Summer 2020

Macalester Today Summer 2020

Macalester College

MACALESTER

TODAY

SUMMER 2020

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FEATURES

ON THE COVER:
How did we get here? That's the question that Professor Duchess Harris has been fielding from media this summer, and she can't answer without drawing on history.

LEFT TO RIGHT: KYRANI KANAVAROS; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; OBADAH ALJEFRI; PHOTO PROVIDED; JESSE DITTMAR

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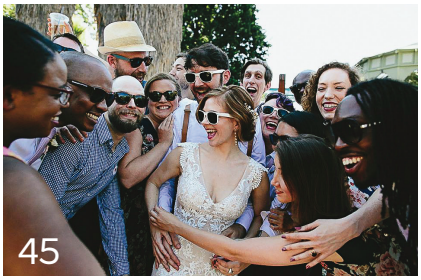
DEPARTMENTS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Rosenberg Reflections

You did such a fine job of capturing the essence of Brian Rosenberg (Spring 2020). My President was Dr. Turck. I have very limited personal contact with Dr. Rosenberg but treat him as "my President" for all of the reasons you captured with his departing thoughts. His greatest gift is the ability to connect with you at your level, forgetting about his PhD.

Don Olson '58
Vashon Island, Wash.

Expanded Timeline

Your "Points of Struggle, Points of Pride" article about Macalester's queer history was informative as it traced life from the invisibility of the '60s to the full openness of 2020. I am mentioned in the article under the Summer 1971 section about Jack and Michael's marriage. Jack and I enjoyed our talk with the brave lesbian and gay students who invited us to speak with them. I also want to add that I am a Mac alum, Class of 1970, which made speaking there all the more meaningful for me.

Karen Browne-Courage '70
Northampton, Mass.

I enjoyed reading Hillary Moses Mohaupt's article regarding Mac's LGBTQ history. I remember trying out for a production of Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" in 1968, and the director had turned Estragon into a woman. He didn't want to show two men on stage kissing each other, as per Beckett's directions, because "that would be gay," he said, "and that would be sad." Yes, that was liberal Macalester College back in the 1960s. Beyond homophobic.

Robert Hofler '72
New York, N.Y.

I read "Points of Struggle, Points of Pride" first, in your good alumni magazine, because my experience at Mac as a feminist was so very formative. A couple of historical things missing from the 1970s summary were: Redstocking Cafe, an all-woman space for hanging out, held in the chapel one or two nights a week; and Consciousness Raising (CR) groups. These small, facilitated, woman-only groups were common in this second wave of feminism that was the '70s. We rotated where we met, in different people's dorm rooms. In our group of eight or so women, one woman came out to the others, and it was the first lesbian I'd ever met. Or at least that I knew was a lesbian! Ah, times have changed—although in some ways from your decade by decade synopsis, it seems too slowly.

Betsy MacMichael '78
Durham, N.C.

"How to Practice Medicine in Alaska"

"How to Practice Medicine in Alaska" told the story of a "frontier" doctor. Frontier was defined as "beyond rural." But frontier does not mean "beyond rural"—it means a desired, divine dreamland in desperate need of colonization. Frontier ideology continues to inspire and glorify brutal, pervasive attacks on Indigenous nationhood and Indigenous lives in Alaska. To use this term without critique betrays Macalester's values. If geographic isolation is all the article intended to describe, "rural-remote" is a common term. If the author employed "frontier" for its mythic effect—we must ask why, and hold ourselves accountable to the full context of that myth.

Maya Pisel '13
Lawrence, Kan., and Juneau, Alaska

I really enjoyed reading about Heidi Baines and the roads she travelled to lead her eventually to Alaska. From her remarks I presume she has studied native culture and some of Alaskan history. Would love to hear more!

Louise Roome Klimoff '64
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Editor's Note

This summer, George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police six miles from Macalester's campus ignited a global movement. Many Macalester alumni joined demonstrations affirming Black lives worldwide. Many dealt with fresh waves of pain that rippled across generations, particularly in Black communities. Many reflected, for the first time or the thousandth, on how they could play individual roles in dismantling white supremacy, and what it means to live out our Macalester values in the world.

We carry that reflection into our work on *Macalester Today*, where June found us midway through a summer issue that suddenly felt incomplete. In this publication, we strive to lift up and amplify the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). We know we can do more. In what ways does our storytelling uphold or dismantle structural racism, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy? In the immediate aftermath of George Floyd's death, how should we center Black perspectives without asking even more of those most affected by racism during a time of immense pain?

One clear message emerged from our conversations: we must sustain this commitment to shining light on racial justice work being done in, by, and among the Macalester community in the months and years ahead. In this edition, we start with the stories of BLMatMac's donation drive this summer (p. 8); the historical context that brought us to 2020, outlined by Professor Duchess Harris (p. 16); and why Keon West '06 says we must talk with children about race and racism (p. 23).

We invite you into the conversation. What stories—and whose stories—should we tell? Your feedback, ideas, and suggestions will help make *Macalester Today* stronger. Please email mactoday@macalester.edu. Together we will keep building a more just Macalester and a more just world.

–Rebecca DeJarlais Ortiz '06

WHEN IT COUNTS

Last fall, in my first conversations about the search for Macalester's next President, I was told several things that piqued my interest in the opportunity.

The first: Macalester is a very special place. As I met members of the Macalester family, I heard story after story about the ways in which Macalester changed a life, solved a problem, contributed to the well-being of the local community, or produced a new venture. Each was told with love and pride about Mac's values and its impact on the wider world.

The second: You would be walking into an ideal environment for a new President. Everyone I spoke to about the opportunity described the Macalester presidency as "a dream job."

This was a distinction meant to differentiate Macalester from colleges embarking on a leadership change from a position of vulnerability. The idea was that strong leadership, organizational stability, and a healthy financial position would make the transition to this job (relatively) easy for the successful candidate. In September, that was true. It was still true in January, when the Board of Trustees voted on my appointment.

What happened next, you all know. The arrival of the COVID-19 virus, and its cruel consequences for virtually every community around the world, disrupted the spring semester at Macalester and wreaked havoc on the global economy. College leadership made difficult decisions about moving coursework and other programs online, and sending most students home.

As I prepared to move to St. Paul, I was impressed by how the Macalester community took great care to attend to the needs of students, particularly those who were most vulnerable. I started participating in Zoom meetings with Mac's senior staff and I learned about all the creative and clever ways faculty and staff were pivoting their classes and programs. I began to understand that the pandemic would preclude many of the transition activities, such as social gatherings, I had looked forward to, and that the job of the President would be a lot more complicated than I originally imagined.

Then, midway through our drive from Cleveland to the Twin Cities in late May, George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis. Every time my spouse and I turned on the TV in our hotel at the end of each day, the news was more shocking and sad and infuriating. We wanted to get to the Twin Cities as quickly as possible so we could roll up our sleeves and try to be helpful.

We crossed into Minnesota on a Saturday night and I started the job on Monday morning, June 1, with the cities in crisis and everyone in our community hurting. We felt like we had arrived at the center of our country's broken heart.

I will never forget how, in that first week, I saw Macalester's values in action. You can say a lot of wonderful things about what you believe, but none of that really matters unless you actually come through when it counts. I learned that Macalester lives its values when it counts.

I saw members of our community joining demonstrations, standing on the front lines of civil disobedience, and gathering food and hygiene donations. When we created a community match, donors met it in 24 hours and hundreds of people wrote messages asking us to do more. That told me a lot about this place. When I got tired or discouraged, that deep, passionate commitment from everyone in this community buoyed me.

This summer, I've carried that energy and relied on that dedication as we set in motion new racial justice initiatives—including the Minnesota Opportunity Scholarship Fund to support underrepresented students of color from Minnesota—while simultaneously creating plans for a safer return to campus this fall. Because the public health landscape changes so rapidly, we need to plan contingency upon contingency, and I am energized by how passionately everyone is throwing themselves into this work. The pandemic is causing us to reimagine how we deliver the Macalester experience, and we're seeing incredible creativity and ingenuity from our faculty and staff as they approach these challenges.

And we're all learning. We're finding that closed captioning in Zoom lectures improves access, and that online academic advising means that every single student can schedule a session rather than just the most intrepid, extroverted students who show up for faculty office hours. In some ways, these tools are actually enhancing and improving what we do, and I hope we'll hold onto those lessons even when we can return to something more like the kind of campus life that we remember.

What's especially encouraging is that we continue to see evidence of the relevance and indispensability of the liberal arts at every turn. The global pandemic and the national civil rights crisis have laid bare structural inequalities in society, fragilities in political and economic systems, and vulnerabilities in the very fabric of our communities. We have an incredible opportunity in front of us right now to seize this moment and take all of that passion and energy, that righteous indignation, that shock that some people are feeling, and put it to work to change the things that we shouldn't accept.

Where but at a liberal arts college can students learn the skills to think critically about these problems, approach them in an interdisciplinary way, and engage with others to solve them from a position of empathy and compassion? Who better than Macalester can prepare world citizens equipped to address the clear challenges that we face today and the unknown challenges we will face in the future?

This summer, I saw in action Macalester's warmth, kindness, commitment to justice, and ethos of care. It is my incredible honor to guide and protect this place that we all love. Back in January, I never could have imagined the challenges we would face together. But there is no other place I would rather be.

Dr. Suzanne Rivera is President of Macalester College. **@MacalesterPres**

NORTH STAR AERIAL

1600 GRAND

SERENDIPITOUS DISCOVERY

In the summer of 1999, an international team of researchers carved a chunk of earth out of the Mahajanga Basin in northwest Madagascar, jacketed it in plaster, and shipped it back to the United States. The region is flush with fossils dating back millions of years, and the scientists thought they had discovered the remains of an ancient crocodile. It wasn't until years later, when the block was finally scanned, that they realized they had one of the most significant fossil discoveries in the early evolution of mammals on their hands.

"This particular block of sedimentary rock wasn't an immediate priority because we didn't know what was in it besides the small crocodile, and we had lots of fossil crocodiles," says Raymond Rogers, DeWitt Wallace Professor and Geology Department chair. Rogers has been the lead geologist and one of the long-standing co-principal investigators on the 25-year project in Madagascar, which is funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Geographic Society.

Working with local researchers from the University of Antananarivo, the team has unearthed some amazing fossil animals over the last quarter-century, including a giant predatory frog (*Beelzebufo*) and a meat-eating, cannibalistic dinosaur (*Majungasaurus*). None of these earlier finds, however, compare to what the team described in an April article published in the scientific journal *Nature*.

The specimen is the most complete and well-preserved skeleton for any Mesozoic-era mammal yet discovered in the southern hemisphere. So complete, in fact, that Rogers and his colleagues were able to identify the animal's exceptionally unusual features, including limbs that were adapted for both digging and running; numerous holes in the nasal region that indicate it likely had a very sensitive snout; and teeth unlike those known in any fossil or living mammal. "This strange mammal is without question the best-preserved specimen that we have yet discovered in the rocks of the Mahajanga Basin," says Rogers, one of the article's co-authors.

The team named the 66-million-year-old opossum-sized creature *Adalatherium*, which is translated from the Malagasy and Greek languages, and means "crazy beast." Mammals, especially ones of this size, were rare during the Cretaceous Period, when dinosaurs ruled much of the earth.

"It's very important because the fossil provides new insights into mammal morphology and evolution during the Mesozoic Era—a time when mammals were scurrying around at the feet of dinosaurs," Rogers says.

In his role as lead geologist, Rogers focuses on the age of the rocks and fossils—the nature of the ancient ecosystem—and the ways that incredible fossils like this one get preserved, a field of study known as taphonomy. "This animal was likely buried alive and took a different path to the fossil record than its compatriots," he says. "It has an epic death and burial story."

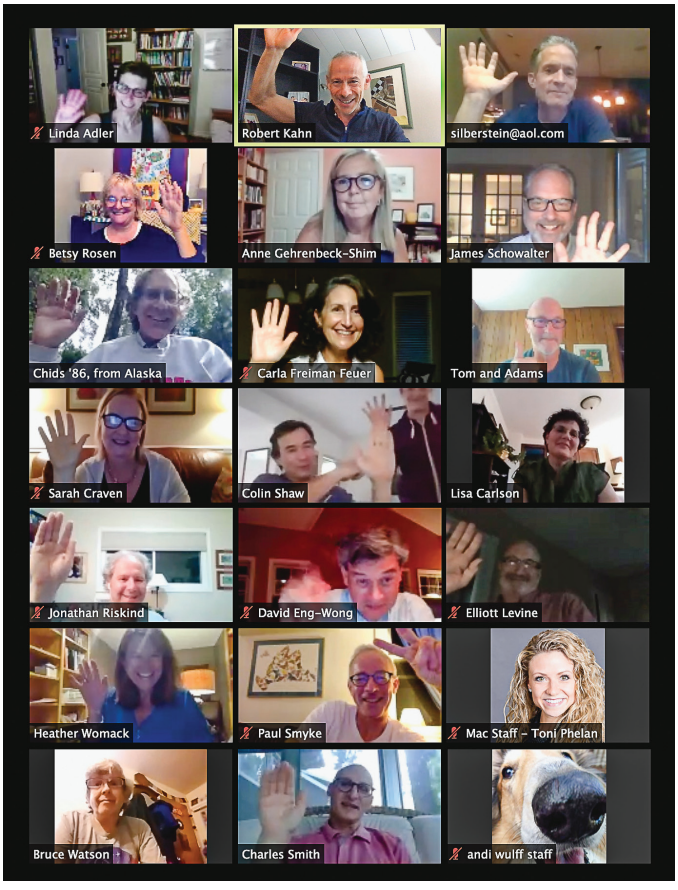
The discovery of *Adalatherium* not only adds a crucial piece to the puzzle of what life on our planet was like millions of years ago, it joins the likes of penicillin and the X-ray in the distinguished annals of scientific breakthroughs that almost never happened. "There's no magic to it. It's not like we knew what was in the block when we dug it out," Rogers says. "We just collected it for one fossil and we got two."

FROM TOP: TRIEBOLD PALEONTOLOGY; ANDREY ATUCHIN

REUNION 2020

This summer, instead of celebrating on Old Main Lawn and Shaw Field, a remote Reunion unfolded in home offices and living rooms around the world. And although we missed gathering in person dearly, this year's program still created space for countless connections (old and new), learning, and moments of joy. "It brought light to me in a time of darkness," says presenter Shá Cage '95.

We extend heartfelt thanks to all of our volunteers who helped make our remote Reunion happen, and to nearly 900 alumni and friends who joined us for events. We're inspired by your flexibility, compassion, and Mac spirit, and we look forward to the opportunity to nurture and grow our connections at future Reunions.



Class of 1985 and friends

Check out archival images in honor of each milestone Reunion: dwlibrary.macalester.edu/reunion2020

Join us next:

Mac In Your City online gathering
October 8 / macalester.edu/macinyourcity

886 TOTAL REGISTERED ATTENDEES

166 VOLUNTEERS

4 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

39 STATES REPRESENTED

1970 Class with the most attendees

1949 Most senior Golden Scot in attendance

24 EVENTS

(including class happy hours, faculty office hours, and a town hall with President Rivera)

35 Teams vying for Mac trivia bragging rights (including the Dupre Squirrels, Just DeWitt, Dressed to Kilt, and Suzanne Triviera)

5 Opportunities to learn from faculty and alumni speakers

9 Alumni Award recipients honored

2 Custom drink recipes (the Loch-tail and Scotty's Famous Cocktail) created by Joan Bennett '05 for The Great Mac Dance Together

1 Kilt donned (to our knowledge), by special guest and former director of security Terry Gorman

FINAL EDITION

When Macalester began distance learning on March 30, students in DeWitt Wallace Professor Ruthann Godollei's Printmaking II course were "without our equipment or our printing presses or the space to work in our beautiful building," she says. The class was just about to begin work on its final assignment: putting together an edition—a set of prints as alike as possible so that students can exchange with each other a full portfolio of class work.

Godollei quickly improvised. She mailed out to each of her students a mini home-printing kit containing paper, water-based ink, a carving tool, a baren (a Japanese printing tool), a brayer, a prepaid mailer, and a hand-printed card of encouragement. She also created a WordPress page for the class to share works in progress and provide feedback. "The miracle was that the students, through grit and persistence, worked with this limited set of materials and managed to make beautiful things," she says.

"It has definitely been a challenging class to translate into remote learning, because we weren't able to get to many of the printing techniques we were going to learn this semester requiring studio/equipment access," says history major EJ Coolidge '20 (Lexington, Mass.). "That said, I've felt very well supported to make prints at home using more portable techniques like relief and screenprinting. I am so glad that our class is still able to do an edition and print exchange via mail."

In addition to sending everyone in class a copy of the edition, Godollei will keep one set for the college archives. "My colleagues in art are doing equally wonderful projects with wonderful results under such constrained circumstances," she said. "Our department has worked really hard to provide students with a quality experience in challenging times."

FROM LEFT: BECCA GALLANDT; EJ COOLIDGE; SCOTT REGAN

Ever wonder about all those books lining professors' offices? We're with you.

Tina Kruse *is an educational studies professor who specializes in the psychological foundations of student learning.*

Any standout books you've read recently?

Permission to Feel by Marc Brackett. It really focuses on rethinking the role of emotion in classroom learning. That type of classroom environment is needed more than ever—as we're traversing this uncertain time, we need all the emotional regulation we can get, as well as the social skills to connect with others even from a distance.

What's one of your all-time favorite reads?

I keep coming back to *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith. It's about this recent immigrant family in the early twentieth century, and my own grandparents immigrated from Eastern Europe and lived in Brooklyn, too. Their educations didn't make it past eighth grade, and this book really helped me understand the role of schooling in that era. It's sort of like a peephole into the history of my own ancestry and the history of education. I like to think that my sixth-grade-educated grandfather would be proud to know I'm an education professor now.

What book is crucial to understanding your academic niche?

I have two. *Brainstorm* by Daniel Siegel takes us through a paradigm shift from thinking of the teenage years as really problematic to recognizing them as really positive and powerful. And *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Beverly Daniel Tatum explores the societal context for identity development, especially in school.

Any guilty-pleasure reads?

Something I've read in my downtime is *Big Magic* by Elizabeth Gilbert. She talks about what it means to live a creative life, whether you're doing something classically artistic or just being who you are in a creative way.

What one book would you recommend to everyone at Macalester?

I have to say *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott. We assign parts of it to think about the writing process, but it's also such a metaphor for how to live well—this idea that if you go bird by bird, one step at a time, you can do really daunting things. **–Rebecca Edwards '21**

Whose shelf should we visit next? **Email mactoday@macalester.edu.**

COLLABORATING FOR CHANGE

AS CALLS for change swept around the world after George Floyd's death, a group of students formed Macalester's Black Lives Matter chapter (BLMatMac) to mobilize around racial justice. By early June, the group was coordinating a donation drive—led by co-organizers Fatiya Kedir '21 and Floyd Krom '21—to support students and the broader community affected by a spike in food insecurity. "After all of our planning, we had no clue what to expect," Krom says. "One car could've shown up."

What actually unfolded on June 21, in Kedir's words, was "overwhelming and amazing levels of support." Despite afternoon downpours, the group collected nearly 4,000 items and $3,000 with help from 180 volunteers. "We even had to turn volunteers away to maintain safe social distancing," Kedir says. "I was helping volunteers sign in most of the day. When I finally went downstairs in the chapel and saw all the items we had collected, it was an impactful moment for me."

BLMatMac was able to expand the campus Open Pantry's inventory, distribute customized packages for Mac students who are in the Twin Cities area this summer and in need, and send some of the donations to local organizations supporting communities of color. (They originally planned to stock the Little Free Pantry with donations, but various campus departments signed up to oversee that program through the summer.)

Kedir, a first-generation African immigrant who grew up in Minneapolis, views the donation drive as part of a bigger movement. As student government president this year, she'll continue overseeing Open Pantry as part of her ongoing mission to fight food insecurity, among other disparities. "Racism and anti-Blackness existed before the tragic death of George Floyd and will exist after this trend decreases on social media," Kedir says. "In the Macalester community, we care deeply about each other, and in order to create a true anti-racist society, we have to continue the conversation."

And Krom, a white first-generation college student from the Netherlands, says the donation drive created an action step for the Mac community to work toward change together. "I don't have the First Amendment right to go protest—I could be picked up at any second and deported—but this is also not a time for me to just sit down," he says. "I think there are many students, including me, who should have done more earlier, but they're standing up now and using their privilege to create change. This is not just a one-time donation drive. This is about broader change in our community that will last throughout the academic year and for future generations at Macalester."

@BLMatMac

KORI SUZUKI '21 / KORISUZUKI.COM

NEIGHBORHOOD PANTRY

Outside the Weyerhaeuser Chapel, Macalester's pilot Little Free Pantry is nearly overflowing with food.

The initiative began as a response to one of the requests put forth by the Black Liberation Affairs Committee (BLAC) in a meeting with senior staff in early June.

When President Suzanne Rivera tasked college chaplain Kelly Stone with the project, Stone was immediately reminded of a conversation she had with an alumnus months ago who proposed the idea of a Little Free Pantry—a lesser-known spinoff of the Little Free Library concept.

Macalester's location will be an open place for community members to leave non-perishable donations and a chest of resources for that same community to tap into if they find themselves in need.

As of now, the Little Free Pantry is not affiliated with Macalester's Open Pantry, which is specifically dedicated to students in need. This project is for people both inside and outside of the campus community—available to anyone who happens to walk by.

While Stone hopes the whole neighborhood can contribute, Macalester will oversee the program. The college paid for the first load of groceries and made a financial commitment to host this pantry for the year ahead. It also paid a carpenter to build a more rugged permanent structure, installed in July: a stilted box with a sloped roof, designed to better withstand snowy Minnesota winters.

Campus community members will coordinate upkeep. "People have said, 'This feels like a tangible invitation into something that I can do. And given COVID concerns, I haven't felt like I've been able to step into the community around a lot of people,'" Stone says. "It's been heartening to hear that."

Stone understood the request for a pantry as a call for Macalester to "make some of the pain of the human family more visible. One of the things I'm learning is that the silence about food insecurity is also just really painful," Stone says. "It does feel like a starting point for us to understand that this isn't someone else's problem, this is our problem to begin to address."

–Hannah Catlin '21

Excerpted from The Mac Weekly *(June 16, 2020)*

PHOTOS PROVIDED

REFLECTIONS ON A JOURNEY

I often say that the journey of an international student is a very independent one, and I quote Rupi Kaur when she says, 'The irony of loneliness is that we all feel it at the same time,' but no one really knows that they're feeling it. So thank you for the pockets of moments and the pockets of people who shared space to just wonder. To my professors, who took time to teach us not just content but how to use it and how to formulate our own ideas. To the many teachers that exist at Macalester, many of whom existed outside the classroom, people who made community for us, thank you: for loving us, for giving us food, for giving us prayers. We thank you.

–2020 Commencement speaker Melisa Peresian Letayian '20 (Nairobi, Kenya), wearing her orange and blue mortarboard tassel in her hair

THRIVING IN PLACE

ATHLETICS

For Kayla Togneri '21 (Ventura, Calif.), calling spring and summer her off-season feels almost like a misnomer: though she's not in competition, those months are a pivotal time for putting in the hard work that will prepare her for success on the soccer field in the fall and the basketball court come winter. She relies on her teammates, practices, and Leonard Center resources to support her in taking those important strides.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic closed the Leonard Center and every athletics space on campus, leaving student-athletes scrambling to figure out how to build fitness on their own while also adjusting to remote learning and physical distancing. For Togneri, that meant browsing YouTube workout videos and scouting out where she could practice soccer drills with safe distance from others. It was a shock for Togneri, who has been playing team sports and working out with teammates for as long as she can remember.

She didn't have to improvise for long. The Athletics Department quickly launched a virtual wellness series (archived at macalester.edu/athletics) with more than 30 Zoom sessions led by Mac sport performance staff on topics including yoga, sport performance workouts, sports psychology, and nutrition.

It's all part of Thriving in Place, an initiative the department designed to support student-athletes in a time when teams can't gather. "We want to provide them with the resources to get bigger, faster, stronger, smarter and to engage while they're away, even during these hard times," athletic director Donnie Brooks told KARE-11 in a recent feature on the program.

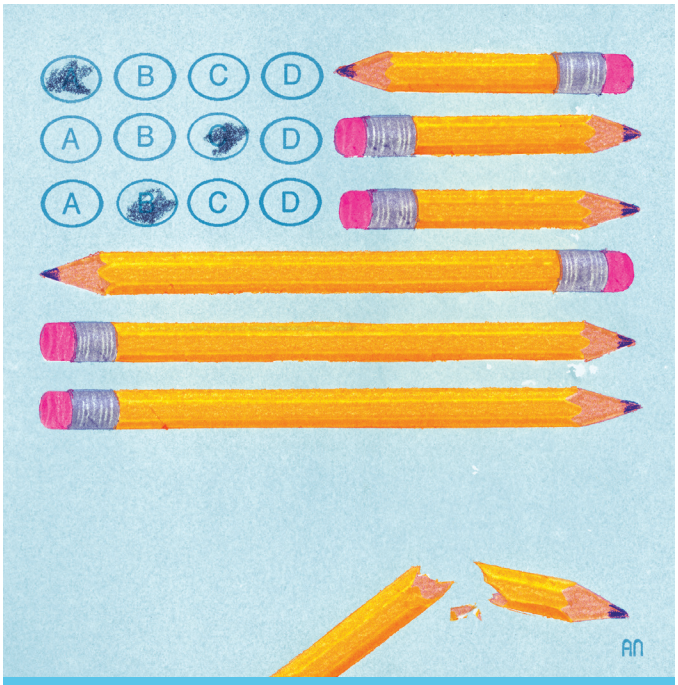
For Togneri, the sessions provided much-needed connection. "Twice a week, I got to connect with people I know, faces I'd normally see around the LC, and do the workouts the staff recommended for us, at the level we were supposed to be," she says. "I didn't realize how much that meant to me at first."

The virtual performance sessions wrapped up at semester's end, but training continues, and so do the remote connections. After seeing two friends in the online sessions, Togneri started working out with them three or four times per week—all via Zoom.

PHOTO PROVIDED

By late summer, Kayla Togneri and her fellow student-athletes learned that the pandemic would require more pivots in college sports. The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Presidents' Council announced in July that tennis and golf programs may attempt some form of competition this fall but that football, soccer, cross country, and volleyball would postpone their schedules, with the MIAC working to create opportunities for those sports to compete in the spring. (The Mac football program's Midwest Conference also announced that it will suspend league competition through 2020.) As of early August, Macalester had not committed to compete in tennis and golf, awaiting further guidance about health and safety precautions.

Instead of a busy competition season this fall, the Athletics Department will focus on reducing risks for team training through physical distancing and other safety measures. "While this fall will not provide the opportunities to compete that we normally look forward to, we will continue our quest to build toward excellence," athletic director Donnie Brooks wrote in a message to current students and families. "We will train, we will support each other, and we will keep our focus on a successful future."



ALEX NABAUM

TESTING OUT

"A thorough examination of our admissions process has confirmed that we can make sound admissions decisions, and students can fully represent themselves to the Admissions Committee, without test scores." *–Jeff Allen, Vice President for Admissions and Financial Aid*

It's been a long-running debate in admissions offices nationwide: how much should standardized tests guide admissions decisions? This spring, Macalester made its position clear: effective immediately, the college won't require applicants to submit ACT or SAT scores to be considered for admission. The decision to eliminate the standardized test requirement comes after several years of careful consideration that has included conversations with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and trustees, as well as internal research. With this permanent shift, Macalester joins a group of more than 1,000 colleges and universities that are already test-optional.

By recognizing that standardized testing may disproportionately affect some of the students Macalester seeks to attract, the new policy reaffirms the college's commitment to increasing access for students of color, first-generation college students, and students who come from lower-income households. In addition to its test-optional admissions policy, Macalester will also eliminate its $40 admissions application fee to further reduce barriers for prospective students and their families.

A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO FALL

After the spring's shift to remote learning, higher education institutions nationwide grappled with decisions about what fall semester should look like in the COVID-19 pandemic. In late June, President Suzanne Rivera announced Macalester's plans for a hybrid model that would begin the academic year in person while providing a remote option. By early August, though, statewide and nationwide spikes in infection rates led the college to adjust its approach:

- For the first several weeks of the academic year, on-campus housing will be limited to new students (first-years and transfers with housing contracts), international students with housing contracts, and students for whom learning from home is untenable (by petition)—to allow for housing everyone in single rooms.
- By securing access to COVID-19 testing that won't divert critical resources from Minnesota's health system, the college will add asymptomatic screening tests to its plan. All students (and employees by request) will be tested upon arrival and again within two weeks.
- In order to manage the risks associated with travel and of bringing the community together for the first time, a two-week "quiet period" will minimize in-person interactions on campus, with all classes held remotely during that window.

Those changes represent a "dialing back" in response to evolving conditions. This summer, several campus groups—including the Infectious Disease Task Force—developed a long list of tactics focused on safety and physical distancing, which will guide the community when conditions allow for "dialing up." Faculty and staff also overhauled the traditional academic schedule with flexibility in mind: the college is splitting both fall and spring semester into two 7.5-week modules, with students enrolling in two four-credit classes per module. Many community members built initiatives this summer to foster community in physical distancing, including small-group Zoom chats for incoming first-year students.

"I do not take lightly the challenges this announcement will create," Rivera wrote in August to current students and families. "I am personally heartbroken that we need to adjust our plans in a way that will prevent a large number of students from joining us in person next month. We are taking these steps judiciously to protect community members from infection and to improve the likelihood that all students who want to can return to campus for Module 2. . . . The health and safety of our community is our paramount concern."

This edition went to print in early August. For current updates: **macalester.edu/covid-19**


WHEN
GRADING
GOES

HIGH-TECH

Drop the red pen: A math professor builds a digital platform that saves educators time.

BY DAVID SILVERBERG

Eight years ago, James Colliander '89 was staring at a stack of more than 84,000 pages waiting to be graded. He and his team of volunteers from the University of Toronto—where he was working at the time as a math professor—were tasked with determining the winner of the Canadian Open Mathematics Challenge, an annual competition that more than 5,300 high-school students had entered. Colliander started calculating how many hours it would take for the team to grade the exams by hand. "I saw the bottleneck that we were facing," he says.

But the pile of papers gave him an idea. Grading needed to be overhauled for the digital era. Within a year, Colliander founded Crowdmark, a software company allowing post-secondary students to submit papers and tests digitally via images. Educators can mark those same papers online and the software sends alerts to students' mobile devices when grades are ready.

"Providing feedback quickly is great for not just students but also educators, so they have time to tackle other responsibilities," says Colliander, who's a living example: he helps run the Toronto-headquartered company, while also serving as a math professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC).

Crowdmark's software works by allowing students to scan exams or homework assignments into the platform. Then a professor or teaching assistant grades the work online using tools such as annotations, marks, or feedback from a comment library. "Imagine hundreds of 10-page exams in front of you—with your red pen, you'd often write the same margin comment on many of the responses for question seven," Colliander says. "With Crowdmark, you can use digital methods like cut and paste that save a huge amount of time."

And the software would have streamlined grading those 84,000 pages at that math challenge. Multiple-choice bubble sheets are graded automatically, and scores are calculated and then exported. Unlike other online-grading software that requires human handling of scanning pages, for example, Crowdmark offers a unique paper-to-digital workflow: Exams are printed with unique QR codes on every page, which "allows for robust routing of scanned page images to the appropriate place in the database," Colliander explains.

To date, more than 50 million pages at post-secondary institutions around the world have been graded on the company's software.

For Colliander, launching a startup offers a different kind of satisfaction than his academic career. "It's exciting to come up with a technology that has touched so many people," he says.

Tech has fascinated Colliander from his childhood days in Texas and Minnesota. His father enjoyed building drag racing cars and taught Colliander how to make and repair them. His passion for math developed in high school, and specializing in math and physics at Macalester felt like a natural progression of his interests, he says. On what he values most about his time at Macalester, Colliander quickly replies with a laugh, "Meeting my wife, of course."

Beyond meeting and eventually marrying sociologist Jennifer Berdahl '89, with whom he has two daughters, Colliander credits Macalester for challenging him intellectually. "I was able to have long discussions with distinguished professors and think through ideas we both found interesting," he says.

During college, he also worked as a research associate at 3M, focusing mainly on optics technology and engineering projects. Then Colliander set his sights on the U.S. Navy, spending 18 months at the USA Naval Research Lab in Washington, D.C., to develop fiber optic sensors for anti-sub warfare weaponry. "But it was around that time I realized I wanted to work more in math than physics and engineering," he says.

He followed that interest to the University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign, where he earned a PhD in math and realized he'd found his calling. "I see mathematicians as lawyers of the universe," Colliander says. "We identify the rules and argue about them while developing them, and we don't argue about them once we find the proof to settle the conflict."

Colliander taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Toronto, where he founded Crowdmark in 2012. He then moved to Vancouver in 2015 to teach at UBC.

Running a startup, teaching math, and making time for family can feel overwhelming at times, Colliander says, which is why he appointed former Crowdmark chief marketing officer Michelle Caers to take over as the company's CEO several years ago. Colliander realized it was time to fine-tune his work-life balance.

"Sometimes I felt very stretched," he says, "I still devote a lot of time to my career, and I'm trying to make sure that I don't miss out on things, like going rock-climbing with my daughter."

And as he and his colleagues develop a game plan for Crowdmark's future, Colliander sees Crowdmark replacing the ubiquitous red pen: "My goal is for Crowdmark to allow for enriched interactions, leading to significant improvements in learning across the entire education system." M

David Silverberg is a freelance writer based in Toronto.

KYRANI KANAVAROS

Our microbiome Jungle

BY REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ '06 / ILLUSTRATION BY EVA TATCHEVA

In the past decade, how we understand the gut microbiome—the microorganisms living in your intestinal tract—has changed dramatically. And along the way, so has biology professor Robin Shields-Cutler's approach. "I went from working with petri dishes and flasks to sitting at a computer for 95 percent of my research," says Shields-Cutler, whose current projects include gut microbiome studies in collaboration with the Como Zoo, University of Nebraska Food for Health Center, and the University of Minnesota Medical School. Here's what he and other researchers are learning about what's happening in your gut.

What happens in a microbiome?

Think of your intestines as an outrageously diverse ecosystem, much like a jungle. Species support and conflict with each other, and there can be dynamic changes in response to the environment. The bacteria bring their own genes and amplify our body's activity hundreds of times over what we can do by ourselves. It begs the question: are we human, or are we just a raft for these microbial friends?

What do they do?

These organisms aren't passive residents that trickle into our bodies and hang around—they play essential roles. They help develop our immune system, teaching our body what's a friend or foe. They synthesize essential nutrients that we can't make ourselves: newborn babies get a vitamin K shot to help prevent bleeding, for example, because they don't yet have the gut bacteria that make some of our vitamin K.

They also help digest our food. Without gut bacteria, you wouldn't be able to get the necessary nutrients from food—you'd have to eat probably around 30 percent more calories to get the same energy. And there's a lot of evidence building about crosstalk between the gut and the brain and how microbial metabolites can regulate brain health and function.

The trick is, we carry probably a thousand different bacterial species, and the community looks different for everyone. If we were to compare the diversity and types of species in my gut to someone else's, it could be as different as comparing a prairie to a forest.

Why does that composition vary?

Research suggests that this gut community can change in response to our environment—the microbiome's "meta-genome" is more adaptable than our body's genome. When you compare microbiome samples from wild primates to primates in zoos, their composition is very different. At the Como Zoo, I'm studying two tamarin monkeys to learn more about how the microbiome responds to changes. We have over a hundred samples along the timeline of when they met each other, when they changed their diet, if and when they went on antibiotics. Over time, we'll look at what stressors and exposures do to the gut.

What threatens gut health?

An antibiotic bombs your intestines with something that's designed to kill a pathogen. But along the way through that jungle, there's a lot of collateral damage, too. When the smoke clears, the jungle starts to grow back. Sometimes the species recover just fine—that's probably the typical experience.

But sometimes they don't grow back in the same way. You can see dominance in particular organisms, or new organisms that shouldn't be there. You can end up with the equivalent of a monoculture.

What are the implications of those imbalances?

Recent literature has associated microbiome shifts with obesity, diabetes, cancers, irritable bowel syndrome, and Clostridium difficile infection. There's a very effective treatment for Clostridium difficile now that involves taking a healthy microbiome and just giving it to a person who's suffering from this infection. It's a miracle for a lot of patients.

Right now, my lab is working with University of Minnesota clinicians to understand how disturbances in the gut community may affect patient outcomes after bone marrow transplants. There's a ton of data, but we have a great collaborative team piecing together the puzzle.

How do we keep our microbiome healthy?

That's tricky, because we're still answering a lot of basic questions, and there's a lot of variability: what works for me very well may not work for you.

Avoiding major damage to the microbiome is good, but antibiotics and other drugs can be life-saving, when prescribed and taken correctly. Something people have a little more control over is their diet. Based on existing data, the most defensible recommendations support eating a diverse diet rich in natural plant fibers. These fibers aren't really for us—they're food for the good bacteria in our guts, and can help nurture a diverse jungle. Greater biodiversity appears to be beneficial and may be protective against some diseases.

How do you study these organisms?

When people think about microbiology, they probably envision microscopes and petri dishes. But it just doesn't work to take the majority of these organisms out of context. If we can't grow a microbial sample in the lab, we can take the DNA and figure out the sequence that is unique to each species. That's essentially what we do: next-generation DNA sequencing. And almost everything we know is from the last 10 to 15 years.

What accelerated this recent progress?

In the past decade, next-generation DNA sequencing's cost has plummeted. In the 1990s, the first Human Genome Project cost three billion dollars over roughly 13 years. Now, for a few thousand dollars, you can use what looks like a very elaborate copy machine and see the equivalent of 800 human genomes in under two days. This technology lets us look into these microbial communities to figure out the DNA sequences, then use that information to learn what's present and what they're doing.

There's an avalanche of data pouring out, and we're just trying to keep up. Often we don't have the tools to analyze the data or even ask the right questions. We're designing new studies based on what we've learned, which helps us figure out what we might investigate next. It's an exciting time to be a microbiologist—we are constantly reminded how little we know about the microbes that we rely on for life. We're developing a clearer picture that I think will transform many aspects of medicine and nutrition. M

“The time to act is NO”

OW

PROFESSOR DUCHESS HARRIS ON HOW HISTORIC EVENTS SHAPE CONTEMPORARY RACE RELATIONS

How did we get here? That's the question that American studies and political science professor Duchess Harris has been fielding from media outlets ever since George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis on May 25. An expert on civil rights law, Black feminism, and African American political movements, the professor can't answer without drawing on history: "One of my favorite political theorists, James Baldwin, says in the *Evidence of Things Not Seen*, "History, I contend, is the present—we, with every breath we take, every move we make, are History—and what goes around, comes around."

But the connections and lessons we need to understand this summer's demonstrations and uprisings, Harris says, are often left out of the high school curriculum. Harris faced a troubling lightbulb moment in 2014, when she returned to the classroom to teach "Introduction to African American Studies" and "Race and the Law" a month after Michael Brown was shot and killed in Ferguson, Missouri. "I found out that none of my students had had any experience talking about contemporary race relations in high school," she says. "Students sometimes have a unit on slavery, but they don't get the skill set to talk about race relations—and it's an important skill set to have."

She got to work to start correcting that problem. In the past five years, in addition to her coursework on campus, Harris has published 115 books on race and gender geared toward fourth through twelfth graders.

In a June presentation for alumni, she reflected on the events that led to the summer of 2020.

–REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ '06

During the June alumni webinar, moderator Justin Brandon '00—incoming Alumni Board president, high school principal, and one of Duchess Harris's former students—led a Q&A with Harris, drawing from more than 100 questions submitted by alumni on race and policing's history and future. Their conversation is excerpted and adapted for print.

Why do you think race issues seem to be news to white America?

I discussed that in my home last night for more than an hour. I think it's because we can return to the 1968 Kerner Commission, which said that we are living in two societies. For some white Americans, George Floyd was shocking. For many Black Americans, it wasn't. I think what some white Americans don't realize is that Black Americans walk through the world and think about Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Jamar Clark, Freddie Gray. That's part of what it means to be Black in America. Our culture has a disconnect around who could have lived their whole life so far and not engaged the notion that a lot of people don't think Black lives matter.

How can we respond to people who don't agree that you can respect and honor our good police officers and also seek change?

That's why I'm celebrating St. Paul leadership: Mayor Melvin Carter III recognizes that there's good policing, because he was raised by good policing. His mom is a county commissioner, his father is a retired police officer, and they are African American. I think that he also knows there needs to be police reform. In his dad's beautiful autobiography, his dad says that he sometimes felt more intimidated in uniform than plainclothes, and so much of that had to do with the fact that he was Black.

Has the conversation on police abolition versus reform shifted?

I really think it has. As recently as six months ago, there wasn't much of an audience for abolition. I think George Floyd being killed has changed the conversation around the world. In June, the Minneapolis City Council voted to advance a proposal that would replace the police department with a Department of Community Safety and Violence Prevention. It's one step of many, but the fact that it was unanimous says a lot about how this one event has changed so much in our culture. We're in a moment now where people are thinking about concepts that no one was thinking about a year ago.

Have you seen places where a community policing model works?

The entire country is making a shift, but I can't point to one place and say, "They have it figured out." In Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti is giving less funding to policing and giving some of that money to other spaces. I think the fact that a city as large as Los Angeles is even considering reform means we've come so far. I came of age in the era of Rodney King—I remember that like it was yesterday. Absolutely no police reform would have been thought of in the early '90s.

One of my students asked how we can address the twin pandemics: COVID-19 and racism. How is dealing with these twin pandemics different for communities of color?

Atlanta pastor Raphael Warnock recently said Black America is suffering from COVID-1619 (in reference to the year when enslaved Africans were first brought to North America). He meant that everything that makes COVID what it is for white America is compounded for Black Americans—because Black Americans were already fragile. Black Americans already had issues with access: sitting in food deserts, places that didn't have the best housing, that didn't have community policing or great healthcare. And if you have any of those things, you might not have a job.

That's what COVID-1619 is. You already had all the problems. Now you're in a pandemic.

How do we encourage white friends to have conversations among themselves about their complicity in systemic inequity—and not be there as the spokesperson for all Black people?

That's a challenge. Given what I do, I get lots of emails right now from white Americans who want me to fix something for them. There are many things I'm not capable of fixing. The challenge, really, is white Americans having the courage to say, "We're going to try this on our own." That takes a lot of courage, because our nation isn't structured so they would have learned anything, especially in K–12. That's why I like writing these books.

What do you think is missing in the approach to teaching a full American history?

When I was in high school in 1983, the methodology was colorblind. Even though we've moved from colorblind to diversity, there still isn't a lot of conversation about what justice looks like, nor a lot of historical context. You have people who were shocked about George Floyd, because they didn't learn about Emmett Till in high school. There are only six books in the country written about Emmett Till for fourth- through twelfth-graders.

PHOTO PROVIDED

How do you have these conversations with kids?

Regardless of a child's age, a good way to open up is to ask: What do you see? What do you know? I had my first experience as a parent with this with George Floyd, because when Philando Castile happened, my kids weren't old enough for technology. When George Floyd happened, I paused and said, "Okay, how am I going to approach this?"

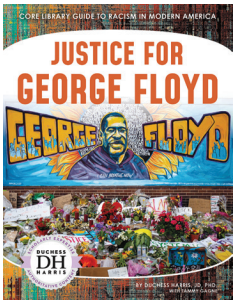
I'll admit, I was a day late and a dollar short. When I approached my 13-year-old, he said, "I saw the video." I couldn't believe that he watched the video, and I told him how concerned I was, and he said, "Mom, 20 million people have seen it on Instagram—why wouldn't I watch it?" That's part of it now: you can run but you can't hide.

We received a question asking your perspective on people of color trying to hurt the Black Lives Matter movement.

In my "Black Public Intellectuals" class, we talk about the range of political thought within the African American community—it's not a monolith. It's always had conservatives. There's room for variety in Blackness in the way that there should be room for variety in anything. There should be free thought.

There's always this trap: shouldn't all Black people be on one team?

We need to think about generational differences. I don't think there's any reason in the world why my kids should see the world the same way I do. I don't see the world the way my parents did. My parents were born in the 1930s and lived in segregation until they were 35. That's very different from how I grew up, which is also very different from how my kids are growing up. Black people can't be all alike.



Duchess Harris's next book, Justice for George Floyd, *is due out in January 2021 from the ABDO publishing company. "It's written for fourth- through eighth-graders, but I believe many adults will benefit from it as well," she says.*

WHAT HISTORICAL PARALLELS ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT THIS YEAR?
Tell us: mactoday@macalester.edu

"IF YOU HAVE GRAND IDEAS OF WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE DONE IF YOU HAD BEEN PART OF A MOVEMENT IN A DIFFERENT TIME PERIOD, I CHALLENGE YOU TO REALIZE THAT THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW."

1857
DRED SCOTT

After Dred Scott was enslaved in Missouri, he comes to live at Fort Snelling in Minnesota as a free person. When he goes back to Missouri, he wants to continue to live as a free person. His case goes all the way to the Supreme Court, and in 1857, he loses. He's denied citizenship. The Supreme Court rules that "a Black man has no rights that a white man is bound to respect." Dred Scott is in an area of Missouri that's in very close proximity to where Michael Brown ends up lying on the ground more than 150 years later. Remember James Baldwin: "What goes around comes around."

1865–1877
RECONSTRUCTION

I frame each time period in terms of hope and despair. During Reconstruction, the hope is clearly Emancipation. The despair, however, is that there's so much resistance. Some people don't realize that Reconstruction is the time when we had the Klan. It leads to 58 years of legal segregation after 246 years of slavery. Sometimes students learn that once slavery is over, people are free. That's not necessarily true.

FROM LEFT: ABDO; DIGITAL IMAGE ©1998 MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ST. LOUIS

1960s

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: PUBLIC OPINION

There's lots of backlash in the 1960s. In 1963, Gallup polls indicate that 60 percent of Americans are opposed to the March on Washington—that's surprising, because now we glorify this event. When young college students sat at the Woolworth's lunch counter to desegregate it, 57 percent of the nation thought it was counterproductive. We also tend to put Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on a pedestal, but in the 1960s, half of white America believed that he was harming the movement. I ask my students to think about what an event is like when it's actually happening and then how the story is told, when we revisit it later. All of this is important when we talk about the contemporary movement and what has happened in the last eight years with Black Lives Matter.

1960s & 1970s

FORMATIVE PUBLIC POLICY

There's federal legislation—including the Civil Rights Act of the 1960s—focused on voting, fair housing, and eliminating discrimination. Within the community, Black feminism, Black power, and the Black Arts movement begin. But we also have to talk about how the government has been complicit in some of the social issues that we have. In the 1960s and 1970s, banks and lawmakers aided and abetted white flight, which continues housing discrimination and practices like redlining. All of this urban decay ends up with crime and poverty that you don't have in the suburbs—but African Americans don't have access to the suburbs. One of the things I argue in my *Race and Policing* book is that this is really about more than policing. There are other public policy issues at hand: this is about housing; this is about jobs.

BEGINNING: 1970s

WAR ON DRUGS

One of the War on Drugs's terrible outcomes is the discrepancy in sentencing between people who were caught with crack cocaine and powder cocaine. This has a devastating impact on Black communities. In the early 1990s, Black people were five times more likely to be arrested for drug offenses than a white person committing the same crime. Black people made up 40 percent of all drug-related arrests despite being 12 percent of the population.

FROM TOP: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; ISTOCK

1996
WELFARE TO WORK BILL

There was tremendous resistance in the Reagan and both Bush administrations, but the Clinton administration was also a lot more moderate on public policy issues related to race than sometimes people think. For instance, in photographs of President Clinton signing the Welfare to Work bill, he chooses to surround himself with African American women. The image makes Americans think that women who look like this would be the beneficiaries of welfare. That's not accurate.

2009
HENRY LOUIS GATES ARREST

For me, one of the most challenging and intriguing questions is why a social movement like Black Lives Matter comes about after we get our first Black president. This question alone has inspired me to teach a class on the Obama presidency. One argument that I make is that President Obama avoided domestic U.S. race relations for his entire first term. It isn't until his second term that he runs into the problem, when Harvard University African American Studies scholar Henry Louis Gates is actually arrested inside his own house in Cambridge. Gates comes back from a business trip and has a hard time finding his keys. His neighbors call police to report a Black man on the porch, but he finds his keys and goes inside. The police come, and they still arrest him. Gates is outraged. His counsel gets in touch with the president, who has the idea to have a beer summit. President Obama gathers with Vice President Joe Biden, Gates, and the arresting officer, to try to smooth things out. This was not well received by either Black or white people.

2014
ERIC GARNER

There continue to be murders of Black men by white police officers, but the one that gets the most media attention is when Eric Garner says in New York City that he can't breathe. Once again, we're in a situation where we have videotape, the world knows what's going on, we get a trial, and the police officer is found not guilty. This results in uprisings throughout the nation.

MICHAEL BROWN

When Michael Brown is killed in Ferguson, Black Lives Matter moves from a hashtag to what some would call a contemporary civil rights movement on the ground. People get in their cars, get on planes and fly to Missouri, and have peaceful protests, marches, and demonstrations.

FROM TOP: ROBYN BECK/GETTY; BEN BAKER/REDUX

2012
TRAYVON MARTIN

After George Zimmerman shot Trayvon Martin, President Obama returns to the same Rose Garden space where he had the beer summit, and he says, "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon. I think all of us have to do some soul searching to figure out how does something like this happen. And that means we examine the laws and the context for what happened, as well as the specifics of the incident."

But this is the strongest hand that he has had in terms of race relations up until this point. The young generation is not particularly inspired by this. And in this moment, you see a racial divide: the *Washington Post* tells us that 86 percent of African Americans are extremely upset that Zimmerman goes free, and then only 30 percent of white Americans are as upset as Black people are.

2013
#BLM BEGINS

When George Zimmerman is acquitted for killing Trayvon Martin, three women—Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi—all get together and start tweeting that Black lives matter. That's when it becomes a hashtag. There were five million #BLM tweets in one day, which was unusual in 2013.

2015

FREDDIE GRAY

Six months later, Freddie Gray is killed in Baltimore. It shouldn't surprise anyone that Black Lives Matter had a lot of resistance—it was not a popular movement. In fact, 55 percent of Americans during this time period think Black Lives Matter is actually a distraction.

JAMAR CLARK

Jamar Clark is shot in Minneapolis. There are numerous protests throughout the Twin Cities, and this makes national news. By early 2016, though, still only 25 percent of white America agree that Black Lives Matter even has a purpose.

SUMMER 2016

FOURTH OF JULY WEEKEND

The tone and tenor of public opinion in Minnesota begin to shift after Philando Castile is shot in the head by a police officer, not that far from Macalester. Then-governor Mark Dayton says that he doubted that Castile would have been shot if he'd been white. This is considered very controversial and the governor is accused of race-baiting.

However, it had been a very challenging week. People don't want their holidays to be complete chaos, but that's what happened four years ago. On July 5, Alton Sterling was killed by police officers in Baton Rouge. The next day Philando Castile is killed. Micah Johnson, who's African American, shoots police officers in Dallas and then police kill him with a bomb. All of this happens in four days.

2016

COLIN KAEPERNICK KNEELS

In September, football player Colin Kaepernick takes a knee during the pre-game national anthem and inspires a wave of other athletes. He starts supporting Black Lives Matter. He is no longer playing football.

2020

Just over two months after Breonna Taylor is shot and killed by police in Louisville, Kentucky, George Floyd is murdered by police in Minneapolis over Memorial Day weekend. For years I've watched people resist talking about race in policing and Black Lives Matter—I do this for a living—and I've been shocked by the radical change in public sentiment this summer. There's no better example than when Republican senator Mitt Romney takes to the streets in June, joins a rally, and tweets Black Lives Matter. This would have been unthinkable years ago. There's been a change in the tide. M

"IT IS PURELY A FICTION OF ADULTHOOD THAT WE DON'T SEE COLOR"

KEON WEST '06 ON WHY CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RACISM

When are kids ready to talk about racism? For social psychologist Keon West '06, the answer is earlier than you may think. West, an associate professor at Goldsmiths, University of London, focuses his research on stigma, bias, and perceptions of people from other groups. He's also the father of two mixed-race children. In June, he spoke with the BBC's Ria Hebden about why those early conversations are crucial. Their discussion is excerpted and lightly edited with permission.

Do you think it's right to talk to children about racism, or should we be protecting their innocence?

I'm going to dismantle the idea of protecting their innocence and say we should start speaking to them about racism very early. Research shows that British children can do racist things by the time they're three years old. If you don't speak to children about racism until they're 10, that gives a good seven years for it to fester, and they either get to simply continue with racist beliefs until they're challenged—or they get to experience racism, which also happens to three-year-old children of color.

In one study, researchers gave children (age three to five, from many different areas of the United Kingdom) pictures of other children: white, Black, East Asian, and South Asian. They wanted to see if the children would give more positive or negative adjectives to certain pictures. They found that not only did the white children receive the most positive and least negative of the adjectives, but that the children were reliably able to establish a racial hierarchy with white children at the top, Black children at the bottom, and Asian children in the middle.

So this isn't a simple matter of children saying, "Oh, that's someone like me or not like me." British children can figure out the racial hierarchy of the country they live in, and respond accordingly, when they're incredibly young.

That's so powerful. So children do see color.

They absolutely do. It is purely a fiction of adulthood that we don't see color. Even adults who try not to see color really don't do that particularly well. The idea that it's good to not see color has become very prevalent, but not seeing color is actually incredibly unhelpful. For one, the problem with racism isn't that I'm Black. I quite like being Black. I enjoy it, I think it's great, I like the way I look. The problem is that people have strange and unhelpful ideas about Black people, and that they're quite negative. That's what needs to stop.

Would you say . . . that we should be talking about this from when they're toddlers?

In my experience, I'd say about three was a good time for our children. Not just because I knew that the research shows that children in the UK do know the racial hierarchy by that time, but also because they can experience racism at that age. My son at age three would come home from nursery saying, "Daddy, you can't be a doctor because you have to have white legs to be a doctor, not brown legs," or "I have curly-wurly hair and that's ugly, and the other children don't."

Children are savvier than we think: they know what's valued and what's not. If we don't warn them that people will give you these negative messages, then we run the risk that they'll just believe the messages—they'll take them on board and be hurt. We have to do better than that.

What would your advice be to parents for the best way to discuss race, otherness, and racism?

I ask people to reflect on the books in their house. I ask them if they can name a single book in their house in which there is a Black father who says something and takes care of his children—not just standing in the background, but one who speaks and takes care of his children. Many people can't. If you can't do that, you're teaching your children that Black men don't take care of children. Indeed, do you have any books in your house in which the main character is a Black person and the whole focus of the book isn't racism? Many people's children's books send the messages that only women take care of children, that only men work, and that only white people's stories are worth telling. There are many things you can teach easily without doing it on purpose.

There's a great book series called Little People, Big Dreams. They tackle race and racism in language that children can understand. I also really recommend books like *Marty Monster*, by Malorie Blackman—a sweet book in which nothing terrible happens. Because it can't always be about racism when you read about Black people. Sometimes it's just children playing, and they're Black children with a Black family, and that's it. And that has to be fine, too. M

MORE CHILDREN'S BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM KEON WEST:

- *The Adventures of Wrong Man and Power Girl!* (C. Alexander London)
- *Jabari Jumps* (Gaia Cornwall)
- *Billy and Belle* (Sarah Garland)
- *Daddy Do My Hair?: Beth's Twists* (Tola Okogwu)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TED S. WARREN; PHOTO PROVIDED; JASON ARMOND/GETTY

CHANGE IN PLANS

HOW ALUMNI ARE RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC—AND LOOKING AHEAD

BY MARLA HOLT

Illustrations by Obadah Aljefri

The COVID-19 pandemic changed daily life, quickly and drastically. At work, we traded long commutes and in-person interaction with colleagues for extended hours in hastily set up home offices, concerns about job security, and upended work/life balance. As Macalester alumni changed gears, many leaned on skills they developed in college: flexibility, compassion, and willingness to serve and to learn. Read on to learn how some of our alumni navigated pandemic pivots—and how they're thinking about what lies ahead.

TECHNOLOGY

Zachary Jordan '20

CEO, easy-EMDR.com

With the COVID-19 pandemic fast-tracking digital transformations, tech-savvy Zachary Jordan has seen huge growth in demand for easy-EMDR, his digital trauma therapy tool that has helped psychotherapists treat their patients remotely during quarantine. "Easy-EMDR filled the telehealth need for therapy, offering inexpensive, all-in-one treatments in one site," he says.

Jordan launched easy-EMDR.com as a first-year student in 2016 after undergoing eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, a therapy that uses bilateral stimulus to help people heal after traumatic life experiences. "EMDR is very helpful," Jordan says, "but it requires expensive physical equipment to complete. I started looking for a way to digitize it."

He built a simple digital application that gained traction after exposure on Reddit led both therapists and their clients to the site. After receiving requests for more features, Jordan turned to Macalester's entrepreneurship and innovation office for help, using a grant from Mac's Live It Fund and support from the MacStartups incubator program to rebuild the site and make it telehealth compatible. Round two was launched in August 2019, and in March 2020, when the pandemic shut down in-person therapy sessions, Jordan's tool hit its stride.

"It just exploded with everyone looking for options to continue EMDR remotely," he says. Easy-EMDR currently subscribes approximately 5,000 therapists, with hundreds of thousands of visitors to the site, which allows therapists to conduct visual bilateral stimulation and connect with their clients in video sessions.

Jordan sees easy-EMDR eventually fitting into a suite of telehealth tools. "Telehealth is here to stay, especially given that we could see multiple recurrences of this virus or another one," he says. "We will need to build comprehensive telehealth tools."

The key to such tools is accessibility, Jordan says. He offers easy-EMDR for free to those who can't afford a subscription and utilizes user feedback for updates. Ten percent of easy-EMDR's profit goes to GiveDirectly's international Universal Basic Income program, which helps people hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis. "I want to set a good example and pressure other companies to be more charitable," he says.

FAITH

Marcia Zimmerman '81

Senior rabbi, Temple Israel

As one of the largest reform synagogues in the country, Temple Israel was already exploring ways to use the internet to stay connected to its members when the pandemic hit. The ban on large gatherings in houses of worship just accelerated the pace of that virtual reality, says Marcia Zimmerman, who has been senior rabbi at Temple Israel in Minneapolis since 2001.

"We were already on the edges of a virtual presence," she says. "COVID-19 has just made us very comfortable being online to create spiritual support for our congregants." Last July, the temple hired a junior rabbi to help with online programming, and so was well prepared to meet the challenges of engaging the faithful without being able to gather in person.

For example, Temple Israel recently took 250 households on a virtual visit to Beit Hatfutsot, the Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv—many more people than would have been able to go on a physical trip. Congregants have performed and recorded music for use in live Shabbat services, and clergy members host an Instagram Live service each evening. The temple also has continued remote operation of its early childhood center and Hebrew school. "It's really important to be with our congregants where they are

and when they need us," Zimmerman says.

The "very old program of Judaism" has been helpful in keeping the faithful engaged and connected during the pandemic, she says.

"We've really had to flex our muscles—perhaps those that have atrophied—in Jewish tradition and ritual, because that is what is going to hold us during this time," she says, noting that families' at-home participation in the prayers and rituals can only strengthen faith. "I hope we don't lose that when we're allowed to gather together again."

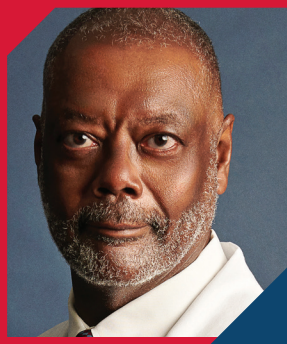
Zimmerman and senior clergy of other faiths in downtown Minneapolis regularly gather to work together in promoting understanding and social justice, and that work has continued on Zoom during the pandemic. They've created an online interfaith service and continue to operate Align, a nonprofit that assists the homeless.

"Macalester taught me how to be active in making this world better," Zimmerman says. "The act of Judaism for me is to leverage religion for good. Religious voices need to stand up and be truly powerful in changing the difficult and bad to better and good."

MEDICINE

Stanley M. Berry '75

High-risk obstetrician, Wayne State University



The pandemic created challenging dilemmas for many, including medical care providers. In March, high-risk obstetrician Stanley M. Berry faced the prospect of one of those unexpected crossroads: continue on his path into retirement or add his name to the list of doctors volunteering to join critical care in Detroit. In early April, he spoke with TIME magazine's Jamie Ducharme about how he reached his decision to submit his name. Though Berry hasn't gotten the call, he continues working for the National Institutes of Health at Wayne State University and volunteering at a high-risk obstetrics clinic. In this narrative—published April 9, 2020, and reprinted with permission—he reflects on facing this decision.

"I was planning to retire and finish my novel in the next year or two. I'm essentially an obstetrician who specializes in high-risk pregnancy. I only work three days a week right now, and one of those days is for research and mentoring.

But Michigan needed to 'repurpose' some physicians who were willing to volunteer to treat COVID-19 patients. I submitted my name. I haven't been assigned yet, but if they tell me they need people in the emergency room, that's where I'll go. I still know how to listen to lungs and take a medical history and do a physical, so I can contribute there. I don't know how this is going to play out, because I'm almost 67.

A number of my friends have called to try to discourage me from volunteering, because of my age. One of my buds was really harsh. My rejoinder was, 'What if your wife had to go to the hospital? You'd want someone to take care of her. Somebody has to do it.' There were some tears shed by my fiancée, but she expressed an understanding of where I'm coming from. One might say there's an element of selfishness in all this, because I do have three children, one of whom is severely disabled; I have a former wife who is a saint; I have a granddaughter who lives with my ex and we're expecting another granddaughter. So I have family ties.

I never imagined a time like this, and I didn't take this decision lightly. One physician friend of mine just got over her fever of four days, yesterday. One of my former residents is intubated because of coronavirus. And one of the anesthesiologists in the hospital is now transferred to the University of Michigan on ECMO. It's on my mind, but I try not to think about it.

This could be the last thing I do on earth, but I felt very strongly about it. I go back to an interview I heard with an army officer who survived the Battle of Mogadishu in the 1990s. He said one of his men came to him and this guy said, 'I'm afraid.' He said back, 'It's not a matter of whether you have fear or not; it's what you do with it.' I do have fear.

But the bravest people that I knew of in my lifetime—Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr.—all knew they were going to die. They went ahead and did it anyway. I don't want to die, and I'm not in this to be a hero, but medicine's been good to me and the city of Detroit's been good to me, and we're being clobbered right now. My will is made, so I'm just going to try to follow all the guidelines for wearing personal protective equipment and help."

EDUCATION

Mercedes Burns '06

Assistant professor of biological sciences, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Mercedes Burns was teaching an advanced course called the "Evolution of Sex" when the University of Maryland, Baltimore County sent students home. She quickly learned the ins and outs of Blackboard Collaborate, an online teaching platform supported by UMBC, in order to move the class online.

"It was my first time teaching this course and I had an idea of how it would go, which of course didn't happen," Burns says. Nonetheless, she was surprised by how easily students embraced technology, thriving and collaborating in everything from course meetings to small group chats to online presentations.

Perhaps even more challenging for Burns was figuring out how she could continue her research without regular access to laboratory facilities. She studies the genomic evolution of Opiliones—also known as daddy long legs—and how some species reproduce both sexually and asexually.

When the university closed down, Burns and her postdoctoral fellow loaded up lab equipment to use at home. Her colleague conducts long-range DNA sequencing in her spare bedroom, keeps a centrifuge in the fridge, and stores reagents and samples in a deep freezer. Burns is dissecting preserved specimens—that she stores wedged between leftovers and bulk food in her freezer—with a microscope at her kitchen table.

"Having things in my life that I can control, like accessing my lab equipment at home so I can keep working on projects, has kept me grounded in a situation that feels pretty touch and go," she says.

Bao Phi '97

Poet and Loft Literary Center program director

Bao Phi '97 is an award-winning Minneapolis poet and the author of four books, most recently the children's picture book My Footprints *(2019). He's also a single co-parent of 10-year-old daughter Sông. In May, he spoke with MinnPost writer Pamela Espeland. Their conversation is excerpted and edited with permission.*

What did your year look like before everything closed down?

I have my job at the Loft as full-time program director. I also do speaking engagements. Everything from going to a grade school to read picture books to little kids, to reading poetry and giving a workshop at a university or in another state. It's the gig economy, basically. As a single parent, it's what I have to do.

For some reason, before COVID hit, most of my bread-and-butter gigging happened from January through early March. I was actually grumpy about it, because every other week I was in my car or going to the airport. But I got very lucky this year.

What is your life like now?

When my daughter is with me, my life is very much a routine of three meals a day and making sure she's up on her offsite learning.

I log into work. I try to get us outside once a day. We live by Powderhorn Park and do socially distanced free time until right before bed, when we watch one episode of "Adventure Time" together. Then we brush up and watch a funny short YouTube video, and then I get her to bed. Once she falls asleep, if I'm not too tired, I'll either do some chores or watch TV or read something before I go to bed.

Work has been very busy. The Loft's Wordplay festival had to pivot online. Wordplay is not my primary responsibility, but it's all hands on deck. My life at the Loft has been helping out where I can and trying to learn very quickly this online stuff that all of us will probably have increasing responsibility for over the next year or so.

I've been doing live events for 20 years and can do that with one hand tied behind my back. But setting up and broadcasting a literary reading in a way that looks professional and is consistent with the values and branding of the organization is new territory for all of us.

You once said you wrote a poem a day. Do you still do that?

No, but I actually maintained that for a surprisingly long time. The caveat being that doesn't mean it was a *good* poem.

I've been working on a novel off and on for the last 10 years. It's basically an alternate history of the United States, where in the late '90s there's a virus that happens that turns people into zombies and Southeast Asians get blamed for it. I finally finished it a few months ago. I don't know if it's timely now or too soon. This is my first long-form anything. It could be terrible, but at least it's done.

It seems that poets can respond immediately to anything. Is the pandemic making its way into your work?

That's why I was drawn to poetry as a teenager. It's why I became a poet. All of these things were happening—the first Persian Gulf War, police brutality—that required an immediate response. I felt compelled to comment and make sense of things through art. I couldn't sing, I couldn't rap, I couldn't play any instruments. I tried theater—that's a whole other thing!—but poetry was immediate. You could go to a rally, a coffee shop, or a meeting of friends in a basement with a poem, and no one could stop you.

The shelter-in-place has been very up and down for me. [At first] it was very difficult to write anything because I was so full of anxiety and anger. I don't have to reiterate the huge number [of acts] of anti-Asian violence.

I want to be very clear here: Anti-Asian violence and discrimination are nothing new. Ever since I had consciousness, I have known that my race has made me an enemy. This is not new to me at all. But the whole heightenedness of it—the fact that it was almost justified at all levels of our civic life, not only super-blatant but also seemingly signed off on as being okay—was really damaging to me. It felt like the hate was cranked up to 11.

This was on top of the stress of working from home, being responsible for my daughter, not knowing if I'm going to have a job, and trying to help my elderly refugee parents, who are poor, negotiate all of this. It's on top of what everyone else is also worried about. This anvil of anti-Asian racism.

It was just too much. So I didn't write about it for a long time. Now I've written a little, but the writing is relatively new because the feelings are still very raw.

Jack Reuler '75

Artistic director, Mixed Blood Theatre

The new musical *Interstate* was in the middle of its run at the Mixed Blood Theatre when the production was shuttered amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The 45-year-old theater located in Minneapolis's Cedar-Riverside neighborhood was founded by Jack Reuler during the summer after his graduation from Macalester, and this is the first time it's closed its doors to audiences.

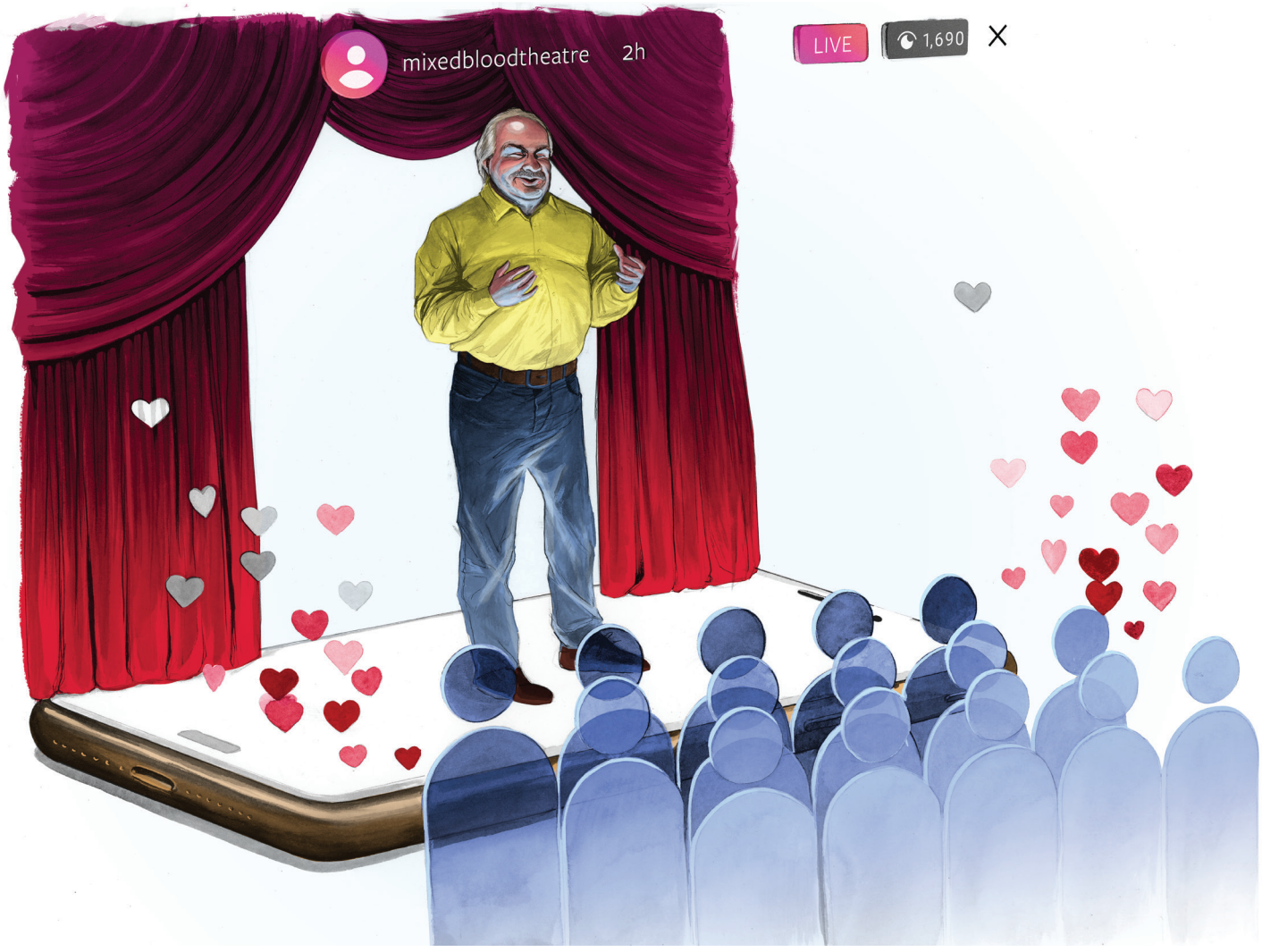
"Everything just slowed to nothing," Reuler says, referencing not only Mixed Blood's in-house theatrical productions, but its educational and outreach programs focused on social justice issues.

Even so, Mixed Blood is carrying on, using the time to reimagine what might be possible. "This shutdown is the great disruption that will allow us to reinvent ourselves," Reuler says.

Because it relies on grants and donations for income rather than ticket revenue, Mixed Blood is in the unique position to be able to balance its budget, even with a curtailed season, Reuler says. The theater also received a small grant to hire several artists to create online content and maintains an active social media presence related to both theater and activism.

Reuler's biggest challenge is figuring out what Mixed Blood's new delivery system will look like, including what protocols need to be in place for artists, staff, and audiences to feel comfortable. Mixed Blood's auditorium only seats 200, so Reuler and his staff are exploring the idea of leasing a larger venue to mount a production later this year. "That'll allow us to have our traditional audience size of 200, but appropriately spaced among 1,000 seats," he says.

As part of a collective brain trust among those who work in live entertainment—be it music, sports, or theater—Mixed Blood is leading the conversation on how to reopen doors to the public. "Because we don't have the financial implications of missing ticket sales goals, we're likely to be the canary in the coal mine. We're still planning to produce a live event in 2020, where other theaters have delayed until later in 2021. Instead of waiting for a green light, Mixed Blood is moving forward, waiting for a red light and hoping it doesn't come."



BUSINESS

Kate Agnew '11

Senior manager, UnitedHealth Group

Like many of those who work in business, Kate Agnew, senior manager of platform engineering at Optum for UnitedHealth Group (UHG), found herself suddenly working from home when Minnesota's stay-at-home orders went into effect mid-March.

"My team of 14 engineers helps stand up platforms that facilitate the movement of data across the company and keep UnitedHealth Group running," she says. The team already had processes and tools in place for flexibility, including working from home most Fridays, so the technical transition was fairly seamless. A larger challenge, says Agnew, proved to be combating a sense of disconnectedness among her team members.

"As manager, I've focused on how we can still feel like a team while we're not sharing a physical space," she says. Agnew got creative by organizing team lunches, coffees, and happy hours, offering optional daily 15-minute meetings or "water cooler time," and encouraging participation in a broader-teamwide trivia contest. She values her own weekly happy hour with her peer group to share best practices for managing the company's work-from-home teams.

Building such camaraderie helped Agnew's team take on one of its pandemic-related projects, as UHG was contracted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services to administer a program that provides claims-based reimbursement to health care providers who conduct COVID-19 testing or provide treatment for uninsured individuals.

"Our team worked a lot of late hours to leverage the tools we already had in place to enable the platform capabilities to accelerate payments to providers through the crisis and simplify people's access to care," she says.

Agnew says this time at home has been a good reminder to be intentional about building community in the workplace. "I now see the value in connection," she says. "When you're faced with a tough situation like this pandemic, it's important to have strong relationships to lean on." To that end, she's working to ensure that the two 2020 Macalester grads she has hired to join her team will have a good onboarding experience, despite the need to begin work remotely.

Toni Symonds '83

Chief consultant, the California Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy

Toni Symonds has spent 35 years in the California State Legislature, working on various policy committees for community and economic development. In her current role, Symonds analyzes, designs, and implements public policy initiatives in the areas of small business, finance, workforce development, trade, and state contracting.

When the pandemic began, Symonds's first challenge was telecommuting, which previously had been against legislature policy. Faced with a pressing need to stay in touch with her stakeholders and a strong desire to support small businesses through disruptive change, she turned to online communication: sending thrice-weekly summaries of COVID-19 news and available resources that distill vast amounts of information into a sort of one-stop shop for stakeholders.

"My primary mission is to make sure everyone is up to date," says Symonds, who also developed a website that includes resources to assist small businesses, entrepreneurs, workers, and economic and workforce development professionals in responding to COVID-19 challenges. "The ability to observe, sort, resort, and observe from a different perspective without judgment—skills I learned at Macalester—has been extremely valuable to me in what I do."

Throughout California's stay-at-home orders, Symonds, who recently conducted her first paperless hearing, has noticed a shift in the legislature's approach to telecommuting. As the committee looks at the future of work, Symonds hopes some changes will remain. "We're realizing people can adapt, while being flexible, efficient, and productive," she says. M

Marla Holt is a freelance writer based in Owatonna, Minn.

GOVERNMENT

HONORING ALUMNI

BY REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ '06, JULIE HESSLER '85, AND ALEXANDRA MCLAUGHLIN '16

Each year since 1949, the college has recognized alumni who exemplify in their work a deep commitment to Macalester's values. From across the river to across the world, this year's nine Alumni Award recipients have made a mark on their communities and their classmates.

"My work has changed my sense of what might be possible."

Kayla Richards '10 says she was destined to become a social worker. Ten years after graduation, writes Kayla's nominator, she has "quietly risen to become one of the most accomplished social workers in the Twin Cities." She works within systems to identify trauma, inequity, and bias—and then focuses on rectifying those imbalances.

A registered member of the Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe, Richards grew up in rural South Dakota in a community that struggled with addiction. At Macalester, an internship at the Juvenile Detention Center introduced her to the criminal justice system's inequities. "Oppressive and/or neglectful environments, like the one I grew up in, often rob people of their sense of possibility, of their imagination," she says. "My work has changed my sense of what might be possible."

As a juvenile probation corrections unit supervisor in Hennepin County's Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation, she facilitates a team that makes placement and treatment intervention recommendations for youth in the juvenile justice system.

The role is both more motivating and challenging than she ever imagined. "My best work has been targeting disparities and examining a critical (and often forgotten about) part of the relationship between institution and youth: the probation agent," she says. In institutional reform, more training is often presented as the solution, but in Richards's view, that's only half of the equation: "I look at how probation agents see their work, through the lens of social identity and power. I want to shift how we see youth and their attempts at problem-solving or coping not as 'bad behaviors' but with a more person-centered, trauma-informed, and equitable manner."

"As someone who has a young fan base, it's important to not just entertain."

When **Kwame Amet Tsikata [M.anifest]** '05 returned to Ghana, the internationally acclaimed hip hop artist put on a free concert for the neighborhood where he grew up. "Being able to have 5,000 to 10,000 people experience a free concert, a lot of whom wouldn't be able to afford it, brought vibrancy to the neighborhood," he says.

After majoring in economics, M.anifest went on to win *City Pages*' Best Songwriter in the Twin Cities, release five solo albums, and collaborate with superstars like Erykah Badu, Damon Albarn (Gorillaz), and Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers). The *Guardian UK* has described M.anifest as "the foremost rapper on the [African] continent."

His accomplishments extend beyond music. M.anifest uses his platform to promote social good and advance the arts. As a UNICEF ambassador, M.anifest works to improve the lives of adolescent girls, tackling issues like anemia, child marriage, and gender-based violence. Through his work with Impact Hub, M.anifest raises funds for people in Ghana to pursue creative projects. "As someone who has a young fan base, it's important to not just entertain, but also push resources to enable folks to develop tools and skills," he says. He co-founded Giant Steps in Minneapolis, an interactive conference for artists and entrepreneurs to connect and collaborate.

"Macalester put a premium on genuine connections," M.anifest says. "That was pivotal for deepening my relationships with people from different parts of the world. Fostering a world with greater cooperation begins with that kind of micro-level individual connection."

"I'm more of a peace-waker than a peacemaker."

As she works to restore communication and resolve conflict in disrupted communities around the world, **Martha Hansen McManus** '70 always uses the same approach: encouraging and empowering local expertise.

"What's different about my approach is that people from the community have to be represented in the training," she says. Then, the people in that community recreate the training materials in their own words, with examples that are culturally specific—teaching each other and strengthening the community from within.

In 1987, McManus founded the Conflict Resolution and Communication Centre in Calgary, Alberta. A year later, she developed Canada's first conflict resolution program, before going on to complete the first of three master's degrees. Within five years, those programs became global and they continue today, with McManus consulting with schools, communities, NGOs, and governments.

"I think people themselves have their own wisdom," she says. "I'm more of a peace-waker than a peacemaker." McManus has received numerous awards, including being selected in 2002 from thousands of global applications for the inaugural group of Rotary World Peace Fellows. A true global citizen, she is also a proud mother of three grown sons, with a household of several well-loved dogs.

As one of her nominators wrote, "How do you bottle Martha's unbridled enthusiasm for people and life? I don't know how to put that into words."

"It's a pleasure to help in any way I can."

Peter Fenn '70 became immersed in Macalester's alumni community two full years before he actually joined that network, when he became the college's first student manager of the Alumni House. At Alumni Board receptions held there, board members drew him into the fold.

Four years after graduation, he married Alison Seale Fenn '72 in that Alumni House. And eventually Peter would become part of that Alumni Board for six years, leading the group as its president.

That was far from the end of his service to Macalester, though. Peter served for 18 years on the Board of Trustees. He was also part of the presidential search committee that selected Macalester's 15th president. Peter currently chairs the Trustees Emerita/Emeritus group, and this year, he co-chaired his 50th Reunion committee. Away from campus, Peter and Alison have hosted many Macalester events in their Washington, D.C., home. "Peter epitomizes the Mac spirit of engagement and service," writes his nominator.

In Washington, Peter has provided strategic and communications support to political candidates at all levels of government for nearly 40 years through his political and public affairs media firm. Throughout his career, he has been a tireless source of mentoring support for countless Mac students and alumni interested in public policy and politics. "I've always tried to talk to every student that asks, meet with anybody who wants to meet," he says. "I know the caliber of Mac alumni, and it's a pleasure to help in any way I can."

"I was an innovator in my academic career."

"I happen to have chosen a wonderful profession," says **Virginia Strand** '70 of her career in social work.

For 32 years as a professor in the Graduate School of Social Services at Fordham University, Strand has significantly advanced graduate education and professional training in the field of social work as it pertains to evaluation and treatment of trauma resulting from child abuse and neglect, sexual and domestic abuse.

During her career, Strand founded and directed two different centers focused on education and professional development. In 1988, she founded the Children and Families Institute for Research, Support and Training (Children FIRST). In 2009, she co-founded the National Center for Social Work Trauma Education and Workforce Development. Both centers continue to thrive and collectively have reached thousands of professionals.

Strand credits Macalester history and media studies professor Jerry Fisher with encouraging what she calls her radical thinking about challenging the status quo. "I was an innovator in my academic career, always coming up with new ways to teach or to provide service delivery," she says. "That came out of my experience at Mac of wanting things to change and feeling like things could be different."

Today, Strand, the proud mother of an adult daughter, is focusing her thinking on politics to "get people elected who can create change."

"I want to serve other people."

"If you've ever met **Abaki Beck** '15," writes her nominator, "you know that she is a powerhouse. Abaki holds her communities and herself to high standards, calling out injustice and hypocrisy in discussions of equity, racism, and multiculturalism."

Beck's latest step in that work is completing a master in public health program at Washington University in St. Louis. Her interest in public health emerged at Macalester, during her American studies honors project on youth suicide on Montana's Blackfeet Reservation, where much of her family lives. "I realized that a lot of the social justice issues I cared about were related to health equity," she says. "I want to serve other people. I think about what issues I see in my own family and community and figure out what role I can play in making them better."

Beck brings an unwavering commitment to empowering Indigenous voices, narratives, and histories. She has written and advocated for grants and federal legislation on behalf of Indigenous communities. Beck led the Blackfeet Food Sovereignty Assessment Project, interviewing elders about foods they ate growing up and medicines they used to revitalize traditional knowledge. Since 2015, she has been a youth advocate for the National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs.

In 2015 Beck created POC Online Classroom, a social justice resource library that 67,000 people visited last year. Most recently, Beck has worked for Washington University's Prison Education Project. Writes her nominator, "Wherever Abaki goes, she inspires those around her to grow, be better, and do better."

"Humanitarian work has been my calling."

"Humanitarian work has been my calling since a very early age," says **Arda Kuran** '05. A native of Cyprus, Kuran grew up in a country marked by conflict and displacement. After majoring in political science and French at Macalester and earning a master's degree in international security in the United Kingdom, Kuran worked in political affairs with the United States government, with a focus on Cyprus peace negotiations, and then in public affairs in Brussels. But for Kuran, it wasn't enough. "Political settlements may take forever," he says. "The constant suffering of people who are affected by conflict endures."

Driven by a desire to work directly with those most in need, and encouraged by his former boss at the U.S. State Department, Jane Zimmerman '84, Kuran took a field job with the UN refugee agency, deploying to a duty station on the Syrian-Turkish border. In the years that followed, first with UNHCR and then with UNICEF, he worked in refugee camps in Turkey and with internally displaced people in Iraq, helping conflict-affected people, especially refugee and displaced children, access basic assistance and protection.

Now at the Danish Refugee Council, Kuran is a regional coordinator for East Africa and the Great Lakes, where he travels among nine countries and supports protection interventions for conflict and displacement-affected communities.

"I need to give back."

"It goes back to my dad," says **Dr. Jim Ochi** '80, whose father Shigeru Ochi graduated from Macalester in 1949. Unable to find room in the dorms, Shig struck a deal with Macalester: stoke the furnace in exchange for a cot in Bigelow's basement. "Macalester gave him an opportunity and he ended up earning a scholarship to MIT," Ochi says. His parents saved so Ochi could attend Macalester without incurring debt. He figured the least he could do was earn A's.

A biology major with a concentration in chemistry, Ochi was struck by the diversity of Macalester's student body. "That helped me as a physician because patients come from all walks of life," he says.

He went on to medical school at the Mayo Clinic. Now a pediatric otolaryngologist, his accomplishments range from groundbreaking research on acupuncture as a way to reduce postoperative pain to digitizing his practice in the 1990s, a cost-saving technique that allowed him to serve low-income patients.

Ochi has dedicated his life to treating underserved patients. Every Friday, he drove two hours from San Diego to El Centro, an impoverished and polluted desert community with rampant ear, nose, and throat problems. On medical missions to Africa and Southeast Asia, Ochi served as a physician and photographer to recruit sponsors for children in orphanages.

"The Bible says, 'To whom much is given, much is expected,'" he says. "I need to give back."

"People are people no matter where you go."

"**Kury Cobham** '90 is tireless, optimistic, fun-loving, competent, and brave," writes her nominator. "She has been a wonderful ambassador for Macalester and the United States for over 30 years."

Now country director for the United States Peace Corps in Fiji, Cobham has devoted her life to making much of the world better. Prior to her placement in Fiji, she served the Peace Corps for three years as country director in Guyana. Her career has also afforded her placements in Nepal and South Sudan, and as a World Bank grant operations officer, among other positions.

Macalester Doty 5 "sisters" Lynn Geerdes, Miriam Levy Mixon, Michelle Morphew Jackman, Chris Weller, and Dina Wilderson remain close friends to this day, says Cobham. She also credits Thaddeus Wilderson, Dina's father and then director of the Department of Multicultural Affairs, for early support: "When I experienced tough financial times that could have ended my career at Mac, he guided me to stay the course."

Cobham says she's most proud of aiding and supporting the improved livelihoods of marginalized people throughout the world. "I have lived and worked in over 15 developing countries covering four continents," she says. "All of this travel has confirmed to me that even with diverse languages and culture, people are people no matter where you go. They want and need to be seen, heard, understood, respected, and valued."

Who should we honor next year?

Nominate a classmate for a 2021 Alumni Award by Sept. 25: **macalester.edu/alumni/alumniawards**

CHANTEL BERMUDEZ

THE FIGHT TO ELECT MORE WOMEN

A century after women got the right to vote, Kristin Hayden '92 wants to make parity in politics a reality.

BY TOM KERTSCHER

A record number of women were elected to Congress in 2018, and more women than ever before are serving in state legislatures across the country. But as the nation marks the centennial of women gaining the right to vote—the 19th Amendment was signed into law in August 1920—Kristin Hayden '92 still isn't finding parity in politics, so she's thrown herself into making it become a reality.

"The public narrative is that it's an amazing time for women in politics," Hayden says. "And of course, there has been progress, especially for young, diverse women. But the increase of women in politics has been incremental across local, state, and federal government and we have a long way to go if we are going to see equal representation in our lifetime."

Based in San Francisco, Hayden is the chief partnership officer at IGNITE, which works to build political ambition in girls and young women. She also served recently as the interim CEO of ReflectUS, a nonpartisan coalition working to increase the number of women in office. We talked with the international studies and Russian language major about her initial reluctance to get into politics, what changed her mind, and how women can take action.

Lightbulb moment

"In my first year at Macalester, a group of my soccer teammates painted signs and then caravanned across the country to attend the historic and massive Women's March on Washington. It was my first march, and it was a powerful experience. That was my political awakening. I remember thinking, 'Oh, wow, there are rights I still have to fight for as a woman?'"

The roadblock

"I've dedicated my life to change-making, but for a long time, I always perceived that being involved in politics was the slowest, most bureaucratic, ineffective way to go. There are so many negative stereotypes about political leadership that keep women from wanting to get involved."

Change of heart

"When I got involved with this work, my perspective totally changed. I now realize when you're sitting at the table where policies are being made, you can impact thousands of people's lives, and that's a very significant way to make incredible positive change. And if you're not sitting at the table, other people are making policy decisions on your behalf—and not always with your community's lived experience in mind."

Nonpartisan movement

"At ReflectUS, we bring together women across the ideological spectrum in an effort to get more women elected. We want to see equal representation of women in political office in our lifetime. All the research shows that women are more likely to reach across the aisle. They're more willing to collaborate and compromise and therefore pass more legislation and make better lawmakers. More women in office therefore strengthens our democracy."

Power at the polls

"Our main message at IGNITE in this important election year is to exercise your political power by voting! The number one thing you can do is vote. And get your friends to vote, too. Young women don't realize the power they have: if every young woman voted, they could determine the outcome of the election."

The next step

"What else can you do? You can run for local office. Don't wait. Do it now. You have your lived experience that is representative of many others. If you don't see political leaders that seem to represent you, make a seat for yourself at that table. We're here to support you along the way." M

Tom Kertscher finished a 35-year career as a newspaper reporter at the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and now works as a freelance writer based in Milwaukee.

The day Donald Trump was inaugurated as the forty-fifth president of the United States, a small group of young adults performed a theater project at a high school in the Bronx. The show, *How We GLOW*, explores queer youth identities.

"A guidance counselor brought us in as part of a larger day of programming to respond to the inauguration," says Emily Schorr Lesnick '11, who co-created the piece with Jamila Humphrie '11. "The actors were struggling with the reality of the day as well as performing on a stage in a huge auditorium with microphones that made them barely audible. It felt futile."

Afterward, Schorr Lesnick and Humphrie led a talkback with the actors and the students in the audience that focused on local challenges. "We asked if anyone had any questions," Humphrie says. "And a kid raised his hand and said, 'The play was really great, but I didn't like the gay part.' We were taken aback and disappointed—but then it turned into a really interesting conversation."

For two alumnae, separate graduate school projects grew into a show exploring queer youth identities.

By the end of the day, Schorr Lesnick remembers, "students were creating tableau—frozen images using physical theatre. They were engaged and thoughtful, and worked together as a group to discuss pressing problems in their lives."

Generating *How We GLOW* was a collaborative effort for Schorr Lesnick and Humphrie, who are romantic as well as creative partners. They met at Macalester in 2007 during Orientation, started dating soon after, and shared the same first-year course. "I don't think working on a project with your partner is always the best idea," Schorr Lesnick says with a laugh. "But maybe it works because we met in a class. We can push each other academically and creatively, because that has always been part of our relationship."

After graduating from Mac, Schorr Lesnick returned to New York and started working at her high school alma mater, Riverdale Country School. Schorr Lesnick was also earning a master's degree in educational theater at the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. For her graduate coursework in 2014, she proposed an ethnodrama—in other words, ethnographic research shared as a script for a theatrical performance.

Humphrie explains what happened next: "In our household that we both read, review, and edit each other's creative pieces." She recognized the piece's potential as soon as she read it. That fall, as she finished her own master's degree at NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, Humphrie proposed for her thesis a production based on Schorr Lesnick's idea. To make the piece a reality, they interviewed 20 self-identified LGBT youth, age 14 to 24, about their identity.

The questions they asked were intentionally open-ended, to make space for whatever came up for interviewees. One question—"What does queer mean?"—garnered a surprisingly consistent answer: "Every single person said, 'It's an umbrella term,'" Schorr Lesnick says. Asked about the biggest issue facing queer communities, not a single young person said marriage. And few interviewees knew anything about Stonewall, the bar where the modern queer rights movement began.

Ultimately, they incorporated 11 people's stories into *How We GLOW*, named after the acronym for Riverdale's gender sexuality alliance, "Gay, Lesbian, Or Whatever." The 40-minute theater piece uses seven actors in a verbatim-style piece of documentary theater inspired by the work of actor Anna Deavere Smith, who interviews real people for her plays about current issues and uses their exact words in the script. The style, Humphrie says, is about the actor really sitting with the words they are speaking: "When you read someone's words, how that person speaks, you begin to sound like them."

Schorr Lesnick and Humphrie see the play as an access point for LGBT and straight people alike. "LGBT people get to hear their stories on stage," Humphrie says, "and other groups in the audience who may or may not be familiar with the experience get to listen and learn."

After attending one of the first productions in November 2015 at the Standard ToyKraft in Williamsburg in Brooklyn, one Riverdale student suggested that they perform it at school. Since then, the show has been performed more than 50 times, including at the International Dublin Gay Theatre Festival.

They recently relocated to Seattle. Schorr Lesnick works at University Prep, an independent secondary school, where students performed the show last spring—the first time she didn't direct it. Humphrie is working on a PhD from NYU Steinhardt, focused on educational policies related to trans and gender nonconforming students. Her other ethnodrama about LGBT history, *Making Gay History: Before Stonewall*, premiered in New York in February. But *How We GLOW* hasn't flickered out.

"I want to read through it again in 30 years to see if it feels like things have changed or if it will have stayed the same. I think the words that people use will be really different again. I think coming-out stories will be different," Humphrie says. "These are some of my hopes, too." M

Hillary Moses Mohaupt '08 is a freelance writer based in the greater Philadelphia area.

JESSE DITTMAR

A SPACE TO GLOW

BY HILLARY MOSES MOHAUPT '08

1945

Lorayne Gunnerud Hall, 95, died June 16, 2019, in Denver. She worked as a nurse and medical office manager. Hall is survived by two daughters, a son, seven grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters.

Muriel Francin McCalla, 96, died May 3, 2020, in Lakeland, Fla. She taught piano for 20 years, worked as a fundraiser for the Columbus Symphony, and competed in local golf championships. McCalla is survived by three daughters, a son, eight grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

1948

Beverly Oyen Nelson, 94, of Eagan, Minn., died May 25, 2020. She worked for the laboratory at Miller Hospital, was employed part time at medical offices in the Highland area for 39 years, and conducted interviews for the U.S. Census Bureau. Nelson had a daughter, two sons, and seven grandchildren.

1949

Brian H. Cleworth, 95, of Seattle died April 8, 2020. He served as a ball turret gunner in the Army Air Force and was a prisoner of war during World War II. Cleworth later was a Presbyterian pastor and worked for the Presbyterian Board of National Missions. He also flew commercially as a bush pilot, served on the Fairbanks, Alaska, City Council, and operated accounting firms in Alaska and Washington state. Cleworth is survived by his spouse, Nicholas Mar, two sons, two grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Kathryn King Edwards, 91, of St. Charles, Minn., died Feb. 13, 2020. She farmed with her husband, Curtis, worked as a bookkeeper for the St. Charles Creamery and Twin Valley Ag, and served on her local school board. Edwards is survived by three daughters, six grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and a sister.

Evelyn Johnson Schroeder, 91, of Richfield, Minn., died recently. She worked as an educator for the Bloomington, Minn., Public Schools for 27 years. Schroeder is survived by two daughters, a son, and four grandchildren.

Ruth Hands Schwartz, 92, of New Hope, Minn., died April 20, 2020. She taught ceramic classes in her home through her business, the TLC Shop. Schwartz is survived by a daughter, a son, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and a brother.

1950

Dora J. Baker, 91, of Fargo, N.D., died April 3, 2020. She is survived by three daughters, a son, 10 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandsons.

James F. Hagerty, 92, of Spokane, Wash., died March 7, 2020. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and worked for Ralston Purina Company at various locations across the country for 39 years. Hagerty is survived by two daughters, a son, four grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

James C. Sargent, 93, of St. Paul died April 14, 2020. He was an Army veteran and worked as a teacher and school administrator in St. Paul until retiring in 1988. Sargent is survived by a daughter, two sons, 15 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

1951

Orville E. Anderson, 90, died recently. He is survived by his wife, Marlene, a daughter, three sons, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

John H. Carpenter, 90, of Burnsville, Minn., died April 9, 2020. After 15 years as a high-temperature chemist with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Carpenter joined the faculty of St. Cloud State University. During his 25 years at the institution, he served sev-

Displaying some of the clothes sent to their "adoptee" are Wallace Hall treasurer Bonnie Bradfield (left) and Marilyn Gricith and Elizabeth Fenstad.

AN ENDURING CONNECTION

BY BERGEN SCHMIDT '22

On April 27, 1951, *The Mac Weekly* published a story about 135 Wallace Hall residents who were caring for an "adoptee," Mirielle Marrion of Belgium, between 1949 and 1952.

Marrion, who lived with her family in Ardennes at the time, received a special Christmas package from her Wallace Hall "foster mothers" every year containing soap, clothes, chocolate, and other necessities.

According to the *Mac Weekly* story, each "foster mother" contributed 20 cents a month towards Marrion's support. This money was forwarded through the Foster Parents Plan, in New York, and then on to Marrion.

Sixty-nine years later, Marrion's son, Pierre Bois d'Enghien, found a clipping of the photo that was printed alongside the original article when he was going through his mother's belongings after her death in 2018.

"I found a small clipping with no reference—on the clipping, there was only 'Wallace' and I saw on the T-shirt 'Macalester,'" he says.

For Marrion, who was born in 1935, students of Wallace Hall helped her during an important time in her life. Not only was the world recovering from World War II, but Marrion was studying to become a nursery school teacher. Bois d'Enghien believes that the help Macalester students provided was critical for his mother's ability to live the life that she did.

After becoming a teacher, Marrion worked in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for six years and then settled in Belgium. She retired from teaching in the early 1990s.

Even after all these years, Bois d'Enghien is still grateful for the help Macalester students provided to his mother. "When I saw this clipping, I was really moved by the story because she kept the clipping until her last days," he says. "I think it was really critical to our life. I was so happy to reach Macalester people, and I would like to give a testimony and a real thank you to your predecessors."

Excerpted from The Mac Weekly *(May 21, 2020)*

eral years as department chair and college senate president. Carpenter is survived by his wife, Ramona Borseth Carpenter '52, a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, a great grandchild, and a sister.

Paul F. Kummel, 93, of Cottage Grove, Minn., died March 1, 2020. He served in the U.S. Navy in the South Pacific during World War II. A teacher and coach at both the elementary and secondary levels, Kummel retired as an elementary school principal in North St. Paul, Minn. He is survived by his wife, Skip, a daughter, a son, and four grandchildren.

Rachel Hart Novy, 91, of Hillsboro, Wis., died March 16, 2020. After teaching kindergarten for two years, she ran a family dairy farm with her husband, Martin. She also worked as a high school teacher's aide and served as president and secretary of the St. Joseph's Hospital Auxiliary. Novy is survived by two sons, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Mary Traci Thornton Weingarten, 90, of Chestertown, Md., died May 20, 2020. She worked for the U.S. Embassy in Paris and traveled the world as the wife of a foreign service officer. Weingarten is survived by daughter Caitlin "Kiki" Weingarten Condon '93, two sons, and a grandson.

Don I. Wortman, 92, of Albuquerque, N.M., died March 27, 2020. He served in the U.S. Army in Japan during the postwar occupation and worked for 27 years as an administrator in the federal government. During his six years with the Office of Economic Opportunity, Wortman helped launch Head Start, Upward Bound, and the Community Action Program. He also spent two years with the CIA, held the post of commissioner of the Social Security Administration for one year, and served as a political appointee under both Democratic and Republican administrations. President Gerald Ford recognized Wortman in 1975 for his efforts to help in the resettlement of refugees from Indochina to the United States. Wortman served on Macalester's Board of Trustees for many years and received the college's Distinguished Citizen Award in 1970. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, three sons (including Eric Wortman '77), and two grandsons (including Kyle Wortman '09).

1952

Adele Christopherson Branch, 88, died April 29, 2020. She taught elementary school in Minnesota and Montana. After retiring in 1992, she worked as a literacy consultant. Branch is survived by her husband, Harold, daughters Julie Adams Branch '82 and Jana Branch '83, five grandchildren (including Hannah Adams Ryan '08), four great-grandchildren, and brother James Christopherson '51.

Malcolm G. Dade, 88, of Detroit died Dec. 18, 2020. He worked for various city and state organizations and retired from Detroit Edison in 1994. Dade is survived his wife, Kitty, two daughters, a son, two granddaughters, two sisters, and a brother.

Virgil C. Herrick, 89, of Fridley, Minn., died May 12, 2020. He ran a law practice in Anoka County, served as a municipal judge, and worked as Fridley's city attorney for 30 years. Herrick also served on the board of the Macalester Alumni Association and was a member of the boards of directors of various community organizations. Survivors include two daughters, son Gregg Herrick '81, five grandchildren, and brother Dallas Herrick '61.

Barbara Jesten Hope, 89, of New Hope, Minn., died April 12, 2020. With her husband, George, she served churches in Minnesota and Iowa. Hope is survived by four daughters.

James L. Jenkins, 89, of Edina, Minn., died March 14, 2020. After his ordination in the Episcopal Church, Jenkins served parishes in Minnesota and was chaplain of Breck School, Sheltering Arms School, and Cass Lake Episcopal Camp. When he retired in 1993 as rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Excelsior, Minn., he was the longest-serving priest in his diocese. Jenkins is survived by a daughter, a son, many grandchildren, and a brother.

1953

Lloyd G. Fowler, 89, died Nov. 8, 2019. He taught high school in Minnesota and Montana before moving to Spokane, Wash., where he taught high school language arts, coached drama and debate, and served as faculty advisor for an exchange student program. Fowler is survived by two daughters, five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and two brothers.

Barbara Porter Johnson, 88, died Aug. 7, 2019, in Verona, Wis. She was a case worker with Green Valley Enterprises. Johnson is survived by two sons, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

T. Kirkley "Kirk" Mark, 88, of Golden Valley, Minn., died May 24, 2020. During a long career in purchasing, sales, and product management, Mark worked for Control Data and Minnesota Wire & Cable Company. He is survived by his wife, Mary MacRae Mark '53, a daughter, two sons, seven grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

1954

Marilyn Bruette Abercrombie, 89, died March 5, 2020. She began her career as a freelance photographer with the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* and the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Her photographs accompanied *National Geographic* magazine articles on Egypt, western Tibet, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, and appeared in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Abercrombie's book *Traveling the World for National Geographic* was published in 2010. She is survived by a daughter, a son, two grandchildren, and a sister.

A. Michael Steffes, 88, died April 9, 2020. He worked in sales and marketing for Kimberly Clark, and later was employed by Standard & Poor, Thompson Lightning Protection, and Enterprise Rent-a-Car. Steffes also served in the U.S. Navy Reserve, retiring as a captain in 1986. He is survived by a daughter, a son, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

1955

Patricia Hayden Olson, 86, died Feb. 21, 2020. She worked as an elementary schoolteacher and a senior home activities and volunteer coordinator. Olson is survived by her husband, Arlen Olson '55, two daughters, a son, four grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

Norman F. Opp, 87, of Chanhassen, Minn., died Feb. 29, 2020. He is survived by two daughters (including Stephanie Opp Zorn '88), a son, and four grandchildren.

Barbara Koucky Ramnaraine, 85, died Oct. 27, 2019, in St. Paul. She was a teacher, an Episcopal deacon, and founder of the Episcopal Network Serving People with Disabilities. She is survived by a daughter and son James Ramnaraine '80.

1956

Beverly Feldhake Hall, 84, died April 14, 2020. She is survived by four daughters, a son, 10 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Clark E. Hunting, 85, of Minneapolis died Feb. 7, 2020. He taught junior high and high school in Minneapolis and coached hockey, football, and swimming. Hunting is survived by three sons.

Donna Tofte Jaye, 85, died Feb. 14, 2020. She taught elementary school for many years and co-founded Gingerbread Nursery School. Jaye is survived by her husband, Gayle Johnson, three children, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Marjorie Carlton Nortin, 85, of Katy, Texas, died March 26, 2020. She began working at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston as an executive assistant to the chief of pathology. She retired in 2000 after 23 years with the institution. Nortin is survived by her husband, Richard Nortin '56, two daughters, a son, a foster daughter, 15 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

Mary Wasgatt Robertson, 85, of Holland, Mich., died April 15, 2020. After working as an advertising manager at Brett's Department Store in Mankato, Minn., and taking a job with Michigan Bell, Robertson taught expository writing and journalism at West Ottawa High School from 1967 to 1993. She is survived by a son, two grandsons, and sister Madge Wasgatt Pedersen '59.

Wanetta Keller Skartvedt, 85, died Feb. 23, 2020, in Chaska, Minn. After retiring from teaching, Skartvedt worked at Kemper Drug Store in Elk River, Minn., for more than 20 years. She is survived by two daughters, three grandchildren, and two sisters (including Geneva Keller Middleton '52).

1957

Marilyn Hermanson Harrington, 84, of Forest Lake, Minn., died May 20, 2020. She taught elementary school in Wadena, Minn., and served as secretary of Bloomington Covenant Church. Harrington is survived by two daughters and five grandchildren.

Ruth Stricker Dayton, 85, of Deephaven, Minn., died April 14, 2020. A pioneer in mind-body work, Stricker Dayton opened The Marsh, A Center for Balance and Fitness in 1985. Described by Dr. Andrew Weil as "a combination of spa, hospital, and health club," The Marsh combines allopathic and alternative disciplines. Stricker Dayton also sponsored research into mindful exercise and the possible benefits of qigong and tai chi for cancer patients.

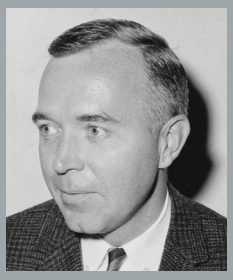
Stricker Dayton's deep legacy at Macalester lives on through her leadership, service, and generosity. She served on the Macalester Board of Trustees from 1995 to 2016 and was elected to Emerita status immediately following her retirement. She also served on the Alumni Board, and inspired decades of other leaders at Macalester. Among many other honors and accolades, she received the Macalester Distinguished Citizen Award in 1987 and the Trustees Award for Meritorious and Distinguished Service in 2018.

Stricker Dayton, along with her late husband Bruce B. Dayton, was extraordinarily generous to Macalester and to numerous other organizations, including the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the China Institute, and the art museum at Yale University. At Macalester, the Ruth Stricker Dayton Campus Center was named in her honor in 2001 and Markim Hall was named in recognition of the Dayton family in 2009.

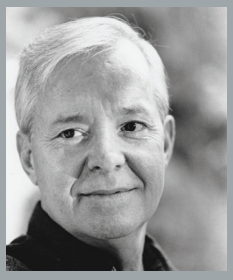
"I will miss Ruth dearly; she was truly a force for good in this world," says Macalester president emeritus Brian Rosenberg. "All of us in the Macalester community are deeply grateful to her for the ways in which she taught us to live out Macalester's values each day."

She is survived by her daughter, Kim Stricker Griffin '87, a son, two grandchildren, brother Paul DeBeer '54, and former husband David Stricker.

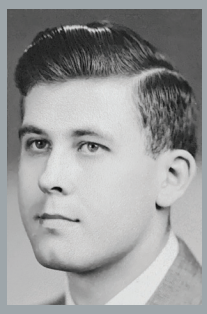
// OTHER LOSSES



David H. Hopper, a longtime professor of religious studies at Macalester, died April 28, 2020, at the age of 92. He served in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II and studied at Princeton Theological Seminary and Friedrich Wilhelms Universitat before beginning his 38-year career at Macalester in 1959. After his retirement, Hopper taught at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. He enjoyed tending apple trees, and his "Whoppertosh" apple won a prize at the Minnesota State Fair. Hopper was the author of four books and was working on his fifth, *The Lincoln of His Speeches*, at the time of his death. He is survived by three daughters (including Kate Hopper '95) and six grandchildren.



John Michael Keenan, a professor of English at Macalester from 1965 to 1996, died May 4, 2020, in Clarkdale, Ariz. He was 85. During his time at Macalester, Keenan designed courses to support the mastery of writing and taught at Bethune Cookman as part of an exchange program with historically Black colleges and universities. He chaired Macalester's English Department for the final 11 years of his tenure and received the college's Jefferson Award for extraordinary service in 1996. Keenan is survived by his wife, Susan, a daughter, a son, and two grandchildren.



Gareth Olson, a former professor of physical education at Macalester, died Jan. 20, 2020, at the age of 94. He lived in Berthoud, Colo. He joined Macalester's faculty in 1958 and also served as an assistant football and wrestling coach. After leaving Macalester in 1964, he took a position at the University of Denver.

Hélène Nahas Peters, a professor of French at Macalester for many years, died recently. She was 101. In addition to chairing Macalester's French Department, Peters launched an undergraduate study abroad program and served as president of the Minnesota chapters of the Alliance Française and the American Association of Teachers of French. She was awarded the rank of Officier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French government. Peters and her husband, John, had two daughters and four granddaughters.

1958

Earl R. Rosenwinkel, 84, died April 7, 2020, in Duluth, Minn. He was an ecologist and assistant professor of general science at Portland State University who studied the ecology of Isle Royale National Park on Lake Superior. After earning an MDiv degree in 1989, Rosenwinkel served as an assisting pastor at the White Earth Reservation Episcopal Church. He also worked as an ecological data manager with the Hartley Nature Center in Duluth.

Robert A. Shogren, 84, died March 20, 2020. He began working for Maritz in St. Louis as a creative director in 1962 and became a corporate officer before retiring in 1991. Shogren then pursued a second career officiating with the Metropolitan Amateur Golf Association and the PGA. He was invited to serve on the rules committee for the 2018 PGA Championship. Shogren is survived by his wife, Susan, a granddaughter, and a brother.

1960

David W. Rowell, 81, died March 1, 2020, in Long Beach, Calif. During his career in the aerospace industry, Rowell was employed by Douglas Aircraft and Northrop Aircraft and worked on the design of a stealth bomber dashboard. He retired in 1990. Rowell is survived by his wife, Carolynn, a daughter, a son, two grandchildren, and a brother.

1961

Gail Hofmaster Nelson, 81, of North Oaks, Minn., died April 23, 2020. She taught at schools in Indiana and Utah and worked for 24 years in the Twin Cities area as a classroom teacher, special education teacher, learning disabilities tutor, and part-time faculty member at the College of St. Catherine. She retired in 2004. Nelson is survived by her husband, Kyler, three children, and nine grandchildren.

George L. Wirkkula, 83, died April 14, 2020. He served in the Peace Corps in Liberia in 1963, helping to establish that country's Department of Civil Service. After returning to the United States, Wirkkula worked in the financial industry for 45 years. He was vice president of sales at Waddell and Reed and a financial planner with H&R Block and Ameriprise. Wirkkula is survived by his wife, Kathleen Keenan, three daughters, and six grandchildren.

1962

Donald D. Parker, 79, died April 22, 2020. He taught math in public schools in California. His survivors include his sister, Jessie Parker Strauss '59.

Dean E. Terry, 84, died April 16, 2020, in Minneapolis. He served in the U.S. Navy and owned numerous businesses, including Lyon Food Products, Terry Mushroom Farms, and Romanoff Foods. Terry served as Commodore of the Minneapolis Aquatennial in 1992. He is survived by his wife, Victoria, daughter Lesley Terry '82, a grandson, and a sister.

1963

William L. Chamberland, 78, died March 29, 2020, in Draper, Utah. During his career as a cartographer and photogrammetrist, Chamberland worked for ACIC/DMA, the U.S. Forest Service, Intergraph, and BAE Systems. He was a piper and bass drummer and a member of the Wasatch & District Pipe Band. Chamberland is survived by his wife, Rita Thorstenson Chamberland '63, a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Elizabeth Turner Platt, 79, of Le Claire, Iowa, died May 16, 2020. She worked as a medical technologist and high school Russian language teacher. Platt was a peace activist who participated in two international peace walks in the U.S.S.R. with her father and daughter. She is survived by two daughters (including Ali Turner '89), a grandson, three sisters (including Jane Turner Cooper '65), and a brother.

Henry L. Pryor, 79, died May 5, 2020. He served in the Naval Air Reserves for seven years. After a career in radio, Pryor worked in office product sales and launched his own company, H.P. Associates. He is survived by his wife, Mary, two daughters, a son, five grandchildren, and two brothers.

Sandra Schaffner Sawyer, 77, died March 1, 2020, in Rochester, Minn. She was director of social work at Ah-Gwah-Ching Nursing Home in Walker, Minn., where she worked for more than 16 years. Sawyer is survived by a daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a brother.

1964

Dennis R. Keller, 79, of Edina, Minn., died Dec. 11, 2019. He was a senior investment officer with The St. Paul Companies. Keller's survivors include his wife, Roberta.

Thomas B. Poch, 77, of Lakeville, Minn., died March 15, 2020. After serving as an assistant county attorney for Ramsey County for 29 years, Poch was appointed in 1996 as district court judge of Minnesota's First Judicial District. During his 15 years in this position, he established Dakota County Peer Court. Poch also served as a judge advocate officer with the Naval Reserve and as a military judge in the Navy-Marine Corps Trial Judiciary, retiring as a Navy captain in 1998. Poch is survived by his wife, Carol, a daughter, a son, and five grandchildren.

1965

Vernon E. Skari, 92, died April 18, 2020.

1967

Sherry McClelland, 74, died Feb. 26, 2020, in Cambridge, Mass. After graduating from Macalester, she taught public school, traveled for several years in Latin America, and earned a graduate degree at the University of North Dakota before moving to São Paulo, Brazil. She was a teacher and administrator at Graded–The American School of São Paulo for 40 years, retiring in 2013. She also taught ESL and English to middle and high schoolers.

McClelland is survived by a daughter, a son, five grandchildren, her mother, a sister, and a brother.

Lynn E. Mielke, 80, of Two Harbors, Minn., died March 18, 2020. He was a U.S. Army veteran and worked as a computer programmer at Unisys for more than 30 years, retiring in 2002. Mielke is survived by his wife, Penelope Nyline Mielke '61.

1968

Donald Max Harshbarger, 73, died March 15, 2020, in Minneapolis. He began his career at 3M as a chemical engineer and was working in technical services management when he retired in 2002. Harshbarger is survived by his wife, Charlene, two daughters, four grandchildren, and three sisters.

1969

Richard J. Evans, 72, of Stacy, Minn., died Nov. 20, 2019. He worked as a ranger for the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Evans is survived by his wife, Deborah, two sisters, and a brother.

1970

Linda Dickhoff Mellen, 72, died April 22, 2020. She and her husband, Michael, had seven children.

1972

Becky van der Hoogt Fisher died recently. She taught English as a second language at the University of Wisconsin–Madison for 20 years, retiring in 2012. Fisher is survived by her husband, David, three children, two granddaughters, and a sister.

Reid B. McLean, 69, of St. Paul died June 6, 2020. After graduating from Macalester, McLean was involved in the Twin Cities music scene, playing keyboards and woodwinds with several rock bands and booking, managing, and mentoring younger musicians. He organized concert series and special events for the Minnesota Orchestra for 15 years. He joined his late wife M. Brigid McDonough '73 in supporting political campaigns centered on equity and social justice and served on the board of Ampersand Families and on the Development Committee of the American Composers Forum. In 2006, McLean began working for Macalester's Advancement Office, building the Mac community and promoting philanthropic support of the college's mission. He also hosted and advised many Macalester international students. McLean is survived by his mother, two sisters, and a brother.

1975

Deborah E. Reeves, 66, of Washington, D.C., died Aug. 26, 2019. She worked as an attorney for the Joint Center for Political Studies and served as a member of the Internal Revenue Service's Tax Court Bar. Reeves also worked for the District of Columbia Office of Employee Appeals and retired as a senior administrative law judge. She is survived by a brother.

1976

Ramona J. Burks, 65, died April 26, 2020. As a national park ranger stationed on Alcatraz Island, Burks was involved in the filming of *Escape from Alcatraz*. After working for the Department of Housing and Urban Development in New Jersey, Burks joined a private-sector firm based in Washington, D.C., that was acquired by the Inner City Fund. She spent more than 30 years working across the country in housing and neighborhood redevelopment, retiring from ICF as senior vice president. Burks and her husband, Jeff Sobotka, had two children.

Joseph H. Honor, 66, of Suffern, N.Y., died Feb. 29, 2020.

1978

Anne K. Frazier, 63, died Feb. 22, 2020. After teaching in Kansas and Alaska, she finished her career in Denver, where she taught high school Spanish and directed the Adams County School District's International Baccalaureate program. Frazier is survived by a daughter, her mother, a sister, and two brothers.

1981

Stephen J. Ek, 60, of Plymouth, Minn., died Feb. 17, 2020. He is survived by his mother and three brothers.

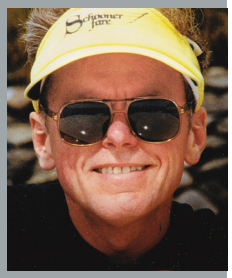
1983

Scott D. Lilja, 58, died May 3, 2020. He was senior vice president of member services for the National Independent Automobile Dealers Association and vice president and chief operating officer of the NADA Used Car Guide. Lilja is survived by a sister.

1986

Jerome H. Walther, 56, died March 26, 2020, in Newtown, Pa. During his career in finance, he worked for Bear Sterns and Church Capital Management. He was most recently a senior vice president at Brick & Kyle Associates. Walther also coached youth hockey. He is survived by his wife, Jennifer Webber, three children, and two brothers.

// OTHER LOSSES



Jon Halvorsen, editor of *Macalester Today* for 18 years, died May 13, 2020, at the age of 74. He lived in South Portland, Maine, where he and his wife Donna moved upon retiring in 2007. Under his editorship, the magazine exemplified the highest standards of journalism while showcasing the achievements of alumni and illuminating the challenges faced by the college over the years.

"If you're really, really lucky, maybe once in your life you'll work for someone like Jon Halvorsen," writes longtime *Macalester Today* writer Jan Shaw-Flamm '76. "He didn't simply engage writers for the magazine. He cultivated us, taught us, made us better writers, and here's the kicker, he did so with patience and the sort of thoughtful and kind critique that made you burn to dig in, understand more, and write to a higher standard because he knew you were capable of it."

For years, Jon and Donna, also a journalist, were host "parents" for fellows of the World Press Institute, which brings professional journalists from around the world to learn about the United States.

In Maine, Halvorsen tutored immigrants who were preparing for their citizenship exams and improving their English. His keen interest in the life experiences and points of view of others aligned closely with the values of the college he served for the better part of two decades.

In addition to Donna, he is survived by their daughter, a sister, a nephew, and Donna's Minnesota family.

A CULTURAL INSTITUTION

The Sounds of Blackness, founded at Macalester in 1971, is pictured here performing in Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center around 1974. Nearly 50 years (and three Grammy Awards) later, the Twin Cities-based ensemble is still making music. On Juneteenth, the group released "Sick and Tired," an anthem for a new civil rights movement with a title inspired by civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer's 1964 quote, "I am sick and tired of being sick and tired." "This song represents the systemic injustice that's been happening for 400 years," says Gary Hines '74, who wrote and produced the song. "The mood of this time is anger, outrage, and calls to action, and the music has to reflect that, too."

The group's legacy goes back to 1969, when Russell Knighton '72 founded the Macalester College Black Voices ensemble. Two years later, he brought on Hines as the music director, and they changed the group's name and began expanding its reach. From the beginning, their mentor, history professor Mahmoud El-Kati, pushed them to think big. "He implored us to be more than just a band," Hines says. "He wanted us to orient ourselves and think about ourselves as a cultural institution."

The song's release marks the start of the ensemble's 50th anniversary commemoration.

Share your Sounds of Blackness photos and memories: mactoday@macalester.edu

COURTESY OF MACALESTER COLLEGE ARCHIVES

THANK YOU

Thank you for making Macalester moments possible for every student, today and in the future!

More than 18,000 alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff, volunteers, and friends of the college were inspired to come together and contribute more than $126 million in endowed funds, planned gifts to support future student and faculty needs, and Macalester Fund current-use support, far exceeding our goal of $100 million.

We look forward to sharing with you in the coming months the many ways in which campaign support transforms the student and community experience at Mac.

Every time I think about leaving this place I get more excited for the students who are going to come after me, for the students who will be entering Macalester this year and who will get the opportunities to experience some of the experiences I've had. It's been such a privilege to be here, and I'm grateful for it, and for you, every day."

Autumn DeLong, Class of 2020

MACALESTER COLLEGE

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

It's tradition for departments to send off graduating seniors each May, but this year faculty and staff had to get creative to celebrate students near and far during physical distancing. When the Geography Department toured the neighborhood to visit seniors still nearby (before face coverings became widely used), this is the scene that greeted Webster An '20 (Ann Arbor, Mich.). "Even professors who I had not had the privilege of taking a class with were out on the sidewalk hooting and hollering," An says. "It cemented the sense of community that the Geography Department gave me throughout my time at Macalester. I had a great big grin glued to my face for the rest of the day."