparency in their favor. In my home state of Vermont, premiums have been rapidly increasing and jumped 24 percent in the last year alone. The state's major insurer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont, recently launched a marketing campaign to inform Vermont residents of the exorbitant prices charged by the dominant hospital system in the state, the University of Vermont Health Network. For example, the average cost of an MRI is $6,520 in the network, but $1,799 when done by an independent facility. A vaginal childbirth costs $17,373 in the network, but just $2,870 at an independent facility. Patients rarely see these prices up front but feel the inflated costs in rising health insurance premiums. Although it's unclear if this data will change where patients seek care, such price awareness could help build political support to then curtail predatory pricing strategies that accompany monopoly power—such as Indiana's effort to limit "facility fees" or federal efforts to enact "site-neutral payments," both of which prevent hospital networks from price gouging on outpatient procedures.

Third, states can increase the supply of healthcare providers. As in other sectors of the economy, prices in healthcare are affected by supply and demand, and increasing supply can lower the prices that consumers face. The earlier example of expanding the "scope of practice" of NPs fits this bill in two ways. Allowing NPs to provide more services can lower prices for primary care services—and the preventive care they provide may in turn reduce demand for more expensive health interventions.

State and national policymakers should bear two major lessons in mind. The first is that they should be willing to invest in their healthcare markets. The federal government is offering states grant funding to compensate for looming cuts to Medicaid, which presents a ripe opportunity. Lawmakers should consider using this one-time money to stabilize or expand community hospitals, particularly in rural settings. They could also consider bolder ideas to subsidize practitioners in less lucrative fields, like primary care. Massachusetts is considering a policy to roughly double the share of its medical spending that is devoted to primary care, with the hope it will keep residents healthier and reduce demand for expensive services.

Second, policymakers need to have an unabashed focus on prices. Prior efforts at reform have balanced a desire to expand access to care and reduce the cost of services, but as the healthcare scholar Jonathan Oberlander has observed, both Medicare and the Affordable Care Act followed the "all-American formula of expanding coverage without controlling costs." That bill is now coming due. Socializing the cost of healthcare through insurance pools will no longer suffice to make healthcare affordable. Without lowering the price of individual services, access to care is going to be curtailed. This applies even for Americans with insurance, as the majority of medical debt is held by households with health insurance.

Ultimately, Americans need to acknowledge that some aspects of the affordability crisis are political problems that require political solutions. It will be hard work. Efforts to lower prices by increasing the supply of providers or regulating market design more vigilantly will be opposed by the healthcare industry and a cadre of lobbyists at every turn. But this affordability crisis demands a patient, detailed response, and there's no time to waste.

Alex Garlick Gr'16 is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Vermont. He is the author of *Pre-Existing Conditions: How Lobbying Makes American Health Care More Expensive*, published by Oxford University Press in 2025.

No Rough PAACHes

Penn's campus home for Asian students turns 25.

Illustration by Laura Liedo

There's a dreary December drizzle spattering campus, but you'd never know it inside the Pan-Asian American Community House (PAACH). Tucked beneath Locust Walk in the ARCH building's lowest level, it's pure hygge: twinkling string lights, colorful origami cranes, dangling paper lanterns.

The cultural center's staff, dressed in identical PAACH sweatshirts, mingle with a dozen or so undergrads, arranging group photos, answering questions, and urging everyone they see to grab a mini corn dog, which they've laid out in a nod to the popular Korean snack.

"You always feel welcomed there," says Affan Jabbar C'27, who visits often. Gina Joo C'27 says the center is "definitely a safe space for me." Besides holding a student job there, she stops in to nap on the couches or when she needs a cup of hot tea. "I also know that if I go to the PAACH suite, most likely I'm going to see a familiar face and get to catch up and chat," she says.

This school year marks PAACH's 25th anniversary, and it's celebrating with a slew of special events on top of its usual fare. Since 2000, the center has served Penn's Asian and Pacific Islander students and anyone interested in learning more about those cultures. From holiday celebrations to peer mentoring, guest speakers, and meeting space for over a dozen student groups, there is no shortage of activity inside its origami-filled walls.

"This is a very diverse and vibrant community," says Mei Long, PAACH's director since 2023. Whether students are attending a formal talk or just relaxing with their friends, "we're very intentional about creating space for people to have meaningful conversations about who we are and how our identities shape our experiences."

Lately Long and her staff of three have been focused on designing new signature programs "that are open and relevant to the entire community," she says. The newest one launched last fall, thanks to a gift from alumnus Chris Davies C'81. The API Leadership Series includes an annual fireside chat with a standout alum and a springtime panel of API leaders from across industries. (The next one is slated for March 27.)

"Leadership is such a relevant topic for our community," Long says. "Despite their high educational attainment, qualifications and skillset, somehow you don't see Asians advancing into senior leadership positions across all industries. It's called 'the bamboo ceiling.'" She hopes that bringing alumni industry leaders back to campus will inspire students to pursue these high-level roles themselves.

Cultural celebrations are also a PAACH mainstay. With students from diverse Asian communities and heritages — Filipino, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indian, Pakistani, Pacific Islander, Kazakhstani— and a staff who tries to honor all of their traditions, "there's always something going on there," Jabbar says.

Whether it's at a Diwali party, a Filipino paper star-making workshop, a boba tea social, or any of PAACH's many other events, students are continually connecting with their own API cultures and others' too.

"A lot of the people who come to PAACH have a shared interest in Asian identity and celebrating that," says Jabbar, who is Bengali. "I wanted to get closer to my own culture and identity in college, so PAACH was a space that I instinctively gravitated to."

He's one of many undergrads who frequent the center's cozy "living room," as he and others call it. Long says graduate students have historically been tougher to draw in, despite their large API population. She's been focused on introducing PAACH to more grad students these past two years, and it's working.

PAACH now supports three groups for graduate students, along with nine undergrad organizations. That includes a group for South Asian women, one for API nonbinary students, a leadership program, and a peer mentoring program. "We spend a lot of time advising Asian-related student organizations, some of which were established directly out of the center," Long says.

In fact, it was a student group that spurred PAACH's creation 25 years ago. Founded in 1995, the Asian Pacific Student Coalition began advocating for a specialized resource center on campus in 1999. They launched a campus-wide campaign—holding a rally, circulating petitions, and ultimately meeting with then-President Judith Rodin CW'66 Hon'04.

Penn's Pan-Asian American Community House officially opened on November 11, 2000. Today it is located inside the vibrant and recently reimagined ARCH building on 36th Street and Locust Walk, right near similar spaces for Latinx (Casa Latina) and Black (Makuu) students ["Gazetteer," Nov|Dec 2022]. Along the wall outside all three centers runs the shared "ARCH Way," with booths and tables. "I study there with a lot of friends," says Jabbar. "Even if we don't plan to be there at the same time, we'll often still end up there together."

During his years at Penn, Paulo Bautista W'14 says that PAACH became the most important spot on campus to him. That's why, after his commencement ceremony in the spring of 2014, it was his last stop before heading to the airport. He showed up with suitcase in hand, offering a last goodbye to the place that had meant so much to him.

And yet, as with so many PAACH alumni, it wasn't a final parting. Over a decade later, Bautista still visits at least twice a year and meets up with current PAACH students during their annual New York City retreat. "PAACH helped me deepen my understanding of my own Asian American identity," says Bautista, who is Filipino American.

"Staff members come and go. The specifics change. But I'm excited to hopefully be there in 25 years to celebrate PAACH's 50th and see what kind of PAACH it is then."

—Molly Petrilla C'06

Useful Advice

How to live well (and maybe longer, but that's not really the point).

"Remember the first rule of life: *We're all going to die.* You can waste all your time trying to extend your life by a few minutes, obsessing over scores of adjustments to your diet or exercise routines, or you can follow six straightforward, smart wellness behaviors and make the time you have healthier and more meaningful," writes Ezekiel Emanuel in the introduction to his new book, *Eat Your Ice Cream: Six Simple Rules for a Long and Healthy Life* (W. W. Norton)—demonstrating that, in addition to being a prominent bioethicist, oncologist, and health policy expert, Penn's vice provost for global initiatives is also a fair hand at book marketing. It's hard to think of a more succinct, direct, and appealing proposal for a culture drowning in confusing and conflicting advice on how to live forever (er, that is, stay physically fit and mentally active).

The book that follows lays out those half-dozen behaviors, from "Don't Be a Schmuck"—essentially, avoid taking foolish, life- and health-endangering risks—to "Sleep Like a Baby," on the importance of, and techniques for, getting a good night's rest. As for "Eat Your Ice Cream," Emanuel approvingly advances some research suggesting that ice cream *may actually be good for you* but mostly focuses on what to do to maintain an overall healthy diet without sweating the occasional indulgence.

The other three behaviors include:

"Talk to People," on the pernicious effects of loneliness and the value of cultivating all manner of social interactions, from casual conversations with passing strangers to shared experiences with colleagues to deeper bonds with friends and family. "Good relationships are the single strongest predictor of both a *happy* life and a *long* life," Emanuel writes. Time away from screens helps, too: "Despite its misleading name, social media is anti-social and thus anti-wellness."

"Expand Your Mind," which includes what Emanuel calls "probably my most controversial recommendation," namely, "to stave off dementia, don't retire." But since people can't work forever, "to slow cognitive decline, continue to challenge your mind," by doing things like trying to learn a new language, play an instrument, attempt new recipes in the kitchen, and other "'novel information activities.'"

"Move It!" lays out the different effects of aerobic exercise, strength training, and balance and flexibility training, but most important, Emanuel emphasizes, "Just get off your ass and move around." He favors hiking and biking (with others, if possible). But while it's a good social activity, golf doesn't cut it as exercise, except *maybe* if you walk the course and haul your own clubs. And whatever you choose to do, after about 150 minutes of vigorous activity weekly, diminishing returns set in.

"Social media is anti-social and thus anti-wellness."

In the acknowledgments, Emanuel reveals that *Eat Your Ice Cream* was born out of his annoyance at a book that displayed all the faults of the "wellness industrial complex," focusing on exercise and diet at the expense of sociability and mental engagement and offering advice that was both unproven and time-consuming. Fueled by frustration, he finished a first draft in a month and might have left it at that but was encouraged by Penn colleague Adam Grant, the Saul P. Steinberg Professor of Management and professor of psychology at Wharton ["Character Over Cognition," Nov|Dec 2023], and *Burn Book* author Kara Swisher to finish and publish it "as an antidote to the gym rats and wellness mindset."

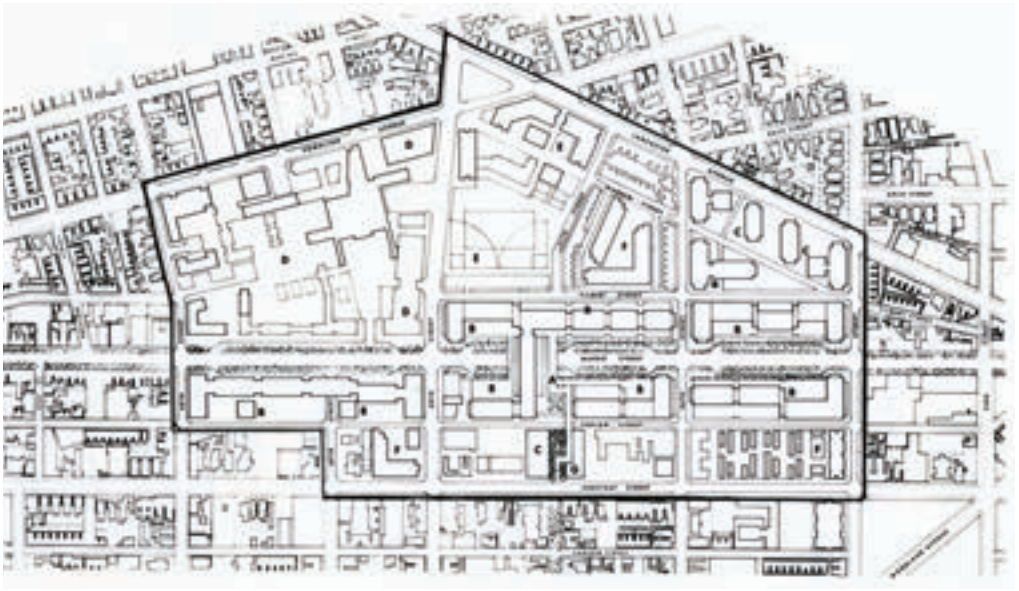
The book references a slew of research studies, and Emanuel is forthright about the limits of what science can bring to the table as well as about his skepticism concerning some medical tests. (He's very much not a fan of the PSA test for prostate cancer, for example.) But the es-

Illustration by Graham Roumieu

sential insights come from closer to home, in Emanuel's own life and that of his wife, as well as stories about his parents and his two famous brothers: politician Rahm and talent agent Ari.

Emanuel's father Benjamin looms especially large, starring as the exemplar of a robust social life and a good death. "Dad was incorrigibly social—the quintessential 'people person,'" he writes, recalling how he would invariably strike up conversations wherever he was, which almost always turned out to be positive experiences but did not trouble him on the occasions he was snubbed in response. A pediatrician known as Speedy for how quickly he walked making his rounds, he was later slowed by health issues but managed to turn back weight gain and diabetes before dying at 92, "peacefully, at home in his own bed, of a brain tumor that he did not treat, having seen all of his children and many grandchildren over the previous week."

A noted Franklinophile ["Franklin's World," Jan|Feb 2023], Emanuel also puts Penn's founder Benjamin Franklin forward as the model of a long life well lived: "He was mentally sharp and engaged right up to the last days of his life. Franklin would tell you to do three things: keep challenging yourself and continually improve, devote yourself to friends and acquaintances, and commit yourself to making the world a better place. Or as he might summarize it, 'be useful.'" —*JP*



Map of the urban renewal area around University City, 1964.

University City Stories

Two new books weigh the area's revitalization and its costs.

A decade before the term "gentrification" was coined by British sociologist Ruth Glass, celebrated city planner Edmund Bacon Hon'84 began work on Philadelphia's signature redevelopment project that would turn the historic but seedy and congested Fifth Ward into Society Hill. Abandoned by the gentry during the 19th century, the area stretching east of Independence Hall to the Delaware River docks had become the home of a declining population of working-class Blacks and immigrants, mostly renters rather than owners, long before progressive political leaders, bankers, and developers facilitated its metamorphosis into a prestigious district of expensive residences and thriving businesses. Marked by demolition, renovation, and construction, the creation of Society Hill would be a model for the transformation of a substantial part of West Philadelphia.

But here universities, Penn and Drexel, were the prime movers in the revitalization effort. The creation of University City is a story told in two new books: *Race, Real Estate, and Education: Inventing Gentrification in Philadelphia, 1960–2020* (Temple University Press) by Edward M. Epstein Gr'20 and *Redesigning Urban Centers: Adapting to Changing Real Estate Markets* (Routledge) by Jonathan Barnett, emeritus professor of practice in city and regional planning at the Weitzman School of Design. Both authors agree that the redevelopment of the area around the two campuses benefited white and wealthier citizens who found it attractive to live and raise families there to the detriment of poorer Black residents of the physically blighted but for the most part stable neighborhoods that supported a communal culture. Barnett estimates that more than 5,000 people were displaced when, as Epstein notes, urban renewal funds were used to drive them from an area known locally as "Black Bottom."

Barnett has produced a data-driven and clearly presented guide to the development of successful mixed-use communities in which University City is one of seven case studies from the Philadelphia metropolitan area. His other foci, all exemplars of national trends, are: the reinvention of Center City Philadelphia to meet suburban competition; the conversion of residential subdivisions and a shopping mall at the junction of major highways in King of Prussia into an edge city with a business park that includes inviting public

Image courtesy Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries

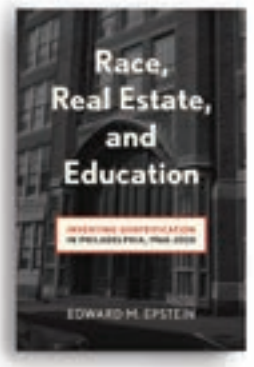
spaces; the transformation of suburban centers in Ardmore and Conshohocken; the redevelopment of land near the Philadelphia International Airport; and the revival underway in downtown Camden, New Jersey, one of the most disadvantaged cities in the United States.

Barnett identifies the impulses for the dynamic change he describes as the appeal of downtown living together with "fewer places where urbanizing rural land continues to be profitable." The coincidental emergence of other factors generated by new technologies, from e-commerce to remote work to decentralized meetings to space demands created by genetics-based research, as well as future trends involving the risks posed to independent workers by artificial intelligence and a transition to driverless vehicles, are all part of the mix that he says planners need to take into account. Barnett makes a compelling argument that regulations requiring separate land uses, once regarded as an immutable template for development, can be changed to permit the creation of places where people live and work in walkable spaces that cater to their needs for shopping, recreation, and entertainment. He demonstrates that place-based management for public spaces is the best way to make the centers work for the benefit of all.

Epstein, the director of the Teachers Institute of Philadelphia, has written a story of conflict: his own, as a resident of University City, whose amenities—including the Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander University Partnership School—he and his family enjoyed even as his research, enriched by dozens of interviews, revealed deeper tensions. Those tensions lay between well-intentioned developers and University administrators and the people who might have been West Philly neighbors, had it not been for the "racially tainted" clearing of 83 acres north of Chestnut Street, south of Powelton and Lancaster Avenues, and sandwiched between 34th and 40th Streets during the era of "urban renewal."

The change these powerful players brought about began with the formation in 1959 of the West Philadelphia Corporation, a coalition of local higher education and medical institutions, in which Penn was the largest shareholder. Its major project was building the University City Science Center, intended as a science incubator. According to the developers' plan, a science-focused high school was to be erected nearby. But pushback from neighborhood parents who had not been consulted and did not think the proposed academy would serve their children's needs resulted in a general-purpose high school that, according to Epstein, became "a highly segregated and deeply troubled institution."

He notes that an "organization whose primary mission was real estate development" was "over its head" when it came to trying to improve the



Diversity eroded as gentrification set in.

city's public school system. University City High School opened in 1971, the beginning of what Epstein calls the "dark years," a two-decade long period when Philadelphia's reputation sagged even as Penn prospered and undertook several initiatives to improve town-and-gown relationships by engaging with local communities.

Crime in the area—notably the murder of two Penn students in the 1990s—spurred a vigorous effort led by President Judith Rodin CW'66 Hon'04, at the behest of faculty and staff, to readdress underlying issues they believed contributed to neighborhood unrest and violence. Building on earlier partnerships spearheaded by the former student activist Ira Harkavy C'70 Gr'79, founding director of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships ["Ode to Ira," Jul|Aug 2023], the University involved community members in planning a new K–8 public school, which opened its doors in 2001 ["School's In," Nov|Dec 2001].

As of 2000, Epstein writes, the catchment area was "predominately Black," but the Penn Alexander School (PAS) was located in the heart of Spruce Hill, an area increasingly populated by white residents, many with Penn affiliations. The University put up the money to build PAS, the state reimbursed the cost of construction, and Penn leased the land to the Philadelphia School District for a dollar while making a long-term commitment to subsidize its operations.

"The school would quickly gain recognition as one of the top public schools in the state and nation," Epstein tells us. But he notes that its diversity eroded as gentrification set in. Housing prices rose sharply, and low-income Blacks were priced out of the market. Epstein ends by considering options for reparations. In addition to a return to rent control and rescinding constraints on the construction of affordable housing, he advocates more equitable state funding of public schools, so cities are less reliant on property taxes. He offers his book as a means of recognizing how racism contributed to present disparities. He does not despair of changing minds and hearts.

—Mary Ann Meyers Gr'76

Social Justice Storytelling

Filmmaker Spike Lee recalls his harrowing civil rights documentary during a lively campus visit.

For most of Spike Lee's visit to Penn in January, the provocative filmmaker bantered with his old friend Heather A. Williams, who moderated the 25th MLK Jr. Social Justice Lecture & Award featuring Lee, and cracked jokes in front of an energetic and sold-out crowd at the Annenberg Center's Zellerbach Theatre.

But when the conversation shifted to his 1997 documentary film *4 Little Girls*, Lee took a softer tone. "That's the best work I've ever done," said the director who's more widely known for narrative classics like *Do the Right Thing* and *Malcolm X*. "That's the one for me, *4 Little Girls*."

The historical documentary tells the story of the four African American girls—Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Addie Mae Collins—who were killed in the Ku Klux Klan's terrorist bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963. Described by Martin Luther King Jr. as "one of the most vicious and tragic crimes ever perpetrated against humanity," the bombing served as a catalyst for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Williams—Penn's Geraldine R. Segal Professor in American Social Thought and Professor of Africana Studies—agreed that *4 Little Girls* is the filmmaker's best work, praising not only the tightly shot interviews with family members that painted a picture of the girls' personalities, but the way Lee connected their murders to the broader civil rights struggles in Birmingham at the time. And she believes the film's significance has not waned in the nearly 30 years since its theatrical release. "I was thinking that everybody in this room needs to see that film now," said Williams, who began plotting a return appearance for Lee along with a campus screening of *4 Little Girls*, which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature Film. "Everybody in the country should," she added, "because it has such resonance for when we think about what's happening in Minnesota. You know, they haven't brought out the fire hoses, but they have brought out tear gas."

"For the students who are in the audience, I didn't do it alone. I had a gang. I had my people."

Lee noted that one of the toughest decisions of his career was whether to include the postmortem photographs of "those four beautiful, young Black girls who weren't allowed to grow up" after his researcher found them in post-production. In the end, he decided to not shield viewers from the painful images, showing them on screen but "very quickly."

Lee also touched on the "funny but pathetic moment" when former Alabama governor and staunch segregationist George Wallace was interviewed for the film (near the end of his life) and brought over his "Black best friend … who did not want to be in the shot" but got a closeup anyway. The director had much kinder words for Fred Shuttlesworth—a minister and activist who was featured in the film's historical footage along with his ally Martin Luther King Jr. and, Lee noted, "does not get the credit" he deserves for his role in the civil rights movement. Lee went on to name two main characters after Shuttlesworth in his 1998 basketball movie *He Got Game*, starring Denzel Washington.

Much of the rest of the discussion between Lee and Williams centered around the Penn professor's longstanding friendship with the director—and his mother, Jacquelyn Lee, who had been Williams's Black Studies teacher at Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn Heights in the 1970s, taking her students on trips to Broadway shows and poetry readings and "opening up this other world of Black culture."

Spike Lee's mother opened a new world for him too, in a different way. "I did not grow up wanting to be a filmmaker," Lee said, but "my mother was a cinephile, and I'm the oldest of five, and I was my mother's movie date. … That's where the seed was planted."

Lee was an undergraduate at Morehouse College—an alma mater he shares with MLK and whose shirt he wore on stage—when his mother died of liver cancer in 1976. Williams met Lee at her funeral, and the two remained close. Lee invited her to a small screening of a student film he made when he

Photo by Eddy Marenco courtesy the Center for Africana Studies

was at NYU (where he's now a tenured professor) in the early 1980s, and not long after asked her for a $100 loan while working on another film. "Thank you for the $100," Lee said to her more than 40 years later, before standing up to give her a hug on stage. Reflecting on his journey since then, the famous filmmaker added: "For the students who are in the audience, I didn't do it alone. I had a gang. I had my people."

Williams—who today is the department chair of Penn's Center for Africana Studies, which hosted the MLK Lecture along with the Annenberg School for Communication—at times appeared playfully exasperated with her old friend, who needed constant reminders not to talk about sports (he's famously a New York Knicks superfan) and to look at a clock ticking down in front of him to avoid launching into too many tangents and cutting off her questions. But Lee had the crowd howling and applauding all night—and standing in appreciation when, at the end of the event, he was presented with the 2026 Martin Luther King Jr. Social Justice Award by Wale Adebanwi, Presidential Penn Compact Professor of Africana Studies and the director of the Center for Africana Studies.

"Tonight, we honor not only a filmmaker but a moral witness," Adebanwi said. "An artist whose work has helped shape public consciousness and whose voice continues to insist that America confronts its past, reckons with its present, and imagines a more just future." —*DZ*

New Products for A New Age

Penn's interdisciplinary Integrated Product Design program churns out inventive entrepreneurs.

While they were graduate students at Penn's Integrated Product Design (IPD) program, Max Liechty GEng'22 and Kausi Raman GEng'23 spent a year and a half testing and finetuning their prototype before launching a Kickstarter blitz in September 2023. "We met our goal [of $50,000] in the first 23 minutes," Liechty says, "and ended our 30-day campaign with $1.17 million in preorders."

No wonder the producers of the ABC reality show *Shark Tank* noticed, inviting Liechty and Raman to a tryout. The propitious series of events reached a zenith when the team appeared on a fall 2024 episode with their invention: ChompSaw, a kid-safe power saw for cutting cardboard. After entertaining multiple offers from the investor panel, they made their choice and walked away with a cash infusion of $250,000 from Lori Grenier and Mark Cuban, who predicted the saw could be the "hot product of Christmas." Before the show aired, the duo had already sold 10,000 units at about $230 a pop; after the *Shark Tank* boost they sold another 5,000 units, resulting in a total of $3 million in sales for 2024.

Last year, things got hotter still for this simple tool that the company likens to a high-speed hole punch. *Fast Company* magazine gave it a spot on its 2025 Innovation by Design list, *Time* magazine did the same for its Best Inventions of 2025 list, and Raman (who conceived of the idea and designed the prototype) closed out the year by earning a place on *Forbes*' magazine's 30 Under 30 list. Revenue for Chompshop, the parent company, reached $14 million in 2025 on sales of almost 55,000 ChompSaws, plus ancillary products.

Liechty and Raman's success may be extraordinary but other graduates of the IPD program—which encourages students to harness design, engineering, and business skills to bring products to market—have started companies to sell a bra designed to help breastfeeding moms produce more milk, a tablet-based point-of-sale system for sports arenas and other venues, and a battery technology that brings power to first responders and other government workers in the field.

"It's great to see students who came into the program not sure of what they wanted out of it, five years later leaning into their potential and operating at a badass level," says Sarah Rottenberg, an adjunct assistant professor in the Weitzman School of Design and the executive director of IPD, which offers two degrees: a master of integrated product design and a master of science in engineering in integrated product design. It also offers a certificate in integrated product design for students who are pursuing other graduate degrees at Penn.

Approximately 15 percent of IPD graduates start companies based on ideas they've generated during the two-year program. Others land design jobs at Fortune 500 companies ranging from Apple to Walmart. At an IPD reunion in late 2024, some 65 graduates discussed where they'd ended up, including in jobs as disparate as building AI programs to improve federal government services and developing virtual reality tours for a real estate platform. "Initially, the program was very anchored in physical design," Rottenberg says. "Now it's focused on processes that can lead to digital *and* physical products."

Faculty members Vijay Kumar (the Nemirovsky Family Dean of the School of Engineering & Applied Science), Karl T. Ulrich (CIBC Endowed Professor at Wharton ["Method Inventor," Sep|Oct 2016])

Photo courtesy Chompshop

and William W. Graham (Professor of Architecture at Weitzman) cofounded the program in 2007. "It's not a coincidence that they started the same year as the introduction of the iPhone, the Kindle, and Airbnb," Rottenberg says. "They saw things happening and wanted to prepare their students for these changes. The idea was to look toward Penn's other schools as assets."

That interdisciplinary bent starts with how the program is set up: it nests inside of the School of Engineering; Rottenberg's appointment is in the School of Design; its physical presence is in a Wharton building (Tangen Hall at 40th and Sansom Streets); and students take classes in all these disciplines. Assembled into small groups, they also work on projects for in-house clients at the College of Arts & Sciences, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and the Schools of Law, Medicine, and Nursing.

"What's especially unique about IPD is that there are so many pathways that students can take," says Taylor Caputo GEng'15. "If you're interested in robotics, you can work at Engineering's GRASP Labs. If you're thinking about a wearable medical device, there are opportunities at Penn Med." For Caputo, entering the IPD program was a great fit after graduating from Temple University with a bachelor of fine arts degree in Metals, Jewelry, CAD-CAM. "I wanted to transfer the design and fabrication skills I had acquired to a new world of product design that's expanded into systems thinking and entrepreneurship," she says. "I ended up with a thesis project focusing on STEM education and that got me more interested in pedagogy, and so I transitioned into teaching." She now teaches two IPD courses, "How To Make Things" and "Designing Connected Objects and Experiences."

Caputo also serves as director of the Engineering Studios @ Venture Lab, a series of labs for new idea testing and tangibility. "I'm really excited about how digital fabrication is shaping the prototyping landscape and turning thesis projects into entrepreneurial realities," she says. ChompSaw's team, for instance, used the resources at Venture Lab (which include three laser cutters and six industrial 3D printers), as did another IPD team, Serpent Robotics, which was named the 2025 Pennovation Accelerator Winner for developing a robotic arm for pruning trees.

The hallmarks of IPD boil down to a "core of human skill sets like critical thinking and coalescing, along with learning to pay attention to different stakeholders and market signals," Rottenberg says. "The legacy companies and start-ups that hire our students appreciate that they're really strategic problem solvers. AI may be able to spit out ideas at amazing speed, but the insistence on discernment and follow-up that we teach is a really important human advantage."

—JoAnn Greco

A Run of Transition

Athletic director Alanna Wren discusses recent coaching shakeups and NIL.

As an alumna who has worked at her alma mater in various capacities for several decades, Alanna Wren C'96 GrEd'99 GrEd'15—Penn's T. Gibbs Kane Jr. W'69 Director of Athletics and Recreation—is a great believer in what her school can offer. And so "one of the great frustrations" of her job, she said in an early February interview with the *Gazette*, are the athletic teams that punch below their weight in the Ivy League.

"I won't be shy," Wren said. "We have an incredible brand. We have an incredible physical footprint. Our facilities are next to unparalleled. … I'm not saying we have to win a title every year, but my expectation is we're competitive year in and year out."

With that in mind, Wren has also not been shy about shaking up the coaching corps. Since her tenure as Penn's athletic director began in 2021 ["Sports," Jan|Feb 2022], Wren has hired 13 new head coaches, culminating with fresh appointments in three of the University's marquee sports: men's basketball, football, and men's lacrosse.

"It's been a run of transition," she said. "There's no doubt."

Wren's most notable move was the dismissal of Steve Donahue after two straight seasons in which Penn failed to qualify for the four-team men's basketball Ivy tournament, followed by the eye-catching hire of Fran McCaffery W'82, who returned home to his alma mater after a successful career that most recently included 15 years coaching at the University of Iowa ["Full Circle," Jan|Feb 2026]. While she admits to having to "remind him of how the Ivy League does certain things differently than the Big Ten," she's been thrilled at how McCaffery "intrinsically believes in what we do" and knows how to "best sell a Penn education in light of what's happening in the NIL space."

The NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) space has certainly been murky at many colleges, with alumni pooling cash toward collectives that often distribute money to student-athletes "outside the context of what we would consider appropriate rules," Wren said. In an online event ahead of the 2025–26 season, McCaffery shared with supporters that Penn basketball has a collective too, but that collective "actually predated Fran," Wren clarified, adding that "we should probably stop using the term collective because people assume we're talking about what's happening at the power four [conference] level." Penn's far more modest collective, Wren said, "should be more seen as a group of alums who care desperately about Penn basketball and who want to help

students, whether that's via jobs, networking, or commercial NIL opportunities."

While many top athletes will continue to go to the teams with the deepest pockets, Wren expressed optimism about the Ivy's pathway to success, pointing out that "we're one of the few leagues that's still recruiting high school students, [with] so much of the country just recruiting out of the transfer portal." And although the portal has loomed large for the Quakers (with standout players exiting and more recently entering), Wren believes McCaffery can build a program the old-fashioned way, with freshmen who receive four years of "individualized attention on player development" by a coaching staff that can point to a good track record in that regard.

The transfer portal and NIL landscape also hang over college football, but it was another change that helped lure new coach Rick Santos to take over the University's historic program in December ["Sports," Jan|Feb 2026]. The Ivy League's reversal of a longstanding policy that banned its teams from participating in the Football Championship Subdivision Playoffs ["Sports," Sep|Oct 2025] was a key factor in Santos leaving the University of New Hampshire, where he was a winning head coach and had been a "celebrity athlete," said Wren, who admitted that "there were absolutely moments where I was afraid we were going to lose him through the search." Now that Penn can compete for a national championship in football, as it can in every other sport, "we don't have some sort of inherent obstacle to our success," Wren said of a program that hasn't won an Ivy title in 10 years.

"I'm not sure he contemplates this move if we're not in the postseason," Wren continued. "And I really do believe him coming to campus was a huge piece of this: his ability to see the investment we made in the locker room. I think he was really wowed by the facilities … and just the alums and their love of the program, and the success we've had historically. I think that was really powerful."

Taylor Wray, hired in July to take over a men's lacrosse program that Mike Murphy GEd'04 had run for 16 years, won't have to contend with some of the NIL and transfer challenges facing football and basketball, given that the Ivy is among the best lacrosse leagues in the nation. But like McCaffery and Santos, Wray—the winningest coach in Saint Joseph University's program history—is "just a winner" who Wren believes has the skill set needed to be successful in this particular college sports environment.

"There's a relentlessness that you need today," Wren elaborated. "The college athletics landscape is changing constantly. So if you're not sort of malleable, or on some level an innovator as far as how to manage challenges, this is not an environment where what you were doing 20 years ago is going to work today."

Wren said that when she looks to hire new coaches—as she's also done recently for field hockey (Scott Tupper) and volleyball (Tyler Hagstrom)—student-athlete feedback, via survey and small-group conversations, plays a big role. Those surveys also factor into the athletic department's renovation projects, which of late have included the opening of an indoor track and field facility, a new football locker room and training complex, a renovated boathouse, and a renovated pool. "We had a three-year stretch where we had over $100 million of projects underway," Wren said. "Now we're at the point we're starting to take a deep breath." But that doesn't mean Penn will stop trying to help its coaches. Among the upcoming projects are a new wrestling center and renovations to the locker rooms at the Hollenback Center for more than 200 student-athletes.

Combined with other recent initiatives, like the hiring of a full-time mental health professional and a dietician to manage a fueling station for athletes, those renovation projects and so many exciting new faces populating coaching staffs has Penn's AD feeling bullish about the future. Said Wren: "It's an energizing time for Penn athletics." —*DZ*

Another Men's Squash Title

One head coach who's not new to Penn is Gilly Lane C'07 G'14 LPS'20, who's been running the Penn men's squash program for the last decade—and continues to take it to new heights.

In late January in New York, Penn senior Omar Hafez captured a College Squash Association (CSA) individual national championship, defeating Trinity's Muhammad Ashab Irfan in the title match.

Penn has now won two straight individual national championships, after Salman Khalil beat Hafez in last year's title match. The Quakers have also captured back-to-back team national championships (and will be aiming for a threepeat after the *Gazette* goes to press).

"To see what he's doing as a head coach is just really inspirational," said Wren, noting she was involved in Lane's recruitment when he first came to Penn as an undergraduate squash player. "He's built something really unique. It is a model program in many respects." —*DZ*

Photo courtesy Penn Athletics

Hyper Text

Synthetic text extrusion. Virtual teaching assistants. Illusions of mastery. Silicon Socrates. Four years after the debut of ChatGPT, higher education is starting to look different.

By Trey Popp

On September 15, 2025, a dozen freshmen from the College of Arts and Sciences gathered in the Neural and Behavioral Sciences Building for the second meeting of a first-year seminar offered through Penn's undergraduate program in Science, Technology & Society. By a consensus they'd reached the week before, the students piled their silenced cellphones in the back of the room before casually sorting themselves around three circular tables. Laptops remained tucked in their bags as they produced pens and pencils to take notes by hand. At the head of the classroom, Rob Nelson drew a long line across a wall-mounted markerboard. At one end he wrote the year 300,000 BC. Near the other end he wrote 2022.

The idea was to mark some precursors to the awesome and anxiety-stricken moment of Right Now. For most of our species' existence, communication was a strictly oral affair, noted Nelson, a lecturer in Penn's Graduate School of Education (GSE) who spent 18 years as a higher ed administrator overseeing academic technologies and program development. The first writing systems sprang up roughly 5,000 years ago, though more as a way of counting livestock than refining ideas. About 2,500 years later, an Athenian philosopher named Socrates criticized writing for implanting "forgetfulness" in the souls of men to whom it offered not "true wisdom" but "only its semblance." Men who outsourced their memories to scratch marks would "appear to be omniscient" but "generally know nothing," he argued—not least because inscribed letters are inert and unchanging, thus forever "silent" in the face of any questions a reader might wish to ask them.

We know about Socrates's dim opinion of the written word, of course, because Plato wrote it down. Though good luck finding a copy for the next millennium or two. Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the moveable-type printing press in 1440 changed that. Humanity's long epoch of "primary orality" gave way to what some scholars call the "Gutenberg Parenthesis," as printed matter began to spread ideas far wider than word of mouth could hope to do. That in turn begat the defining feature of life for every freshman in this room, because "in order to participate in culture during the Gutenberg Parenthesis," Nelson observed, "mass education became the enabler."

So it has remained even after the rise of radio and television propelled us into an era of "secondary orality," broadcasting speech and images around the globe to enlighten (or enfeeble) the masses irrespective of their ability or inclination to read. Yet even all that—including its 21st-century juicing by broadband internet—has acquired the sepia stain of ancient history since 2022, when OpenAI released ChatGPT ["Alien Minds, Immaculate Bullshit, Outstanding Questions," May|Jun 2023].

ILLUSTRATION BY CHAD HAGEN

Most of these seminar students were high school sophomores at that time. They entered Penn as the fourth undergraduate cohort to take college classes in the era of generative AI chatbots; the soon-to-graduate Class of 2026 has been swimming in this water for four years. So in a sense, these students constituted Exhibit A in Nelson's freshman seminar, which was titled simply: "How Is AI Changing Higher Education?"

That was the same question I wanted to answer, along with its implicit corollary: "And what should be done about it?"

It seemed like a tough assignment to teach a seminar tackling questions that have largely flummoxed higher ed institutions themselves. But Nelson and his students were game for me to sit in on their three-hour sessions—as well as the two-hour meetings of a concurrent section being offered to GSE master's students in higher education administration. I did so over the course of the fall 2025 semester, during which I also interviewed 16 Penn students, a handful of faculty members, and sampled three other courses that grappled in one way or another with the educational challenges and opportunities presented by AI.

I set out with little more than curiosity, a hunch that AI is changing more about higher education than just how to cheat, and a gut feeling that I'd gain more insights from students than their teachers.

MARKET RESEARCH

The first thing I learned was that hundreds of Penn undergraduates will gladly wait in line for an hour or more to score a complimentary Owala water bottle. On September 8, Google representatives pitched a tent on campus to offer students a free year of access to Gemini Pro. At the time, this large language model (LLM) was widely regarded as a laggard in the generative AI space. Presumably that's why every student I asked told me that the main reason they'd joined the queue was for the Owala—except one who had her eye on free ice cream.

About LLM chatbots more generally, opinions and experience varied.

Amelia Carroll, a freshman in the School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) from Cleveland, had tried ChatGPT just enough to lose faith in it. "I would use it for research, and it gave me bad information and bad links," she told me. "Most people I know are generally pretty skeptical." But not everyone, she quickly added. "There are a lot that use it pretty consistently for everything. I'm in a scientific computing class, and somebody didn't know how to do an assignment, and so they just asked ChatGPT to do the entire thing."

This split perspective turned out to be a theme. When I asked College freshman Denisia George how she planned to use Gemini, the aspiring neuroscience major doubted she'd spend much time trying. "Most of them are stupid," she said, "and it's probably going to be stupid, too." Mariah Lewis, a freshman political science major standing nearby, chimed in with agreement. "I try not to use AI," she said. "I feel like it's definitely dwindling how much we actually have to think in life."

But if chatbots are stupid—or even just mediocre—why would it take any effort to resist using them? And why were "some people" turning to them for help?

Saving time was a common answer. "It's club application season," observed Emily Leung-Kaplan, "so a lot of us are in a time crunch, and I know most people use AI to save time." Yet Leung-Kaplan, a Wharton freshman from Seattle, professed a different motive. "I use it to just help me understand problems a little better. Sometimes, if I don't have other resources readily available, Gemini is just easy to access, and I can ask it to explain the concept to me."

For Emilia Cropf, a College freshman from Philadelphia, saving time and soliciting explanations were two sides of the same coin. "If I'm researching a particular topic, or I just need clarification on something I'm learning in school, it's really helpful to have a concise and exact explanation behind whatever I'm learning—instead of watching, like, an hour's worth of YouTube videos or just individually googling and searching for information." The pre-veterinary student didn't trust Chat (as students often call it) to summarize a book; it had burned her in the past. But it seemed on firmer ground with STEM concepts. "Sometimes I'll use it to explain something like a process that I already vaguely know," she said, "and it helps to cement and solidify an idea."

Leung-Kaplan and Cropf were getting at two issues that now shape virtually every student's college experience. Chatbots aren't 100 percent reliable—and the only way to competently assess their outputs is to know a fair bit about a topic already. But they are available 24 hours a day, answer questions with superhuman patience, and never pass judgment.

"I'm gonna be so honest," SEAS freshman Joy Wong told me. "The TAs here are very specific about what you can and cannot ask them. So if you have to turn to ChatGPT to understand something—because it's on the homework, and you're not allowed to ask about the homework—you might as well."

Wong, who is majoring in computer science with a concentration in AI, had high praise for a specific bot called CalcStar Blue. It is one of several "custom GPTs" developed by Robert Ghrist, the Andrea Mitchell University Professor of Mathematics and Electrical & Systems Engineering, to mesh precisely with his mathematics classes, right down to week-by-week learning goals. Indeed so many students mentioned CalcStar during my reporting that I reached out to Ghrist toward the end of the semester. (More later about that fascinating conversation.) But despite the excellence of that specialized tool and the accessibility of off-the-shelf LLMs—or perhaps because of those things—Wong worried about the ways they might undermine her education.

"I think people get too reliant on it. Like, even now, I'm feeling a little bit too reliant for basic concepts," she confessed.

She worried that "people will stop thinking critically—or asking questions directly to the professor, who knows a lot."

Oresta Hewryk, a fourth-year PhD candidate in biology, had witnessed that dynamic firsthand as a teaching assistant. Hewryk's doctoral research focuses on using "machine learning and AI pipelines" to probe data on chemical compounds from traditional medicinal plants in search of new therapeutics. She planned to test Gemini Pro's ability to automate the labor-intensive process of combing through scientific papers. So her work epitomizes the excitement many scientists and scholars have about AI's potential to accelerate research productivity. Yet she fretted about the "stark difference" separating her own undergraduate experience from that of today's students.

"There's more of an expectation that everything is so readily available, so you don't have to go out and do the research yourself," she told me, referring to how easy it is to hit up ChatGPT for explanations. "That's a tool, if you know how to use it. But it's also an issue when you're asked to come to your own conclusions, and you are instead asking an LLM to come to those conclusions for you.

"You can't get an LLM to do your wet lab work for you," she explained, "but you can easily say, 'This reaction caused bubbling and turned green. What does this mean if these are all the chemicals I used?' And that kind of distorts the best part of research, which is having to come to the conclusions yourself. … And I think that's where the gap is starting to form—at least what I see as an educator—where students are not relying on their own thoughts. They don't trust themselves to come to that conclusion, but they trust an LLM to come to that conclusion for them."

Hewryk allowed that an LLM might serve up trustworthy answers in the context of a first-year biology lab. But she wondered whether LLMs might be eroding critical skills that they are fundamentally unable to replace. "If you're doing cutting-edge research as a PhD or a PI [primary investigator]," she said, "the whole point is coming to a novel conclusion or a novel prediction. And if AI relies so much on preexisting research and methods, is it going to be able to make that novel prediction?

"So I'm seeing this now in undergrads," she concluded, "but I'm kind of curious to see how that will affect graduate students and new PIs in 30 years."

"Students are not relying on their own thoughts."

"I try to use any sort of AI as a last resort."

Some emerging research gives cause for concern about the prospect of AI-driven "de-skilling." A recent study in *The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology*, for example, found that physicians who used AI for three months to help them identify precancerous polyps during colonoscopies were able to detect significantly fewer of these lesions once the tool was taken away. Yet a previous meta-analysis in *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy* found that AI assistance raises overall detection rates by about 20 percent—which is, after all, the whole point of the procedure. There is little question that AI tools can be effective. In some realms they may prove indispensable. The challenge facing universities is how to keep them from short-circuiting the educational process. In a 2025 study, researchers from MIT compared the brain activity of subjects who wrote essays in response to SAT prompts with and without the aid of LLMs. LLM users "struggled to accurately quote their own work" just minutes after completing it, and EEG recordings of brain activity showed that they "consistently underperformed at neural, linguistic, and behavioral levels. These results raise concerns about the long-term educational implications of LLM reliance," the authors concluded.

Many undergraduates I talked to were alive to this concern—but caught in a bind. Sensing that AI tools are likely to shape their professional prospects, they want to become proficient users. But many worried that the better the tools get, the riskier they become for students to rely on. And many feared becoming dependent. "I try to use any sort of AI as a last resort," said Ryan Steinfurth, a College freshman planning to major in math. "Just because it kind of does it all for you. Which is nice—but if you're trying to learn something, it's not the best way."

DEMYSTIFYING AI

Rob Nelson kicked off the September 29 meeting of his freshman seminar by writing four statements on the markerboards lining the room:

All models are wrong, but some are useful.
Prediction is hard, especially about the future.
Correlation is not causation.
The map is not the territory.

Splitting into groups, the students illustrated each aphorism with case studies drawn from the book *AI Snake Oil: What AI Can Do, What It Can't, and How to Tell the Difference,* by Arvind Narayanan and

Illustration by Chad Hagen

Sayash Kapoor, of Princeton University's Center for Information Technology Policy. The examples ranged from weather forecasting to earthquake prediction to criminal-justice risk assessment algorithms ["Black Box Justice," Sep|Oct 2017]. The ensuing discussion touched on a seminal study known as the Fragile Families Challenge. This 2017 project invited 160 research teams to build machine-learning models to predict six life outcomes (such as a child's grade point average or likelihood of household eviction) for children whose families had been part of a 15-year longitudinal study. Given nine years of detailed survey results that encompassed millions of data points across hundreds of variables—including height and weight, family composition and income, cognitive assessments and linguistic fluency, and household discipline practices—the teams were challenged to predict outcomes that had been recorded in year 15. All this academic and computational firepower produced a decidedly underwhelming result: even the very best models performed only slightly better than a coin flip.

One of Nelson's goals was to demystify AI for his students. *AI Snake Oil*'s useful categorization of its three main flavors—generative AI, predictive AI, and automated decision-making AI—gave them a lens to peer past the breathless branding and recognize these products as tools in a more prosaic sense, with particular strengths and weaknesses that suit them better to some tasks than others. (LLMs are just one type of AI, but they drive the chatbots that have become synonymous with the term for most undergraduates.) Nelson had also charged each of his students with identifying a thinker with a compelling perspective on AI and sharing their ideas with the class.

The diversity of their choices gelled well with the seminar format. One chose Emily Bender, a linguistics professor at the University of Washington who has belittled chatbots as "synthetic text extruders" and "plagiarism machines" that are incapable of understanding their own output—but lull us into believing otherwise by dint of our "human tendency to attribute meaning to text." Another gravitated toward Alison Gopnik, a University of California psychology and philosophy professor who views LLMs as a cultural technology akin to books, library catalogues, and the internet; and just as we don't blame a library catalogue for a book that contains an erroneous claim, we shouldn't let the weaknesses of LLMs distract us from their strength: rendering "complex, large, and inchoate" bodies of knowledge "more visible and tractable than they were in the past."

Several students focused more narrowly on the implications for higher education. One cited a recent *New Yorker* essay by Ted Chiang, who wrote, "Using ChatGPT to complete assignments is like bringing a forklift into the weight room; you will never improve your cognitive fitness that way." A couple others offered a partial rebuttal by quoting Wharton professor Ethan Mollick, a chatbot enthusiast who has incorporated AI into his classes more swiftly than probably any other professor at Penn. "Our fear of AI 'damaging our brains,'" Mollick has written, "is actually a fear of our own laziness." College freshman Luke Castelli, who struck me as the seminar's most eager and discerning adopter of AI tools, offered a reflection based on a summer internship with an AI consultancy in his native Utah. Its founder, he noted, liked to say that "AI readiness isn't about the right tools, it's about the right judgment." So for universities, Castelli suggested, "one solution is to create more courses on AI. If we understand the risks of AI, we can exercise our judgment."

A number of Penn faculty members have answered that call. One is astrophysicist Bhuvnesh Jain, the Walter H. and Leonore C. Annenberg Professor in the Natural Sciences. This past fall, approximately 60 undergraduates took his "Introduction to AI: Concepts, Applications, and Impact." By providing an "overview of how AI works, how it is applied, its limitations and where it might be headed," according to its course description, the class aimed to convey "everything you need to know about AI before stepping into the real world." (Peter Struck, the Stephen A. Levin Family Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, sat in frequently for the weekly sessions.)

Michelle Zhang, a freshman from Los Angeles intending to major in classics, gave Jain's class high marks. "It's very mathy, a lot of it," she told me midway through the semester. "We talk about anything from the technical side—like here we're talking about squash functions" she said, pointing to a page of exquisitely handwritten notes, "and also the social side, like what do we think is going to happen in the future?

"It's been really helpful," she reflected, "in terms of allowing me to see it as less of this, like, mysterious force—and more as just what it is, which is a tool that's been built to do a specific task." Some students overestimate what it can do, she reckoned, and others are "incredibly scared of it." Both attitudes could hold people back from discovering good uses. For instance, she routinely snapped photos of her inked notes and uploaded them to an LLM for digitization. In line with research indicating that hand-writing notes improves knowledge retention, Jain prohibited laptops in his classroom. "But he actively encourages all of us to use AI to study," Zhang said, for example by prompting it to generate practice quizzes based on notes and course materials.

Rob Nelson took a similar tack, pairing a decidedly low-tech classroom approach—"I'm a big believer that PowerPoint has destroyed class presentations," he told his students—with assignments involving substantial AI experimentation.

For their September 29 meeting, he tasked the freshmen with using generative AI to produce an automated acceptance or rejection letter from an official undergraduate club. One prompted ChatGPT to reject "Rose" from the Wharton Pickleball Club in "a mean and pretentious manner."

In the hard-hearted Hunger Games of competitive-entry Ivy League extracurriculars, this kind of thing apparently happens all the time—and Chat passed the test with flying colors. "That's pretty pretentious," the student laughed ruefully after reading the letter aloud. But the previous week, Nelson's master's students had made a less captivating discovery. When prompting an LLM for editorial advice on short essays, the students were initially impressed by the tailored feedback it provided—only to discover that everyone else had received pretty much the same generic suggestions. That's not to say that it wasn't potentially useful; much writing suffers from common ailments. But it was a reality check on the trustworthiness of tools that are expressly trained in the art of impersonation.

Nelson's freshmen also created "virtual teaching assistants." Using an educational platform called BoodleBox, they essentially layered specific bodies of knowledge atop an LLM (they could choose between several well-known models) to design a customized chatbot whose goal was to help them succeed in the class. The results were by turns funny and fascinating. One student tried to infuse her bot with the personality of a Japanese anime character (or that's how I took it, anyway). Its initial amusement wore off with rigid repetition, but that in itself was a useful lesson. Another tried to give his a penchant for edgy sarcasm (perhaps to counter the cloying sycophancy that many chatbots employ to flatter and hook their users). He lamented that it was too tame—except with Nelson, whom it insulted freely when he graded the assignment. Everyone uploaded the class syllabus and readings into their bot's knowledge base, but one student went a step further and included a bevy of articles bearing Nelson's byline. He figured that aping the instructor's writing style could hardly hurt his grade. (Nelson, surprise surprise, thought this bot was pretty slick.)

Toward the end of their meeting, I posed two questions to the seminar group and asked for a show of hands. "Who thinks *artificial intelligence* is a good name for the tools we've been discussing?" I asked. To my mild surprise, only one person thought so. Some discussion ensued about the nature of intelligence and the difficulty of defining it. Then I asked my second question: "Who is glad that they are in college at a moment when these so-called AI tools exist?" Every single hand went up.

"Imagine living back in the time when microscopes came into being. I believe we are in a similar moment—not for categories of life, but for categories of intelligence, maybe categories of consciousness."

ENDLESS FORMS, MOST BEWILDERING TO BEHOLD

Robert Ghrist agreed that intelligence is difficult to define. But the professor of math and electrical and systems engineering, who also serves as Penn Engineering's associate dean for undergraduate education, was not ready to dismiss the term "artificial intelligence" as an exercise in branding hype.

"I do find these models of AI to be doing much more than just searching things on the internet and reporting—doing much more than just trying to predict the next thing it should say," he told me. "They are reasoning. They're reasoning at a level of complexity that exceeds that which I see from most humans."

"Most humans" is a broad and occasionally disappointing category. I asked Ghrist if he'd ever sensed an AI model outstripping *his own* intellectual capacities.

"In certain aspects, yes," he replied. "Good AI" had "stunned" him with its reasoning in two realms. One was "research-grade mathematics"—no small feat for a man who has led over a dozen projects in algebraic and computational topology for the likes of DARPA and the NSF. The other related to Ghrist's abiding love for English literature, which for a time had been his intended major as an undergraduate. "Having conversations with my favorite LLM about Blake, about Joyce, about Milton, about synthesis ideas, I've gone to places that were stunningly creative," he said. And they were not just "being ripped out of something from the internet," he professed, "because I know the literature."

For Ghrist, determining what qualified as "good AI" had much to do with the context. He told me he used Anthropic's Claude for writing but often turned to Elon Musk C'97 W'97's Grok for creative idea generation. "Grok is just bonkers. It's just nuts—in the good and the bad way—and I love it for that." Google's new Gemini 3 was "outrageously good" at technical problem solving, he said, but "I would never use it for writing." He suggested that their differences from one another, and from human minds, added a new layer of complexity to a very old challenge.

"Aquinas dealt with non-human intelligences quite a long time ago and actually tried to categorize them," he said, surprising me with a reference to the 13th-century Catholic theologian and philosopher. "I don't think he finished the job."

"The job got harder as of late," I suggested.

"Much harder," Ghrist concurred. An historical analogy occurred to him. "Imagine living back in the time when microscopes came into being," he mused. "We could grind the lenses and really zoom in. What did we discover? Oh my God, there's life everywhere—at micro-

scopic scales, a multitude of forms that is unimaginable! They're crawling all over you. They're responsible for you getting sick. They're responsible for you maintaining health. They're floating in the air—you're sucking them in your nose right now. And then, below that, there's viruses. Which, are they even alive?

"I believe we are at a similar moment—not for categories of life, but for categories of intelligence, maybe categories of consciousness," he said. But "it won't be the end of the world. It'll be really confusing, and people will argue and fight about it, and we'll discover just weird stuff—and then we'll get used to it."

COEFFICIENTS OF FRICTION

However you rate the current intelligence of Claude or Grok or Gemini, enthusiasts are wont to respond with a widespread article of faith. "AI today is the worst AI will ever be," as Luke Castelli put it, echoing the common refrain. "It's only going to get better." If so, the choices facing educational institutions will only grow harder.

Josh Miller, a freshman in Nelson's seminar, hit the nail on the head by citing Marc Watkins, who directs the AI Institute for Teachers at the University of Mississippi, where he is a lecturer in writing and rhetoric. "What generative AI gives to the user is a frictionless experience," Watkins has written. "Regardless of what you ask a chatbot, the response is always instantaneous, confident, and reasonable sounding. Users trade speed over accuracy and cede their critical thinking to a technology they likely don't understand, just that it quickly gives them a response." But "learning *is* friction," Watkins stresses, which "puts education at odds with the current wave of frictionless chatbot interfaces dominating the market."

In a mid-October interview, Miller told me he had grown wary of one of the most pervasive uses of LLMs among students: summarizing assigned readings. By senior year of high school he was doing this a fair bit. "But in college, I've generally been avoiding it," he said. A summary was just too easy to read quickly before moving on. "I don't remember any of the information," he said, "versus when I take the time to actually sit down and read, like, a chapter in a book—I'm actually going to remember."

But here's the thing: virtually everyone seems to be using Chat to summarize text. One upper-level philosophy seminar I attended epitomized how normal this has become. A student called upon to explicate the thesis of an assigned essay during a heady discussion interrupted herself midway through to say, "Just for full disclosure, I'm referring to a ChatGPT summary right now." To which her instructor replied, "That's OK. So am I."

The most intriguing perspective I encountered on this issue belonged to Michelle Zhang, the aspiring classicist. Among her peers, she said, "one of the most common uses of AI is putting in a 15-page reading and saying, 'OK, give me five pages, max.'" Insofar as a skillful summary dispenses with "fluff," she speculated that this practice could ultimately change academic writing for the better, by bending scholars toward concision from the get-go. No one will mourn the death of jargon-larded flatulence. "But is it good," she continued, "if I essentially dumb down reading that my professor assigned because he or she thought it was valuable to read?"

Fealty to a professor's judgment is one question—and students who alter readings are accountable for the consequences. But Zhang also raised a more insidious prospect. Perhaps the most pernicious means of social control in George Orwell's *1984*, she noted, was the pared-down language of Newspeak. "One of the ways the authoritarian regime inserts itself into the lives of everyday people is through the adoption of speech that is incredibly shortened," she said. "And that's dangerous, because when we shorten the number of ways that we can express ourselves—or the ways that other things can be expressed to us—we give more power to the people who are shortening these words.

"So then you think, well, who is doing the summary?" she went on. "Who owns the machine that's doing the summary? And can I 100 percent trust it?" And even if our tech overlords prove less malign than Orwell's totalitarian superstate, shouldn't college students be able to "read a complex sentence and do their own summary in their own heads"?

Zhang had been honing such skills in a first-year seminar at Kelly Writers House taught by Julia Bloch Gr'11. AI was only tangential to this class, but the session I sat in on showed how LLMs can be deployed to *increase* friction for educational purposes. For a homework assignment, Bloch's students had prompted chatbots to produce a haiku from a news story, iterating and refining the output until they were satisfied. After a lively debate about whether this counted as authorship, an in-class exercise presented them with a series of paired poems or prose excerpts. Each pair comprised one authentic text (Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, Ernest Heminigway, etc.) alongside a version rewritten by ChatGPT. The challenge was to distinguish the genuine article from the ersatz one, explain your reasoning, and (though time limited this part) express an aesthetic preference between the two.

As a critical-reading exercise, this was as engaging as it was cheap to produce. And I got the sense that some students had been doing something similar on their own. ChatGPT by this time had earned a reputation for certain stylistic tics, like its liberal use of em dashes and the word *delve*. (The verb is rare in American English but comparatively common among the low-wage African English speakers who have helped train OpenAI's models.) One of Bloch's students said that chatbots had awakened him to rhetorical idiosyncrasies of his own, pushing him to expand his linguistic palette. It struck me that even the act of camouflaging an LLM's output to

claim it as one's own is a sort of exercise in refining prose, albeit a dodgy one.

Later in the semester I interviewed Aliza Jankowsky, a junior majoring in Philosophy, Politics & Economics and minoring in data science. She said that she mainly used LLMs—ChatGPT, Claude, and Perplexity—for "high level overviews and summaries," but also used them as writing assistants. She had a dim view of using chatbots in the early stages of a draft. "I lose a lot of my voice when I ask it to create it fully from white paper," she explained. But she does use them to "structure" her ideas, "tell me which ones are more persuasive than others," and "poke holes in an argument." Soliciting this sort of "pushback" is "not necessarily timesaving," she said, but "that is where I've also found it to be useful." Meanwhile, she was content to save time by offloading lower-level tasks. "It's great at rewording things," she said. "I send a lot of emails, and I like that I can draft my email and then put it into an LLM and ask it to rewrite it with a specific tone, or a specific voice for a specific person or purpose." (Though not, so far as I know, on behalf of a University pickleball club.)

The freshmen in Nelson's seminar seemed to regard LLMs as trustworthy authorities on grammar, syntax, and the "correct" feel of formal prose. Many of them, perhaps all, were in the habit of running any writing assignment through a chatbot for copy editing prior to turning it in. Nelson devoted a great deal of the semester to a sort of compositional counterprogramming. He assigned exercises inspired by the longtime college writing instructor John Warner, a trenchant critic of the "five-paragraph essay" format whose deadening conventions have come to blight US high school instruction (and, by extension, much chatbot output) with formulaic rigidity and "pseudo-academic BS." By emphasizing writing as thinking, and pushing the students to embrace their own intellectual and rhetorical idiosyncrasies, Nelson encouraged reflection about what

"I think there's an illusion of understanding that can happen by virtue of using these chatbots."

distinguishes genuine human expression from the probabilistic derivations LLMs intuit from a given body of training data.

EFFORTS AND ILLUSIONS

My broad sense from speaking with undergraduates (to whom I offered anonymity to discuss uses of AI that they would not care to acknowledge publicly) is that outright cheating is not a major problem at Penn. Some of that comes down to the limitations they perceive. "I find that it's really unable to truly philosophically engage with ideas," said David Kerendian, a College junior majoring in economics and minoring in philosophy. "In our classes," said SEAS sophomore computer science major Teyo Agoyo, "we're not able to just chuck a homework assignment in there. It's not really able to answer at that high of a level." Michelle Zhang lamented its abuse by "students who just have no desire to do their own work. But I think that happens less often than people think," she said. "It's not great at generating creative work—or work that actually involves people understanding the words that they're saying."

A Penn education is a huge investment, and most students seemed genuinely intent on learning. To me, their most compelling uses of AI were often the most mundane: using an LLM to digitize handwritten notes, or convert readings into audio files to listen to on the move, or create practice quizzes from course materials. This echoes my own experience with these tools. I still cannot get an LLM to convert my reporting into a satisfying paragraph—at least not without spending more time prompting than it would take me to compose it on my own. But their ability to transcribe dialogue has supercharged my productivity and also made me a more attentive interviewer.

As for Robert Ghrist's glimpses of AI intelligence(s) verging on consciousness, I can't help but suspect that these are substantially a function of his own.

Illustration by Chad Hagen

Without the deep well of knowledge he possesses in certain domains, he wouldn't be able to assess LLM outputs—or push back against the mistaken ones to drive the dialectic forward. Inexpert users, by contrast, are liable to misjudge flawed arguments for valid ones and suffer the consequences. "This is the perennial problem," Ghrist allowed. Every human sooner or later reaches his limit of knowledge. But a chatbot just keeps going—whether its reasoning stays on or off the rails.

For students who found it risky to rely on AI in the early phases of an assignment, or were underwhelmed by their attempts to push LLMs into higher levels of intellectual discourse, the sweet spot often seemed to be somewhere in the middle. "The way that it really helps is when you get to that point when you're stuck," Josh Miller explained. Stumped by a homework problem late at night, when a TA can't be expected to respond to an email and the professor's office hours are two days away, "I can just take a picture of my work and ask ChatGPT, *What am I doing wrong here?* And I can move forward without hitting that hiccup."

Almost every undergraduate I spoke with described something like this. ChatGPT now has a "study mode" that offers "step by step guidance instead of quick answers." It initially struck me—as it has struck many professors—as a terrific use. But I came to see it as a slippery slope. So had SEAS sophomore Elias Chavez. As a freshman facing a daunting workload, the mechanical engineering major had routinely turned to ChatGPT in this manner for a physics class. "I wish I hadn't done that," he told me this year. "It didn't help me on the midterms, that's for sure."

Chavez had plenty of company. Computer science professor Chris Callison-Burch teaches a graduate-level introductory AI course to about 650 students. After sensing that chatbots were leading many to complete assignments "faster and maybe without critically engaging it to the degree that I was seeing from students in the past," he seeded his exam with several questions that should have been gimmes for anyone who'd done their homework the old-fashioned way. Two-thirds of the class got the first question wrong. Eighty percent flubbed another one.

"I think professors should be incentivized to create custom GPTs."

"I don't necessarily attribute that to malice or cheating, or anything like that," Callison-Burch told me. "I think there's an illusion of understanding that can happen by virtue of using these chatbots. Even if you are doing it conscientiously, it can be tricky."

Chavez corrected course. Now he's more likely to consult his textbook and "sit there for however long it takes me to actually figure it out." He also discovered the wealth of high-quality tutorials and explanations on YouTube. "I don't know why I just started with ChatGPT," he said. His physics class this fall was harder, but he did better in it. But by and large, undergraduates receive little formal guidance, so they are feeling their way forward through trial and error.

Designing a new introductory AI class for freshmen and sophomores has led Callison-Burch to "rethink a lot of what I'm teaching and how I want to assess the students—and also how I want them to figure out how to engage with the tools that are going to be part of their professional lives." He's eager to use AI to his advantage, for instance by experimenting with automated question generators and "second-chance testing."

"You can write a template that allows you to have many, many variations and combinations that test the same concept," he explained. "So that allows you to easily reuse [exam] questions in a way that they don't leak. And therefore it also allows you to let the students try to do things on their own, using that question generator as a form of practice." This dovetails with Callison-Burch's teaching philosophy, which he sums up as "A's for all, as time and interest allow."

"I want the students to achieve mastery," he told me, "and I'm happy to award as many people an A as have achieved that mastery."

Ghrist's custom GPTs seem like another promising path forward. Since 2023 he has been making them for every course he teaches. Using ChatGPT as a foundation—because virtually all students are familiar with it—he seeds each one with detailed course materials and week-by-week learning objectives. He instructs them to assume that students only know material covered in prior weeks. "That is why just going to generic ChatGPT, or your favorite AI, and asking questions about what you're working with in class, doesn't work so well. It draws from everything that's available everywhere on the internet and starts feeding you information, and then all of a sudden, you're like, *Oh my gosh, what is this talking about? I've never heard of this stuff. My professor didn't say anything about this.*"

When students get lost or stuck within Ghrist's GPTs—or think it may have made a mistake—they can type */think* to launch a "dialectical examiner," which acts like a silicon Socrates. "It starts off really simple, low-level," Ghrist explained,

Illustration by Chad Hagen

showing me on a browser. "As you go back and forth, it gets harder and harder until it's asking really deep, conceptual questions. And I've heard back from students that this has been super useful in testing whether they understand something—much more so than just grinding through sample test problems."

There are additional advantages. CalcStar Blue (like its brethren) invites users to begin by introducing themselves and stating their major. "From then on, it is instructed to try to frame things in a way that is going to click with you," Ghrist said. "Of course, any good instructor would do this as well," he added. "But if I get a student who says they're a finance major with a minor in neuroscience, and that they're talking to me about Lagrange multipliers and constrained optimization—it's a little difficult for me to make a connection to that thing that they're interested in studying. Because I know a lot of applications, but I don't know everything about finance. I don't know everything about neuroscience. But LLMs kind of do," he said. "So these custom GPTs are really good at explaining things with connections to what students are really interested in, no matter how arcane."

Many undergraduates told me they'd used one of Ghrist's CalcStar GPTs. Those who hadn't heard of such tools often cottoned onto the idea of an AI assistant designed and approved by their instructor. "I think professors should be incentivized to create custom GPTs," said David Kerendian, the economics and philosophy student. "For students to really develop the skills professors want them to learn," he said, they seem "more refined and more specific to what the professor wants."

"I could teach anybody how to do it in 10 minutes," Ghrist told me—though building and refining them takes more time. "My biggest frustration," he said, "is the models are updating and getting more powerful so quickly, that every time a new model rolls out, I kind of have to retest everything to make sure it's not going off script."

"These tools are not meant to replace the human element," Ghrist emphasized. "Because they can't." But he considers them an important complement to more traditional teaching modalities—from office hours and traditional textbooks, to his cartoon-strewn *FLCT: Funny Little Calculus Text* and sprawling library of YouTube videos—and confessed to feeling frustrated by students who are unwilling to try them out.

"It's imperative that while students are here focusing on their education, they pick up skills that are going to be broadly useful outside of this place," he said. "If all they do is interact with AIs and learn that way, they're missing out on some really useful skills." But "if they're not using AI for anything," he added, "they're missing out on some really useful skills."

HYPER TEXT

I wrapped up the fall 2025 semester by taking in the final group projects of Rob Nelson's first-year seminar and engaging the freshmen in a roundtable discussion the following week. It was a curious experience. One group effectively demonstrated how easy it was to create a custom GPT that answered queries in biased and deceptively non-transparent ways. Another led the class through a "vibe coding" exercise that chained a few AI tools together to create personal websites based on students' resumés or LinkedIn pages. Many of the results were hilariously inaccurate. Though he'd hoped for a better outcome, Luke Castelli offered an unimpeachable takeaway: It's easy to identify howlers in your own resumé, "but when you look at an essay you prompted, it might not be so apparent."

In our final discussion, it emerged that ChatGPT, which retains memories of past conversations unless users disable that feature, had apparently concluded that one white student in the seminar was African American. Every month or so, this mystified student related, Chat would respond to a query with the phrase, "As a Black student, you…" Another classmate reflected that he'd started his freshman year assuming that LLM explanations of economic principles were reliable, "and I'm sort of wondering if I shouldn't."

But as a whole, the freshmen seemed broadly tolerant of the weaknesses that go hand in hand with these tools' perceived strengths, which many expect will only grow more powerful. (Had the vibe coding group attempted their exercise after the January 2026 debut of Anthropic's Claude Cowork, for instance, the outcome may have been much more impressive. The sheer speed of change within the AI marketplace is yet another dynamic to which current undergraduates are adjusting on the fly.) When I repeated my questions from earlier in the semester, the students answered in the same fashion. All but one respondent declined to credit LLMs as possessing "artificial intelligence." But everyone counted themselves glad to be attending college at a moment when these tools exist. And although one freshman only raised his hand halfway up, it was obvious that everyone expected to be using AI regularly, even daily, over the next four years.

"We encountered a decent amount of different perspectives in this class," one student reflected. "It's very easy as a student to not critically think about AI, and just use it to help you with whatever. But this class kind of forces you to think deeper than that."

Another singled out the usefulness of disentangling AI into discrete categories, as they'd learned from reading *AI Snake Oil*. "Even just that," he said, "100 percent helps your judgment."

They will need it. Contemporary anxieties about LLMs often echo Socrates' critique of writing—that they can cloak ignorance with the semblance of wisdom. But the Athenian's qualms were equally rooted in the inability of text to talk back. Now that it can, these students face the question that confronts us all: what to ask it.

A Degree Too Late

Remembering Penn's first women in architecture.

By Sidney Wong and Annie Liang-Zhou

In May 2024, Penn's Weitzman School of Design posthumously awarded Phyllis Lin Whei-yin FA1927—known colloquially as Lin Huiyin—a bachelor of architecture degree. Exactly 100 years earlier, Penn had rejected her application to the architecture program—not because she lacked qualifications, but because she was a woman.

Penn's decision was an extraordinary step to reckon with its past, acknowledging the historical inequalities and limitations in its architectural education.

Denied entry to what was then the premier American architecture program, Lin remained undeterred. In 1924, she enrolled in the Department of Fine Arts for her architecture education. Eventually, she became the first woman formally licensed as an architect by the Chinese Nationalist government in 1936 and made a lasting impact on China's architecture ["The Story of Liang and Lin," Nov|Dec 2019].

Yet the dream of an architecture degree eluded her in life; nearly 70 years after her passing, the diploma was received by her granddaughter and great-granddaughter, who is now pursuing a master's degree in historic preservation at Lin's alma mater (and is one of the authors of this piece).

While Lin's story is extraordinary, she was not the first woman to receive a retroactive architecture degree after leaving Penn. In 1937, five other academically qualified female students were considered for a degree—women who contributed greatly to the Penn and Philadelphia communities but whose stories have largely been untold.

Penn's First Female Architecture Students

In the spring of 1920, Penn established its School of Fine Arts and sparked a wave of admissions inquiries. Among the hopefuls were a handful of women—ambitious, capable, and artistic, yet hindered by the barriers that awaited them.

The Laird Papers (from Warren Powers Laird, first dean of the School of Fine Arts) in Penn's University Archives kept several letters from these women, who were told, without exception, that they could not be admitted. On occasion, applicants were advised to consider other institutions open to women, such as MIT or Columbia University.

The first woman who dared to challenge the status quo was Georgina Pope Yeatman CCT1922 (1902–1982). When the School of Fine Arts was established, she was a sophomore in the School of Education. The following year, she transferred to the part-time College Course for Teachers program. By all accounts, she demonstrated leadership from the outset. An avid athlete, especially in field hockey and basketball, she was one of four founding members of the Women's Athletic Association in 1921.

In 1922, Yeatman graduated with a degree in education and enrolled in the School of Fine Arts. Although her correspondence with Penn at that time is uncertain, a note in her father's donor dossier provides some insight.

Her father, Pope Yeatman, was an internationally renowned mining engineer and a peer of Herbert Hoover. Having amassed considerable wealth, he was actively courted by Penn for donations. A note from his 1927 dossier reads: "Displeased at U of P (sic.) because School of Architecture would not admit daughter for that course."

While there is little evidence of how Georgina navigated her studies, her only path into architecture was through a fine arts degree. At the time, the school offered a six-year dual-degree program: Male students could earn a bachelor of fine arts (BFA) degree in four years with foundational and intermediate courses, then continue for two more years to complete the bachelor of architecture (BArch) degree. As a fine arts student, Yeatman gained access to the architecture curriculum, including the four-course Design I–IV sequence—the program's core, which accounted for nearly half of the required architectural credits.

ILLUSTRATION BY JONATHAN BARTLETT

After her petition to pursue a degree in architecture was denied, Yeatman left Penn in 1924. Archival records indicate that she had completed 18 architecture courses, including Design I through III.

Yeatman continued her education at MIT, where she took additional architecture courses, including Design IV, landscape architecture, and town planning. She eventually earned her degree in architecture from there in 1925.

Lin Huiyin (1904–1955) was the second woman to study architecture at Penn and the school's first female student from abroad. She arrived from China several months after Yeatman had left, making it unlikely that their paths ever crossed.

Lin's matriculation was more colorful and better documented. In November 1923, Mrs. T. D. MacMillan, secretary of the Committee on Foreign Study for Chinese Women in Peking, wrote to Penn to inquire about her admission as a special architecture student, signaling Lin's awareness of the exclusion policy.

Laird suggested that Lin consider applying to MIT, Columbia, or Cornell. Alternatively, he proposed that she could enroll as a fine arts student and take architecture electives: "Miss Lin's motive might be met by a broad course in the Fine Arts with a strong architectural flavor." Lin did not accept Laird's suggestion as final.

Around the same time, her father, Lin Changmin, a Chinese politician, asked the Chinese Legation in Washington to advocate on his daughter's behalf. Minister Sao-Ke Alfred Sze, a friend of the Lin family, spoke directly with Laird.

In his second reply to MacMillan, Laird stated that Penn's trustees had barred women from required architecture courses in building construction and general lectures, including mechanics, statics, carpentry, masonry, heating, plumbing, and material strength. He added that omitting such courses would not impede Lin's pursuit of architectural design. As for her request to be admitted as a special student or auditor, Laird agreed to recommend it to Penn's admissions office.

After completing three Cornell summer courses, Lin entered Penn as a freshman in 1924 with advanced credits and was promoted to a junior standing the following year. She completed 23 architecture courses, the most by any woman before formal admission. She was the first woman to finish the full Design I–IV sequence, earning two "distinguished" and two "good" marks on her report card.

Lin earned a total of 90 undergraduate and one graduate credits, accumulating 67 in architecture and 24 in non-architecture, well beyond the 72 required for the BFA degree. She graduated in February 1927, completing the BFA a year and a half ahead of schedule.

Lin graduated in February 1927, completing the BFA a year and a half ahead of schedule.

In recognition of her achievement, Design professor John Harbeson Ar1910 GAr1911 hired her to teach Design I and II as an instructor in 1926 and 1927. In the summer of 1927, Lin worked in Penn's star professor and Philadelphia architect Paul Phillipe Cret's office, a dream job for most aspiring architects—male or female—at the time.

The third woman to study architecture at Penn was Gertrude Howard Olmsted Nauman FA1927 (1901–1973), who came from a prominent family in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She and Lin entered the Fine Arts program together in the fall of 1924. Olmsted proved to be an exceptionally talented student, earning distinguished grades in Design I through III. In a letter dated September 30, 1926, Laird described her to a professor of mathematics as "one of the most capable of our students." That fall, Harbeson appointed her as an instructor for Design I.

In the spring of 1927, due to health and family circumstances, Olmsted transitioned to partial student status, leaving Design IV incomplete, and later discontinued her academic studies. Records show that she completed 13 architecture courses and left three unfinished. Although she did not accumulate enough credits to graduate at the time, she was retroactively awarded a BFA in 1932, dated as of 1927, in recognition of the quality of her academic performance.

In the same year Lin and Olmsted arrived on Penn's campus, Doris Joy Derbyshire Ar1929 (1905–1990), a future Penn basketball team member, enrolled in the newly established Landscape Architecture program. She then found herself increasingly drawn to architecture and transferred to the Fine Arts program in the fall of 1925.

Joy completed 13 architecture and one landscape architecture courses, including Design I and II, but left before completing Design III. In 1927, she followed Yeatman's path to MIT, where she completed Design III and IV and additional architecture courses, including town planning. She earned her architecture degree there in 1929.

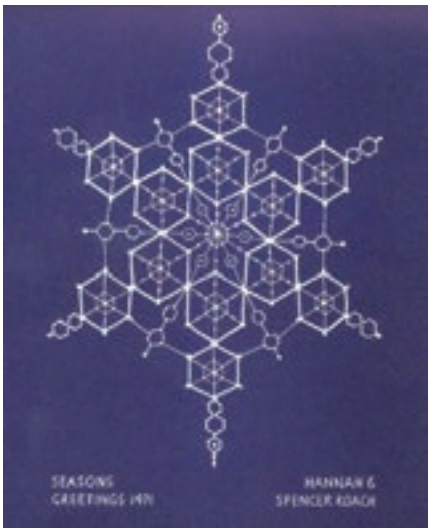
Jane Harper FA1930 (1908–1964) was the fifth to join the ranks. She began her studies in landscape architecture in 1925. Like Joy, she switched to Fine Arts to pursue architecture and in June 1926, successfully petitioned the Executive Committee to take five building construction courses.

Over her five-year tenure at Penn, she completed 20 architecture courses, including Design I and II, and attempted Design III without finishing it. In addition, she took five courses in landscape architecture, including its own Design I and II sequence. She also served as an assistant instructor in Elements of Architecture and Design I from 1926 to 1929 and eventually earned a BFA in 1930.

The sixth woman to study architecture at Penn was Hannah Benner Roach FA1929 (1907–1976). She enrolled in the Fine Arts program in 1926, and her academic path closely mirrored Lin's—except, like the other five, she did not take the three architectural history courses that

Images courtesy University Archives

Christmas cards designed by Hannah Benner Roach and her husband and fellow architect Franklin Spencer Roach.



Lin Huiyin conducting an architectural survey of a stone pillar (jīng chuáng) at Foguang Temple, Mount Wutai, Shanxi, 1937; Commemorative Stamp for the Monument to the People's Heroes, issued in May 1958.

Lin had completed. Benner earned her BFA in 1929. After Penn admitted women to architecture, she returned to the School in January 1935 for one additional semester to take supplementary courses and was retroactively awarded a BArch in 1937. In total, she completed 19 architecture courses and became the second woman to finish the full Design I–IV sequence.

Except for Yeatman, these exemplary women overlapped with Lin at Penn, united by a shared ambition to become architects.

Career Journeys Shaped by Ambition and Expectations

The intertwined journeys of these women, through either their shared academic training or their passion for architecture, led to remarkably diverse trajectories. Each was shaped as much by the structural barriers they encountered as by their own tenacity and talent.

The most visible breakthroughs were achieved by Georgina Yeatman and Lin Huiyin. Denied an architectural degree at Penn, Yeatman returned to Philadelphia and established the city's only independent women's architectural practice. She joined the AIA, led Philadelphia's Department of City Architecture as the only woman in the mayor's cabinet, and advocated for housing reform. She ultimately pursued a career of civic and professional leadership that spanned multiple states.

Lin cofounded one of the earliest architecture programs in China at Northeastern University. Despite persistent ill health, she played a foundational role in documenting and preserving the nation's architectural heritage and pioneered the development of a framework for architectural periodization. After World War II, she became a founding member of Tsinghua University's Department of Architecture and Planning and later emerged as a leading advocate for historic preservation and regional planning in Beijing.

Their trajectories reflect women who not only persisted in the profession but also

reshaped the architectural and cultural landscapes of their respective countries.

Others navigated careers that blended architectural practice with family responsibilities, public service, and intellectual pursuits. Hannah Benner, admitted belatedly into Penn's architecture program, married Franklin Spencer Roach Ar1928 and balanced work with her husband's projects. She later became a scholar in genealogy and Pennsylvania history, demonstrating a career that evolved from professional design to historical research.

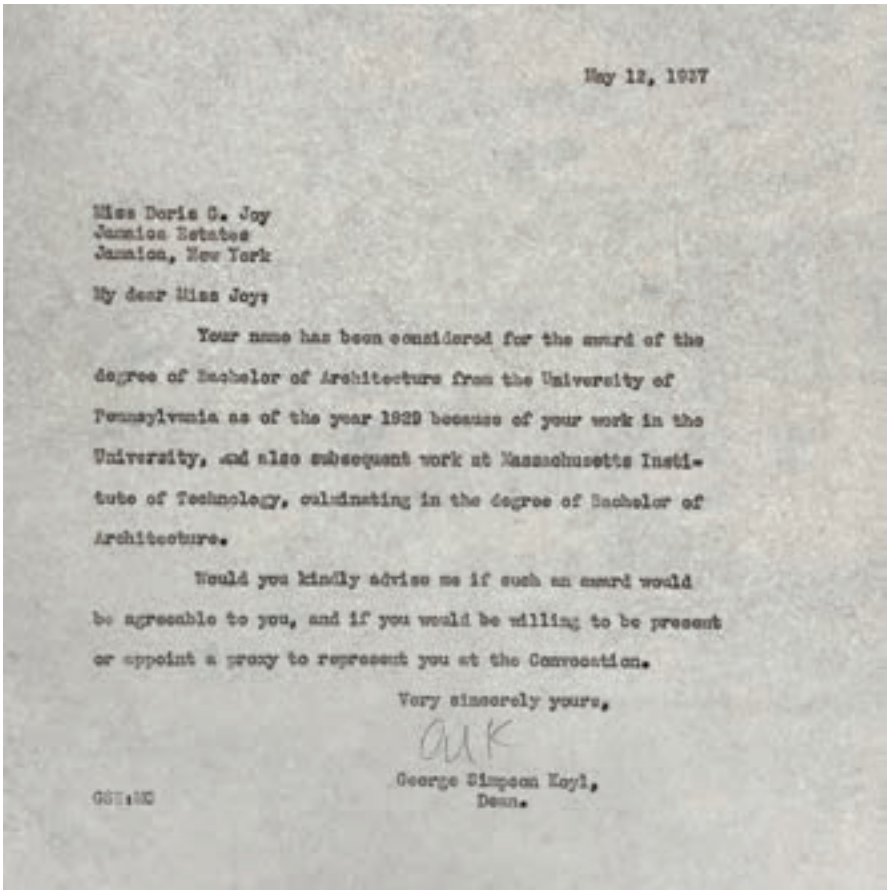
Jane Harper pursued a cosmopolitan path: Trained in Philadelphia and Paris, she combined teaching, museum service, and the operation of a Philadelphia art gallery specializing in modern European work, embodying a creative career that bridged architecture, languages, and the arts.

Still others saw their trajectories shaped primarily by the social expectations of marriage and domestic life. Doris Joy left architectural practice after moving to Detroit in the mid-1930s and focused on raising her family, while Gertrude Olmsted married early and became a prominent society figure, remembered less for her professional work than for her considerable wealth and social commitments.

Viewed through a common lens, their stories reveal a generation of women negotiating opportunity, discrimination, marriage, talent, and circumstance—some advanced boldly in the profession, while others practiced quietly or shifted into new disciplines, and some charted hybrid paths that reflected the complex realities of being a woman in early 20th-century America.

From Admissions to Retroactive Degrees

When Laird told Lin in 1924 that several required courses were closed to women, that was only a partial truth. The deeper barrier lay in gendered perceptions: Faculty were uneasy about a handful of unchaperoned women working alongside around 100 men in the drafting room, often late into the night. As a result, the few women who took Design courses were required to work in a separate room.



May 12, 1937

Miss Doris C. Joy
Jamaica Estates
Jamaica, New York

My dear Miss Joy:

Your name has been considered for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania as of the year 1929 because of your work in the University, and also subsequent work at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, culminating in the degree of Bachelor of Architecture.

Would you kindly advise me if such an award would be agreeable to you, and if you would be willing to be present or appoint a proxy to represent you at the Convocation.

Very sincerely yours,

GSK

George Simpson Koyl,
Dean.

GSK:MC

Doris Joy Derbyshire completed 13 courses in architecture and one in landscape architecture at Penn before completing her degree at MIT. In 1937 Penn awarded her a degree in architecture retroactive to 1929.

The life drawing course, which featured nude male models, sometimes fellow students, created an even more awkward situation. At the time, Beaux-Arts architectural training emphasized the study of beauty in nature and human form as a foundation for aesthetic expression in design. Faculty were deeply concerned about the possible impropriety and embarrassment of placing a woman in such a setting.

Yet, according to reports at the time, MIT never experienced such an issue. In October of 1934, George Koyl Ar1909 GAr1911, the second dean of Penn's School of Fine of Arts, received a letter from William Emerson, dean of MIT's School of Architecture, that stated "[t]here has never been the slightest difficulty of any sort … and no unpleasant or embarrassing incidents have at any time occurred."

While Penn took pride in its openness to Black and Jewish students, it was slow to admit women into its architecture program. By the time the School of Fine Arts was established, according to a study by MIT alumna Marilynn Bever, MIT had already matriculated 40 women into its bachelor of science architecture program, and its first female graduate, Sophia Gregoria Hayden, earned her architecture degree in 1890.

In 1928, the school undertook a self-study in response to Penn's creation of a university presidency and school-specific boards. The following year, Leicester B. Holland Ar1902 GAr1917 Gr1919, a former faculty member, was appointed director of the Department of Fine Arts for a one-year term, charged with reorganizing the curriculum and clarifying its relationship with other programs. In a report to the Board of Fine Arts, Holland observed that "most of the students enrolled in the Fine Arts courses are there because of the courses in Architecture offered through the Fine Arts Department."

Concerned that underqualified [male] students were using Fine Arts as a backdoor into Architecture, Holland recommended closing the pathway into the three-year upper school of architecture. He also recognized that his recommendation would render architectural training almost impossible for qualified women, so he proposed opening the Department of Architecture to them. However, the school denied the proposal in a faculty poll conducted in April 1930, with eight members voting in favor and 12 opposed. Meeting minutes stated that the opposition "would be withdrawn if in the main classes for women were separate from those for men."

The matter resurfaced in 1933. As the Great Depression deepened and enrollment fell, Penn established the College of Liberal Arts for Women, an administrative unit through which women could at last earn a liberal arts degree. That step made the continued exclusion in Architecture increasingly untenable, and the University administration pressed for reform in the School.

On November 15, the Executive Committee of Architecture passed a motion to admit women into the upper school via anonymous competitive examination, provided they had completed equivalent lower-school coursework. The following day, the faculty engaged in a lengthy discussion of the motion. While many opposed discrimination and affirmed the talent of female students, faculty nevertheless dwelt on the potential misconduct they feared could arise from men and women working closely together.

The December faculty poll showed 19 in favor of admission, with none opposed. Yet 16 members supported segregated instruction, with only four dissenting. The following March, the board approved the school's decision but imposed a 10 percent quota on women in the upper school of architecture. On July 1, 1934, the department officially admitted women, though some courses remained segregated.

While many opposed discrimination and affirmed the talent of female students, faculty nevertheless dwelt on the potential misconduct they feared could arise from men and women working closely together.

That fall, three women already enrolled in Fine Arts successfully transferred into the upper school. Betty Ray Bernheimer Rotenberg Ar1936 (1914–2001) and Halina Leszczynska Ar1936 (1900–?) earned their architecture degrees in June 1936, followed by Rebecca Biddle Wood Watkin Ar1937 (1913–2010) in February 1937.

The minutes of the Board of Fine Arts, together with the Koyl Papers dossier in the University Archives, provide valuable insight into the events leading up to the retroactive awarding of BArch degrees in 1937 to female students.

The initial recommendation by Penn's Bicentennial Committee to grant Yeatman the degree was endorsed by the board but rejected by the Executive Committee of Architecture. Around the same time, a list of courses completed by Penn's first five female architecture students (excluding Lin) was compiled for review. The school appeared to conclude that if Yeatman were to be honored, other qualified students should be considered alongside her.

Although discrepancies remain regarding the exact timing and details of the deliberation process, records show that the Executive Committee of Penn's trustees ultimately approved the awarding of retroactive degrees to Yeatman, Joy, and Benner shortly before the University's June 1937 commencement.

Reckoning with Its Past

The posthumous conferral of Lin's architecture degree in 2024, exactly a century after her matriculation, marks not merely an act of restitution but a profound institutional reckoning. It acknowledges the historical barriers faced by women who sought architectural education at Penn. It also honors the extraordinary perseverance with which they pursued it despite systemic exclusion.

The stories of Georgina Yeatman, Phyllis Lin Huiyin, Gertrude Olmsted, Doris Joy, Jane Harper, and Hannah Benner together reveal how women, denied formal recognition, nonetheless shaped the intellectual and professional fabric of early 20th-century architectural practice.

The symbolic act of granting Lin her long-overdue degree reconnects Penn's architectural legacy with the ideals of equity, inclusion, and historical accountability. It reclaims a lineage of women whose talent and determination helped expand the boundaries of the discipline before they were formally admitted.

Today, the gesture by the Weitzman School of Design bridges the past and present. It acknowledges that progress in design education is inseparable from the ongoing work of confronting its former prejudices and partialities. And for Lin's descendant, who now continues her family's architecture and preservation legacy at Penn, the degree stands as both closure and continuation: a restoration of dignity long deferred and a reaffirmation of architecture's humanist qualities spanning generations.

Sidney Wong, a former member of Penn's city and regional planning faculty, is a longtime researcher on Lin Huiyin and her husband, Liang Sicheng, as well as a practitioner in urban planning. Annie Liang-Zhou GFA'26 is a student in the Weitzman School of Design. She has a cultural practice documenting global heritage sites and is the great-granddaughter of Lin Huiyin.

The Eye of Denise Scott Brown

Having long battled sexist neglect of her own work and what she contributed in partnership with Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown has cemented her position as a major figure in 20th-century architecture and urbanism. Photography has been key to her influence.

By Jon Caroulis

IN 1960, the future of the University's library was up for debate. Some architecture faculty met to consider demolishing the 1891 Frank Furness-designed building. Denise Scott Brown GCP'60 GAr'65 Hon'94 argued for saving it. As she recounts the story, after the meeting, an assistant professor she had never met walked up and told her he agreed with everything she said.

"Well, why didn't you say something?" she asked Robert Venturi Hon'80.

His reply: "Do you want to have lunch?"

They had lunch, became friendly colleagues, were married in 1967, and forged a professional partnership whose writings and building projects exerted a profound influence on architecture and planning up to and beyond Venturi's death in 2018. (Along the way, the partners led the 1980s–1990s renovation and restoration of the Furness building into what is now the Anne and Jerome Fisher Fine Arts Library, currently in the midst of an exterior refurbishment scheduled to be complete next fall.)

Now 94, Scott Brown has studied and practiced architecture and planning on three continents: in her native South Africa, the United States, and Europe. William Whitaker GAr'96 CGS'99 CGS'05, director of the University's Architectural Archives, where Scott Brown and Venturi's archives are held, calls her "a major figure in ar-

Photo by Robert Scott Brown

Facing page: *Venice Den. S. Marco*, Denise Scott Brown in the Piazza San Marco, c. 1956 (photo by Robert Scott Brown); below: *Santa Monica Beach*, Santa Monica, 1966; *London Buses*, London 1950s.

chitecture of the second half of the 20th century and even to the present day." From her training in both architecture and city planning, he adds, "she brought an important sensibility that had to do with looking at the world around [you] and in giving new tools to designers to make good design decisions based on what you're seeing in the world."

Denise Lakofski was born in 1931 in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and became interested in architecture from an early age. While studying in a program at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, she met another brilliant student, Robert Scott Brown, whom she married in 1955. Although Denise's life and career have revolved around her architectural and planning designs, she's also a photographer. After her marriage to Robert, who

Africa hsg JHB, Soweto, South Africa, 1957–1958.

had a background in photography, they became experimental photographers. At the university, they worked together on an architectural "show" as part of their studies, in which Robert would drive his motorcycle through city streets and Denise would sit behind him taking pictures.

Denise Scott Brown went on to complete her degree at the Architectural Association (AA) School in London. At her urging, Robert visited her in England and also did a studio at AA. They traveled in Europe. They planned to return to South Africa, intent on developing an architectural practice informed by sociology, economics, and the other philosophical elements of what had come to be called "urbanism."

One of their teachers recommended they go to America to study with Louis Kahn Ar'24 Hon'71 at the University of Pennsylvania. "We chose to enter Penn's Department of City Planning because, in 1950s England and Europe, planning was considered the basis for architecture. If you were a committed and talented young architect, the next step was to study city planning, but the training in England was too prosaic. So Robert and I went to Penn to study with Kahn," Scott Brown recalls.

"On reaching Penn, we found, to our surprise, that Kahn did not teach in the planning department. Our student advisor, the architect and planner David Crane, said, 'Don't worry, I'll make sure you get the best city planning training. You need that for where you're going.' We were going back to Africa to work as Africans," she explains.

"After the first semester in planning, we couldn't believe we had lived our lives till then without what we had just learned. One example was Herbert Gans' urban sociology course. When we met him, Gans Gr'57 Hon'03 ["Obituaries," Jul|Aug 2025] had just moved to Levittown, New Jersey, to be a participant-observer in the birth of the community. The London East End study was on his course reading list, and he had recently completed a parallel study of Boston's West End, recording the experiences of its inhabitants during urban renewal," she adds, referring to Michael Young and Peter Willmott's 1957 volume *Family and Kinship in East London* and Gans's *The Urban Villagers*, published in 1962.

"At Penn, and in most places where it was taught and practiced, urban design wore the aesthetic and theoretical hand-me-downs of architecture. David Crane [who taught at Penn from 1957 until 1972] was a major protagonist in the struggle to get urban design beyond architecture's discarded clothing. Gans was also one of the few members of the Penn faculty who tried to maintain the link between architecture and social sciences based on 'non-physical' (as they called it) urban planning. It was he who set me to study regional planning. He had lived in Nigeria, and was interested, as I was, in planning for developing areas. Some of his ideas on Third World urbanism could, I believe, be applied to American cities."

Denise and Robert's plans for the future were tragically thwarted when they were struck by another car while driving near Doylestown, Pennsylvania, in 1959. Denise survived, but Robert was killed. Traumatized by his death, Scott Brown poured her energies into her studies. "Penn was very important to me then. Everyone was very helpful." She says her surroundings helped her to deal with the tragedy.

Scott Brown left Penn in 1965 to teach first at the University of California, Berkeley and then at UCLA's newly established School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Living in California showed her how the automobile was crucial to life—and therefore architecture. Interested in how pop culture influenced architectural design, she invited Venturi to join her and her students in examining the Las Vegas strip, with its casinos and neon lights. Two developments arose from that project. The first was personal. "We had a marvelous time, and we began to fall in love," Scott Brown recalled, as quoted in a chapter about her in Andrea Gabor's *Einstein's Wife: Work and Marriage in the Lives of Five Great Twentieth-Century Women*. "And at the end, when we came back to L.A., the last day or two [of Bob's visit] it became a real relationship."

The second was *Learning from Las Vegas*, written by Venturi, Scott Brown, and Stephen Izenour GAr'65, and published in 1972 by MIT Press. The photographs, many taken by Scott Brown, were fundamental to the book's analysis of the automobile's

Boardwalk at [Santa Cruz] Beach Calif., California, 1965; *De-Budé, Geneva Loop*, Geneva, 1962.

impact on the city. But the *New York Times* review of *Learning from Las Vegas* began by discussing Venturi, who already enjoyed a world-wide reputation, and hardly mentioned Scott Brown.

"That's the story of my life," she says.

Scott Brown was also left out in 1991 when Venturi was awarded the Pritzker Prize—architecture's Nobel—even though they worked as a team. She stayed at home in Philadelphia while he went to Mexico to receive the prize.

"Part of it was just the sexism of the profession, but her work also really challenged architects," says Elizabeth Greenspan CGS'97 CGS'99 Gr'06, author of *Battle for Ground Zero: Inside the Political Struggle to Rebuild the World Trade Center* ["Arts," Nov|Dec 2013] and Penn Praxis Senior Fellow at the Stuart Weitzman School of Design, who is writing a book about the duo. "It had a social component,

focusing on what regular people needed and wanted from the profession, and lots of architects disliked this, because it threatened their cultural status."

"For far too long we have insisted on thinking about architecture as something created by a single heroic figure, when in fact we know that designing and constructing a building is an incredibly complicated undertaking that requires people with a variety of skills," says Inga Saffron, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*'s Pulitzer Prize–winning architecture critic, who has interviewed Scott Brown and Venturi several times.

While Venturi's earlier work and his first book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, published in 1966, did introduce "a new way of thinking about architecture," Saffron adds, "I would argue that Denise helped elevate his thinking by grafting her knowledge of semiotics, pop art, urbanism, and social housing onto his original vision, and introducing him to the ideas" of figures such as the British New Brutalist architects Alison and Peter Smithson and the avant garde group Archigram, as well as sociologist Herbert Gans, who championed the equal worth of popular and high culture.

Scott Brown's studio on Las Vegas was "profoundly transformative for both of them," says Saffron. "So, while Venturi is the one who may have sketched the initial images, they really worked on buildings collaboratively and, thanks to those collaborations, those designs evolved, making it hard to give credit exclusively to either one of them—and let's not forget Steve Izenour and others."

"This time, Denise Scott Brown's name is on the prize."

That's how Saffron began her story in the *Inquirer* after the American Institute of Architects (AIA) awarded its prestigious Gold Medal to both her and Venturi in 2016—after changing its rules to allow more than one person to receive the prize. (Previously, Venturi had declined it, since Scott Brown couldn't be included.)

James Timberlake GAr'77 and Stephen Kieran GAr'76 are the founding principals of Philadelphia-based architecture and design firm KieranTimberlake, whose buildings on campus include Levine Hall ["A Passion for Putting Things Together," Nov|Dec 2003] and the recently completed Stuart Weitzman Hall. They worked for Scott Brown, Venturi, and their then partner Robert Rauch early in their careers. They say *Learning from Las Vegas* was unlike any book they had ever seen.

"When *Learning from Las Vegas* ... came out [in the] early '70s, there were strips of continuous still photographs strung together that were really kind of groundbreaking," says Kieran. "I remember just staring at those pages. I didn't know them at the time when I first read that, thinking, 'Who's behind this?' They were just a brilliant, insightful way of looking at the world."

"They set an example for us," Timberlake adds. "Denise certainly in particular, and Bob as well; but she set an example that good architects don't just design and build, they research and think and write and develop discourse in the broader profession and culture about the work of architects and planners." That approach "has remained central to who we are as a firm."

New York-based architect Billie Tsien, whose projects with her husband and business partner Todd Williams include the Barnes Foundation art museum on Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Parkway and Skirkanich Hall on Penn's campus, says that Scott Brown "has a very, very important place in 20th-century architecture [and] is an important planner."

Tsien, who was quoted in Inga Saffron's story about Scott Brown receiving the AIA Gold Medal, declaring that "it's about time. It's about effing time," says of her, "She stood tall and proud, didn't back down—never backed down. I think it teaches young women it's a life's journey; you don't back down, you keep on moving forward, you don't give up."

Scott Brown has "faced sexism in her professional life from the beginning," says Penn Praxis's Elizabeth Greenspan, noting descrepancies in both pay and prestige common at the time. "When she and Bob got married and started publishing together—writing books like *Learning from Las Vegas* but also quite a few articles—they wanted to be seen and recognized as a pair. Both of them actually went to really extreme lengths to try to make it happen early on, correcting people, doing their due diligence, and there was just resistance every step of the way," she says.

"Because of the sexism that pervades our society generally and architecture specifically, I think there was an unusual determination to erase Denise from the story, even though they jointly led the design team," Saffron says. "Every time I met with her and Bob to discuss a project, it was clear she had forceful ideas about the movement of people through space, on the scale of both the buildings and the city. That way of thinking is critical to the creation of architecture. There's no doubt that their work around Houston Hall and Perelman Quadrangle [on Penn's campus] bears her stamp."

In the *New York Review of Architecture,* Greenspan wrote about first encountering Scott Brown while working on a paper about Philadelphia's South Street as a first-year graduate student. A Penn librarian directed her to a plan written by Scott Brown—whose other work she was unaware of at the time. "Her plan grabbed my attention, mostly for the way it proritized the needs of residents, like the construction of more and better housing," Greenspan wrote. She learned that Scott Brown had developed the plan with activists battling a proposed Crosstown Expressway in the 1960s, which would have cut through neighborhoods in South and Southwest Philadelphia.

"She worked with residents in South Philly to fight the highway that they were going to put through there. It occupied years of her life," Greenspan says. Scott Brown took hundreds of photos of the

I Love You, Phila., Philadelphia, early 1960s.

South Street area while the expressway was debated. Many area merchants left, but low rents attracted a new wave of idealistic and enterprising artists and shopkeepers who drove the South Street Renaissance in the 1960s and 1970s.

Scott Brown says she was influenced by architects and planners who had a "social conscience" to their work, asking how their structures and plans would affect people in the area. "The social planners are still my conscience and many of their methods are my methods," she adds.

Encounters: Denise Scott Brown Photographs (Lars Müller Publishers, 2025) collects some 400 photos from the 1950s through the 1970s, selected by Scott Brown and editor Izzy Kornblatt. "In a sense, they are almost all snapshots," says Kornblatt of Scott Brown's visual style. "They really record a process, an instantaneous process of seeing something of interest and trying to use a photograph to capture it." Many examine the relationships between people and the spaces they occupy. "That means that there's a lot of social, political dynamics in these photographs."

"She worked with residents in South Philly to fight the highway that they were going to put through there. It occupied years of her life."

Photos from South Africa in the 1950s and 1970 provide "a really powerful record of the apartheid regime that had been instituted in 1948," says Kornblatt. Yet the editor regards a pair of Philadelphia photographs as especially emblematic—both of this photography book and Scott Brown's career.

On one page, a black-and-white photograph of the Fine Arts Library is paired with the house Venturi designed and built for his mother.

The library shot is "not set up to sort of show the grandiosity of the building, with really high contrast and perfect light. It shows the way that that building sits on the campus, the way it's seen from Locust Walk," Kornblatt says. "And then there's a relationship on the page between that photograph, which captures the building with all the trees around it, and the Vanna Venturi house. … To pair this house in which she played a critical role in the design, with the building in which she met Robert Venturi, it creates a relationship." And like so much of Denise Scott Brown's career, the relationship is multidimensional—encompassing urban dynamics, her career trajectory, and the depth of her personal connections to the places where she practiced.

Jon Caroulis is a writer living in the Philadelphia area.

Paper Record

Tracing the story of American English, one slip at a time.

By Stefan Fatsis

***As part of the reporting for his new book,* Unabridged: The Thrill of (and Threat to) the Modern Dictionary,** *author Stefan Fatsis C'85 spent time working as a lexicographer for Merriam-Webster, the premier dictionary company in the US and the only originally brick-and-mortar/ink-and-paper outfit still standing after the internet ravaged the industry.*

In Merriam's headquarters at 47 Federal Street in Springfield, Massachusetts—a model of mid-century office design when the company moved in in 1940 but which had grown shabby by the time Fatsis first arrived in 2017—he labored among the dwindling staff proposing new words to include in the company's online dictionary and crafting definitions to go along with them. These days such work takes place in front of a computer screen, but Fatsis also reveled in investigating the company's Consolidated Files, where generations' worth of paper materials of various shapes and sizes are stored away—a treasure house of insight into American language and culture whose fate is currently uncertain.

EXCERPT

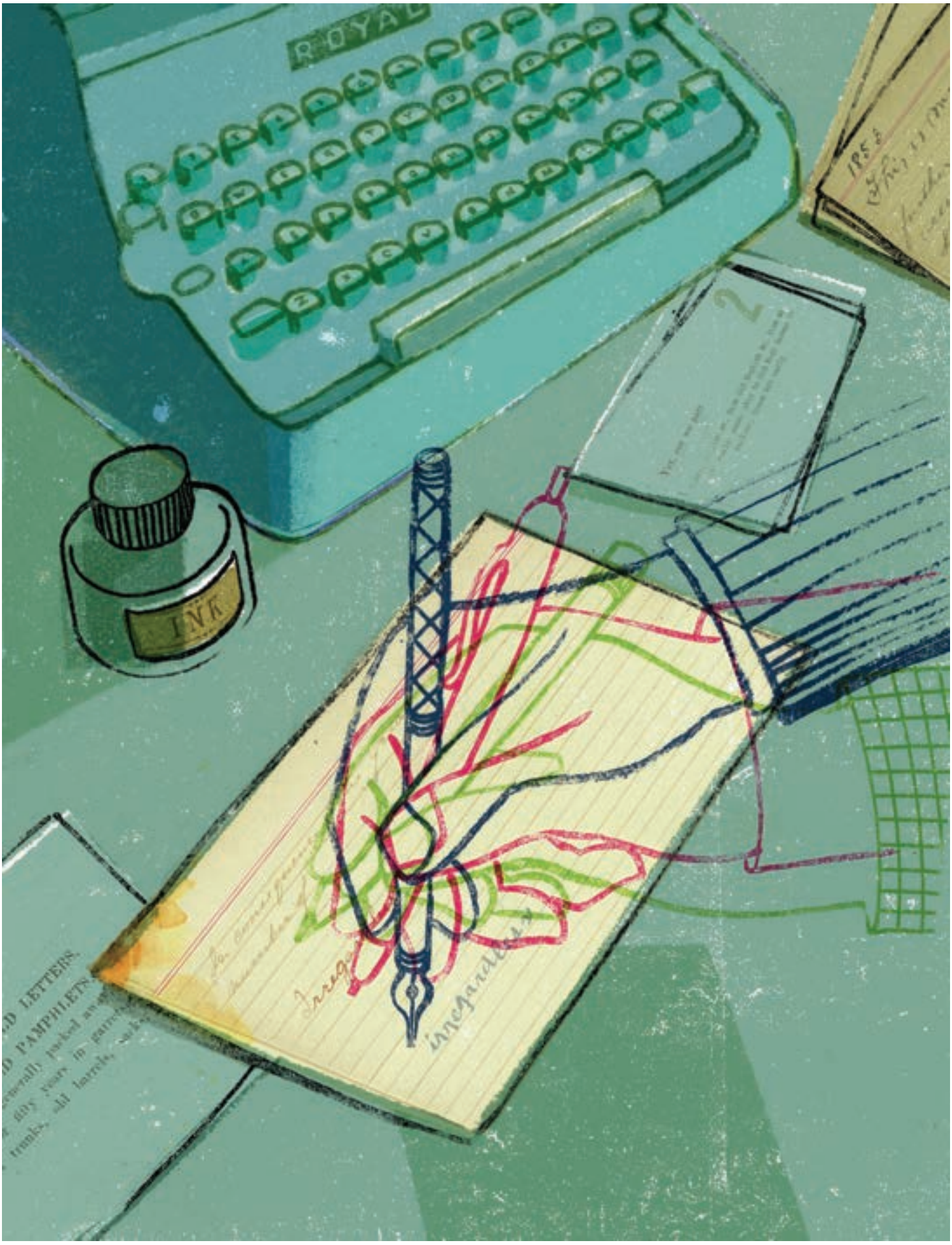
What I cherished most about my all-access pass to Merriam-Webster was the paper.

I loved rooting around in the Consolidated Files, stumbling on a yellowed snippet of a 1974 *New York Times* story by McCandlish Phillips—a reporter who once revealed that a Ku Klux Klansman had been an Orthodox Jew—that used the phrase *Dashing Dan*. Or extracting from a basement file a 1928 card with comments from an editor named Loveridge about an illustration to accompany *green turtle* ("Head very poor, claws on hind flippers over-accentuated"). Or finding in a metal cabinet a 1956 contract to pay an Ohio State University marketing professor $150 to define 652 business terms, from *general store* to *window display*. Or encountering a wall of boxes filled with words typed in reverse order. (This was the Backward Index, which was useful in identifying related terms that might be defined the same way, or particular groups of compounds, or words that rhymed. The index's 315,000 slips filled 129 file boxes.) When I did any of that—which I did a lot—I was awed by what *The Atlantic Monthly*, in an 1879 review of a Merriam dictionary, called "this mighty thing."

But my infatuation with the musty and sweet-smelling history—tens of thousands of pounds of cards and books and sheets of paper crammed inside drawers, stacked in stairwells, smushed into creaky filing cabinets in the basement of Merriam's old brick headquarters—wasn't just sentimental. Merriam didn't need the paper to practice modern lexicography. Definers rarely made the trip to the Consolidated Files. But the paper—especially the slips—was more than a reliquary. It was a living, breathing portal into the history of American words. It was indispensable to charting and understanding the story of American English.

Merriam didn't invent the citation slip. Samuel Johnson collected about 150,000 quotations for the 40,000 headwords in his 1755 dictionary. When James Murray took over in 1879 as editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the creators of the then two-decades-old project already had amassed about two million citations, or quotation slips, as they are known at Oxford. From the outset, readers were instructed to send submissions on four-by-six-inch slips, "written out with its quotation and the full reference on a separate half-sheet of note-paper, *lengthwise, and on one side of the paper only*." But contributors posted much more: book and newspaper extracts stuck on torn-off bits of envelopes or the back of theater bulletins.

ILLUSTRATION BY HADLEY HOOPER


ROYAL
INK

The slips arrived at the Scriptorium, as Murray jokingly called the specially built, corrugated shed where he and his staff made the dictionary, in boxes and sacks and even a bassinet; "a hamper of I's," one worker said. They were sorted—by Murray's eleven children, among others—and filed in specially designed bookcases containing more than a thousand pigeonholes and, as the number of slips swelled, on bookshelves. By the time the first edition was published, in 1928, the *OED* had amassed more than five million.

At Merriam, slips were used to make its 1864 unabridged dictionary, which for its creation, content, and look is considered the first truly modern lexicon. (After acquiring the rights to Noah Webster's groundbreaking American dictionary after Webster's death in 1843, brothers George and Charles Merriam overhauled the editing and marketing of the dictionary.) "Paper to be written on one side so as to be cut up into slips so that all the quotations for each word may be gathered readily together & be before the eye of the definer at once," the editor of the 1864 book, Yale University professor Noah Porter, explained. Alas, I didn't find any slips from that era in the Merriam company papers covering much of the nineteenth century, which are held at Yale's Beinecke Library.

After Porter's death in 1892, the Merriams brought the dictionary north from New Haven. The oldest three-by-fives in the company's home base in Springfield date to the first book created there, *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1909. Citations were handwritten on light blue slips and stamped with an inch-high numeral 1. A blue slip pops up in the Consolidated Files every quarter inch or so. When the next edition of the unabridged dictionary, known as *Webster's Second,* was published in 1934, the files held 1,665,000 citations, known inside the company as "cits," pronounced *cites*. New ones for that book were stamped with a big 2.

Philip Gove, the editor-in-chief of *Webster's Third*, which came out in 1961, went at it more systematically than his predecessors. Gove told editors to read for up to two hours a day and mark new words or new senses of existing words from anything and everything. The intent was to portray "language as it is," not as it was rendered by a hunched-over editor drafting a stilted sentence fragment with a pencil. Under Gove, editors collected about 80,000 cits a month, or nearly a million a year, bulging the files to about 10 million when the *Third* was published. The pace slackened after the big book was done, but editors kept precise track. Merriam's 1976 in-house annual report noted that "208,646 citations were added to the files during the year, bringing the total number of citations to 12,275,742."

The current 16 million number excluded slips with existing definitions cut from dictionaries, new draft definitions, cross-references, and editor comments and questions. There certainly had been

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Q&A

STEFAN FATSIS

The* Unabridged *author *spoke with* Gazette *editor John Prendergast about his experience reporting and writing the book and the rich past and cloudy future of the American dictionary industry, launched around 1845 when the enterprising brothers George and Charles Merriam snapped up the rights to Noah Webster's groundbreaking* An American Dictionary *for their expanding publishing business.*

"Half that book would probably be worth, permanently, more than any thing we have, or ever shall have else," wrote George to Charles urging speed in making the deal. (He wasn't wrong.) And while the rise of the internet has brought the industry to the edge in terms of economic viability, Fatsis insists that dictionaries' work of tracing how words appear, develop, and change over time remains vital. Their conversation has been edited and condensed.

In your introduction, you talk about getting the *Webster's New World Dictionary* as a birthday gift when you were 11 years old as the start of this process, but how did that lead to the new book?

Getting that book on my 11th birthday sort of foreshadowed my life as a journalist. I used that dictionary until the bindings fell apart. But I really got connected with the world of dictionaries when I wrote *Word Freak*, my book about Scrabble ["Man of Letters," Sep|Oct 2001]. Merriam-Webster publishes the official Scrabble players' dictionary. I got to know people at the company and stayed in touch with them over time.

In the early 2010s Merriam undertook this project to revise its 1961 unabridged dictionary online. Merriam is a pretty closed company, privately held by Encyclopedia Brittanica, but I persuaded them to let me do a piece on the revision project. And after *Slate* published the piece in 2015, I asked Merriam's publisher, John Morse, if I could write a book. His reaction was: "I knew you were going to ask that." And then I said, "Well, if I do this, I want to embed as a lexicographer to understand, to watch this revision process of the unabridged dictionary, but to do it from the inside, to see how the linguistic sausage gets made."

How big a part of the finished book was the embedding? My sense was that it was less central than in your previous book, *A Few Seconds of Panic*, about your experience as an aspiring kicker for the Denver Broncos football team ["Living the Lesson," Sep|Oct 2008].

This is the third book of participatory journalism that I've done, and I've tried to structure all of them similarly, where I'm not the sole subject. The point of these books is to explore interesting and hard-to-get-into subcultures like Scrabble and the NFL and now lexicography. I've always viewed my role in these books as kind of a through line, a way to connect with the reader or allow the reader to connect with me. So something that might come off as dry, just a book about dictionaries or lexicography, I've always felt that a personal element gives a reader a connection to the story.

a lot more. Before the company's move to its current home in 1940, editors likely culled and tossed cits that had been rejected again and again. Retired Merriam publisher John Morse once tried to check the total by counting the number of cits per inch and then multiplying that number by the length of a drawer and then by the total number of drawers. His estimate was pretty close.

The Consolidated is a mosaic of colors and inks and fonts and papers and stamps. You can easily discern the period from the style. Elegant, flowing, fountain-pen cursive in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The evolution of manual and then electric typewriter fonts. There are carefully scissored quotations from newspapers and magazines, curt and precise and visually evocative of the dates typed beneath them.

The files are a century-long scrapbooking project. Full-page clippings folded one, two, three, four times, like a kid stuffing a school note into their back pocket. Black-and-white photostats that began appearing in the 1950s, when Gove instructed editors to take multiple citations from single passages, especially for common words, to avoid the tendency to flag unusual words while ignoring run-of-the-mill ones. Early computer printouts with truncated tails on the *g*, *j*, *p*, *q*, and *y*, which reminded me of the annoyed Penn professor who underlined every last one on a paper I submitted in the 1980s.

The aesthetics make the cit files a work of art. Their content makes them an irreplicable and irreplaceable archive of American English. The cards hold forensic clues to how identically trained curators compiled and adjudged the quotidian changes in the language for more than a hundred years. USED FOR SCHL DICT 4. REJECTED FOR 9 COLL. USED FOR CII. Those all-caps distinctions—C and COLL *Collegiate*, the name of Merriam's bestselling desktop book; SCHL DICT for *School Dictionary*; the numerals for the editions—weren't mere editorial and business judgments on what belonged in a dictionary. They were clinical assessments of the state of American English and American culture (and Merriam-Webster) on any given day. Every physical detail about a card—the ink, the typewriter, the publication font, the handwriting, the glue, the stamp, the type of paper—provided context about the word it chronicled and the time in which it was chronicled, about the way information about the language was conveyed, curated, and preserved.

Examining these slips, letters, and memos is a historical exercise; they add facts to our understanding of the evolution of language. But it's also a personal one. I was eavesdropping on a multigenerational, intraoffice conversation. It was as if Gove and the other Merriam editors I came to know by their stamps and handwriting and three-letter initials were sitting around the table in the conference room filled with more than a century of unabridged editions

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In *Word Freak*, you're rooting for me to become an expert player, and with *A Few Seconds of Panic*, my football book, you're rooting for me to make a field goal, or kick in an NFL game. Here it was less directly narrative, but I hope that people reading it will say, "Well, I wonder if Stefan actually will be able to write a competent definition and get it into the dictionary?"

I think my participation is essential in this book, too, but it's not quite the dominant through line—which is fine, because I found that the world of language and words and dictionaries was fascinating and compelling and fun on its own and through the course of my reporting, I really uncovered some places and people that I wasn't aware of when I started.

Unabridged: The Thrill of (and Threat to) the Modern Dictionary
by Stefan Fatsis
Grove Atlantic,
416 pages, $30.00.

You get a lot of mileage in the book out of visiting different conferences and other gatherings on lexicography, linguistics, and related fields. What's it like participating in these different worlds?

It's fun. I spent 20-plus years as a newspaper reporter. We sort of parachute in, cover something, write a long feature, and get out. With books, you're really centering your life around the subculture. So you'd better like it, and you'd better be interested, and you'd better care.

This one was different from the other two. With Scrabble, it was hanging out in a world where the people wanted to be written about. There was this passion they have that didn't get covered a lot, and they relished the opportunity to have a reporter there—and one who wanted to become a player too.

With the NFL, it was sort of truth telling. My pitch to the players on the Denver Broncos was: *I want to show people what life is really like in the league*. And the only way, or a good way, to get the players to trust me and open up was to show them that I was willing to try to play, that I was willing to put myself out there, and by doing that, I could experience what they were experiencing, and that made them feel like I could get a real understanding of the NFL, as opposed to standing on the sidelines or in a press box.

This was different in that I felt really like an intellectual inferior in this world. It was way more intimidating to me than even kicking a football! And I know that's weird to say, but I found the task of doing lexicography to be far more challenging than I expected intellectually. And I also found that I felt imposter syndrome way more doing this book, oddly enough, again, than becoming a kicker in the NFL. Everyone is so smart, everyone's a linguist, everyone's got an advanced degree.

The Merriam-Webster office itself is this library-like, quiet, monkish workplace where people are performing this deeply intellectual re-

hashing out what to do about *fuck* or *ain't* or *pragmatic*—like the 1919 Black Sox emerging from that Iowa cornfield. These were real people making critical decisions about the way words are depicted. The slips let me join the discussion all these years later.

Sometimes the conversations lasted decades. On June 28, 1930, a Merriam special editor for grammar named A. D. Sheffield recommended saving four lines of print in the entry for *preposition* in *Webster's Second* by deleting an explanation that a preposition "may follow (in position) its object." An assistant editor with the last name Thomas replied in gorgeous, right-leaning red ink: "There is still abroad in the land a good deal of schoolmasterly feeling that such locutions are a bit off-color, as violating the etymology of *pre*position. I should retain the statement." Thomas wrote that 29 years later, on September 17, 1959.

A conversation about how to label *irregardless* also lasted decades. Merriam dated the first use of the word to 1847 and reported that it was "popularized in dialectal speech" in the early 1900s. Commentators began calling it out as improper as early as 1927. "The most frequently repeated remark about it is that 'there is no such word,'" a note in the *irregardless* entry in Merriam's free online dictionary read. "There is such a word, however. It is still used primarily in speech, although it can be found from time to time in edited prose. Its reputation has not risen over the years, and it is still a long way from general acceptance."

Merriam books have entered *irregardless* for generations. There's also evidence in the Consolidated Files, extracted and promoted by former Merriam lexicographer Kory Stamper like a county-fair preacher spreading the gospel, that *irregardless* isn't just a bastard form of *regardless*, it's a word in its own right—an intensified form of the root word that enjoyed a dialectal minute in the South in the late nineteenth century. Stamper laid out her findings in a revised usage note in the online dictionary, explaining that while the *ir-* prefix normally expresses negation, in this case "it appears to function as an intensifier." The note cites similar, "while rare," words including *irremediless* for *remediless*, *irresistless* for *resistless*, and *irrelentlessly* for *relentlessly*.

I did my own spelunk into the Files, hauling the short stack of *irregardless* slips back to my desk. I was looking for debate: Did Merriam just willy-nilly include one of the most notorious words in English? How kid were the gloves worn by editors when debating how the entry should look? Did they have strong feelings about it?

They did. On page 1312, *Webster's Second* labeled *irregardless* as *Erron.* or *Humorous, U.S.* Six years later, in 1940, on a single white slip, editors argued about that. Harold Bender, the *Second*'s chief etymologist, suggested that the entry include an etymology—*irrespective* + *regardless*—and lose the second part of

search, and these conference papers about linguistics and speech were way over my head. So in reporting the book I had to just fall back on what I do as a reporter, which is to be the curious interloper who asked questions. I knew—just as with Scrabble and football—I wasn't going to become a professional, and nor did I want to, but I had to lean more on my reporting skills than on my embedding skills.

Reading the book, I was struck by the similar trajectories of dictionary-making and journalism as industries, which comes through in many passages about downsizing and the competitive pressures facing companies like Merriam.

One of the assumptions we have about the dictionary is that it's this divinely created product—that it is this important, magisterial, historical reference source that is just out there. We don't really stop and think that the dictionaries are written by people. We just sort of expect them to exist as this authoritative source for answering questions we have about language.

One of the more surprising things that I discovered in reporting this book was that American dictionary companies are media companies. They are facing the same struggles that every other internet-based media company is facing—the pursuit of eyeballs and clicks, the threats from Google and artificial intelligence. This business has declined dramatically in the last 20 years. Familiar names from our childhoods—Funk & Wagnalls, Random House, the American Heritage Dictionary—these were all once active players in a robust, competitive industry that has been stripped by the vagaries of the internet and modern life. The American dictionary business is down to two players, really: Merriam-Webster and Dictionary.com.

So the declines here do mirror the declines in journalism and the attempts to find ways to survive are notable, and similar too. The *New York Times* is thriving in part because of the growth of its games and recipes offerings. If you go to Merriam-Webster's site right now, they have a roster of almost a dozen games to try to get people to the website and get them hooked so they come back every day. It can't just be about the random lookup of a dictionary entry, even though there are still plenty of those. It's got to be about something more if a company like Merriam-Webster is going to thrive and survive.

Though I probably shouldn't have been, I was surprised by how political the book was. I hadn't really thought about how large arguments about words and their usage loomed in the industry.

Language is political. It always has been, and we live in the most divisive times in the history of the Republic, right? So it came as no surprise to me, when I got to Merriam-Webster during the first Trump administration, that the words that I might end up defining and wanted to define were going to have some political aspect.

its label. "It is Erron. as to linguistic history, but it is not Humorous," Bender wrote. "It is good Colloq. Americana. I have heard & seen it many years."

For evidence, Bender quoted a popular, racy (the unmarried main character has an abortion) recent bestseller, *Kitty Foyle*, by Christopher Morley: "But she can take things in her stride, irregardless of what's happened." Senior general definer John Bethel, however, wasn't impressed with the etymologist's incursion into the field of usage labels. "I see no reason, yet, to change," Bethel wrote. "Certainly *Kitty Foyle* is no well of English undefiled—or even Colloq. if I hear right." The *Humorous* label stuck in later printings of the *Second*. (I asked John Morse to decode the turf war. "I think I share Bender's opinion on this matter, but this really isn't his area of responsibility, so Bethel pushes back.")

But opinions changed. As part of a purge of monitory labels, Philip Gove wrote in the explanatory notes for *Webster's Third* that *nonstandard* would be "used for a very small number of words that can hardly stand without some status label but are too widely current in reputable context to be labeled" *substandard*. If you were going to include it at all—and its frequency of use demanded its inclusion in an unabridged dictionary—*irregardless* needed to be flagged. But how?

> **"If you had all the money in the world, you ought to start the American museum of dictionary-making."**

In 1958, as the *Third's* deadlines bore down, two renowned editors—H. Bosley Woolf and Mairé Weir Kay, known in house as Miss Kay—took up the debate. In December, on one of the pink slips used for miscellaneous notes (white was for citations, yellow for draft definitions, blue for production details), Kay wrote cheekily, "*Irregardless* of our changing staff, yours seems to be as near a 'usage desk' as is currently available—does this seem an appropriate place for a *substand* label?" On the flip side of the slip, Woolf replied, "I don't think *substand* is quite right, for *irregardless* is used by people who would never dream of using *twicet*, *throwed*, *hisself*, etc. And of course it isn't slang. PBG"—Philip B. Gove—"suggests the OCCASIONAL use of *nonstand*, and this seems to me to be a proper place for it."

The following June, another editor, reviewing the entry, noted that there was "no such label in style file as *nonstand*." They clearly hadn't read the earlier notes. "It is not generally acceptable," a senior editor, Anne Driscoll, replied, "but PBG approved it for this and one or two other entries."

When the *Third* was being condensed into the seventh edition of the *Collegiate*, published in 1963, an editor noted that *irregardless* had been deleted during preparation of the abridged dictionary but was used in the front matter as an example of a few words that "are disap-

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I very consciously chose a few words to define that fit into that category. So I defined *microaggression* and *safe space* and *alt right*. These were words that had cultural currency and then were politically controversial. I wanted to have the opportunity to wade into the salient aspects of language as a political tool. And the more reporting I did, the more I realized how powerful the dictionary's role in this is.

Merriam-Webster and its editors have been routinely attacked in the last 15 to 20 years over revisions to words like *marriage* and *woman* and *female*, to the point that somebody was arrested and sentenced to prison for sending threatening messages to Merriam-Webster objecting to these definition revisions. So there's a fundamental connection between what lexicographers do and how words are deployed in culture.

I write at some length about the history of the word *woke* in the book, and seeing its journey from a word coined, possibly by the singer Lead Belly, in the 1930s, that became a 1960s vernacular [term] among African American speakers, to something that went very mainstream in a pretty benign way, to something that was then weaponized by rightwing politicians and commentators.

Dictionaries' role in understanding and parsing that is hugely important. Dictionaries have to go back and revise previous thinking about the way words are used. It's part of the role of the dictionary to stay on top of fluctuations in language, and I got to see that happen at Merriam-Webster—the way that definitions were revised to reflect how the usage of particular words changes over time, those political words among them.

Did the book change as you were writing it? As with so many other things since 2020, COVID factored in.

This book took me a long time to write, and I'm glad, in the end, that it did. COVID was important to me for understanding just how critical the role of lexicography can be in society. Merriam-Webster did this remarkable thing that it had never done before during the pandemic, which is that it got COVID—the word which had been created out of thin air by the World Health Organization in early 2020—and other related terms into the dictionary in 34 days. Before that, the fastest that Merriam had ever included a new word into its lexicon was two years and that was AIDS in the 1980s.

But it showed that it was important, and it also reflected how the internet is a much better delivery system for dictionaries than physical books. You could get it in there quickly and give people access to this information that they needed in real time. COVID was a matter of life and death. People needed to understand what these terms meant. What was a *stay-at-home order*? What was a *quarantine*? What's *COVID*? People were going to Merriam's website hundreds, thousands of times a day looking for answers, and they weren't getting them, because the dictionary hadn't been up-

proved by many but that have some currency in reputable contexts." Should it be restored? the editor asked. Gove replied in red pencil: "Yes, pls. Should be as in 3d."

Irregardless would never leave a Merriam dictionary again. Because it was a word, and these slips of paper helped explain why.

Among commercial dictionaries in America, Merriam's slips were 16 million three-by-five sentinels of the nation's linguistic legacy. John Morse had strong feelings about what should happen to the slips—and the books and company records and editorial files. "If you had all the money in the world, you ought to start the American museum of dictionary-making and house it at 47 Federal Street and bring in an archivist," he told me. "That's what ought to happen. But there isn't a lot of money to make an American museum of lexicography."

There was value in all of the material, and you didn't know where or when it would turn up. Rummaging through some old desks that were about to be junked, Kory Stamper discovered a cache of correspondence from the 1930s between Merriam and the National Bureau of Standards about defining colors. She kept them, and wrote a book about the subject. I couldn't have reported my book without the paper archives, either. "There's just so much hiding in these files," Stamper said.

Stamper once proposed applying for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to digitize the slips and partner with a university linguistics program to link them to dictionary entries, but the idea stalled. The engineer who ran the Google Books project told me that scanning the slips wouldn't be hard; Google could design a machine. But Merriam didn't have the money or ambition for the project.

The fear was that, at some point in the possibly not-too-distant future, Merriam's parent company, Chicago-based Encyclopædia Britannica, or a new owner would sell the building in Springfield. If that happened, a university might want to acquire the material. But there was a non-zero chance one wouldn't, and Merriam would break up its history, donating some of it to a library, selling some of it to private collectors, tossing a few boxes to the Smithsonian. And dumpstering the rest.

Even John Morse thought that was possible.

"This is an incredible repository of information about the language and information about dictionary-making and information about the institution that really preserved Webster's dictionary project longer than any dictionary project you can think of in the English-speaking world," he said.

"On the other hand, let's face it, dictionaries come and go. I think at some point you just have to assume that civilization moves on and not all of its artifacts are preserved. You can't keep the entire historical record. I'm not happy about that."

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dated. Merriam recognized that it was important to give people going to their website information, not just to their business but to society at large. They were a critical source of information for people who were confused and looking for answers.

The internet, as a delivery system for the dictionary, is really effective. Dictionaries can track how many times people look up individual words. Just like every other website, the companies know how many times people visit their websites and they can then target what words to update and focus on. The moment COVID was added Merriam editors could detect that people were looking up the word—before they had made any public announcement that they had updated the dictionary. It showed them that people were constantly looking for an answer, and then they were finally able to provide it.

What's next for dictionary companies as commercial enterprises and for the larger study of the progress and change of language?

For dictionary companies, I think it's a troubling time. Google began eating the lunch of dictionary companies almost 20 years ago when it started licensing dictionaries and putting definitions at the top of searches. You didn't have to scroll down to get to Merriam-Webster's link or any other commercial dictionary link. Now you get an AI overview when you type a word into a Google search bar. That's having the same effect—with even worse potential results, because you can't necessarily rely on the information in the AI overview. So commercial dictionaries are going to need to find ways to adapt, to harness ChatGPT for their own ends or find other ways to work around Google's intrusion on the audience. It's not going to be easy.

ChatGPT can write pretty good definitions of words. It can put together an entire dictionary, if prompted the right way. In America, the dictionary business has always been competitive, from the time of George and Charles Merriam, who bought the rights to Noah Webster's dictionary after Webster's death in 1843. We don't have a tradition of academic oversight of or involvement in commercial dictionary-making the way that, say, the *Oxford English Dictionary* is supported by Oxford University. We don't have a tradition of a public-private model, either. And as with journalism, the answer might be in some sort of nonprofit model, a cooperative venture that allows the painstaking work of the dictionary to proceed without the overhanging threat of commercial unviability.

Can Merriam continue to generate enough revenue to support itself and be profitable? It always has been, and it continues to be profitable to this day. But there are a lot of question marks about the future viability of a company like Merriam, with all of the unknowns about how AI and other technologies are going to reshape the way we consume information.

Calendar

Annenberg Center
pennlivearts.org
Mar. 6 **Naturally 7**
Mar. 8 **Kayhan Kalhor**
Mar. 11 **Rennie Harris Puremovement** (open rehearsal)
Mar. 13 **Alarm Will Sound with Bora Yoon**
Mar. 15 **The Peking Acrobats**
Mar. 19–21 **Rennie Harris Puremovement**
Apr. 11 **Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain**
Apr. 17–18 **Paul Taylor Dance Company**
Apr. 23 **Tiburtina Ensemble**
Apr. 26 **Delbert Anderson Quartet**

Arthur Ross Gallery
arthurrossgallery.org
Collecting the New Irascibles: Art in the 1980s
Through Apr. 12

ICA
icaphila.org
A World in the Making: The Shakers
Through Aug. 9

Kelly Writers House
writing.upenn.edu/wh/
Mar. 4 **Speakeasy Open Mic Night**
Mar. 17 **Celebration of the Life and Work of Alice Notley**
Mar. 18 **YA Authors: Elizabeth Yim, Rowana Miller C'22, Alexandra Villasante, Nova Ren Suma**
Mar. 23 **WXPN Live at the Writers House**
Mar. 25 **Molly Jong-Fast** (conversation)
Mar. 25 **Elaine Hsieh Chou** (conversation)
Mar. 26 **Reimagining International Writing**
Mar. 30 **David Grann** (reading)
Mar. 31 **David Grann** (conversation)
Apr. 15 **Speculative Fiction: Alex Smith, Margaret Killjoy, Abbey Mei Otis**
Apr. 21 **Anna Badkhen and Christopher Rogers** (conversation)
Apr. 27 **Ayana Mathis** (reading)
Apr. 28 **Ayana Mathis** (conversation)

Morris Arboretum and Gardens
morrisarboretum.org
open daily

Penn Libraries
library.upenn.edu
Celebrate or Demonstrate: Philadelphia and Bicentennial Discontent
Through May 15
The Time to Right all Wrongs: France, Haiti, and Philadelphia in a Revolutionary Age
Through Sep. 4
Nursing the Revolution
Through Nov. 20
Phil Parmet: Haiti Revolution
Through May 22
Re/Make History: Crafting the Past with 21st-Century Technologies
Through Jun. 19
Celebrating the History of Medical Education at Penn
Through Nov. 9

Penn Museum
penn.museum
Open Tuesday–Sunday
Mar. 3, 10, 17, & 24 **Life and Afterlife in Ancient Thebes** (virtual)
Mar. 4 **Mind and Moon Recharge**
Mar. 4 **Archaeology in Action: Reconstructing an Assyrian Capital** (virtual)
Mar. 7 **Re-Encountering Egypt: Museums and the Human Experience in the Age of AI**
Mar. 18 **Make It Look Real** (film)
Mar. 21 **CultureFest! Holi**
Apr. 1 **Archaeology in Action: Revisiting Ancient Anatolia** (virtual)

World Café Live
worldcafelive.com
Mar. 3 **Nep with Imani Graham**
Mar. 7 **Filmore**
Mar. 13 **Day 26 R&B Experience Tour with Avery Wilson**
Mar. 14 **Sarah Hester Ross**
Mar. 19 **Taj Farrant**
Mar. 20 **Joe Conklin & The City Rhythm Orchestra**
Mar. 21 **Kelly KDubb Walker, Smokey Suarez + Buckwild 215**
Mar. 25 **IYLA**
Apr. 3 **Raynes with Jax The Bard**
Apr. 4 **Emmanuel Ohemeng III & Perpetual Motion**
Apr. 9 **Kaleb Cohen**
Apr. 10 **Goldpine & Alaina Stacey**
Apr. 11 **Elizabeth & The Catapult**

Above: Rara band in Port-au-Prince during Easter week in 1986. Photo by Phil Parmet, from the exhibition *Phil Parmet: Haiti Revolution*, on view at Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, 5th Floor.

Installation view includes *I Want to Believe*, 2025, by Finnegan Shannon, and Shaker objects.

The Shakers' Living Legacy

The ICA presents the material culture of a radical Christian sect alongside contemporary artists it has inspired.

Last year Germany's Vitra Design Museum presented *The Shakers: A World in the Making*, juxtaposing Shaker-inspired contemporary art with traditional Shaker crafts. By the time the traveling show reached Penn's Institute of Contemporary Art, where it runs through August 9, the title and subtitle had flipped.

That was no accident. "What we want to emphasize here is the way that the Shakers thought about world-building, and how contemporary artists have taken up that call," says Hallie Ringle, the Daniel and Brett Sundheim Chief Curator at ICA, and the exhibition's cocurator.

Among the questions the show asks, according to Ringle: "What does it mean to build today for tomorrow? What are things we can use to move forward, and how are contemporary artists also part of those solutions? How are they building their worlds as well?"

Originated by the Vitra Design Museum, *A World in the Making* was co-organized by ICA, the Milwaukee Art Museum, and the Wüstenrot Foundation in collaboration with the Shaker Museum in Chatham, New York, which lent most of the more than 100 artifacts in the show. These include Shaker furniture, agricultural implements, and clothing, as well as Shaker-related images and documents. The exhibition travels to the Milwaukee Art Museum this fall and to the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh next year.

The show describes the paradox of Shaker worship as "radical openness in movement and voice, yet constriction through doctrine, celibacy, and separation of the sexes." Each themed section uses a quotation from Shaker writings as its title, including, "When we have found a good thing, we stick to it."

The curators commissioned seven artists—from the United States, Denmark, and the Netherlands—to respond to the Shakers' objects and ethos. The resulting works riff on the Shaker meetinghouse (Amie Cunat and Chris Liljenberg Halstrom), fuse traditional Shaker dances with Black spirituality (choreographer Reggie Wilson), meditate on sustainability and mortality through the medium of

Photo by Constance Mensh courtesy ICA

Installation view of *2nd Meetinghouse*, 2025, by Amie Cunat; agricultural tools.

woven coffins (Christien Meindertsma), and mine the mystical writings of Mother Rebecca Cox Jackson (Kameelah Janan Rasheed). In 1858, Jackson, a free Black woman, founded the Shakers' only urban community, in Philadelphia.

David Hartt's refracted video installation, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths (Tree of Life)*, "engages with the spirituality, artifice, and history of the Shakers," according to the exhibition catalog. And Finnegan Shannon's *I Want to Believe*, featuring fabric banners with a poem "assembled from promises of pain relief," responds to Shaker pharmaceuticals and assistive devices on display nearby.

A World in the Making rides a crest of interest in the Shakers, including several recent exhibitions coinciding with the 250th anniversary of their 1774 arrival on American shores. That story is told in Mona Fastvold's 2025 movie *The Testament of Ann Lee*, a biopic about the charismatic Shaker leader that emphasizes the sect's ritualistic embrace of song and dance.

An offshoot of the so-called Shaking Quakers, the Shakers were known for both their utopian religious communities and their minimalist designs—two aspects of Shakerism that Ringle sees as closely connected. "The Shakers were looking at design as a product of their faith," she says. "That is really how we are looking at the Shaker objects—that every value that they held, every religious belief, came through in these objects." Among those beliefs, she says, was the ideal of "complete equality between genders and races."

Today, three Shakers—one of them a new recruit—still practice their faith in the Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village in Maine, the sole representatives of a group whose numbers peaked at about 6,000 in the mid-19th century. (The Shakers' commitment to celibacy was not exactly a prescription for growth.) Yet their sleekly functional designs, for everything from brooms to chairs, live on, some of them "unimproved upon since their invention," Ringle says. Sustainability is another theme that resonates with contemporary artists, she adds.

Cunat says her 2016 visit to the Hancock Shaker Village, a living history museum in western Massachusetts, influenced her thinking about the nature of community. After the presidential election, she says, "I wanted to recreate a Shaker meetinghouse, where like-minded people—in this case, artists—could gather in person. It seemed important to make a space to come together."

That piece, *Meetinghouse,* led to further involvement with the Shakers, including a 2024 trip to Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village. On that visit, Cunat says, "I experienced their meetinghouse by looking through its windows. Frankly, I was late for the community service on that day so could not get into the building." This "looking in" helped shape the new project, *2nd Meetinghouse,* which examines architectural symmetry and its implications for equality.

"Every value they held, every religious belief, came through in these objects."

In *2nd Meetinghouse,* Cunat says, "cues that signify interiors, like a stove or benches, are placed outside as an invitation to experience the site from different places." She painted the installation blue "because it had a few associations with heaven, sky," and was used by the Shakers for meetinghouse interiors. "I see *2nd Meetinghouse* as a space of inclusion," she says, a project "to address the urgency of

From top: Photos by Bernhard Strauss courtesy Vitra Design Museum, and Alex Lesage courtesy Shaker Museum

the present," while also igniting questions about American history.

For her part, Rasheed has long been "deeply interested in a range of religious and spiritual movements"—especially how beliefs change and are manifested in material culture. After discovering the Shakers about a decade ago, she became fascinated by Rebecca Cox Jackson's mystical leadership. While visiting ICA to give a talk, Rasheed saw a book in Ringle's office about the Shakers. That led to a conversation about Jackson and the Philadelphia settlement—and, ultimately, the commission.

For the ICA version of the show, Rasheed contributed two large, embroidered banners, inspired by both Jackson's handwritten journal and Shaker gift drawings. She also created a video loop using excerpts from the journal and a diaristic novel by the pioneering Black science fiction writer Octavia E. Butler.

"I'm really interested in Black women who have become heretics in some sort of way or have exceeded the boundaries of expected religious behavior," Rasheed says. "There's something important for me in thinking about the radical potential of divergence, of disobedience, of charting your own path."

One of the challenges of the installation, Ringle says, was "making sure that the Shaker objects and the contemporary work felt in conversation. That can always be really tricky." The original design by Formafantasma was adapted for ICA by Richard Harrod. The first object visitors encounter is Cunat's *2nd Meetinghouse*, whose exterior stove is juxtaposed with an actual Shaker stove. In another example, Wilson's dance video is situated near the prints of Shakers that helped inspire it.

"We live in a time of great change, of a real shift in everything from values to the way we interact with community," Ringle says. "It's exciting to be able to look back in history, and say, 'How did people think about this in the past?'"

—Julia M. Klein

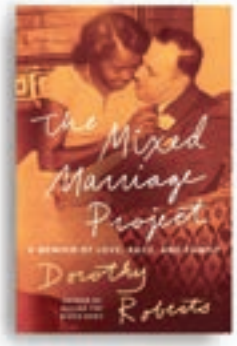
Across the Great Divide

In an enthralling mash-up of memoir and sociological treatise, Dorothy Roberts probes her father's lifelong but unfinished investigation of mixed-race marriage—including the one that begat her.

Review by Julia M. Klein

It is not easy to categorize *The Mixed Marriage Project*, the latest book by Dorothy Roberts, the George A. Weiss University Professor of Law and Society. Which should come as no surprise.

The founding director of the Penn Program on Race, Science, and Society has reveled in crossing disciplinary boundaries ["Dangerous Ideas," Jul|Aug 2016]. She trained as a lawyer, but her research has ranged across sociology, social work, criminology, and bioethics, among other fields. In books such as *Killing the Black Body, Torn Apart,* and *Shattered Bonds*, she has advocated for reproductive justice and critiqued the US child welfare system. In *Fatal Invention,* she detailed how politics and science have shaped conceptions of race.



The Mixed Marriage Project: A Memoir of Love, Race, and Family
By Dorothy Roberts
One Signal Publishers/Atria, 320 pages, $30

The Mixed Marriage Project is subtitled *A Memoir of Love, Race, and Family.* Roberts serves as its first-person narrator, but this is not a traditional memoir. At its core is Roberts' sympathetic summation and contextualization of her (white) father's decadeslong, mostly unpublished investigation of interracial marriage in Chicago. The resulting amalgam is a sociological treatise laced with reflection and framed by her family history.

It's an ambitious enterprise: enthralling in its detail, matter-of-fact in its storytelling. Robert "Bob" Roberts, the son of German and Welsh immigrants, had more than an academic interest in interracial marriage; he was in one himself, with the Jamaican-born Iris Rosalie White. Only the timeline was a surprise. "I believed that my father's faith in the promise of interracial marriage grew from the steadfast devotion they shared," Roberts writes. "Turns out that he had begun interviewing Black–white couples," as well as dating Black women, "more than a decade before he met my mother."

The personal and professional strands of her father's life are challenging to tease apart. Roberts discovers that her mother, as her father's student at Roosevelt College, assisted him with some of the interviews. They divided the work along gender, rather than racial, lines: She questioned the wives, while he talked to the husbands. By then, the two were already romantically involved—an ethically problematic situation by today's standards.

Roberts also uncovers another seeming deviation from research protocols: Many of the pseudonymous couples her father surveyed became part of her family's social circle, some even close friends. One, she suspects, was likely her piano teacher. Her parents "took participant observation to a heightened level—one that may have shaped the very social phenomenon they were studying," Roberts writes.

The spur for *The Mixed Marriage Project* was not unusual. After her parents' deaths, Roberts, the eldest of three sisters, became the custodian of 25 boxes containing family archives. One summer

she ensconced herself in an apartment on Chicago's South Side, near her childhood home, to pore through their contents. Along with family photographs and other memorabilia, she found voluminous notes and transcripts relating to her father's (and mother's) investigation of the couples and, later, their children. The project began in 1937 and continued into the 1980s, encompassing nearly 500 interviews, some of them lost.

Bob Roberts found his subjects largely through referrals and pursued them with the doggedness of an investigative reporter. Chicago's Communist Party was one source of promising leads; nudist camps were another. He returned repeatedly to tease out intimate details.

His research was referenced in other people's work. Two trade publishers offered him book contracts. He wrote a handful of scholarly articles. Yet despite his passion, he was never able to complete a book of his own—a tragedy that shadowed the entire family. "Perhaps, by trying to do too much, he managed to accomplish too little," Roberts writes.

So she tries, in effect, to write the book for him, combining finely drawn portraits with general observations. Bob Roberts was, she suggests, ahead of his time. Perhaps influenced by his travels in India, he described the racial hierarchy in Chicago as a caste system, and was aware of "his white male privilege."

Nearly all the couples he interviewed lived in the city's Black Belt. "In segregated Chicago, white spouses … were pushed into Black neighborhoods, risked losing their jobs, and feared neglect in hospitals," Dorothy Roberts reports. White spouses often were rejected by their families; many concealed their marriages at work. "I don't think a man should marry outside of his race unless he has a lot of intestinal fortitude," said one husband, himself apparently biracial.

The social pressures doomed some marriages (as did more conventional marital stresses). White immigrant wives married to Black men seemed especially bitter after encountering racism for which they were unprepared. Other marriages survived or thrived—the Roberts union among them.

But Bob Roberts, too, had to cope with his family's racism: He waited for his mother to die before marrying and was estranged from one of his brothers. (A final, heartbreaking note from the brother suggests that fraternal love persisted, even if it couldn't conquer all.)

As was typical in mid-20th-century America, the husband's career took center stage, even though Dorothy describes her mother as "the most gifted person in the family." Iris Roberts nevertheless abandoned her graduate studies in anthropology at Northwestern University to become "the consummate homemaker" and called her first-born, Dorothy, "my PhD."

Apart from an interlude in Liberia, her mother's onetime home, Dorothy Roberts spent her seemingly idyllic early years in the racially mixed neighborhood of Kenwood. Bob Roberts headed Roosevelt College's joint anthropology and sociology department. But a disastrous investment and the forfeit of two book advances imperiled the family's finances and forced the sale of their house. The boxes were Dorothy's only material inheritance.

As a child, Roberts writes, she responded to questions about her race by saying, "I'm just human." She took pride in her family as "a living symbol of racial harmony." Later, though, she began identifying as Black, even hiding the fact that her father was white. And she chose to marry two Black men. (The first marriage ended in divorce after more than three decades and four children.)

Even after immersing herself in her father's research, Roberts confesses that she still doesn't share his optimism about interracial marriage. She continues to see the racial utopia he envisioned, and tried to embody, as elusive. "For me," Roberts writes, "interracial intimacy can't be disentangled from the larger forces of race, gender, and power that continue to govern our world."

Indelible Imprint

A new biography examines a giant of 20th-century American book publishing.

Review by Dennis Drabelle

Nothing Random: Bennett Cerf and the Publishing House He Built
By Gayle Feldman CW'73
Random House, 1,072 pages, $40

Reading this illuminating biography has brought out a commonality that my partner of 38 years and I never knew we had: flirtations with twin outfits known as the Famous Artists and Famous Writers Schools. As teenagers, he and I each sent away for a Famous test, which, depending on our scores, could qualify us to enroll in a three-year correspondence course designed to make us either a successful artist (his dream) or writer (mine). You may not be shocked to learn that, like almost every test-taker, we passed; we also passed *up* the chance to be tutored that way because the price tag—$418, nonrefundable even if you dropped out—was beyond our means. After muckraking journalist Jessica Mitford exposed the dual scams in an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, the parent firm filed for bankruptcy.

The Famous Writers School was overseen (lightly) and endorsed (enthusias-

tically) by Gayle Feldman CW'73's subject, Bennett Cerf, a dynamic book publisher who moonlighted as a TV star. I bring up Cerf's connection with the Famous Schools not so much to castigate him as to highlight his far-flung interests and the insouciance with which he pursued some of them.

Born in Manhattan in 1898, as a kid Cerf got the nickname "Beans" because of his unflagging energy; he lived up to that moniker for the rest of his life. His Jewish parents were well-to-do. As Cerf's friend the actress and singer Kitty Carlisle observed, "Most of us [Jews] had to struggle; what's amazing is that [his] family had money, and yet he did everything he did with so little a kick in the pants from fate. To be born with money is a handicap, from the point of view of extraordinary accomplishment in the intellectual fields…" Cerf overcame that handicap with élan.

Bennett Cerf was a Jewish pioneer in a WASP-dominated field.

After he graduated from Columbia University, Cerf and his acquaintance Donald Klopfer became rivals for a young woman who introduced them to a Jewish milieu in which, Feldman writes, "country clubs were taken for granted and girls had coming-out parties at the Ritz." Klopfer got the girl, but Cerf got Klopfer—they became best friends and cofounders of perhaps the most influential 20th-century American book publisher, Random House.

Among other things, *Nothing Random* is a chronicle of Jews' increasing participation in what had been a WASP-dominated field, with Cerf as one of the pioneers. He got his start by using inherited money to buy into Boni & Liveright, whose Modern Library imprint was among the first to publish the classics in relatively cheap editions. Cerf's canny assessments of authors and books made him a comer, and Horace Liveright dealt with his financial problems by selling the Modern Library to the talented young man and his buddy Klopfer. In 1925, their first year at the helm, the partners increased sales by 8.5 percent, and in 1927 almost half a million copies of their books were sold. Cerf and Klopfer founded Random House, a cavalier name suggested cavalierly by Cerf, to publish their line of new titles.

In arguably his greatest contribution to literature, Cerf shepherded Irish writer James Joyce's daunting, sprawling, bawdy novel *Ulysses* through a long battle with censors. It helped that the work's countless word plays, parodies, digressions, and allusions made it an unlikely polluter of susceptible minds. As Feldman succinctly puts it, "*Ulysses* didn't behave like a dirty book," and in 1933 a perceptive federal judge gave Random House the go-ahead to import Joyce's masterpiece into the United States.

Under Cerf and Klopfer's leadership, the combination of Modern Library and Random House published an enviable array of, well, Famous Authors, such as Eugene O'Neill, Sinclair Lewis, William Faulkner, Gertrude Stein, James Michener, Truman Capote, Ayn Rand, Ralph Ellison, William Styron, Cormac McCarthy, and Dr. Seuss. One of Feldman's set-pieces features the chronically overextended Faulkner, who felt compelled not only to support a slew of relatives but also to maintain his mansion and other trappings of Southern squiredom. The novelist had been "mortgaging mules one at a time to buy essentials," Feldman writes, "and had just about run out of animals," so he begged Random House for a loan. (Instead, the firm gave him an advance on three books yet to be written.)

Cerf owed his celebrity status to being a fixture on *What's My Line?*, a half-hour TV game show whose 17-year run started in 1950. Broadcast from New York on Sunday nights, it challenged four panelists to guess what one guest after another did for a living by asking yes-or-no questions. Except for comedian Fred Allen, at first none of the panelists was famous (that word again!), but soon they all were. Dozens of *What's My Line?* episodes are available on YouTube, where Cerf delivers his quips in a surprisingly thick New York accent. Fizzy as Prosecco, the program still offers first-rate light entertainment.

After his brief marriage to the film star Sylvia Sidney ended in divorce, Cerf wed a gentile, Phyllis Fraser, who chafed against the marital paradigm of the era—husband as breadwinner and boss, wife as child-bearer and support staff. A literary type herself, Fraser teamed up with Ted Geisel (Dr. Seuss's real name) to found a children's imprint called Beginner Books, but her husband went along with a corporate decision to force her out—a betrayal for which she never forgave him. After Bennett's death in 1971, Phyllis married former New York City mayor Robert Wagner Jr.

There is much more to *Nothing Random*, notably Cerf's sideline as a compiler of anthologies (in my personal library is a copy of his *Reading for Pleasure*, which, by the way, contains nothing by either James Joyce or Gertrude Stein); and acquisitions and mergers that resulted in Penguin Random House, a British-American conglomerate that remains a mighty force in the book trade. Some readers will be intimidated by the length at which Feldman goes on, but I noticed very little fat in the telling. Her blend of a crash course on the history of 20th-century American publishing with the hectic, messy, book-smart life of Bennett Cerf is a formidable achievement.

Dennis Drabelle G'66 L'69 was a contributing editor of *The Washington Post Book World* from 1984 to 2015.

Pleasing the Ancestors

A pair of Jewish entertainment veterans—and former Penn classmates—are paying tribute to the Borscht Belt.

Illustration by Sam Kalda

"Think of it like a cabaret with elements of a TED Talk and just a whisper of Bar Mitzvah."

That's how Jill Abramovitz C'93 describes to her audience *Borscht Belt Serenade*, the one-woman show she cocreated with former Penn classmate Gideon Evans C'93 that uses songs and slideshows to chronicle the rise and fall of what Evans calls a "phenomenon and juggernaut of American entertainment and history."

The two veterans of the entertainment industry—Abramovitz is a Broadway and television actress, Evans a TV producer and podcast host—never had much of a personal connection to the popular summer resort region of New York's Catskill Mountains known as the Borscht Belt, where Jewish families vacationed from the 1920s to 1960s. But, like many Jews, they loved the famous comedians and musicians that performed in the area's iconic hotels and resorts—and understood their lasting cultural impact.

So when Evans saw a local news segment about the 2023 opening of the Borscht Belt Museum in Ellenville, New York, "I was just like, *I have to be involved somehow with this museum*." His initial idea was to create a podcast similar to the one he had already done on legends in standup comedy. But after connecting with the president of the museum, "we brainstormed some ideas, and we hit on this idea of music." He quickly reached out to Abramovitz—a friend since their time together in the Penn theater community in the early '90s—to see if she'd join him in creating a musical show to be performed at the museum's yearly festival in July 2024.

Despite her busy schedule, Abramovitz—who Evans regards as not just a great performer of Broadway musicals, but also a "prolific writer"—said yes right away.

"It's almost like pleasing the ancestors, in a way," Evans says, with Abramovitz laughing in agreement. "My dead mother is smiling somewhere."

With the festival serving as a hard deadline, the two swiftly wrote the show, meeting at coffee shops in New York, where they both live, and over Zoom. They plotted Borscht Belt-era songs for Abramovitz to sing, enlisting a musical director to arrange the tunes. "Some of the songs you couldn't find the sheet music anywhere," Abramovitz notes. And in between the songs, they wrote a history lesson of the Borscht Belt, mixing in jokes and opportunities for audience interaction.

Their first performance of the show, at the aptly named Borscht Belt Fest 2024 in upstate New York, was a success, even though Abramovitz made it to the stage with mere minutes to spare after a flight cancellation forced her to drive all the way from St. Louis. (She had been in St. Louis for a *Fiddler on the Roof* production and is currently acting in a play called *The Recipe*, about Julia Child, at La Jolla Playhouse in southern California; Evans is the cohost of a podcast called *Bad Elizabeth* about notorious Elizabeths through history.) They've since put on *Borscht Belt Serenade* at other venues, including the Penn Club of New York this past November, and will return to the Borscht Belt Museum for a performance this May.

"My dead mother is smiling somewhere."

They now hope to take the show to other parts of the country, pointing out that Jewish Community Centers (JCCs), where they've already done a show, are perfect places to "celebrate Jewish culture" and partake in singalongs and musical trivia with knowledgeable audiences. But at the Penn Club, they were pleased to also see a lot of younger, non-Jewish alumni in the crowd, enjoying new material. "Even though the Borscht Belt is a Jewish story, it's also an American story," Evans says. "It was almost like Vegas or Branson—a center of entertainment in America. So I do think there is a draw even among non-Jews."

"We don't want to assume that [audience members] come in knowing anything and to make anyone feel alienated in any way," adds Abramovitz, who sings renditions of popular songs from the 1920s like "My Yiddishe Mama" and "Makin' Whoopee," among others. "We want to bring them in and introduce them to this wonderful part of American history, while also acknowledging some of them already know a lot of it. So I think it's a very welcoming show."

This isn't Abramovitz's first foray into the Borscht Belt. The actress portrayed a worker at a Catskills resort in the *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, the television show which, along with the film *Dirty Dancing*, most famously depicted the "Yiddish Alps." With hundreds of background people milling about on set in 1950s-era costumes, "I really felt like I was traveling into my own past," says Abramovitz, whose grandparents were Holocaust survivors and whose mother's first language growing up in New Jersey was Yiddish. Although her family "wasn't fancy enough" to go to the Catskills and instead visited Jewish bungalow colonies in New Jersey, "what an experience it was to get to feel like you've time-traveled into something that influenced your own family," she says. "It all feels so in my DNA, in my cells."

Evans feels similarly, noting that "even though I don't have a super close connection to that world, it feels like I do." In addition to growing up steeped in Jewish culture—his grandfather, he says, was "probably one of the first people to start slicing lox" at a supermarket—he loved listening to prominent Jewish comedians like Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner, before getting into comedy himself as a producer for *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* ["Profiles," Jan|Feb 2012]. Evans admires Jewish entertainers like Sophie Tucker,

Eddie Cantor, and the Barry Sisters, all of whom performed around the country and achieved mainstream success—but when "they went to the Catskills, it was almost like being home." By retelling their stories now, at a moment in history when antisemitism is again on the rise, Evans hopes "having a show where you can be communal and sing songs and listen to songs that are just joyful, will make you think, I'm part of a community that's pretty wonderful."

Both Abramovitz and Evans feel nostalgic for those joyful Borscht Belt days, but "you can't stop time moving forward," says Evans. In the show, Abramovitz explains that the Borscht Belt's decline came about partly due to shrinking restrictions on where Jews could vacation; the exclusion of Jews from many hotels and resorts from the late 19th century to the mid 20th century is what originally catalyzed the development of Jewish safe havens in the Catskills. (The rise of air conditioning also played a part by making sweltering cities like New York more bearable in the summer, as did the increasing accessibility of air travel.)

Intent on channeling both aspects of that bittersweet legacy, Abramovitz imparts a traditional Jewish expression of condolence for a loved one near the end of the show.

"May their memory be a blessing," she says of the abandoned Catskills resorts, most of which didn't make it past the '70s. "And what better way to preserve a memory than through song." —*DZ*

Two Old Friends, One Young Chess Prodigy

How a sports agent and a lawyer stumbled into the "craziest shared experience that we never expected."

When Adam Sloan W'95 and Matthew Ingber C'95 met the first week of their freshman year at Penn, they clicked right away.

Ingber, who came from a small Catskills town, and Sloan, a charismatic Long Islander, were both extroverts who dove headfirst into the campus social scene. Their friendship soon sprouted lasting roots.

Twenty-six years later, the pair met for dinner. They caught up as usual, swapping stories old and new—and that night in 2021, Sloan had a captivating one to share.

As a sports agent at Creative Artists Agency (CAA), he had recently helped a young chess prodigy named Tanitoluwa "Tani" Adewumi land a book and movie deal. The eight-year-old boy's family fled a dangerous situation in Nigeria and had been living in a homeless shelter while seeking asylum in the US. At the same time, Tani had become a New York state chess champion.

That night at dinner, Sloan wasn't asking for Ingber's input as a trial attorney. "I was telling the story because I was so impressed by the family and what they have done, and it had so moved me," Sloan says. But Ingber saw his own chance to jump in and assist. "Let me have a few conversations back at my firm," he told Sloan. "I feel like I could be helpful here."

Soon the longtime friends were working together, each with their own expertise and high-powered employers behind them. The result has been life-changing for Tani and his family—and Sloan and Ingber, too.

"In these United States, nobody has done what these two guys have done for us," says Kayode Adewumi, Tani's father. "They are wonderful people. Extremely wonderful."

For Sloan, it all started in early 2019, when the *New York*

Illustration by Cannaday Chapman

Times published an article about Tani. Sloan's son is a two-time national chess champion, so he knows that world well. The director of Tani's school chess program, whom Sloan had known for a decade, called and asked for his help. *You're the only person I know who is an agent and understands chess*, Sloan remembers Russ Makofsky saying. *Can we talk about this opportunity?*

They met up while Makofsky fielded calls from TV shows, news outlets, and celebrities who all wanted to get involved. "I was immediately taken by the story," Sloan says now. He called CAA's publishing and motion pictures teams on a Sunday, and they all agreed to meet with Kayode the next day.

"He came in beautifully dressed in a navy-blue pinstripe suit," Sloan remembers. "And he said, 'I don't have a story about chess. I have a story about life.'"

Kayode described how the militant Islamic group Boko Haram had tracked and threatened the Adewumis, who are Christians, for years, forcing them to flee to the US seeking safety. After a challenging stay with some relatives in Dallas, the family moved to New York City and took refuge in a homeless shelter. Kayode worked as a dishwasher and Uber driver; his wife cleaned buildings. They clung to a hope for something better—and celebrated watching their young son learn chess and amass "seven trophies by his bed in the homeless shelter," according to the *Times*'s March 2019 article, which noted that Tani had "outwitted children from elite private schools with private chess tutors" to go undefeated at a state tournament for kindergarten through third grade players that month.

"For the rest of our lives, we're going to share this amazing story."

After the *Times* article was published, a generous donor supplied a free apartment until they got back on their feet, and a GoFundMe campaign raised more than $250,000 for the family. Rather than spending it, they launched a foundation to help other refugees. "On the spot, we decided we had to tell this story," Sloan says. "It's our responsibility to tell this story."

"Ever since that time," notes Kayode, "Mr. Adam has been very supportive and very good to our family."

CAA's team helped the Adewumis land a three-book deal with HarperCollins and a motion picture rights deal, with Trevor Noah as a producer with Paramount. The book, *My Name Is Tani…and I Believe in Miracles: The Amazing True Story of One Boy's Journey from Refugee to Chess Champion*, came out in April 2020.

Meanwhile, Tani continued to conquer the chess world, winning his way to a national master title. But legally, the family was still adrift. They didn't have asylum, which meant no refugee status, no green cards, and no guarantee of staying in the US. It also meant Tani couldn't travel out of the country to compete in chess tournaments—crucial if he wanted to become an international master.

"I was heartbroken that he couldn't do that—that he didn't have the same opportunity that other kids had, despite all his hard work and everything he was doing," Sloan says.

That's where Ingber picks up the story. A partner at Mayer Brown, he contacted his law firm's pro bono practice right after his dinner with Sloan in 2021. "When Adam told me this story, I was thinking, wow, this family needs more support than they're getting at the moment on the legal side," he says.

After meeting the Adewumis and getting a green light from Mayer Brown, Ingber assembled a legal team. They urged the federal government to "stipulate to asylum"—meaning no trial would be necessary—and it worked. By the end of 2022, the Adewumi family officially gained asylum. Today they all have green cards, enabling them to remain in the US and also travel outside of it—a profound change and major relief for the whole family. "Every time I see Kayode," Sloan says, "he always says, 'Make sure to say hello to Matthew—he changed my life.'"

"I tell my colleagues here—especially young lawyers—that there is something powerful about having a law degree," Ingber says. "What we were able to do for this family with our law degree was extraordinary. This is Exhibit A that I use now when I talk to other people at the firm about how fulfilling this work can be."

Sloan has continued to work as Tani's agent, helping him land a Chess.com partnership and a campaign with Target. (His other clients include Formula 1, Chelsea Football Club, The US Open, and Riot Games.) "Investing my time and energy in something so meaningful gives me more energy in return, and it's been incredible to have CAA's support along the way," he says.

In January 2023, Sloan and Ingber had dinner again—but this time their table held about a dozen people, all there to celebrate the Adewumi family's grant of asylum. "It was an unforgettable night," Ingber says. "The most beautiful thing," adds Sloan.

It's now tucked into their well of shared memories, right alongside their time as Zeta Beta Tau fraternity brothers, the backpacking trip through Europe they did post-graduation, their weddings, becoming dads at roughly the same time. "It's been something else to connect over," Sloan says. "For the rest of our lives, we're going to share this amazing story."

"Adam and I work in different worlds," Ingber says. "I never thought those worlds would collide where we could team up to help a family."

"This is one of the most motivational things we've ever done," Sloan adds, "and doing it together as friends is the craziest shared experience that we never expected. We didn't look for this. It found us." —*Molly Petrilla C'06*

Rachel Moskowitz C'06

Moskowitz looks through ledgers dating back to the late 18th century inside the JPMorgan Chase Corporate History Program's storage facility.

Vaulting a Bank's Past

For the director of JPMorgan's corporate history program, "there's always something new to learn."

At the beginning of August, JPMorgan Chase threw a dinner party to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Broadway show *Hamilton*. It took place on the stage of the Public Theater, where the megahit musical first premiered off-Broadway, in front of a recreation of the original set.

Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton*'s creator and original star, answered questions from the audience. He then performed a few songs along with Renée Elise Goldsberry, who originated the role of Angelica Schuyler, and Leslie Odom Jr., who played Aaron Burr.

Rachel Moskowitz C'06, director of the JPMorgan Chase Corporate History Program, was on hand to tell guests—including clients, celebrities, and journalists—how closely the financial corporation is linked to the famous play.

"We do talk a lot about the duel between [Hamilton and Burr] and the rivalry because they were the founders of JPMorgan's earliest predecessor institution," she reflected later, explaining that the rivals established a water company in 1799 that soon became a bank, which ultimately evolved into JPMorgan Chase.

She showed guests an original cross section of a pipe that was used to deliver water from the historical company's reservoir to homes and businesses in Lower Manhattan, and replicas of the pistols used in the fatal 1804 duel that ended Hamilton's life. The original pistols? Those are displayed in JPMorgan's corporate headquarters in Manhattan.

Since 2014, Moskowitz has been part of a six-person team that she now leads that's responsible for preserving the more than 225 years of history of JPMorgan, helping collect the documents, artifacts, photographs, advertisements, newsletters, and artwork that tells the firm's story. She then shares the tales with employees, clients, and the wider public.

The Penn history major didn't exactly imagine working at a bank. But Moskowitz says the job has been fascinating and fulfilling. "This bank's history is intimately tied to American history, to international history," she notes.

At Penn, Moskowitz was inspired by classes she took with Kathleen Brown, the David Boies Professor of History who teaches about gender and race in early America; and Kathy Peiss, the Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor Emerita of American History who focused on modern American cultural history.

Photo by Nathan Bajar

Inside the storage facility and gallery space are items including a $5 paper banknote printed in the 1850s by the Merchants' Bank in New York; a mid-20th century Speedrite check writer, designed to emboss monetary amounts on checks and hinder tampering; and an early-20th century safe deposit vault.

Not knowing exactly what she wanted to do with her history degree after college, she worked as a production assistant and film archivist at a production company that produced documentaries for the *History Channel*, *National Geographic*, and *Discovery Networks*. She also spent a summer on a Penn-sponsored excavation at an ancient site called Mount Lykaion in the Peloponnese region of Greece. She was on the topographical survey team, which performed surface surveys of the landscape, and worked with the excavations registrar to clean and catalog all the finds at the end of the day. "Every summer subsequent to that, I wanted to return," she says. "But once you have a job, it's really hard to say, 'I will see you in two months.'"

As part of her senior thesis seminar with Brown, she had visited the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, where she learned about the role of archivists. After graduating, she returned as a volunteer and loved working with the collections so much that she moved to New York to pursue a master's degree in history and archival management at NYU.

One of her first jobs out of graduate school was working as an archivist for the New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center. Despite not having a medical background or knowing "much about the actual diseases that appeared in the records," she says, "the records themselves were fascinating because they spoke about epidemics in the 1800s and the founding of hospitals specifically for women."

She then moved to an archival consulting company, where one of her assignments was helping the United Nations organize and identify records from the mid-1940s when it was founded. "It was some of the most moving material I've ever worked with," she says. "It was material that documented the departure of European Jews and the extreme trouble they faced in finding a country that would accept them after World War II."

Her next stop was Citigroup, which opened her eyes to working at a bank as an archivist. She saw a job posting for an in-house position at JPMorgan and, as she puts it, "the rest is history."

One of her main jobs at JPMorgan is collecting historical materials related to the bank—which has some 1,200 predecessor institutions. Sometimes that means searching on eBay, where she's found cross sections of the Manhattan Company water pipes, or at auctions. She helped acquire a rare catalog of the watch collection of John Pierpont Morgan Sr., the powerful Gilded Age financier who ran the firm that ultimately became known as JPMorgan Chase. The catalog is now on display at a JPMorgan client center in Geneva.

"This bank's history is intimately tied to American history, to international history."

She also works with employees who have a question about the firm's history. "Maybe someone is writing a press release about JPMorgan's role in the entertainment industry and wants to know how long we've participated in some capacity with media and entertainment," she says. "Maybe they're working on a new advertisement and are interested in seeing what advertisements looked like in the 1950s or '60s."

She also gives presentations and tours to customers, clients, and employees in the offices as well as at the bank's state-of-the-art, climate-controlled storage facility in Brooklyn, which also serves as a gallery space.

In the summer of 2025 JPMorgan opened a 60-story headquarters in Manhattan. For the new building, Moskowitz helped install historical artifacts and imagery that tells the company's 226-year history. One exhibit, for example, is full of historical signs that feature predecessors' logos. Another has the famous water pipes.

The bank's history is so vast that she says she is challenged every day. "If it was just the history of banking, that would be enough, or just New York would be enough," she says. "But so much of what we talk about is tied to so many other parts of history that there's always something new to learn." *—Alyson Krueger C'07*

Photos by Nathan Bajar

"My wife and I have eight children, one dog, two goats, and too many chickens to count."

—*Gary Kalbaugh GL'99*

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

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

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 15–18, 2026!

1956

Morton "Mort" Handel C'56 celebrated his 90th birthday last April with a party of 250 friends and acquaintances at the Woodfield Country Club in Boca Raton, Florida, his home for many years. He retired, "finally," he writes, after serving as chairman of the board of Marvel Entertainment after its sale to the Disney Corporation at the end of 2009. He has also been a board member of Linens 'N Things, CompUSA, and Trump Entertainment Resorts. He continues to serve as a Life Regent of the University of Hartford and Life Trustee of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi.

1957

Richard A. Silver C'57 celebrated his 90th birthday with family and friends in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, in January. In attendance were colleagues from Silver Golub & Teitell LLP, the law firm in Stamford, Connecticut, he cofounded in 1978 and where he still actively practices. As an attorney, Richard uses AI every day on medical and legal matters to stay up to date with his practice. In acknowledgement of his lifetime achievements, Senator Richard Blumenthal (D–Conn.) read a tribute to him on the floor of the US Senate, celebrating his six-decade legal career and his impact on Connecticut's legal landscape. It can be read at tinyurl.com/SilverTribute.

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 15–18, 2026!

1961

Gerald A. Friedlander W'61, a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity, recounts his life after Wharton. He attended Harvard Law School, practiced law for 16 years, and then became president of his family's furnishings business in Alabama. There, he presided over the boards of three not-for-profits: Mobile Jewish Welfare Fund; United Way of Southwest Alabama; and Mobile Arc (formerly known as MARC), which advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Jerry then sold his family's business, retired (for the first time) in late 2006, and enrolled at the University of South Alabama at age 70. He was awarded the Outstanding Gerontology Graduate Student Award for his studies on aging. He later worked for his local area agency on aging before retiring (again) at the end of 2012. In 2017, he and his wife, Kay, moved to Tampa, Florida, to be near their daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter. Jerry still volunteers with various organizations, and in his words, "life has never been better!"

1964

Stuart Resor C'64 writes, "Sadly, I see a big number of men from our class already gone too soon. [But for] the women, so far, almost none of them are gone. I think this might be related to all the tobacco and smoking that went on in our earlier years. I smoked a little but then ceased after leaving Penn. I saw a sample of lung tissue at the Del Mar Fair of a smoker's lung, all black and sooty, and a nonsmoker's lung, all clean and perfect! I never smoked again and avoided situations with smokers. My wife Bonnie is very focused on good health, diet, and behaviors. She is reading a book on longevity. The best thing we do is line dancing at the YMCA! I recommend that to anyone. Our new townhome in Suffolk, Virginia, has one flight of stairs that we both like and I try to jog that every day. Then we have a great, almost traffic-free loop road here that is great to walk around almost every day."

1965

Dale Richard Perelman WG'65 has published his 11th book with The History Press, a true crime book titled *New Castle's Las Vegas Guys: Gangsters, Gamblers and Dealers*. Based upon extensive interviews, Dale "unfolds this cavalier group's frolicking adventures as they navigated their way from the belly of the downtown Golden Gate to some of the Strip's premiere casinos, all while teetering along the right side of the law," according to the press materials.

Ellen Stekert Gr'65, a folk singer and folklorist, has released a new single, "Puttin' on the Style," revisiting a recording of the song that she made in the early 1960s. The song can be heard on her website, ellenstekert.com. (A different version of this song can also be found on her now-rare debut record, 1955's *Ozark Mountain Folk Songs, Volume One*.) She writes in a press release, "'Puttin' on the Style' speaks of minor 'outrages' of people attempting to be accepted within the society of both the narrator and what s/he sees." On her website, listeners can also hear another new single, "Golden Apples of the Sun," which sets W. B. Yeats's poem "Song of the Wandering Aengus" to a melody Ellen has carried with her for decades.

1967

Dr. Edward Feller C'67 has finished his term as interim director of Medical Student Research at Brown University where he is clinical professor of medical science in the Division of Medical Education. He is co-editor-in-chief emeritus of the *Rhode Island Medical Journal*, the official journal of the Rhode Island Medical Society.

1968

Bobbi Penneys Susselman Laufer CW'68 writes that she's celebrating "44 years of selling travel all over the world." This year, she will be escorting two tiny groups (never more than eight travelers) to Zambia and Tanzania in June and Namibia and Botswana in October. If interested, contact her at bobbilaufer@yahoo.com.

1970

Karen B. Schleimer CW'70 has been named deputy mayor of the coterminous Village/Town of Mount Kisco, New York. She has served the village for many years as chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, member of the Planning Board, prosecutor, and Village trustee, all while maintaining a full-time legal practice.

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1971

Ken Roemer G'68 Gr'71 launched his open access digital archive *Covers, Titles, and Tables* (mavmatrix.uta.edu/exhibit/ctt), in November. He explains, "*CTT* exhibits 200 years of the tables of contents of American literary anthologies and literary histories, more than a century of scholarship indices, and full essays by leading scholars. The Introduction tab defines how the archive chronicles the American literary canon formations and how anthologies and histories define how to represent America during our 250th anniversary. The one-page About tab offers an overview with instructions on searches and the location of a real-time global map indicating downloads, including substantial downloads from South America and Asia. Harvard Professor Werner Sollors called *CTT* a 'monumental' resource." Ken is a professor emeritus at the University of Texas, Arlington, in the department of English.

Linda Silverstein CW'71 see **Kim Rogoff Silverstein C'01.**

1972

Dr. Peter Silverstein M'72 see **Kim Rogoff Silverstein C'01.**

1973

Arnold Rochvarg C'73, professor emeritus at the University of Baltimore School of Law, had his book on the 1960's civil rights movement published by the University of Missouri Press. *No One Ever Asked: The Untold Story of a Civil Rights Worker* is a narrative history of the mid-1960's civil rights movement based on the experiences of a young woman who quit college and became involved with many of the important events and persons of the movement. The book's "bottom-up" approach to history interweaves its discussion of historical events with personal stories of civil rights "foot soldiers" who faced violence, imprisonment, and family rejection because of their commitment to fight for racial equality and justice.

1977

Richard "Rick" Meyer W'77, a former professional tennis player, writes, "Danny Waldman and I won the ITF Masters World Doubles Tennis Championships in 2025 for our age group (70+), played in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. We beat the number one team in the world in the finals. Danny Waldman played number one for Harvard when I played number one for Penn. We are the number one team in the world. Nice to be number one in the world in anything."

Regina Sokaler Wolgel OT'77 writes, "Last July, I retired from my hospital position to launch my encore career: expanding my occupational therapy private practice and teaching more qigong." She shares that a study done with her occupational therapist colleagues, entitled "Qigong: Introducing the Ultimate OT Modality to an Inpatient Rehab Unit," has been accepted as a poster presentation at the 2026 Science of Tai Chi and Qigong Whole Person Health Conference being held at Harvard Medical School on April 30–May 1.

1978

Steven Miller EE'78 shares that he "ended up working as a faculty member at Carnegie Mellon University and Singapore Management University (SMU), and as an industry practitioner in Oyama, Japan, and Richardson, Texas (Fujitsu Limited Telecom Division), Columbia, Maryland (RWD Technologies), and Singapore (IBM services consulting)." While in Singapore, he was the founding dean of SMU's School of Computing and Information Systems and also served as the university's vice provost of research. In 2022, he coauthored the book *Working with AI: Real Stories of Human-Machine Collaboration* (MIT Press). After spending 23 years in Singapore, he returned to the US in mid-2023. He now resides in Stamford, Connecticut, continues to do advisory work related to AI and analytics applications and operational deployments, and serves as adjunct faculty at the University of Connecticut's Stamford regional campus.

Mark S. Mingelgreen W'78 has been named to *Variety* magazine's 2025 list of Elite Business Managers. Mark is managing partner with Peyser & Alexander Management and has been with the firm for 33 years. His clients include television personalities, authors, journalists, television and film producers and directors, as well as corporate executives. He shares, "Also, by the time this gets published [I] will have cycled the seven-day, 560-mile Empire State Ride from Staten Island to Niagara Falls to raise money for cancer research."

Paul Root Wolpe C'78 and **Valerie Root Wolpe C'79 GEd'84** met at Penn as undergraduates and have now been married for 40 years. Paul writes, "After 17 years as the director of the Center for Ethics at Emory University in Atlanta (following over 20 years of teaching at Penn), I am now building a new center for the university, a center for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation (PACT)." In 2025 Paul spoke at the Nobel Peace Laureates Summit in Monterrey, Mexico, and was awarded the 2025 Humanitarian of the Year Award from the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children.

1979

Badi H. Baltagi Gr'79, a distinguished professor of economics at Syracuse University and senior research fellow at the school's Center for Policy Research, has been awarded a Great Arab Minds Award for 2025 in the economics category by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the vice president and prime minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai. According to *Gulf News*, Badi was recognized for "a career that has reshaped modern economic analysis and strengthened the foundations of econometrics."

Valerie Root Wolpe C'79 GEd'84 see **Paul Root Wolpe C'78**.

1980

Bonnie Miao Bandeen C'80 WG'85 and her husband Derek are cofounders of a new nonprofit, the Parkinson's Wellness Foundation (PWF), which they started after Derek was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. PWF provides education, community, and support to families facing Parkinson's disease, with a special focus on mental wellbeing. One of the foundation's first initiatives is the opening of the Bandeen Center in Manhattan this year. This facility will be dedicated to supporting the Parkinson's community in and beyond New York City with specialized fitness classes, events, and wellness programs. Bonnie served on Penn's Board of Trustees from 2014 to 2024, Wharton's Board of Advisor's from 2016 to 2023, and the Wharton Executive Board for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa from 2011 to 2020. She remains on the Trustees' Council of Penn Women.

Vincent J. Palusci C'80 retired from full-time clinical practice and continues as a professor of pediatrics and forensic medicine at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. In addition, he has joined the Babies and Toddlers Task Force at the NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. His photography and familial Penn Band ties were recently highlighted in a *Gazette* cover story ["And the Band Played On," Jan|Feb 2023].

1982

Antonia M. Villarruel GNu'82, a professor and the Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing at Penn Nursing, is the coauthor of a new book from the American Public Health Association, which examines how the social determinants of health (SDOH) have different impacts across multiple racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Titled *Systems That Impact Population Health: Past and Present*, the book "combines historical analysis, contemporary policy review, and population-specific chapters to show how racism functions across social systems—including healthcare, education, employment, housing, the environment, justice, and immigration—to produce persistent health inequities," according to a news release from Penn's Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics.

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1986

Lee X. Blonder Gr'86, professor emerita of behavioral science and anthropology at the University of Kentucky, has published two books, *Transformative Health Strategies: Integrative Medicine and the COVID-19 Pandemic* and *The Beach Was Beautiful*, which is a crime novel.

1987

Dr. Carl Law C'87 GM'96 writes, "Hard to believe it's been nearly 40 years since graduating from Penn in 1987. The curiosity, grit, and sense of community I found on campus still shape me today. After Penn, I went on to earn my MD at Penn State, completed anesthesia residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, and a pain management fellowship at Stan-

ford—then settled in California, where I've spent more than three decades practicing hospital anesthesia. In April 2025, I took on a new challenge and founded Doctors First Staffing, a physician-founded locum tenens company built around a simple idea: When you put doctors first, patients and hospitals benefit too. I'm still active in the operating room, which keeps me grounded in the realities of clinical care and helps guide how we build smarter, more human staffing solutions. When I'm not working, you'll find me surfing, spending time with family, or mentoring younger physicians. I'm incredibly grateful for my Penn roots and always happy to connect with fellow Quakers along the way."

1989

David H. Cohen C'89 was honored by the New York State Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired with the George E. Keane Award in recognition of his work with assistive technology for students who are blind and visually impaired. David writes, "Back in 1994, I received a grant to receive my master's in the Special Education of the Visually Impaired at Teachers College, Columbia University, and I am currently in my 31st year working for the NYC Department of Education. For the past 20 years I have served as the vision technology coordinator, managing the assistive technology needs of New York City students who are blind and visually impaired, in both public and private schools, as well as leading a team of evaluators to help determine students' assistive technology needs." In 2017, David was named an Apple Distinguished Educator for his work training teachers and students to use assistive technology as well as for integrating the technology into students' curricula.

1990

David Magerman C'90 EAS'90 was recently interviewed on the video podcast *Invested by Aleph*. David is cofounder and managing partner of Differential Ventures, a New York-based venture capital fund investing in technology companies. In the episode, he discusses how engineering training shaped his thinking across finance and investing; the importance of systems-level reasoning in complex organizations; and why technical education remains foundational well beyond academia. It can be viewed at aleph.vc/content/david-magerman.

1992

Eric Brenner C'92 has been promoted to international administrative partner at the law firm Boies Schiller Flexner. Eric is a trial lawyer who works out of the firm's New York office. He has successfully litigated complex commercial cases involving antitrust, M&A, partnership, RICO, cryptocurrency, and insurance disputes.

David Woolf C'92, a partner in the labor and employment practice group of Faegre Drinker, has been promoted to general counsel. In this role he oversees all legal matters affecting the law firm and advising on ethics and professional responsibility, conflicts of interest, compliance, governance, and risk management.

1993

Jeffrey Blander W'93 released a new children's book, *Jessica and the River Fairies*, in January. The book is coauthored with his late mother, Ann Blander, and grew from a short bedtime story she wrote for him on a typewriter when he was four years old. Jeffrey writes, "She passed away less than a year later, making those rediscovered pages especially meaningful." This is his fifth book and second children's title. His previous children's book became an Amazon bestseller and reached more than 50,000 readers globally. He writes, "All proceeds from [my] children's books are donated to organizations supporting children, caregivers, and educators navigating grief and loss."

Meredith Gavin Singer C'93 has launched her own federal lobbying and advocacy firm, Impact Advocacy. As a longtime DC-based federal lobbyist who has worked for many Fortune 100 companies over the course of her career, her new company now serves private corporations and nonprofits across a range of issues. Follow her activities on LinkedIn @impactadvocacyllc or reach out via impactadvocacyllc.com.

1994

Airea "Dee" Matthews C'94 has been appointed provost of Bryn Mawr College. Her three-and-a-half-year term began on January 1. In a letter to the community, President Wendy Cadge wrote, "Dee's genuine dedication to Bryn Mawr, along with her notable professional accomplishments, strategic leadership, and collaborative spirit, make her an exceptional choice to lead the next chapter of our academic endeavors. I have been impressed by her relational empathy, capacity for big ideas, and many qualities that make her a true strategic leader." Dee is also a professor of creative writing and cochairs the creative writing department at Bryn Mawr.

José Luis Rojas Villarreal C'94 recently concluded six years of service on the Cambridge (MA) School Committee, including three terms as chair of the budget and the building & grounds subcommittees. During his tenure, he helped guide the district through the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, working to support students, families, and educators during one of the most complex periods in public education. José Luis highlights his service as "one of the great honors of my professional life," noting that the experience deepened his commitment to educational equity, public service, and community-centered leadership. He looks forward to continuing his work in education and civic engagement in the years ahead.

1995

Kali Gross G'95 Gr'99, the National Endowment for the Humanities Professor and chair of African American studies at Emory University, is the author of four award-winning books. Her most recent, *Vengeance Feminism: The Power of Black Women's Fury in Lawless Times*, won the 2025 ASALH Book Prize (from the Association for the Study of African American Life and History) and the 2025 PEN Open Book Award (from PEN America). She writes, "My current research is on the history of Black women and capital punishment in the US, and I am exploring legacies of race and Jewish ancestry in the Caribbean and South America." More information can be found on her website, kalinicolegross.com.

1997

Dr. Jennifer Burke C '97 has been appointed medical director for palliative care

at Main Line Health after a year of serving as interim director. Jennifer has been practicing at Main Line Health since 2009.

Sigrid Ladores-Barrett Nu'97 GNu'02 has been named one of the Top 100 Filipinos in the World, given by TOFA (The Outstanding Filipinos Award) during its 15th anniversary in Las Vegas last October. Sigrid currently serves as dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She writes, "I am proud to represent the Filipino American community. My time at Penn, both as an undergrad and grad student, was pivotal in my development as a scholar and leader."

1999

Janna Davidson Gilbert W'99 has been named CEO of Luminary Labs, a New York-based strategy and innovation consultancy. She joined the company in 2013, was promoted to president in 2019 and became a partner in 2024. In her new role, she will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the company across all of its functions, focus areas, and capabilities.

Meghen Kobli Ehrich C'99 GEd'00 is celebrating her one-year anniversary as the first data privacy administrator for Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, the 18th largest school district in the United States.

Gary Kalbaugh GL'99 is a partner at Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP and chair of the law firm's Commodities, Futures, and Derivatives practice. He writes, "My wife and I have eight children, one dog, two goats, and too many chickens to count."

Jake Wilson C'99 was elected the 37th mayor of Somerville, Massachusetts, in November and inaugurated on January 3, after serving the past four years as a city councilor-at-large. His wife, **Dr. Catherine Evans C'99**, is enjoying her new role as the First Lady of Somerville.

2000

Elisabeth L. Austin G'00 Gr'06 and **Elena Lahr-Vivaz G'02 Gr'08** are coeditors of a new book, *Adaptation and the Edge Effects of Latin American Cultures*, which also features contributing authors **Rebecca E. Sheehan G'03 Gr'08** and Timothy Corrigan, professor emeritus of English, cinema and media studies, and history of art at Penn. The book delves into the "vibrant and dynamic cultural landscape of Latin America," according to the press materials, and explores "the creative frictions that arise from the coexistence among, and tensions between, diverse cultures."

Michelle Holme C'00, a creative director and graphic artist, was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Recording Package for Bruce Springsteen's *Tracks II: The Lost Albums*. This is her third Grammy nomination, and she previously won in 2012 ("Arts blog," online, March 12, 2012).

Efthimios Parasidis GGS'00 L'00, a law professor at The Ohio State University and consultant for the US Air Force and DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency), is author of a new book, *America's Military Biomedical Complex: Law, Ethics, and the Drive for Scientific Innovation* (Oxford University Press, 2025). From the press materials: "[The book] shows how the drive for scientific and military superiority has shifted the moral compass of government and society, detailing scores of examples where untoward conduct has been rationalized as necessary to promote national security and achieve military goals."

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2001

Kim Rogoff Silverstein C'01 and **Mike Silverstein C'01** are proud to announce that their daughter Ivy Silverstein will be attending Penn as a member of the Class of 2030. They write, "Ivy follows in the footsteps of not only her parents but also grandparents **Linda Silverstein CW'71** and **Dr. Peter Silverstein M'72**, great-uncle **Dr. Paul Silverstein M'64**, great-aunt **Betty Rosenkranz C'78**, and cousin Deborah Silverstein, a professor at Penn Vet. Hurrah!"

2002

Elena Lahr-Vivaz G'02 Gr'08 see **Elisabeth L. Austin G'00 Gr'06.**

2003

Kenneth Johnson GCP'03 L'03, founder and president of Architecture, Urban Design and Policy LLC (archipolicy.com), was honored with two awards last year. The Architecture Community granted his company first place in residential new construction during its World Design Awards 2025; and Rethinking the Future gave him first place in residential new construction during its Global Architecture & Design Awards 2025. The winning project is named GalleryHouse, located in West Philadelphia, "a project deeply rooted in design innovation, sustainability, and community impact," he writes.

Rani Karnik L'03 (47) and her partner, Vance (49), gave birth to their first child, Om Ravi Karnik. She shares that they "recently celebrated [our] union, Om's birth, and many years of whole-food veganism." Rani serves as in-house deal counsel at a major insurance company. Her primary client is the firm's chief investment office, with a focus on alternative investments. She is still active in the arts, music, and belonging and impact initiatives. Rani and family (including their three feline and two canine companions) are currently located in Tampa Bay, Florida.

Jonathan Lombardo EAS'03 has been elected partner at the law firm Baker-Hostetler. Jonathan focuses his practice on patent prosecution in the electrical and computer fields, patent portfolio review work in support of litigation, intellectual property due diligence, and intellectual property audit. He works out of the firm's Philadelphia office.

Rebecca E. Sheehan G'03 Gr'08 see **Elisabeth L. Austin G'00 Gr'06.**

2004

Dr. Arie Dosoretz C'04 M'09 WG'10, a radiation oncologist and managing partner of Southwest Florida Proton, Advocate Radiation Oncology, and Precision Healthcare Specialists, has been selected by *Florida Trend* magazine as a Florida 500 honoree for 2025. The Florida 500 program identifies and showcases 500 influential Florida business leaders across all industries. Arie is among 32 individuals recognized in the Health and Life Sciences category.

2005

Thomas Richards Jr. C'05 GEd'06, a history teacher at a private pre-K–12 school, writes, "In February, for the US Semiquincentennial, I am publishing my second book, *The Unfinished Business of 1776: Why the American Revolution Never Ended*. The book narrates the stories of the countless Americans who believed in the many promises of the American Revolution, and, in the century after independence, continued to push the United States for revolutionary change."

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 15–18, 2026!

2006

Gabe Martin C'06 has joined Capitol AI, a company focused on delivering trusted, decision-ready intelligence using artificial intelligence, as vice president of partnerships. His role was created as the company scales its enterprise AI platform across media, government, and other high-stakes sectors where accuracy and judgment are critical. Prior to this appointment, Gabe served as head of university partnerships and business development across the US and Latin America at Coursera.

2009

Keith D. Hoffmann C'09 is running for Rhode Island attorney general in the 2026 Democratic primary election. Keith, a Rhode Island native, previously served as chief of policy and senior counsel to the Rhode Island attorney general, where he helped build the state's Public Protection Bureau, expanded access to healthcare, and played a central role in Rhode Island's efforts to challenge harmful federal actions. His campaign website is keithhoffmann.com.

Leonela Vaccaro Padrón C'09 has been promoted to partner at Venable LLP. She specializes in corporate law, and lending and finance transactions.

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 15–18, 2026!

2011

Andrew Steinmetz C'11 L'17 has been promoted to partner at the law firm Boies Schiller Flexner. Andrew is a trial and appellate litigator who focuses on complex commercial disputes and class actions, with substantial experience in practice areas including real estate, healthcare, financial services, sports and entertainment, and corporate restructuring.

2015

Jessica Schneider Rollén C'15 and **Sebastian Rollén C'16 W'16** welcomed their second child, Eleanor Rose "Ellie" Rollén, on August 16. The Rolléns still live in New York City and write, "everyone is doing well, including Evie who has been embracing her new role as a Big Sister."

Celebrate Your Reunion, May 15–18, 2026!

2016

Sebastian Rollén C'16 W'16 see **Jessica Schneider Rollén C'15.**

2018

Farah Otero-Amad C'18, a video producer and host at the *Wall Street Journal,* has been named to *Forbes's* 30 Under 30 list for 2026 in the Media category. From the description: "She's a trilingual journalist who has written, shot and edited stories on global issues—including the economic impact of Bad Bunny's residency, the status of SNAP benefits, the 2024 presidential election and even a hip-hop school in Medellín (which won Best Documentary Short at New York CineFest)."

Michael J. Torcello C'18 has joined Democracy Forward, a nonprofit legal organization, as senior staff attorney. Recently, Michael argued for the plaintiffs in *Rhode Island State Council of Churches v. Rollins*, where Democracy Forward urged the court to enforce its order that the Trump administration provide urgently needed Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) payments. US District Court Judge John McConnell Jr. agreed with the plaintiffs and ordered the government to comply. As a result of the work of Michael and his coworkers at Democracy Forward, the Court ordered SNAP benefits to resume for over 40 million Americans.

2019

Ari M. Gordon Gr'19, director of Muslim–Jewish relations for the American Jewish Committee, is the author of a new book, *Sacred Orientation in Late Antiquity and Early Islam: The Qibla as Ritual, Metaphor, and Identity Marker*. He writes, "It is based on my dissertation at Penn and explores the manifold ways that Muslim, Jewish, and Christian orientation for worship in a particular sacred direction created a sense of collective belonging for those communities."

Angela Simms Gr'19, assistant professor of sociology and urban studies at Barnard College-Columbia University, is the author of a new book, *Fighting for a Foothold: How Government and Markets Undermine Black Middle-Class Suburbia*. From the book's press materials: "Dr. Simms draws on her background as a sociologist and former federal policy analyst to dig into the deeper inequalities that still persist between Black and white suburbs, like imbalances in the quality of schools, public spaces, and even drinking water."

Anny Zhuo Nu'19 GNu'23 and **Jonathan Chen C'19** welcomed baby girl Juni on December 11, 2025. As a midwife at Pennsylvania Hospital, Anny was able to help catch the baby.

2025

Maxwell Morganroth W'25 was named to *Forbes*'s 30 Under 30 list in the transportation and aerospace category. Maxwell is CEO of Rove, which helps Gen Z earn airline miles on everyday spending. From *Forbes*: "They partner with 14 major airline and hotel programs, which cover 140 individual airlines and 200,000 hotels, and tens of thousands of stores. The company has raised $3.5 million from backers including Y Combinator, Peak XV Partners, General Catalyst, Soma Capital and Pear VC."

1943

C. C. Collie Jr. W'43, Dallas, a retired banker, real estate developer, and healthcare specialist for the elderly; Oct. 19, at 102. He served in the US Navy during World War II. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity.

1947

Dorothy McPhillimy Thomas Ed'47 GEd'48, Media, PA, a health and physical education teacher; Dec. 5, at 100. At Penn, she was a member of the basketball and field hockey teams.

1948

Doris Hamilton Kranzley Ed'48, Kennett Square, PA, a customer service manager at Cyklop Strapping; Oct. 20, at 99.

Albert Z. Segal ME'48, Pennington, NJ, retired director of Allstates Design and Development Company; Dec. 14, at 100. He served in the US Army Corps of Engineers during World War II. One son is Dr. Arthur L. Segal C'73 D'76 GD'78.

1951

Richard Lynn Miller Jr. ChE'51, Commerce Township, MI, a retired scientist for Dow Chemical; Jan 7. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

1952

Claire Mamourian Harootunian Ed'52, San Diego, an artist and teacher who taught at Syracuse University; Nov. 7. At Penn, she was a member of Penn Players.

Arthur H. Hurwitz W'52, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, a retired lawyer; Oct. 26. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity.

Marcelle Freed Marcus CW'52, Santa Rosa, CA, an educator who helped immigrants with loans, jobs, and the English language; Dec. 4.

Barbara G. Walker CW'52, Sarasota, FL, a pioneer in the world of knitting who authored how-to books and invented about 1,000 patterns of her own; Dec. 21. She also published books on feminism and mythology, as well as some tarot card decks. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, Penn Players, and Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

1953

Barbara Markoe Scott CW'53, Philadelphia, a former basketball, field hockey, and lacrosse coach; Oct. 19. In her later years, she managed a real estate office. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, and the basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, and tennis teams. Two sisters are Annis Lee Reeves CW'53 and Cintra Scott Rodgers CW'58 (Franklyn L. Rodgers W'58).

Irwin J. Stein Ar'53, Bryn Mawr, PA, an architect; April 20, 2022. His work, particularly private, single-family residences in the tri-state region of southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, is representative of mid-century modern American architecture. Penn's Architectural Archives now houses his collection of architectural drawings, project photographs, and project files.

1954

Frank J. Campbell III W'54, Media, PA, a retired investment banker; Sept. 9. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity. Two daughters are Tracy Campbell Smith C'84 and Cynthia Campbell Crochiere C'87.

Anne Morseberger Krabbe G'54, Baltimore, July 17.

Gary M. Newman W'54, Murrells Inlet, SC, a former life insurance agent; Dec. 22. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity, WXPN, and the ROTC.

1955

Dr. Carl Wendell Lofland D'55, Kennett Square, PA, a retired dentist; Nov. 4. He served in the US Air Force Dental Corps.

Hope Haimowitz Seitchik CW'55, West Palm Beach, FL, a former interior designer; Nov. 10. Her husband is Dr. Murray W. Seitchik CGS'07.

1956

Daniel B. Moskowitz W'56, Washington, DC, a journalist and retired bureau chief for *McGraw-Hill World News* in Denver and Toronto; Oct. 29. In retirement, he was an instructor of music and theater for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at American University. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity and WXPN. One daughter is Luise Z. Moskowitz C'87 GGS'98 CGS'02, and one grandchild is David C. Lawrence C'22.

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.

Carl W. Schneider L'56, Philadelphia, a retired corporate lawyer; Dec. 18. One sister is Julie Schneider Berkowitz G'82 CGS'07, and one grandchild is Margot O. Schneider C'26.

Dr. Jay J. Simmons V'56, Voorhees, NJ, a retired veterinarian and a high school biology and anatomy teacher; Dec. 19.

1957

Caris Andreuzzi Carr CW'57, Middlebury, VT, Dec. 19. She worked in marketing communications for CIGNA. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority.

Dr. Edward S. Cooper GM'57, Philadelphia, a professor emeritus of medicine in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine; Dec. 12, at 99. He joined Penn's faculty in 1958. By 1973, he was the first Black faculty member in the School of Medicine to be appointed a full professor. While he was working at Philadelphia General Hospital (PGH) earlier in his career, he had noticed that, even though the patient base was both Black and white, most stroke patients were Black, and their strokes were largely caused by brain bleeds and uncontrolled hypertension. He set out to study this discrepancy. He cofounded a stroke research center at PGH that later moved to Penn. His research informed fellow physicians and the public about the high prevalence of strokes in America's Black population and other understudied groups. He was among the first researchers to emphasize the similarity in the risk factors for strokes and heart disease, such as high blood pressure and cholesterol, and the need for better control of these risk factors. He once treated Martin Luther King Jr. (following up on treatment after King had been stabbed with a letter opener). In 1993, he was named the first Black president of the American Heart Association. He retired from Penn in 1995. A professorship at Penn was established in his name, as well as the Edward S. Cooper Internal Medicine Clinic in University City. Two children are Dr. Lisa Cooper Hudgins M'79 and Charles W. Cooper C'80. He served at the US Clark Air Force Base hospital as its first Black chief of medical services.

Dr. James F. Devoe V'57, Millville, PA, a retired veterinarian; Dec. 20.

Richard W. Elliott C'57, Boothbay Harbor, ME, an attorney; Dec. 6. He served in the US Navy and the US Navy Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and the ROTC.

David B. Everett CE'57 GCE'61, Hamilton Square, NJ, retired chief engineer for the Delaware River Basin Commission; Dec. 14.

Dr. Walter J. Gamble M'57, Lexington, MA, a retired pediatric cardiologist at Boston Children's Hospital; Nov. 9. He and his wife established the 21st Century Endowed Scholars Fund at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine in 1992. To date, the fund has sustained 399 graduates, known as Gamble Scholars.

J. David R. Kramer Jr. EE'57, North Andover, MA, an engineer who worked with radar systems for the MITRE Corporation; Dec. 8.

Joseph D. Kuo Ar'57, Philadelphia, a retired architect and real estate developer; Sept. 19. For a time, he taught architecture at Penn. Two children are Brenda Kuo Pfeiffer C'83 GAr'89 (Marc P. Pfeiffer EE'82) and Laura Kuo Carmany C'88, and one grandchild is Charlotte Kuo Carmany C'27.

Susan Fox Mermelstein Ed'57, Newton, MA, a retired teacher; Oct. 15. Her son is Lee D. Mermelstein EAS'86.

Susann Ferguson Neely CW'57, West Palm Beach, FL, a former real estate agent; Nov. 27.

1958

Nancy Schunter Birkmeyer SW'58, Sea Isle City, NJ, a retired social worker who recruited and counseled foster parents; Dec. 23. Her husband is John F. "Jack" Birkmeyer Jr. SW'58.

G. Thomas Hill WG'58, Portland, OR, owner and operator of a packaging machinery and materials company; May 21, 2024. He served in the US Army.

Ruth Ella Hindman Ed'58 GEd'61, Philadelphia, a retired elementary school teacher; Nov. 30. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority.

Donald M. Levine Gr'58, Glen Rock, NJ, a professor emeritus of biology at William Paterson University; June 2, 2024.

Robert M. Rowlands C'58 L'62, Mechanicsburg, PA, a retired lawyer and law professor at Penn State and Harrisburg Area Community College; Nov. 27. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

Irene Cohen Wurtzel Ed'58, Washington, DC, a playwright and writer; Nov. 4. One daughter is Ellen Rosenberg Lessans C'82.

1959

Stuart J. Horner Jr. W'59, Warminster, PA, a retired lawyer; Dec. 4. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity. His wife is Christel Hagedorn Horner CW'60.

Joel E. Jensen WG'59, Bryn Mawr, PA, a retired management consultant; Feb. 19.

David M. Jordan L'59, Haverford, PA, a retired lawyer and author of books about political history and baseball; Jan 24. He served in the US Army. Two children are Diana M. Jordan C'83 and Sarah Jordan C'90 G'91, and one grandchild is Charles Jordan-Weinstein C'24 G'25.

Earl A. Meyerson W'59, Potomac, MD, a retired businessman and former owner and operator of two high-fashion ladies clothing stores and a ski and tennis shop in Washington, DC; Nov. 29. He served as a cryptographer in the US Army Signal Corps and the US Army Reserves. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Sigma Rho fraternity.

Bernard N. Silver W'59, Boynton Beach, FL, a retired accounting executive; Dec 7. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Delta Phi fraternity and the heavyweight rowing team.

1960

Dr. Robert M. Abrams D'60 Gr'63, Bridgewater, NJ, a professor in obstetrics-gynecology at the University of Florida; Dec. 11. He researched the impact of drugs and noise on fetal development. He served in the US Army.

Christine Postenrieder Miller Ed'60, Stratford, WI, a retired high school German teacher; Nov. 2.

Dr. Charles M. "Skip" Rohrbaugh GM'60, New Cumberland, PA, a retired obstetrician-gynecologist; Dec. 14. He served in the US Air Force.

Hudson B. "Pete" Scattergood W'60 WG'67, Linwood, NJ, former chief development officer at several Delaware Valley organizations, including Einstein Montgomery Medical Center, Montgomery Hospital Medical Center, and Ursinus College; Nov. 29. He began his development career at Penn (1961–1971). As a student at Penn, he was a member of Theta Xi fraternity and the track team. As an alumnus, he was a board member of Penn's General Alumni Society and received the Alumni Award of Merit in 1980.

Merrill W. Stephens G'60, Cragford, AL, a retired general contractor; March 18, 2024. He served in the US Army National Guard.

Dr. J. Frederick Walk M'60, Winchester, VA, a retired obstetrician-gynecologist; Dec. 2. He served in the US Army.

1961

Robert A. Freedman L'61, New York, a retired literary agent and owner of a dramatic arts agency; Sept. 22.

Lorraine Kalfayan Marina GEd'61, Frederick, MD, a retired middle school teacher; Dec. 9.

Clarice O. Neil McGee DH'61, Camp Hill, PA, a retired dental hygienist; Dec. 2.

Dr. Jan N. Safer M'61, Commack, NY, a physician in the field of neuroradiology; Dec. 20. His wife is Lois Ballen Safer Ed'56 GEd'68 GrEd'03.

1962

Sandra Keefe McMullin CW'62, Newtown Square, PA, a retired fashion sales consultant; Oct. 22. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. One child is Anita L. McMullin C'85.

Marion Lane Murray GEd'62, Long Beach, NY, a retired teacher; Nov. 16, 2020.

David F. Peachin W'62, Tucson, AZ, an accounting executive; Nov. 18. He served in the US Air National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity. His son is Jeffrey L. Peachin C'91.

1963

David R. Emery G'63, East Norriton, PA, a high school and college math teacher; Nov. 29. He was an assistant instructor of mathematics at Penn from 1961 to 1963.

Robyn L. Newkumet CW'63, Narberth, PA, a former high school French teacher and head of the foreign language department; Oct. 18. She was also a field placement advisor in Bryn Mawr College's education certification program. At Penn, she was a member of the Pennguinnettes, a synchronized swimming team.

Dr. Alvia Gaskin de Urdaneta GM'63, Maracaibo, Venezuela, a retired pathologist and professor of medicine at the Universidad del Zulia; Dec. 13. Her husband is Dr. Jose E. Urdaneta GM'63.

Donald W. Warren Gr'63, Vass, NC, a dental medicine professor at the Univer-

sity of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Dec. 2. He served in the US Army Reserve.

1964

Dr. Norman Browner D'64, Miami, FL, a retired dentist; Nov. 4. He served in the US Army as a dentist.

Richard A. Dow Jr. C'64, South Dartmouth, MA, a former model, actor, and family therapist; Nov. 18. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Psi fraternity.

Anne Sceia Klein W'64 ASC'65, Medford, NJ, retired founder and president of an award-winning public relations firm; Jan. 21. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Delta sorority, the *Pennsylvania News*, and the softball and basketball teams. She was also a longtime volunteer for her class and coauthor of *On the Cusp: The Women of Penn '64*, which shares the stories of Penn alumnae who went on to excel in business, academia, and other nontraditional female roles during the 1960s and '70s ["Alumni Profiles," Sep|Oct 2018].

Dr. Robert A. Lobis C'64, Bath, ME, retired medical director of inpatient psychiatry at Children's Hospital of Boston; Oct. 26. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. One stepdaughter is Emily C. Wolfe-Roubatis Nu'14 GNu'16.

John E. Olson C'64 WG'66, Houston, a retired Wall Street analyst; Dec. 9. He was fired from Merrill Lynch after refusing to recommend Enron and then gained international recognition when the company imploded. He testified in Congress, was interviewed by various media outlets, and was featured in the documentary *The Smartest Guys in the Room*. He served in the US Army and the Air National Guard. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity.

Larry L. "Satch" Sampson PT'64, Spanish Fort, AL, retired director of clinical services at the University of Alabama at Birmingham; Dec. 7. He served in the US Army.

1965

Dr. Seth A. Koch V'65 GV'70, Princeton, NJ, a veterinarian specializing in ophthalmology; Dec. 18.

Dr. Neil H. Levine C'65, Indianapolis, a retired orthopedic surgeon; Nov. 28. He served in the US Army Medical Corps.

Smith Murphey IV WG'65, Sumner, MS, a former systems engineer for IBM who later became a farmer; Dec. 16. He was mayor of Sumner for a time and volunteered as a firefighter. He served in the US Army Security Agency.

Edward J. Wiest V'65, Fairfield, FL, a retired veterinarian; Nov. 25. He served in the US Army 82nd Airborne Division.

1966

Col. Stanley J. Delikat G'66, League City, TX, retired bureau chief for emergency response at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; Dec. 16. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam and Korean Wars.

Basil W. Henderson Jr. C'66, Washington, DC, a healthcare policy expert; Oct. 23, 2023.

Joel E. Kinley WEv'66 CGS'73, Weatherford, TX, a real estate agent; Dec. 16.

David A. Lewis W'66, Bonita Springs, FL, retired founder of a computer and mailing services company; Dec. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity and Penn Singers.

Jerome A. "Jerry" Messina L'66, Bryn Mawr, PA, a retired lawyer; Nov. 9. His daughter is Victoria A. Messina L'05.

Achilles J. "Oggie" Pappano Gr'66, West Simsbury, CT, a professor emeritus at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, Dentistry, and Graduate Medical Education; Dec. 31, 2024.

1967

Paula Austin McNichols WG'67, Winchester, VA, a management consultant; Oct. 18. Her husband is Gerald R. "Mac" McNichols G'66.

Gerald J. Reilly WG'67, Olympia, WA, executive director of the Washington Healthcare Association; Dec. 7.

Christian M. Yost GEd'67, Newfields, NH, a retired construction inspector and consultant; Dec. 14. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

1968

John S. Altman C'68, Kansas City, MO, a former English literature teacher and documentary filmmaker; Oct. 13. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity, WXPN, and Penn Players.

Dr. Daniel M. Freeman GM'68, Princeton, NJ, a psychiatrist; Nov. 16. He also taught psychiatry at Penn's School of Medicine, Hahnemann University, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

Mark Kreher W'68, Santa Monica, CA, a retired investment banker; Nov. 7. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

Alasdair J. H. Saunders WG'68, London, July 13.

Allan W. Sherwin C'68, Richland, WA, March 1, 2025.

Olin B. Van Dyck Gr'68, Albuquerque, NM, a retired physicist who worked at the Los Alamos Meson Physics Facility; Nov. 5.

1969

Michael F. J. Brady MTE'69 Gr'77, Cape Coral, FL, a research scientist in the telecommunications industry; Dec. 15. His brother is John P. Brady MTE'70.

Julie Patton Currie CW'69 GrEd'80, Lafayette Hill, PA, a former attorney and law professor at Temple University and Chestnut Hill College; Dec. 19.

Ellen R. Domb G'69, North Palm Beach, FL, an engineering consultant specializing in TRIZ (Theory of Inventive Problem Solving) methodology; Dec. 5. Her husband is Dr. William C. Domb D'74.

Dr. David N. Hornick M'69, Niskayuna, NY, a physician specializing in home care; Nov. 16.

Laura L. Persily CW'69, Richmond, MA, retired sales manager for a computer company; Oct. 27.

James B. Schaefer C'69 GFA'74, Ambler, PA, an artist and technical support specialist; Oct. 24.

Miles S. Sibell W'69, Roslyn, NY, Feb. 16, 2025. At Penn, he was a member of the baseball team.

Charles B. Worsham G'69, Glenmoore, PA, May 2, 2024.

1970

Frank T. Freidl CE'70, Williams Township, PA, retired regional distribution manager for an electric distribution company; Dec. 27. From 1992 to 2002 he served as the Williams Township Supervisor. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity and Sphinx Senior Society.

1971

Gretchen E. Behl G'71, Hampton, NH, a former school librarian, substitute teacher, and owner of a bed and breakfast; Dec. 2.

Frederic Blatt FA'71, Fly Creek, NY, an artist and teacher; Dec. 3.

Robert A. Mintzer (Rei Muroji) C'71 G'72, Tokyo, a professional translator for companies such as Goldman Sachs, Mitsubishi, and Pokémon; Oct. 31.

1972

Eileen I. Berko CW'72, Merion Station, PA, Dec. 27. At Penn, she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. Her brother is Stephen J. Berko C'68.

Barbra L. Eaton Gr'72, Easthampton, MA, a retired biochemist; Nov. 9.

Catherine Molchany Immerman Nu'72, Wolcott, NY, a nurse at her husband's optometry practice; Nov. 13. Earlier in her career, she worked at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

Leo T. Jones G'72, Ipswich, MA, Dec. 19. He retired from the Hartford Insurance Company. He served in the US Army as an interpreter.

1973

Marcia Ensinger Chernoff Gr'73, Rydal, PA, Nov. 6. Her husband is Dr. Arthur Chernoff M'72.

Dr. William L. "Bill" Elkins GM'73, East Fallowfield Township, PA, an associate professor emeritus of pathology and laboratory medicine in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine; Nov. 11. From 1959 to 1962, he worked at the Wistar Institute doing biomedical research. He joined the faculty of the School of Medicine in 1969 as an assistant professor of pathology and laboratory medicine. He conducted pioneering research on how the human immune system fights infection and disease, with a specific focus on bone marrow transplants and pediatric oncology. He retired from Penn in 1987 and bought a nearly 300-acre farm in Chester County, PA, with his wife. He became an expert on breeding cattle and growing the high-energy grass they eat and was a champion of holistic regenerative farming. He served in the US Navy.

Rachel R. Munafo CGS'73 G'78 CGS'07, Havertown, PA, a retired family law mediator; Dec. 8.

Ann Coghlan Stowe Nu'73 GNu'76, Newtown Square, PA, chair emeritus of the nursing department at West Chester University; Aug. 3.

Carole J. Westerman GeEd'73, Newark, DE, a retired counseling psychologist for the Veterans Administration; Dec. 1.

1974

Angela E. Fincato SW'74, Mount Carmel, PA, a retired social work administrator; Nov. 30. Earlier in her career, she worked as a field instructor in Penn's School of Social Policy and Practice.

1976

Bettina C. "Tina" Ferguson L'76, Elkton, MD, Dec. 21.

Laurie H. Newitz W'76, New York, retired chief financial officer at Brooklyn Law School; Oct. 28. Her husband is Kenneth E. Adelsberg W'76.

1977

John L. Radcliffe Jr. WEv'77, Wayne, PA, an addictions counselor; Sept. 8. He served in the US Army 82nd Airborne Division.

1978

Dr. Emery "Sam" Castimore Jr. V'78, Augusta, NJ, a veterinarian and former racehorse breeder; Nov. 9.

Dr. Douglas Brock Cines GM'78, Philadelphia, a physician and professor of pathology and laboratory medicine at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine; Dec. 7. He specialized in the field of immune thrombocytopenic disorders, and his research has helped advance the understanding and treatment of platelet and special coagulation disorders. In addition to teaching, he was also the director of what is now the Douglas Cines, MD, Special Coagulation Laboratory at Penn. Two daughters are Valerie Cines C'98 and Pamela H. Cines CGS'00.

Cynthia C. Olds C'78, Philadelphia, a former healthcare administrator, writer, editor, and tutor; Oct. 14. At Penn, she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and Penn Singers. Her husband is Benjamin B. Greeley C'81, and one daughter is MaryElizabeth Gillespie Rouse Olds Greeley C'23.

1980

Derek W. Cox GLA'80 GRP'81, Nashville, TN, a retired architect; Oct. 23.

Donald J. Harrington WG'80, East Liverpool, OH, former director of management systems for a ceramics manufacturer; Sept. 13.

David P. Leibnitz ChE'80, Patterson, NY, an engineer; Dec. 19.

Beatrice M. May GEd'80, Somerset, NJ, retired chair of the home economics department at Rutgers University; Oct. 27.

Michael J. Plummer W'80, New York, cofounder of an art finance advisory firm that provided counsel to Fortune 500 companies, and a former executive with the fine arts and collectibles auctioneering house Heritage Auctions; Dec. 12.

1981

Melvin Deloy Pack Gr'81, Provo, UT, a retired lecturer in Hebrew at Brigham Young University; Dec. 20, 2024.

1982

Julianne Harmon James G'82, Yeadon, PA, former executive director of Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly in Philadelphia; Nov. 10. She also served as tax collector of Yeadon.

Rev. Kevin A. Wardlaw WEv'82, Seminole, FL, a pastor, chaplain, and teacher; Dec. 5. One brother is Charles H. Wardlaw ChE'75 (Sonia C. Jaipaul C'76 G'76).

1984

Karen L. Glass C'84 W'84, Studio City, CA, a film executive at Disney; Dec. 22. She worked on films such as *The Princess Diaries* and *Freaky Friday*. At Penn, she was a member of Sphinx Senior Society. One sister is Randi Glass Murray W'78 WG'79.

Dr. David E. Kenny Jr. V'84, Denver, CO, a veterinarian at the Denver Zoo; Dec. 11.

1986

Steven B. Grunblatt W'86, Mahwah, NJ, chief information officer of a bank; Dec. 18. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and the baseball and gymnastics teams.

1987

Lee Scott Zimmerman W'87, Blue Bell, PA, an executive at TE Connectivity, a manufacturer of electronic components; Nov. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

1989

Julia Ryan Davis WG'89, Rogers, AR, a former healthcare consultant; Dec. 13. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority.

Dr. Patricia A. Huber GM'89, Coopersburg, PA, Dec. 7. Her husband is Dr. Ralph S. Sisson M'85 GM'89 GM'91.

1992

Jerrilyn "Jerri" McGregory Gr'92, Tallahassee, FL, a folklorist and professor emer-

ita of English at Florida State University; Aug. 5. As a scholar of American folkways, the Caribbean, and the African Diaspora, she had vast archives of research, which will be housed at the African American Museum and Research Library (AAMRL) in West Palm Beach, Florida, set to open in 2028.

Andrea J. Vernot GEng'92, West Chester, PA, a retired systems engineer at Lockheed Martin; Dec. 3.

1994

Max W. "Bill" Dix Jr. WAM'94, Centennial, CO, a coal mining executive; Sept. 15, 2024.

Robert F. Perricelli GEx'94, Point Pleasant, NJ, a retired engineer; Oct. 24.

1996

John E. "Jack" Briggs Gr'96, Wilmington, DE, an elementary school teacher and education consultant; Jan. 11. He also had a side career as a history teller, portraying a medieval knight, a pirate, a Civil War soldier, and other historical roles.

1997

Eugenia C. Antipas C'97, Ridgewood, NJ, a business executive at The Clearing House, a banking association and payments company based in New York; June 20.

2004

Daniel H. McQuade C'04, Philadelphia, a writer and visual editor at Defector Media; Jan. 28. He previously served as a journalist, writer, and blogger for other outlets, including *Philadelphia Weekly, Philadelphia* magazine, and Deadspin, writing quirky, Philly-centric culture and sports pieces as well as a recently poignant one on his battle against neuroendocrine cancer. He was also a community activist, helping charitable nonprofits such as the Everywhere Project, Back on My Feet, and Prevention Point. At Penn, he was an award-winning writer and editor at *34th Street Magazine* and the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, which in early February published a tribute to him with recollections from his former colleagues.

Faculty & Staff

Thomas C. Childers Jr., Media, PA, the Sheldon and Lucy Hackney Professor Emeritus in the department of history in Penn's School of Arts & Sciences; Nov. 7. He joined SAS in 1977 as an assistant professor of history. After several promotions, he became an endowed professor in 2002. Widely beloved by students for his vivid and engaging lectures on World War II, he received several teaching awards, including the Ira Abrams Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching in the Arts and Sciences (1987), and the Spotlight on Teaching Award as the Best Lecturer in the Humanities (2004), selected by Penn's entire student body. He was a scholar of German history, and particularly studied the rise of the Nazis and World War II. He held a number of visiting professorships, including at Smith College and Swarthmore College, and he is the author of many books. He retired in 2016. He served in the US Army Ready Reserves during the Vietnam War.

Dr. Douglas Brock Cines. *See Class of 1978.*

Dr. Edward S. Cooper. *See Class of 1957.*

Dr. William L. "Bill" Elkins. *See Class of 1973.*

David R. Emery. *See Class of 1963.*

Angela E. Fincato. *See Class of 1974.*

Dr. Daniel M. Freeman. *See Class of 1968.*

Frank I. Goodman, Philadelphia, a professor emeritus of law in the Penn Carey Law School; Dec. 26. After an early career as an entertainment and government lawyer, he came to Penn's law school as a visiting professor in 1973. Two years later, he was appointed full professor. He taught classes on constitutional law, federal courts, and constitutional theory. He was known to stay after class with students, debating the fine points of the law and advanced constitutional theory, investing time in students' personal experiences, and writing numerous letters of recommendation. He retired in 2014.

Catherine Molchany Immerman. *See Class of 1972.*

Joseph D. Kuo. *See Class of 1957.*

Frank G. Matero, Wilmington, DE, the Gonick Family Professor in the department of historic preservation and a professor of architecture in Penn's Weitzman School of Design, Dec. 19. He joined Penn's faculty in 1990 as an associate professor, becoming full professor in 2004. He organized sold-out conferences and founded and directed Penn's Center for Architectural Conservation, which has protected dozens of priceless cultural heritage sites. He was particularly proud of his work in Mancos, Colorado, where he collaborated with local residents and colleagues to revitalize an abandoned newspaper office and print shop as a community center. He also founded and edited *Change Over Time*, an international journal on conservation and the built environment published by Penn Press. In recent years, he focused on developing a framework for material and site risk and vulnerability related to climate change, and he was completing a book on the conservation of concrete architecture.

Hudson B. "Pete" Scattergood. *See Class of 1960.*

School Abbreviations

Ar	Architecture
ASC	Annenberg
C	College (bachelor's)
CCC	College Collateral Courses
CE	Civil Engineering
CGS	College of General Studies (till 2008)
Ch	Chemistry
ChE	Chemical Engineering
CW	College for Women (till 1975)
D	Dental Medicine
DH	Dental Hygiene
EAS	Engineering and Applied Science (bachelor's)
Ed	Education
EE	Electrical Engineering
FA	Fine Arts
G	master's, Arts and Sciences
GAr	master's, Architecture
GCE	master's, Civil Engineering
GCh	master's, Chemical Engineering
GCP	master's, City Planning
GD	Dental, post-degree
GEd	master's, Education
GEE	master's, Electrical Engineering
GEng	master's, Engineering and Applied Science
GEx	master's, Engineering Executive
GFA	master's, Fine Arts
GGS	master's, College of General Studies
GL	master's, Law
GLA	master's, Landscape Architecture
GME	master's, Mechanical Engineering
GM	Medicine, post-degree
GMt	master's, Metallurgical Engineering
GNu	master's, Nursing
GPU	master's, Governmental Administration
Gr	doctorate
GrC	doctorate, Civil Engineering
GrE	doctorate, Electrical Engineering
GrEd	doctorate, Education
GrL	doctorate, Law
GrN	doctorate, Nursing
GRP	master's, Regional Planning
GrS	doctorate, Social Work
GrW	doctorate, Wharton
GV	Veterinary, post-degree
Hon	Honorary
HUP	Nurse training (till 1978)
L	Law
LAr	Landscape Architecture
LPS	Liberal and Professional Studies
M	Medicine
ME	Mechanical Engineering
MT	Medical Technology
MtE	Metallurgical Engineering
Mu	Music
NEd	Certificate in Nursing
Nu	Nursing (bachelor's)
OT	Occupational Therapy
PSW	Pennsylvania School of Social Work
PT	Physical Therapy
SAMP	School of Allied Medical Professions
SPP	Social Policy and Practice (master's)
SW	Social Work (master's) (till 2005)
V	Veterinary Medicine
W	Wharton (bachelor's)
WAM	Wharton Advanced Management
WEF	Wharton Extension Finance
WEv	Wharton Evening School
WG	master's, Wharton
WMP	Wharton Management Program

Classifieds

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Diana Caramanico (No. 23) holds up the Ivy League championship trophy with teammates after leading Penn to its first women's basketball title 25 years ago.

Forever the First

"This building has been really good to me."

That's what Diana Caramanico W'01 LPS'11 told the *Daily Pennsylvanian* after leading the Penn women's basketball team to a win at the Palestra over Princeton to conclude the 2000–01 regular season.

The victory, as the *Gazette* described it at the time ["Sports," May|Jun 2001], "finished off a spectacular and unprecedented season."

That Penn team, which this year celebrates its 25-year anniversary, won the program's first Ivy League championship, went undefeated in conference play (only the second time that happened), and closed the regular season on an NCAA-best 21-game winning streak.

The Quakers' first trip to the NCAA tournament was less kind as they got routed, 100–57, in the first round by Texas Tech, in Lubbock, Texas. But it was an appropriate end for Caramanico to play her final college game on the national stage.

One of the most dominant Penn athletes across any sport, Caramanico closed her four-year career with 2,415 total points, which is still the record for Penn and the Ivy League (and, until 2023, the Big 5). She also holds program records for career rebounds (1,207) and steals (201), and she formed a potent pairing with another 1,000-point scorer in classmate Erin Ladley (now Leonard) C'01.

In a *Gazette* feature on 100 years of women's sports at Penn ["Century Club," Jul|Aug 2021], Caramanico recalled her senior season in 2000–01 in vivid detail, from her program-record 42-point outburst in a game against Albany to the Ivy-clinching win at Harvard that lacked much of a celebration because, she said, Harvard "hid anything we could stand on to cut down the nets."

Caramanico and the rest of the Quakers instead saved their big celebration for their Palestra finale on March 7, 2001, hoisting up the championship trophy in front of their home fans and opening doors for a program that would go on to win five more league titles. *—DZ*

Photo by Tommy Leonardi C'89

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