

# Macalester

# Today

SPRING 2016

## THEATRICAL FORCE

The remarkable odyssey  
of playwright and actor  
**Danai Gurira '01**

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**ON THE COVER:** Actor and playwright Danai Gurira '01.  
Photo by Maarten de Boer/Contour by Getty Images



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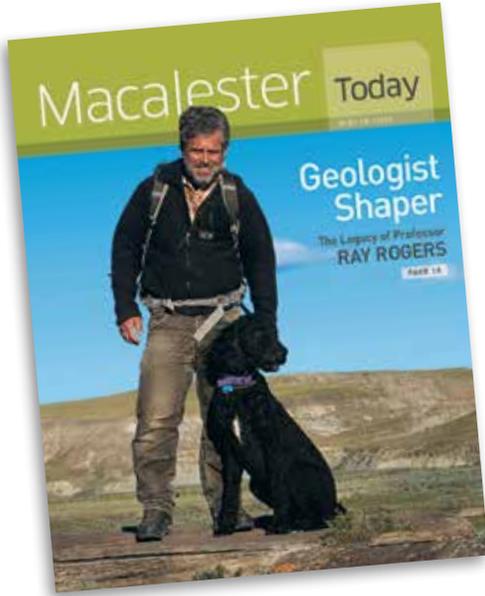
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# Letters



## Ray Rogers

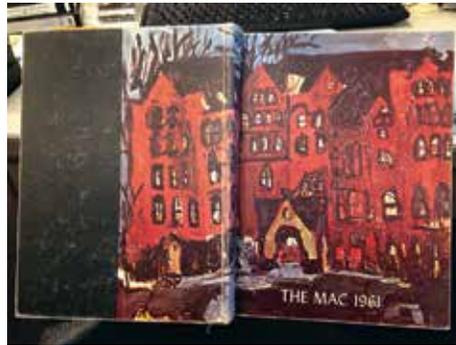
I really enjoyed the latest issue of the *Macalester Today* (Winter 2016). I especially loved the article on Ray Rogers; I took a geology course with him during my last semester at Macalester and sure wish I had discovered the discipline sooner. I also really liked the article about changing (or not changing) one's surname at marriage. It seemed like a slightly strange topic, yet very pertinent to the interests of many alumnae. Keep up the good work!

**Casey Mason '06**  
St. Paul, Minn.

## On Alvin Greenberg

I was saddened to see the obituary of Professor Alvin Greenberg. In the 1970s Professor Greenberg was an indie-rock star of a teacher in an English Department that had a few... Bob Warde, Michael Keenan, and others. His 1971 novel *Going Nowhere*, published by Simon and Schuster, was a must-read and a near cult classic in those hazy days—cosmic, warm with humor, and like Vonnegut, Brautigan, et al, he tapped into the era with a sharp eye and great imagination. Other books followed: more experimental stories, poetry, an opera, apparently. Thirty-eight years of Mac students orbiting his intellect, reading the books he loved, writing for his perspective and advice. There are, I'm sure, numerous Mac professors of lengthy tenure whose passing should be given a more detailed remembrance in *Macalester Today*. Al Greenberg is definitely one.

**Kevin Ott '77**  
Cincinnati, Ohio



## Mystery Painter Revealed

You may receive many emails regarding your “mystery art” painting on page 5 of *Macalester Today* (Winter 2016; also above). This painting of Old Main was used on the 1961 yearbook cover, and it was painted by then-sophomore **Judith Lodge '63**. I still have the yearbook, so I immediately recognized the painting.

By the way, I painted the 1964 yearbook cover—my senior year as an art major—which was a picture of the construction site of Wallace Fine Arts Center. I recently donated the painting to Macalester at the request of **Janice Dickinson '64**. The last I heard they had received the painting and were having it framed. Does anyone know where it is? I wouldn't want it to become another piece of “mystery art.”

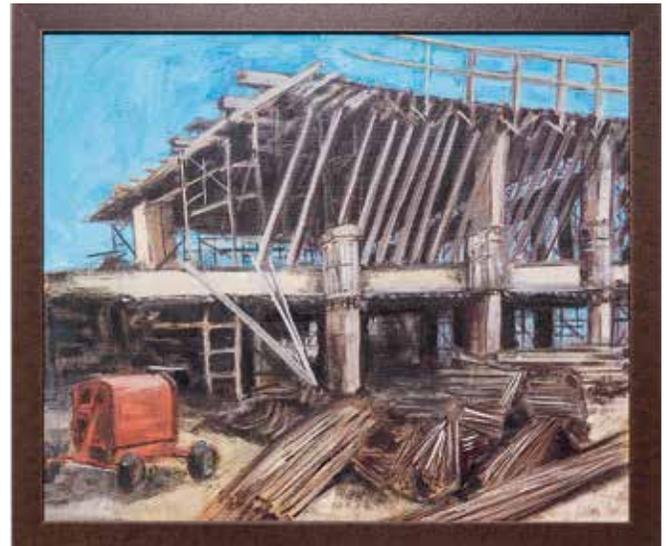
**Cynthia Holley Brewster '64**  
Concord Township, Ohio

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Indeed we did hear from many alumni from the 1960s: **Joanne Brown Fabel '64**, **Dallas Lindgren '63**, **Gail Hofmaster Nelson '61**, and **Connie Kane Anderson '62**, all of St. Paul; **Eleanor Ostman Aune '62** (Arden Hills, Minn.); **Paul Fellows '65** (Metropolis, Ill.); **Christine Ostrom Stannard '61** (Greeley, Colo.); **Ben James '63** (Birchrunville, Penn.); **Jack Westin '64** (Wimberley, Texas); **Anne Harbour '64** (Hereford, England); **David Robinson '67** (Minneapolis); **Kathy Hansen McQuaid '63** (Chandler, Ariz.); **Carol DeBoer-Langworthy '64** (Providence, R.I.); and **Bob**

**Allen '62** (Rancho Mirage, Calif.), all of whom identified the Old Main painting as the work of **Judy Lodge '63**.

**THE ARCHIVIST CONCURS:** The yearbook in 1961 was called *The Mac*, and the “mystery art” painting that ran in the Winter 2016 issue of *Macalester Today* is the same art that was used on the cover of that yearbook. **Judy Lodge '63** is listed as “Artist” on the 1961 *Mac* staff list and as “Artist for the MAC” on the pages describing the yearbook staff. That, coupled with images of some of Lodge's other artwork that ran in *The Mac Weekly*, leads me to believe that she is indeed the artist.

**Ellen Holt Werle '97**  
Macalester Archivist  
St. Paul, Minn.



**Cynthia Holley Brewster's painting of the 1964 Wallace Fine Arts Center construction hangs today in the office of Gabrielle Lawrence, executive director of Alumni Engagement.**

## LETTERS POLICY

We invite letters of 300 words or fewer. Letters may be edited for clarity, style, and space and will be published based on their relevance to issues discussed in *Macalester Today*. You can send letters to [llamb@maclester.edu](mailto:llamb@maclester.edu) or to *Macalester Today*, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105.

# Creating Diverse Communities

BY BRIAN ROSENBERG

Absent any easy way to measure the messy, nuanced work of education, colleges tend to rely upon the numbers. How many applications were received? What are the median SAT scores? What percentage of students graduate on time and (thanks to the Department of Education) what is their annual income?

So it is with the project of creating diverse communities on our campuses. How many students of color are enrolled? How many international students, and from how many countries? What is their rate of graduation?

All of these numbers are important. They should, however, be thought of not as the whole story, but as the opening chapter in a long and complex narrative. Enrolling a diverse student body, hiring a diverse group of faculty and staff members: these are necessary steps toward the goal of building diverse communities, but too often, I think, they are seen as ends in themselves.

Among the many lessons that might be learned from the recent wave of discontent among students of color and their allies is that simply bringing those students onto a campus is insufficient. Increasing their number, while critically important, is not in itself enough, a truth demonstrated by the fact that some of the most profound unrest can be found on campuses where the number of students of color has increased most dramatically.

Even good intentions are not enough, frustrating as this may be. Racism in overt and covert forms exists on college campuses, as it exists in all corners of our society, but I do believe that the leaders of most colleges and universities genuinely embrace both the educational importance and the societal value of creating diverse communities.

Yet we struggle. Without dismissing our progress and our successes, we must acknowledge that the pain and frustration felt by many people of color on our campuses are real. The

sense of being within but not truly a part of a community is real. The anger is real. Those who dismiss these feelings as somehow immature or overstated are, I think, in error.

While there is no quick or easy way to build campus communities that are diverse, inclusive, and supportive, there are, in my view, best practices that will move those communities in the right direction. At minimum our efforts must be *intentional*, *pervasive*, and *visible*.

By *intentional* I mean that bringing people of color onto campuses that have historically



been and largely remain white and expecting community just to form, as if by some spontaneous chemical reaction, is unrealistic. Even as we alter the mix of students we enroll, we need to ask, and attempt to answer, a range of difficult questions: that is, we need to have a plan. How will traditional, more homogeneous populations and newer, more diverse populations be helped in the effort not just to coexist, but to benefit from proximity? How should programming outside the classroom and teaching inside the classroom reflect and support this new group of students? How will we respond when things go wrong, as inevitably they will?

By *pervasive* I mean that the work of creating a diverse community must be shared by the entire community. Perhaps the most com-

mon mistake made on our campuses is to designate responsibility for “diversity” to a single office or administrator and allow everyone else to go about business as usual. This reinforces the perception that diversity is a side-project rather than a central priority. While offices and administrators focused on multiculturalism play a crucial role, the responsibility for thinking about the implications of diversity must be distributed much more broadly among students, staff, and administrators, and—I would say especially—faculty. The majority of complaints I hear about unwelcoming environments relate to experiences in the classroom: the place most crucial to learning is sometimes the place where students feel most ill at ease.

And by *visible* I mean that leadership, mission statements, and symbols matter. Presidents especially must address the importance of having diverse campus communities, must highlight successes and acknowledge failures, must make decisions about resource allocation and strategic directions with diversity in mind. We have seen what happens when this is not done, or when it is done only in response to demands. Boards of Trustees, too, should underscore diversity both in their composition and in the priorities they communicate to the president.

None of this will provide a quick fix. Colleges and universities are embedded in a society whose challenges are deep and ongoing and from whose conflicts they will never be immune. But they—we—should aspire both to model that society at its best and to educate those who will improve it. This means doing all in our power to form communities that are both diverse and cohesive: to discover, in Lincoln’s famous phrase, “the better angels of our nature” at a time when so many seem to have abandoned the search. ■

**BRIAN ROSENBERG** is the president of Macalester College. A shorter version of this essay appeared in *Trusteeship magazine* (Jan./Feb. 2016).

# ▶ Summit to St. Clair

## CAMPUS NEWS SUMMARY



MISE-EN-SCENE, KEY LIGHT, Roman Polanski, Jean-Luc Godard. These are among the many cinematic names and elements that students taking Film Analysis/Visual Culture were exposed to last semester.

A first-year course taught by Media and Cultural Studies professor Morgan Adamson, Film Analysis is a compelling mixture of theory and viewing. “It’s very rewarding to read scholarly work about a cinematic movement and then watch a film from the movement,” says **Sebastian Eising ’19** (Rochester, Minn.).

Although Millennials are veteran viewers, most haven’t previously mastered the academic tools needed to analyze film. “I loved the idea of finding meanings and purposes to what is at first glance purely entertainment,” says **Erika Aguiluz Ramirez ’19** (Los Angeles).

Adamson’s students were “not always expecting all the academic parts along with the movie watching,” she says. But once they adjusted to that, they were a joy to teach, she says. “They’ve all actually done the reading and want to talk about it.”

And there was plenty to talk about, with the class covering everything from D.W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* to Steve Mc-

Queen’s *Twelve Years a Slave*. Along the way, class members learn cinematic history as well as technical concepts such as lighting, sound, and cinematography.

Exploring the rich film world of the Twin Cities was another vital part of the course. One of their assignments was to attend a film at a local micro-cinema, such as the Trylon Cinema in Minneapolis (which in December was showing *The Thin Man*). The class also visited the Walker Art Center for a screening of the Senegalese film *Black Girl* by Ousmane Sembène and enjoyed a demonstration of its new multimedia room, designed by **Anthony Tran ’11**, a New Media Initiatives technologist there.

Although the Film Analysis students didn’t share a residence hall floor, as some first-year classmates do, they developed a tight community nevertheless. Sunday night film screenings helped, accompanied as they often were by dinner or popcorn, as did regular field trips.

And there was always plenty to talk about. Says Eising, “I was surprised by the number of directions our class discussions have gone in. Film can be the starting point for so many different conversations.”

# A for Women Coaches



Kelly Roysland

Macalester was the only MIAC school that received an "A" for its staffing of women's sports teams, according to a report issued by the Tucker Center for Research

on Girls and Women in Sport. Seven of Mac's ten head coaches in women's sports are women, *MinnPost* reported in January, as are its athletics director and associate director.

The article featured women's basketball coach Kelly Roysland, who is turning around a longtime losing team after less than two years on the job. She previously served as an assistant coach for the University of Minnesota's women's basketball team.



## Public [Transit] Art

A BRIDGE IN ST. LOUIS PARK, Minn., features one of the newest public artworks by Myklebust + SEARS, the team of art professor Stanton Sears and **Andrea Myklebust '95**. That bridge, located at Hwy. 7 and Louisiana Avenue, showcases the artists' vertical steel embellishments inspired by designs from the iconic Bundt cake pans made by Nordic Ware, a St. Louis Park company.

Sears and Myklebust, collaborators since 1993, have created more than 40 public artworks across the country in airports, on campuses, and in government and corporate settings. They work in durable materials such as cast bronze, glass, stone, terrazzo, concrete, and fabricated steel.

Other recent work includes three pieces of transit-inspired sculpture at Twin Cities Green Line light-rail stations: a Great Northern Railroad-inspired work at St. Paul's Union Depot; a diesel truck-inspired piece at the Raymond Avenue station in St. Paul; and an International Harvester tractor-inspired sculpture at Westgate station near the University of Minnesota.



## Starry Night

It's traditional to celebrate the completion of the college's calculus sequence with a calculus fair. Visiting math professor Dan Flath thought that this project from last fall's fair was "particularly visually appealing and not quite what people expect from a math project." **Paul Reischmann '19** (St. Petersburg, Fla.) and **Elena Smith '19** (Eau Claire, Wis.) designed this version of Vincent Van Gogh's painting *The Starry Night* using programming and math skills learned in Flath's Multivariable Calculus course.

## CITY CYCLING

When **Hannah Klapprodt '19** moved to St. Paul from a small Massachusetts town, an important part of her introduction to the Twin Cities took place on two wheels. That orientation came thanks to Cycling the Urban Landscape, a course she took with environmental studies professor Margot Higgins.

“I had no experience biking in an urban environment, but I thought there’d be no better way to explore the cities than via bike,” says Klapprodt (Ipswich, Mass.). “I chose Macalester partly for its urban location—which was essentially the syllabus.”

That meant frequent field trips (by bicycle, of course) led by guest speakers from St. Paul’s transportation planning department and cycling advocacy groups such as Cycles for Change (led by **Jason Tanzman '06**). Another field trip took the class to North Min-

neapolis and Theodore Wirth Park, guided by a staff member from the Loppet Foundation, which promotes outdoor activities for underserved youth and families.

Giving students a better understanding of equitable forms of urban transit—and how bicycling fits into that picture—is among Higgins’s goals for the course. “I hope students see that bicycle planning is one part of transportation and environmental planning,” she says. “I want them to understand how bicycling connects to these larger conversations.”

Some students were already avid cyclists; others started the semester with little experience. They hailed from places ranging from Boston to Bombay. That range of perspectives proved invaluable as students discussed both local and international transit policy.

The course also looked at St. Paul’s bicycle

plan, passed last year. In response to a restaurant owner’s concern about losing parking spaces to a bike lane, for example, students presented suggestions for how the restaurateur might appeal to bicycling customers. Their ideas ranged from offering a cyclist discount to adding cyclist-level signage. Higgins sent their ideas to the restaurant owner.

Cycling the Urban Landscape is being offered again this semester (winter riding!) and next fall. Higgins hopes her students gain a lasting sense for how bicycles can fit into their daily lives—and how more bikes can strengthen communities.

For Klapprodt, that dual approach made an impact. “This was a great introduction to urban planning,” she says. “Plus I’m now comfortable biking anywhere. I think I’ll be a lifelong cyclist.”



PHOTO: DAVID J. TURNER

## 6 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MAC GRADS\*

- **They felt challenged.**  
93% felt faculty posed challenging ideas in class, and 83% felt students challenged each other's ideas.
- **They are global learners**  
92% felt their study-away experience contributed to their learning and personal development.
- **They spent time with faculty.**  
93% think Mac faculty members were willing to spend time outside class to discuss issues with students.
- **They developed significant skills.**  
They feel Mac contributed to their development with regard to: careful reading (90%), critical thinking (94%), effective writing (90%), and intercultural knowledge (86%).
- **They feel connected.**  
78% developed a close relationship with at least one faculty member.
- **They keep learning.**  
Almost a third of the Class of 2010 was attending graduate school in 2015.

\* From a 2015 survey of members of the Class of 2010

## SPIRITUAL MAC

Ever wondered if Macalester still has active spiritual communities? Wonder no longer. Here's the spring schedule from the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life:

- **Muslim Student Association,** Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
- **Mac Unitarian Universalists,** Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.
- **Mac Christian Fellowship,** Tuesdays, 8 p.m.
- **Sitting at Mac: Dharma Talk and Meditation,** Wednesdays, 4:45 p.m.
- **Mac Jewish Organization,** Open Shabbat, Fridays, 6:30 p.m.
- **Alternative Faith Association,** Sundays, 2 p.m.
- **Mac Catholics,** Sundays, 4:30 p.m.
- **Mac Protestants,** Sundays, 7:30 p.m.

# MAC//ATHON

# FUNKATHON

BUSINESS AND TECH TYPES aren't the only ones competing in entrepreneurial marathons at Mac these days.

This year, a new 24-hour competition called Funkathon took place on the same February weekend as the fourth annual Macathon (a computer hackathon/business startup contest).

Funkathon, "where creativity and music meet time," is a musical composition contest for teams of composers, performers, and multi-media artists. Like Macathon, Funkathon awarded cash prizes totaling more than \$2000.

"We've been so amazed to see what Macathon entrepreneurs can create in 24 hours

and we were curious and excited to see what Funkathon musicians could do given the same time constraints," says Entrepreneur in Residence **Kate Ryan Reiling '00.**

Eleven teams worked through the night to create their works. The first-place winner was team Kingdom Roots, with its moving music video "Still Standing," based on the themes of struggle and hope, inspired by a Black History Month performance.

As for the tech types, they fielded 19 teams. The first-place winner was the team Coderoni with its project Unifi, which focuses on helping first-generation college students and their families understand college costs and how to finance them.

## AROUND GRAND



### • NEWLY TENURED:

Three faculty members were granted tenure this winter: **Julia Bekman Chadaga** (left), Russian Studies; **Brian Lush** (middle), Classics; and **Brett Wilson** (right), Religious Studies. Chadaga is a specialist in 19th and

20th century Russian literature and culture; Lush studies tragic dissonance in the plays of Euripides; and Wilson is a specialist in Islamic studies and modern Middle Eastern history.

• **LIBRARY AWARD:** The DeWitt Wallace Library has received the 2016 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award in the "college" category. Just three libraries—one small college, one community college, and one university library—are recognized each year.

• **HEALTH FINDINGS:** The National College Health Assessment survey, taken by a thousand Mac students last spring, showed that cigarette use had decreased 72 percent since 2005 and that alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette use are all lower at Mac than nationally.

# Summit to St. Clair

## CAMPUS NEWS SUMMARY



# DOG DAYS

Just before finals each semester, Mac students de-stress with a little help from the canine community. Faculty and staff members bring their dogs—from bichons to Bernese—to the Campus Center for study-weary scholars.

## GOODBYE TO GARRISON

Garrison Keillor (far left) led the first broadcast of *A Prairie Home Companion* from Macalester's Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center on July 6, 1974. This summer, following two years of anniversary broadcasts from Macalester's Great Lawn, Keillor will end his 42-year tenure as the program's host. The photo below is from the show's early years.



PHOTOS (TOP): KAYLA STEINBERG '16 (BOTTOM): COURTESY OF PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION



## BALL PLAYER AND TEACHER

WITH 40 BASEBALL GAMES scheduled between mid-March and early May, versatile athlete **Nick McMullen '18** (Payson, Ariz.) will spend plenty of time this spring in left field, at first base, and even on the pitcher's mound for the Scots.

But for five hours each week, you'll find McMullen on the other side of campus, volunteering as a math tutor with middle school students at Laura Jeffrey Academy, a charter school for girls. In his sophomore year, he has already discovered a passion for teaching.

First, though, McMullen found a home in the math department while taking his first-year course, Statistical Modeling. After declaring an applied math and statistics major, he became intrigued by pedagogical details such as how professors construct a syllabus. "I started thinking about the professors' teaching styles as much as the material," he says.

To pursue that interest, McMullen landed a job last summer teaching math and debate in San Francisco through Breakthrough Collaborative, a program for low-income middle-schoolers. He admits to having faced quite a learning curve during his

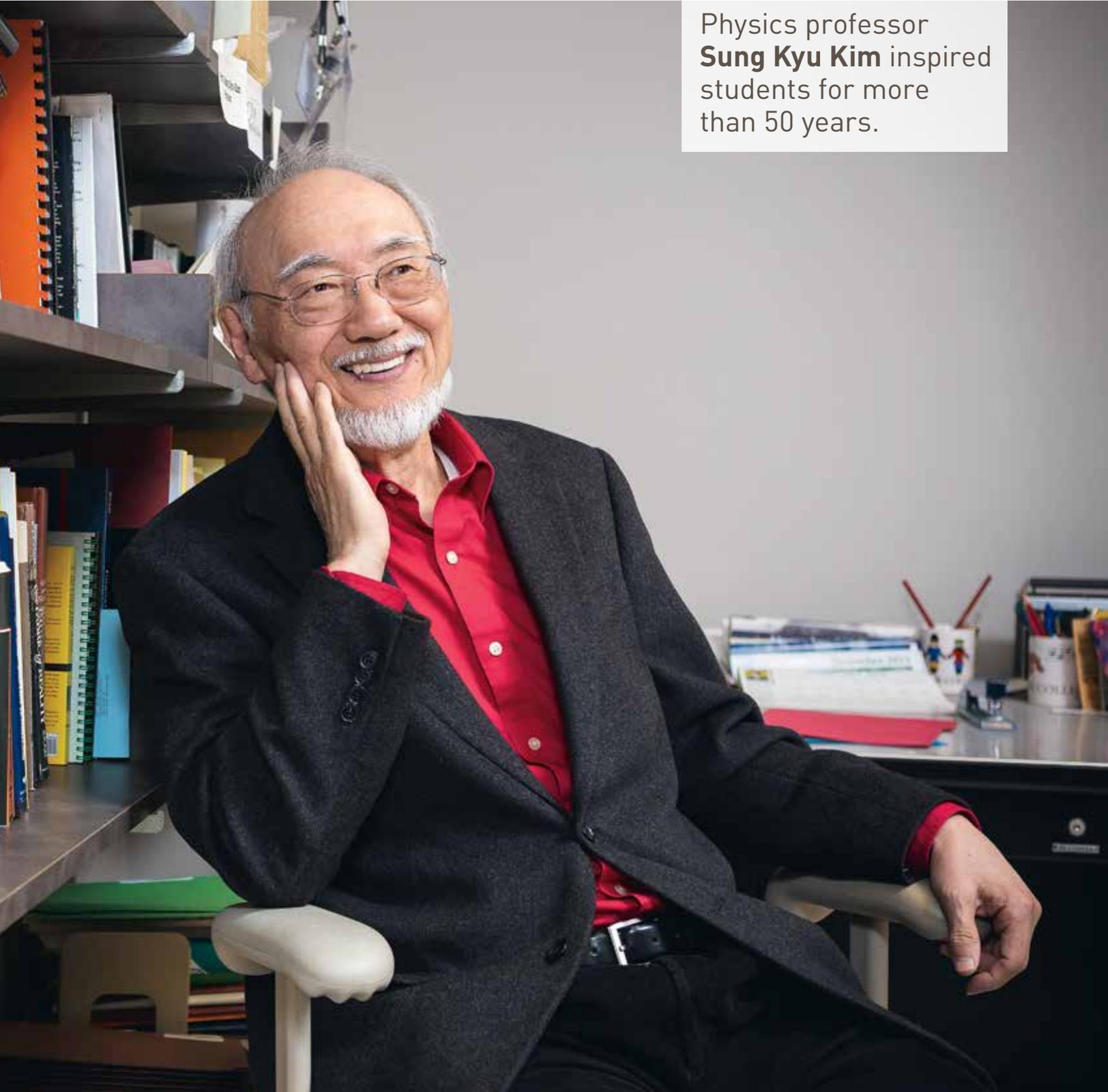
first weeks in the classroom. "Because math is so structured, I tried to keep that structure in my teaching—and it didn't work," McMullen says. "The kids got bored. I had to change how I delivered the material, change up the dynamic. Then, when the kids are asking to learn, you know you're doing something right."

McMullen's volunteer work at Laura Jeffrey Academy is a requirement for an Educational Studies course called Community Youth Development. All the students in the course volunteer at local youth organizations, then share their experiences through discussions and blog posts. "The goal is to learn both through your own placement and through the placements of others," he says.

Meanwhile, he'll be playing ball. With plenty of talent on this year's roster, says McMullen, it could be an exciting season. Between games and practices, classes, and tutoring, McMullen's schedule is packed. But he likes it that way—and his coaches appreciate what he brings to the program. "Nick is proof that an athlete can excel at many things yet remain committed to his sport and teammates," says coach Matt Parrington. "He embodies what Macalester is all about, both on and off the field."

# Random **Miracles**

Physics professor **Sung Kyu Kim** inspired students for more than 50 years.



BY **JAN SHAW-FLAMM '76** → PHOTO BY **DAVID J. TURNER**

To hear a lecture by retiring physics professor Sung Kyu Kim was to be dazzled by his explanation of the cosmos and uplifted by his optimism. His love for both subject and students led him to teach physics for more than half a century.

Although he also taught physics majors and pre-med students, Kim is best known for his course Contemporary Concepts of Physics, in which he introduced more than 10,000 non-science majors to the genius of some of history's greatest minds.

Known around campus as Con Con or Physics for Poets, the course has inspired generations of Macalester students to explore the secrets of the cosmos. This legacy began with what Kim thinks of as a random miracle.

While finishing his PhD at Duke University in the mid-1960s, Kim happened to read a *Time* magazine article that mentioned Macalester. He wrote to this previously unknown college, but received no reply. A few weeks later, his thesis advisor handed him a phone number saying that the dean of some Midwestern college—the name escaped him—had called.

A week later Kim visited Macalester and was soon hired, thus inaugurating a career that has touched thousands of students now living around the world. Among those Con Con alumni are a number of faculty members, including **Martin Gunderson '68** (philosophy), **Sarah West '91** (economics), **Laura Smith '94**, (geography), **Erik Davis '96** (religious studies), **Peter Bognanni '01** (English), and **Stephen Smith '82** (visiting professor of English).

In his public radio documentary *Who Needs an English Major? The Future of Liberal Arts Education*, Smith said:

*Sung Kyu Kim's physics class was a revelation to me. He made the Big Bang cool; the Theory of Relativity was mind opening. And the ideas I was learning did actually inform the way I read books and, eventually, how I practice my profession. For example, the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle: ... As long as you're looking, you're part of the picture—you're changing what you look at by being there. That idea stuck with me because as a journalist I'm always asking how my being there changes the scene that I'm watching.*

Kim's inspirational teaching has not gone unacknowledged. In 1993 he was presented with the Burlington Northern Citation, awarded for "unusually meritorious service in teaching." *The Princeton Review* once named him one of the "300 Best Professors," quoting a student, "You'll be excited to go to class every day and watch more of the story of the universe unfold."

One year, in what Kim called another random miracle, he and philosophy professor David White took each other's courses and decided to develop the lecture series Cosmology, Quantum Physics, and Consciousness. It was a blockbuster, with 100 students registering for the course and an additional 200 regularly sitting in to hear such exemplary speakers as physicist John Wheeler, who coined the term "Black Hole."

Perhaps Kim's foremost characteristic—after his intellect—is his ebullience. He exudes joy. But that joy didn't stem from a carefree life. Born in Korea, Kim grew up during the near-starvation years of the Korean War. His father was a Presbyterian minister and assumed his son would follow in his footsteps. When a U.S. friend offered housing for Sung Kyu, the teenager traveled to this country on his own, finished high school, and attended Davidson College in North Carolina.

Kim loved the warmth of the Southern college and thrived, finding his home with the campus Christian group, where he was warmly welcomed. Kim cites his faith—he's a Minnesota Lutheran now—as the source of his optimism.

Hired by Macalester in 1965, at the end of the academic year—"They were desperate," jokes Kim—the young professor quickly made a name for himself. He soon took on the course for non-majors, but found the text sorely lacking. Together with his students, Kim developed his own course, which resulted in his first textbook, *Physics: The Fabric of Reality*.

The young professor turned out to have a genius for explaining special relativity, quantum mechanics, cosmology, and other complex concepts. He used clever stories and analogies to explain the ideas so that students could grasp the ideas without understanding the underlying mathematical framework.

Contemporary Concepts blended a 21st century understanding of physics with the awe and excitement of storytelling. As Kim drew furiously to illustrate concepts and tossed a marker to demonstrate the path of a projectile in motion, he also brought alive the thrill of discovery, quoting from newspaper accounts and the private letters of scientists who dedicated their lives to understanding time, space, motion and matter.

Now, with Kim retiring at semester's end, many fewer students will enjoy his generosity and brilliance for teaching. (He will continue to run the summer physics institute for pre-meds.) But his legacy lives on: In a retirement card, department chair John Cannon wrote, "It has been a true honor to work with you. Your passion for teaching and your care for your students will continue to be an inspiration to me."

Not to mention an inspiration to 50-plus years of liberal arts students. After Kim had covered topics like Einstein's Theory of Relativity, black holes, and quarks and neutrinos, he ended Con Con with a legendary lecture based on an Isaac Newton quote: "Whence arise all that order and beauty we see in the world?" concluding with these words:

*Something amazing and truly heart-warming happened some three billion years ago. Life appeared. And over the eons of time it evolved, becoming ever more beautiful. That's how you got here. This is your story, your cosmic heritage. Your existence is rooted in 14 billion years of cosmic history. The universe, this universe, is on your side. You are made of star stuff, therefore, you are special. **M***

**JAN SHAW-FLAMM '76**, an economics and humanities major, is among the thousands of Mac alumni who took Con Con from Sung Kyu Kim.

# The Thing That Changed My Mind

Q • What kind of experience does it take to transform the way you think about the world?

BY ERIN PETERSON

WE LIVE IN A WORLD where consistency is a virtue. We roll our eyes at flip-flopping politicians and mock people who change their minds as indecisive or weak.

But if there's anything that a Macalester education teaches its students, it's that we all must be willing to change our perspective when what we discover about the world doesn't square with our long held viewpoints.

We asked seven Macalester alumni, faculty, and administrators to share their epiphanies—points in their lives where a sudden realization led them to change their minds about something important to them. Condensed versions of longer conversations are shared below. We think you'll be surprised and inspired by their transformations.

## Religion

**Kelly Stone** is college chaplain and associate dean at Macalester.

Growing up, I believed the world was an unfair place, and there was nothing we could do about it. But in college, I took a Theological Christian Ethics class. I was a Christian, but at the time, my religion had never been front and center in my life. It had always been off to the side.

As part of the class, we were encouraged to examine poverty, wealth, and the distribution of power and privilege globally. And what I learned in that class is that my tradition, Christianity, had impor-

tant things to say about these issues; things that weren't simply the "left leaning" of my heart.

I saw these ideas as a mandate to think about breaking down barriers that prevent justice from flourishing in the world. I began to believe that the systems currently in place can be changed with thoughtful dialogue and clear, actionable steps by communities.

The idea that whole communities, particularly those that collect around a religious identity, can take steps toward this type of progress made me feel empowered for the first time in my life. I felt compelled to take action to dismantle unjust structures as a person of faith.



Kelly Stone

*"My tradition, Christianity, has important things to say about poverty, wealth, and the distribution of power and privilege globally."*

## Education

**Jesse Hagopian '01** teaches high school history in Seattle and is an educational critic and activist.

When I joined Teach for America, I believed that a dedicated teacher could change the conditions for students in some of the country's poorest areas. I thought that as an individual I could make a difference.

After five weeks of training, I was sent to one of the nation's most impoverished ghettos, the Anacostia neighborhood in south-east Washington, D.C. The first assignment I gave my students was to take home a paper bag and put something in it that represented who they were. The next day we sat in a circle with our paper bags. The first student took out her dad's driver's license and told us he was in jail. The second student had a picture of his father, who had been killed the previous summer. By the time I talked about playing baseball in college, I just felt silly.

I realized then that I had no idea of the depth of the problem. As an African American myself, I had experienced racism, but I wasn't prepared for the level of trauma I saw.

I concluded we must have a social movement that addresses the problems of poverty—that teachers alone can't overcome society's shortcomings. Since then, I've spent a lot of time organizing teachers and parents to get our schools the resources they deserve.

I continue to work hard in the classroom, but I believe we also need social justice advocacy outside the classroom. That's the only way we'll achieve a school system—and a society—worthy of our students.



*"We must have a social movement that addresses the problems of poverty—teachers alone can't overcome society's shortcomings."*

## Negotiation

**Richard Sollom '88** is a senior officer at the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

In 1993, I was working as a human rights officer in Haiti, right after the coup d'état. The military junta was in power. My job was to investigate, in real time, extrajudicial executions, torture, and kidnappings of human rights activists and journalists.

At one point, I had reason to suspect two Haitian human rights activists were being detained and tortured at a police station. I needed to talk to Michel François, the chief of police at the time. I imagined how many people he had killed or tortured, and I felt disgusted. So I was stern when I spoke with him. I furrowed my brow and spoke in clipped language. It was an approach that didn't really work.

A year or two later, I was flying from Geneva to Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, during the Rwandan Genocide. I had a similar role there, and I knew I had to do my job differently.

It happened to be on the same flight as the President of Burundi. I remember him taking my *Newsweek* magazine, because he thought it was the airplane's, but it was one I had brought myself. It seems like a silly thing to remember, but it was a very human moment.

I realized that part of my job was to engage with people on a human level, regardless of how I felt about them personally.

For example, I had to work with the police and military again in Burundi. But this time, long before I had to ask for help getting a refugee out of prison, I met with all the commandants. I drank beer with them and got to know their families. I thought that if they got to know me as a person and I got to know them, they might help me out when I needed something.

They did. Over the next year, I was much more effective. I helped a lot of refugees get across the border safely, and I helped reunite families. In the end, I learned to shut down my anger and emotion toward people who did horrible things so I could do my job and help the people who needed it.



*"Part of my job is to engage with people on a human level, regardless of how I feel about them personally."*

## Domestic violence and support

**Liz Richards '83** is the executive director of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women.

I have been doing work in domestic violence since I was at Macalester, and my first job after law school was working on these issues at the Hennepin County Attorney's Office.

Back then this type of domestic violence work was quite new. At the time, one of the things we were focused on was increasing law enforcement response to domestic violence cases and prosecuting cases. The goal, for the most part, was to find ways for the victims to leave the abusers. But real life is more complicated than that.

During my twenties, I was working with a woman who was married to a man who was severely abusing her; he had actually kidnapped her and her two young children.

At one point, I was able to get her to come to my office, but her kids couldn't join her. I persuaded her not to go back to her husband and children. Although I told her we would find her a safe place and get her kids back, she was extremely distraught. She was right to be: Ultimately it took us two years to recover her children. Even the FBI was involved. As a mother myself, I can't even imagine that experience.

What I learned was that I just can't always know what's best for someone. I don't know what the impact is on individuals and

on families. In fact, many women say what they really want is not to leave the abuser. They want the violence to stop, but they want to keep the family intact.

Today, I believe it's important to give people much more agency over their own lives, even when they make decisions I might not make. We want to give people the resources they need, but we also want to give them control over those resources.



Liz Richards '83

*"I just can't always know what's best for someone. I don't know what the impact is on individuals and families."*

## Life's purpose

**James Dawes** is Macalester's DeWitt Wallace Professor of English and teaches in the Human Rights and Humanitarianism concentration.

When I was growing up, I knew I wanted to be a lawyer. I knew I would be good at it. My parents were keen on the idea, too.

But then I took an English course that included the major classics of 19th century literature, including Emily Dickinson and Henry David Thoreau, who both talked a lot about what it means to live a meaningful life.

Awhile later, I went to London to visit a friend, and I was going up an enormous escalator that takes you from the Underground to the street. They take forever, and they give you time to think. When I got on the escalator, I was thinking about the LSATs

when two thoughts came into my head at once. The first was Thoreau's argument that people who live their lives judging their worth and success by external measures are sleepwalking through life. The second was Dickinson's: life is terrifyingly short.

In that moment, those two ideas hit me hard. Was I living an authentic life? Even if I aced the LSATs, what was the real value in that? I worried that I was distracting myself from life's great questions by pursuing external measures of success.

When I got off the escalator, I knew I wasn't going to be a lawyer, but I didn't know what was next. I learned that it's okay to let go of certainty, and to be willing to occupy that anxious place where things aren't always clear. I learned the importance of embracing that as a condition of life.



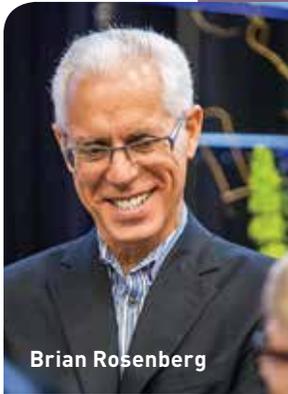
James Dawes

*"It's okay to let go of certainty, and to be willing to occupy that anxious place where things aren't always clear."*

# Race

**Brian Rosenberg** is the president of Macalester College.

Two years ago, if you had asked me what the top issues on my mind were, I'm not sure issues of race would have been on the list. My feelings on this issue have become much more passionate over the past two years the more I've talked with international students and students of color.



Brian Rosenberg

*“The key to my personal transformation has been in those moments when I have been encouraged to see the world through the eyes of someone else.”*

Over the lunch hour one day this past fall, there was a meeting of the Muslim Students Association not long after the Paris attacks. At the same time, there was a peaceful demonstration in the Campus Center organized by the Black Lives Matter organization, shortly after the unrest in North Minneapolis related to the police shooting. I went to both events.

Seeing the really deep sadness these two groups felt, in different but overlapping ways, and the fact that they couldn't quite share what they were feeling, even with their closest friends, was incredibly powerful. It made me realize that things that take place on the other side of the Twin Cities, or even on the other side of the world, are very present for a lot of students. And I know that I need to be more aware that these realities are part of their lives.

For me, the key to my own personal transformation has been in those moments when I have been encouraged, in a deep way, to see the world through the eyes of someone else.

# Sustainable change

**Leda Dunmire '00** manages environmental advocacy campaigns for the Pew Charitable Trusts.

When it comes to environmentalism, I spent a long time believing that all you had to do was get the regulations, the laws, and the policy right. I believed if you did those things, then people would behave the right way, and the necessary conservation would follow.

But it's about more than that. You can't just set up the Endangered Species Act and hope it will work; the people who live and work in areas you're trying to protect must be part of the solution. Some of that realization came when I saw how much of my work was dot connecting: I'll hear the director of the Southeast History Science Center talk about a specific challenge, then the next week I'll hear someone in a nearby fishing community say something related to it. I'll realize that these two groups need to talk with each other.

As I've worked to do environmental advocacy campaigns, I've realized that policy often isn't sufficient, and research doesn't exist in a vacuum. We need to be connecting people and problems.

We create a better world not just when we have the researchers discovering something, but when we're connecting the work to people who are passionate about a topic and understand it deeply because they're using these resources. **M**

Minneapolis writer **ERIN PETERSON** is a regular contributor to the magazine.



Leda Dunmire '00

*“Policy isn't often sufficient, and research doesn't exist in a vacuum. The people who live and work in areas you're trying to protect must be part of the solution.”*

# M HONEST Messaging:

HOW CANCER and  
a SINGLE GREETING CARD  
HELPED Emily McDowell '98  
GROW A THRIVING GIFT COMPANY.

BY LYNETTE LAMB → PHOTO BY DIKKA AFIDICK

- *I will not compare myself to strangers on the Internet*
- *Please let me be the first to punch the next person who tells you everything happens for a reason.*
- *You're like a sister to me. Except I never hate you.*

HALLMARK SENTIMENTS THEY'RE NOT. But that's the beauty of the cards coming out of Emily McDowell Studio: they're real.

While working as a freelance creative director five years ago, McDowell—an English major and art minor at Mac—opened an Etsy shop to sell prints of her illustrations. She “wanted to go back to doing what I loved to do as a kid,” McDowell says—drawing and writing. Thanks to a then-new site called Pinterest, her work was getting shared—a lot.

Then in January 2013 she came up with her Awkward Dating card:

*I know we're not, like, together or anything but it felt weird to just not say anything so I got you this card. It's not a big deal. It doesn't really mean anything. There isn't even a heart on it. So basically it's a card saying hi. Forget it.*

Clearly there are plenty of people who define their relationship status as “it’s complicated,” because the Awkward Dating card was a huge hit, selling 1,700 in a week. Says McDowell, “That’s when I realized there was a concept for creating cards for the relationships we actually have, instead of the ones we wish we had.”

Four months later she’d left her day job and was running Emily McDowell Studio full time.

The big launch took place at the National Stationery Show, held each May in New York City. A greeting card sales rep had advised McDowell that to make her business work she’d need to rent a booth at the show, produce a catalog, and have at least 45 cards in her line.

Unfortunately, the show was just two and a half months away.

*There is nobody else I'd rather lie in bed and look at my phone next to.*

The cards she could do, but the booth was a problem. Then fortune struck. McDowell had earlier reached out to Mac friend **Allison Chapman '95**, “the one person I knew in the stationery business.” The two had worked together briefly at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts and now Chapman, founder of Ohio’s Igloo Letterpress, was a National Stationery Show veteran. At the last minute, Chapman was offered a bigger booth at the show, and she in turn gave McDowell a wall in that booth. “That was a huge deal,” says McDowell, who remains friends with Chapman.

McDowell was doing well for a first-timer at the show, having written orders for about 35 boutiques. Then on the last day, she hit pay dirt: Urban Outfitters placed an order for 15,000 cards. The catch? They needed them in three weeks.

“I had no cards printed yet, only samples,” remembers McDowell. Not only did she have to get the cards printed, she had to get them hand-assembled, packaging each with an envelope in a clear film cover, labeled specially for Urban Outfitters. And then there was finding a large enough space in which to work.

Luckily, another friend came through, offering space in a downtown Los Angeles building, and so did social media, which allowed McDowell to quickly find 10 people to assemble and ship the cards to Urban Outfitters.

*One More Chemo Down. Let's Celebrate With Whatever Doesn't Taste Disgusting.*

Fast forward two years to last spring. By then most of the staff of Emily McDowell Studio was made up of former card packagers who



Emily McDowell '98 in a dress made entirely from her company's cards, by her production manager Katherine Voorhies.

# PLEASE LET ME BE the FIRST to PUNCH the NEXT PERSON WHO TELLS YOU EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR a REASON.

had moved on to performing more challenging jobs in sales and operations. The company's cards were in a thousand retail stores and selling steadily online.

Then Emily—who does all the artwork and most of the writing for her eponymous company—introduced a line of “Empathy Cards™” inspired by her own experience with cancer. And the Internet—followed by the mainstream media—went wild. Within a few weeks Emily McDowell Studio and its cards were featured on *Good Morning America*, the *NBC Nightly News*, NPR, *Huffington Post*, *The New York Times*, and dozens of other media outlets. The brand's number of stores jumped 30 percent in one quarter.

“Those cards just went insanely viral,” says McDowell. “We never did any paid marketing. If you make products that people want to share, you can leverage social media to create ambassadors for your brand. It's been fun and crazy.”

The idea for her line of empathy cards had a less than fun start, however. McDowell was diagnosed with Hodgkins lymphoma at age 24. “I was the first person with cancer that most of my friends had known. They had no experience with anyone but a grandparent being that sick.”

One of the hardest parts of the experience, she says, was the isolation she felt. “People didn't know what to say. They were scared and lots of them turned away. I ended up feeling really alone.”

Get well soon cards just don't cut it with cancer. “Those only make sense when someone has a broken ankle or something,” says McDowell. Then there are sympathy cards: “Sad and weird—they make you feel like you're already dead.”

The devastating 2011 cancer diagnosis and death of her college roommate, **Amy Ostermeier '98**, revived McDowell's commitment



to creating an alternative. “Amy being sick brought it all back to me,” she says. “Nobody knew what to do, and I became the de facto cancer translator. People were asking me, ‘Can I say this?’”

Just as the company's sales were exploding, it was also moving its fulfillment operations in-house, to a newly leased Las Vegas warehouse. “There were a hundred moving parts,” says McDowell. “It was incredibly challenging logistically.”

A year later, things have calmed down considerably, and McDowell is able to devote a larger percentage of her time to the creative side of the business, including co-writing and illustrating a forthcoming book on how to help people in crisis called *There Is No Good Card For This: What to Say and Do*

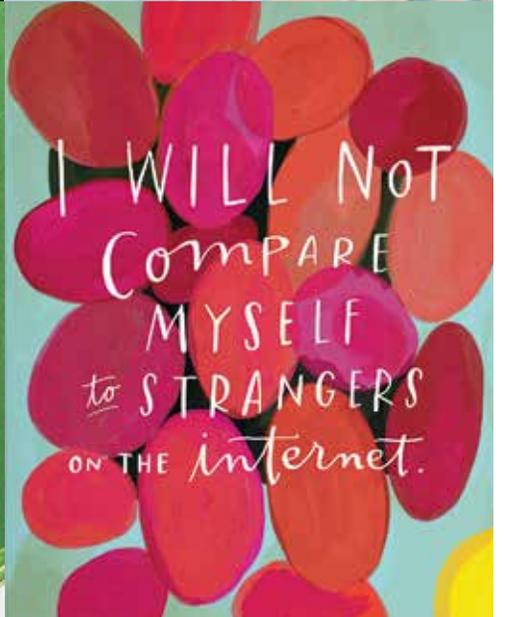
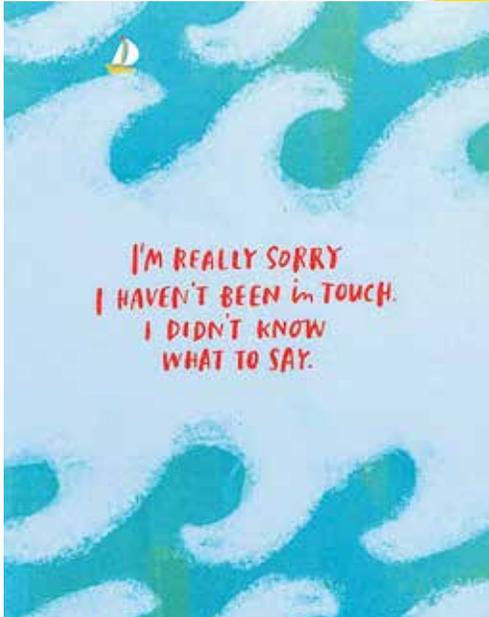
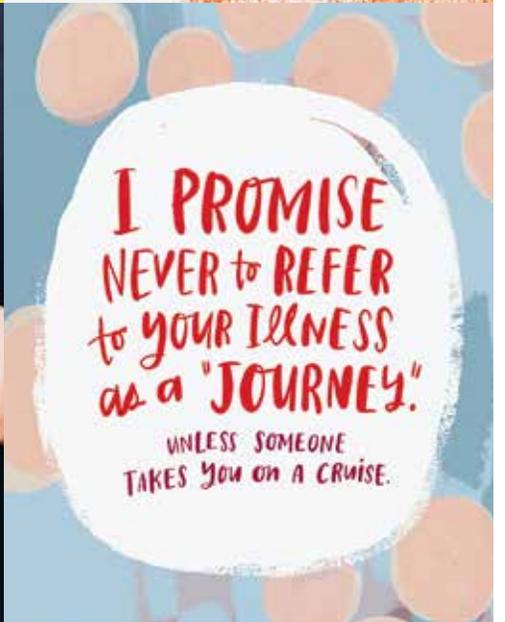
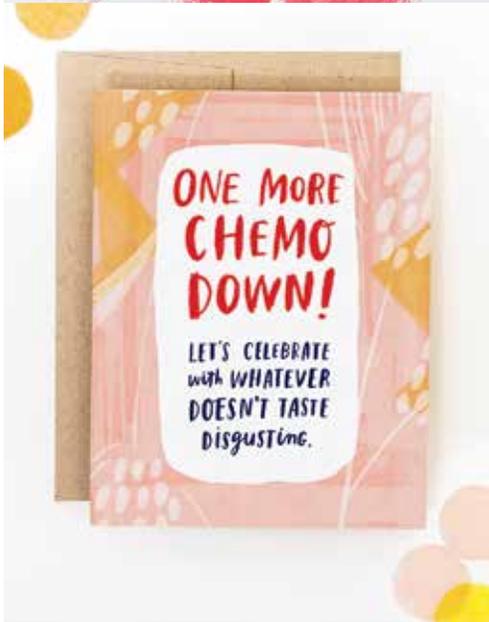
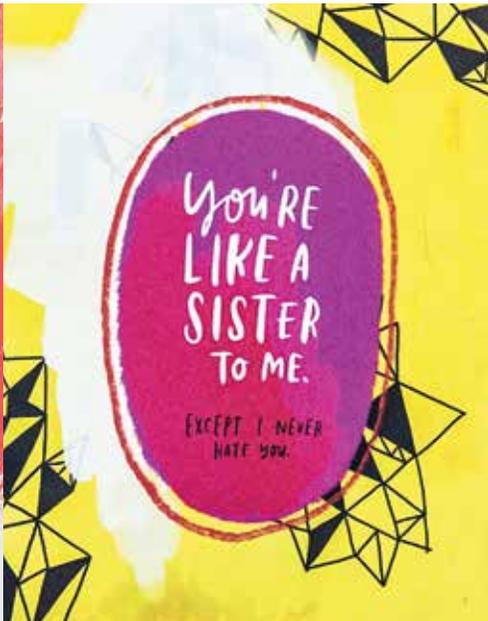
*When Life Is Scary, Awful, and Unfair to People You Love* (HarperOne, January 2017).

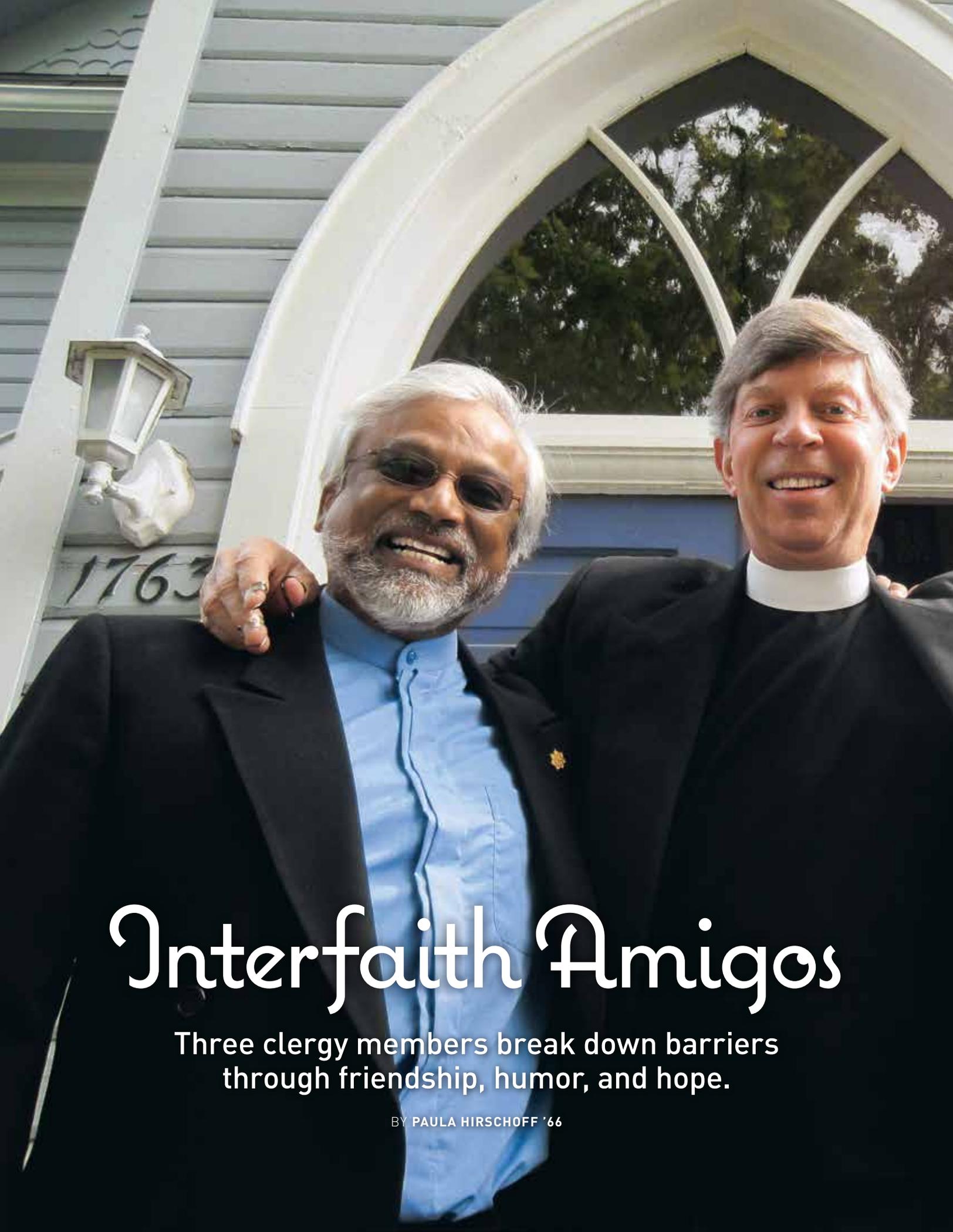
But she doesn't regret having spent time on the financial, manufacturing, and marketing sides as well. “I tell everyone that I have an MBA from Google,” she says. “As an entrepreneur you have to be willing to embrace the things you don't necessarily love doing, because you'll be the only one doing them for awhile. And you have to be willing to take risks—in a calculated way.”

Although she has cancelled her last four vacations, McDowell wouldn't have her life—or work—any other way. “Our brand is about being real and talking about the things that many people don't talk about,” she says. “The phrase ‘me too’ is really powerful. Admitting that something has been a burden to you, finding out that there are others like you, a lot of our work speaks to that.”

And that work, in turn, is clearly speaking to many others. **M**

**LYNETTE LAMB** is the editor of *Macalester Today*.

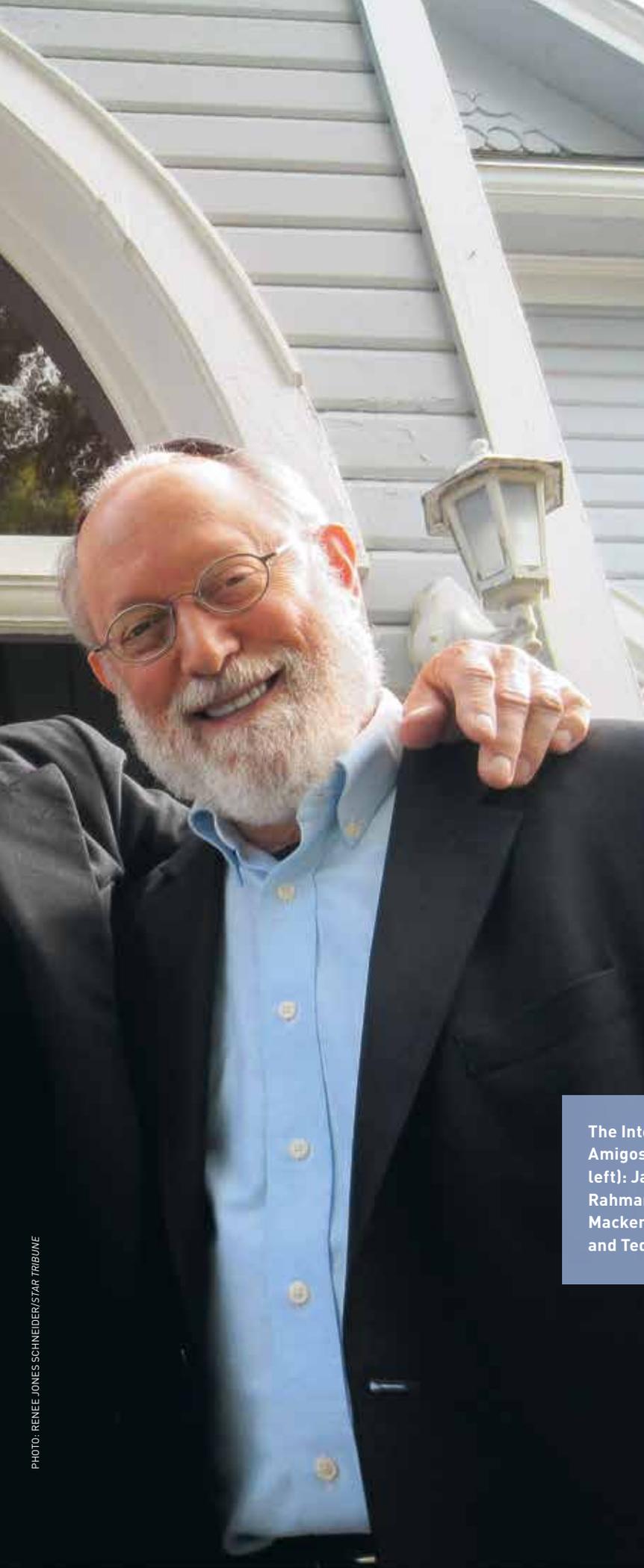




# Interfaith Amigos

Three clergy members break down barriers through friendship, humor, and hope.

BY PAULA HIRSCHOFF '66



## A pastor, a rabbi, and an imam walk into a bar. Or a Texas town. Or a Seattle mega-church. And they try to change worldviews.

A skeptical reaction to such a scenario is unsurprising. Yet a pastor, **Don Mackenzie '66**; a rabbi, Ted Falcon; and an imam, Jamal Rahman, *do* frequently walk into towns and religious centers together as the Interfaith Amigos, a trio they started soon after the 9/11 attacks. And though their work is no joke, they do encourage laughter. Indeed, they mingle fine-tuned comic timing with spiritual wisdom in presentations that spread hope for overcoming sectarian conflict and violence.

Humor was a force in forging this team. Early on, they realized that they needed to leaven their mission with humor. “We three as talking heads was not going to do it,” says Mackenzie. “Humor can lift something that seems irreconcilably broken into something that is not.”

Music, too, can foster a sense of unity. They end their programs with a three-verse song about oneness, in which together they sing lines in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

### Coming together

For decades, each clergyman had been involved in interfaith efforts on his own while leading separate congregations. Then around 14 years ago in Seattle, their lives began to intersect. They discovered not only that they made each other laugh but that they shared basic beliefs in the same God and the unity of the three Abrahamic faiths.

Within a year of 9/11, the trio had bonded—and not just intellectually, says Falcon. “It became clear that we could support each other through difficult passages in our own lives. We became each other’s clergy.” Says Rahman, “We realized we were confiding in each other in very personal and vulnerable ways.”

Reaching across religions in friendship, they believe, is the first stage of interfaith dialogue. Without that foundation, attempts to explore interfaith often founder at subsequent stages, as core concepts of faiths are shared or, even more precariously, as participants discuss areas where their faiths conflict.

The Amigos’ own friendship was tested over issues of Israel and Palestine. Rahman had described the security wall between Jerusalem and Bethlehem in a way that Falcon took as placing

The Interfaith Amigos (from left): Jamal Rahman, Don Mackenzie '66, and Ted Falcon.

all responsibility for violence on Israel. Falcon objected to including that interpretation in the trio's first book. "I was sensitive because the press in my own community had criticized me [for views considered insufficiently supportive of Israel]," he says. "Then Don, in his characteristic way, remarked, 'This is really important; this is an opportunity,' and we started talking about it." Each imagined himself as the other, and in so doing managed to resolve their disagreement.

They came to their interfaith mission with an abiding sense that their three religions overlap and intersect, and that all religions encourage believers to awaken to a universal force, open their hearts, and transcend their egos to become more complete human beings.

The trio's third book, due out later this year (see below), discusses the relationship between spiritual practices and social/environmental activism. "Each religion has practices to deal with anger and fear. Each has practices cultivating forgiveness and compassion," says Rahman. "We can engage in meditation, silence, prayer, and other contemplative practices. These reduce tension and allow people to think clearly."

## Working globally

Over the years, the Interfaith Amigos have spread their message in many ways, including joint presentations given in venues ranging from college campuses to the Parliament of World Religions. They have spoken mostly in the U.S. and Canada, but also in Japan, Israel, and the Palestinian Territories. They've had police protection in Houston and challenges from individuals in various places, but have never felt personally threatened.

They have also done local TEDx talks that are accessible on their website ([interfaithamigos.com](http://interfaithamigos.com)); several books; their own radio show; and interviews with many media outlets, including *The New York Times* and CBS and BBC news.

Although they receive no outside funding except for honoraria, all three have done this work nearly full time in recent years.

## Early influences

Each of the Amigos developed an early belief in the importance of interfaith connections. At age 5, Mackenzie absorbed the horrors of the Holocaust through the stories of an uncle who had interrogated German prisoners of war. The child connected the stories to a Jewish family he knew. Later Mackenzie worked with Muslim colleagues at the Cairo Hilton while on a Macalester work abroad project, and his coworkers'

devotion to Islam left a deep impression on him. After earning a divinity degree, Mackenzie ministered to several congregations, retiring from a Seattle Congregational church in 2008 to give more time to interfaith. Although he now lives in Minneapolis, he continues to work closely with his Seattle colleagues.

Falcon witnessed the anguish produced by interfaith misunderstandings while growing up in neighborhoods where his family was in the minority. He has taught Jewish traditions of Kabbalah and meditation, as well as founding the first meditative Reform congregation in Los Angeles. In Seattle he founded and led a meditative synagogue, but now focuses on interfaith and a spiritual counseling practice.

Rahman is the son of Bangladeshi diplomats who ensured that their son visited other houses of worship while grounding him in the tenets of his own faith. Rahman is cofounder and Muslim Sufi Minister at the Interfaith Community Sanctuary in Seattle and an adjunct faculty member at Seattle University. He, too, has a spiritual counseling practice.

## Growing interest in interfaith

The Interfaith Amigos have noticed considerable growth in interfaith efforts in the U.S. since 9/11. "The fear of terrorism has increased interfaith collaboration," says Rahman. "Houses of worship, especially churches, are taking the lead in initiating interfaith programs to counter the dehumanization of the other."

So what has been the impact of the Interfaith Amigos? One way to gauge their success, says Rahman, is in the responses to their presentations. "The three of us stand together in the spotlight, where we can see the audience members' faces. Almost invariably, we see tears in their eyes. They realize that we three are friends [across religious divisions]; we represent vision and hope."

Their ultimate aim, they say, is to foster hope by disseminating the seeds for interfaith dialogue; seeds that they hope will someday grow into collaborative activism.

"I am optimistic that interfaith dialogue will gain traction, especially as the need for it becomes ever more obvious," Mackenzie says. "We three try to keep up each other's spirits in the face of terrible news every day."

And they do what they can, knowing that they may never see the results of their important work. **M**

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**PAULA HIRSCHOFF '66** will attend Reunion this June as a member of the 50th Reunion Committee for the Class of 1966.

### Read the Amigos

- *Finding Peace through Spiritual Practice: The Interfaith Amigos' Guide to Personal, Social, and Environmental Healing* (Skylight Paths, 2016)
- *Religion Gone Astray: What We Found at the Heart of Interfaith* (Skylight Paths, 2011).
- *Getting to the Heart of Interfaith: The Eye-Opening, Hope-Filled Friendship of a Pastor, a Rabbi & an Imam* (Skylight Paths, 2009)

### Hear the Amigos

To hear the Interfaith Amigos yourself, attend Reunion (June 3-5) this summer. The trio will make a presentation on Saturday, June 4, at 10:30 a.m. and also will deliver the sermon at the Sunday morning service.

# THEATRICAL FORCE

On the remarkable odyssey of playwright  
and actor **Danai Gurira '01**.

BY NELL CASEY → PHOTO BY MAARTEN DE BOER/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

When **Danai Gurira '01**—actor, playwright and rising star—speaks about decisions she has made in her life and career, it is with dynamic purpose. “When you are born black and female, you are looking at the world through a certain lens and saying, “There is very little of me I’m seeing in terms of story or media image and what I do see doesn’t seem to quite fit what I know,” Gurira says. “So if I am a storyteller, my mandate is to counter that, my mandate is to change that, to break that barrier down and to create more opportunity for girls who look like me . . . who have talents and abilities they don’t get to exercise because the opportunities don’t exist.”

Gurira has done exceedingly well by her self-imposed mandate: Currently, 10 actresses of African descent are performing nightly on New York City stages—both on Broadway and off—bringing to life Gurira’s rich and varied stories of Africa. Her play *Familiar*, both funny and formidable, about a Zimbabwean-American family living in the United States, barely suppressing a host of secrets within their well-ordered household, opened at Playwrights Horizons last March.

Just a few days later, *Eclipsed*, with a stunning ensemble cast that includes Oscar-winning actress Lupita Nyong’o, opened at the Golden Theater on Broadway. This play, broader in its scope and darker in its exploration, traces the lives of several “wives,” essentially sex slaves, during the second Liberian civil war. *Eclipsed* is also a trailblazer in theater history: it is the first Broadway play written, directed, and performed

entirely by black women. Both plays have already garnered immense critical success, with prominent theater critics describing them variously as “fantastically well-realized” and “soul-searing.”

*Familiar* portrays a family that has expatriated from Zimbabwe to settle in Minnesota—a setting Gurira knows well from her Macalester days. Somewhat drawn from real life, as the playwright confides, it actually offers an inverse narrative of her own experience growing up.

Gurira was born in Grinnell, Iowa, the youngest of four siblings, to parents from Zimbabwe, and lived in Iowa until she was five, at which time her family returned to Zimbabwe.

Gurira remained in Africa until she enrolled at Macalester as a psychology major.

“I don’t think I would be writing the plays I write or have the passion I have if my parents hadn’t gone back to Zimbabwe,” Gurira says. “I don’t know if I would have been as palpably concerned about that disparity if I hadn’t grown up in that environment and seen the various sophistications and subtleties of the Africans that are not portrayed in the West.”

But it also stirred in her questions about the consequences of leaving behind your native country. “How does that look?” Gurira asked herself. “You might not speak to your child in your own language anymore because you want them to be able to get in the pool with all the rest of the American kids and swim competitively. Excel academically. You want them to have a fighting chance in the work-



**Danai Gurira '01 will be one of two speakers at Commencement on May 14.**

“ There was something about Michonne and the premise of *The Walking Dead* that I found to be deeply related to the premise of *Eclipsed*—which is, who will you be when the world gets this dire? Because you’re not going to be who you are right now. A lot of the women who became soldiers [in Liberia] were very much like Michonne. You turn yourself into a weapon and don’t look to anybody else to help you . . . And though I’ve never had to step into a war zone, I do think there is a fighter in me, so there is something that I understood about that choice. ”

place. There are various degrees of deciding to make your child American while you’re here.” The complexities of assimilation became the axis on which *Familiar* turns—and then spins out.

*Eclipsed*, on the other hand, started with a *New York Times* article Gurira read about the Liberian civil war. But to research this play, she had to travel to Liberia. “I had to be deeply specific about the fact that people in Liberia do not speak like people in Zimbabwe and their history is completely different; their geography is completely different; their experience is completely different,” Gurira says. “I had to go there to learn that . . . I am trying to absorb story, people, and the essence of their humanity.”

The instinct to humanize global problems has informed Gurira’s work from the beginning. One of her earliest plays, *In the Continuum*, in which she also co-starred, looks at the disparate lives of two women—one a teenager in South Central Los Angeles and the other a middle-class wife and mother in Zimbabwe—who are simultaneously given HIV diagnoses. For this, Gurira drew praise as an actor as well as a playwright.

Indeed, she has cultivated a successful career as a performer throughout her rise as a playwright. In 2012 Gurira joined the cast of AMC’s hit television series *The Walking Dead*, playing Michonne, a complex and cagey character unafraid to slice a sword through the necks of flesh-eating zombies. “There was something about Michonne and the premise of *The Walking Dead* that I found to be deeply related to the premise of *Eclipsed*—which is, who will you be when the world gets this dire? Because you’re not going to be who you are right now,” Gurira says. “A lot of the women who became soldiers [in Liberia] were very much like Michonne. You turn yourself into a weapon and don’t look to anybody else to help you . . . And though I’ve never had to step into a war zone, I do think there is a fighter in me, so there is something that

I understood about that choice.”

Gurira will soon bring another complicated woman to the screen: she just completed filming the Tupac Shakur biopic *All Eyez on Me*, in which she plays Shakur’s mother, Afeni Shakur. “It was enriching,” the actress says of the experience. “The story of Tupac is a powerful one. And his mother was very much a part of his theater background, exposing him to arts and culture and making him read *The New York Times* as a 10-year old.”

Not one to slow down—or to leave an opportunity to support Africa or the arts untapped—in 2011 Gurira cofounded the nonprofit Almasi Arts Alliance ([almasiartsalliance.org](http://almasiartsalliance.org)). “I was noticing there weren’t a lot of institutions of artistic training on the continent that allow people to walk into a Tisch or a Juilliard and really have their craft validated and then developed to its fullest potential,” Gurira says. “The idea of Almasi is that ultimately it will be that type of an institution. But for now what we do is take a lot of Americans, my artistic peers, to Zimbabwe to teach and train.” The organization also brings Zimbabwean artists to America for theatrical fellowships.

Toward the end of the interview, as Gurira starts gearing up for the next thing—there is, it seems, always a next thing—she mentions that she has recently been working on a pilot for HBO connected to her play *Familiar*. With this she will move into a new phase of her mandate: “The goal of putting the faces and voices that I’ve managed to put on stage onto the screen.”

There is no doubt that Gurira—a force to be reckoned with and a talent to be admired—will achieve that goal as well. **M**

**NELL CASEY** is a *New York* writer and the editor of several books, including *The Journals of Spalding Gray*.



With two plays in New York, a hit TV show, and a new movie in the works, Danai Gurira '01 is a dramatic triple threat.

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# What can we feel good about?

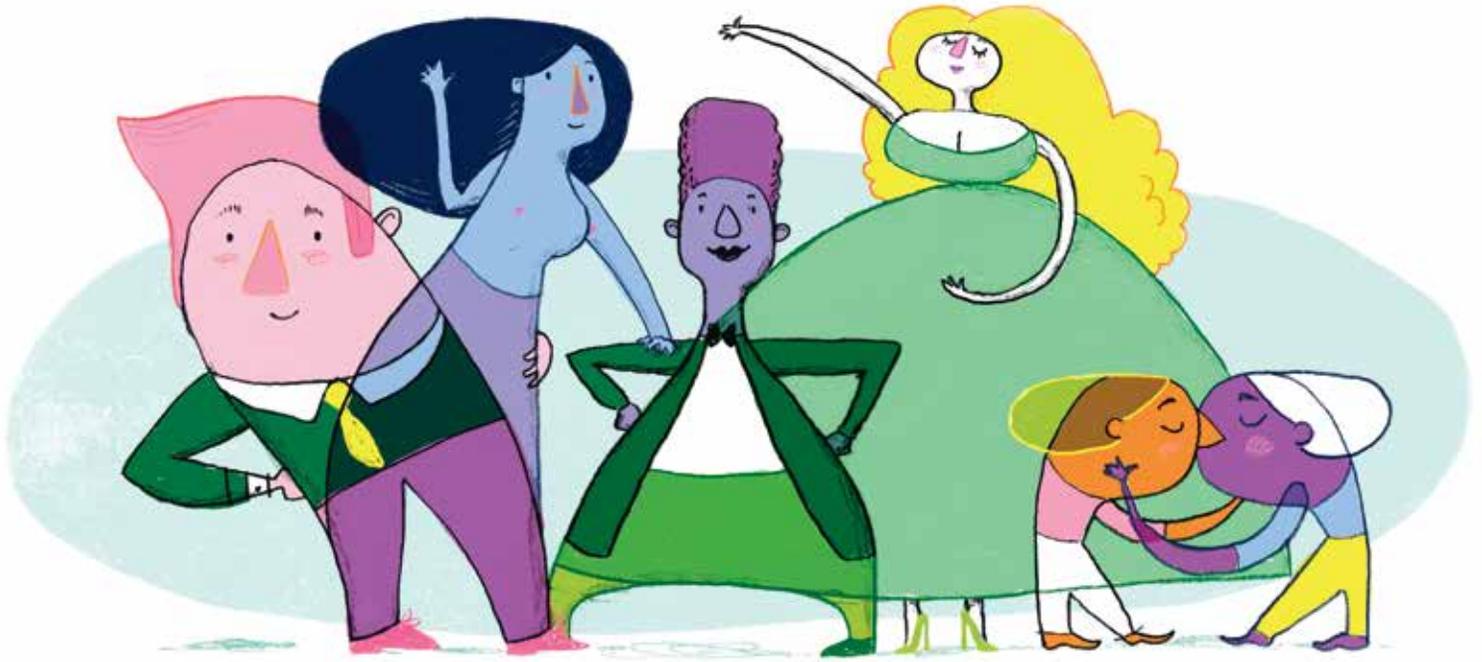


FORGET ALL the BAD NEWS,  
HERE ARE 8 WAYS the WORLD  
is GETTING BETTER

BY MARLA HOLT → ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIANNE FARLEY '06

Regular listening to the daily news could lead anyone to wallow in pessimism and conclude that the world verges on collapse. Stories of terrorist attacks, racial strife, viruses, gun violence, and poisoned water fill our news feeds, not to mention all those fear-mongering declarations from presidential candidates. It's enough to make you want to crawl back into bed, pull the covers over your head, and declare yourself a cynic.

How then, to lift our collective mood? Well, we've got you covered. We asked a few Macalester alumni and professors to serve up a handful of things to feel good about. Here's what they had to offer.



## • Improved understanding of sexuality

As executive editor of the *Huffington Post*'s Queer Voices section, **Noah Michelson '00** has seen a shift in how we talk about sexuality. "We've made tremendous and rapid progress in visibility and inclusiveness," he says. "We're moving toward encompassing people who haven't gotten attention in the past."

Media attention for celebrities like Caitlyn Jenner and Miley Cyrus, who have spoken publically and positively about their sexuality, has been helpful in moving toward greater understanding and acceptance, says Michelson. "Educating people about transgender, pansexual, asexual, and other identities can remove misconceptions," he says. "We can pass all the laws we want, but until we help people understand what it means to be queer, it won't matter."

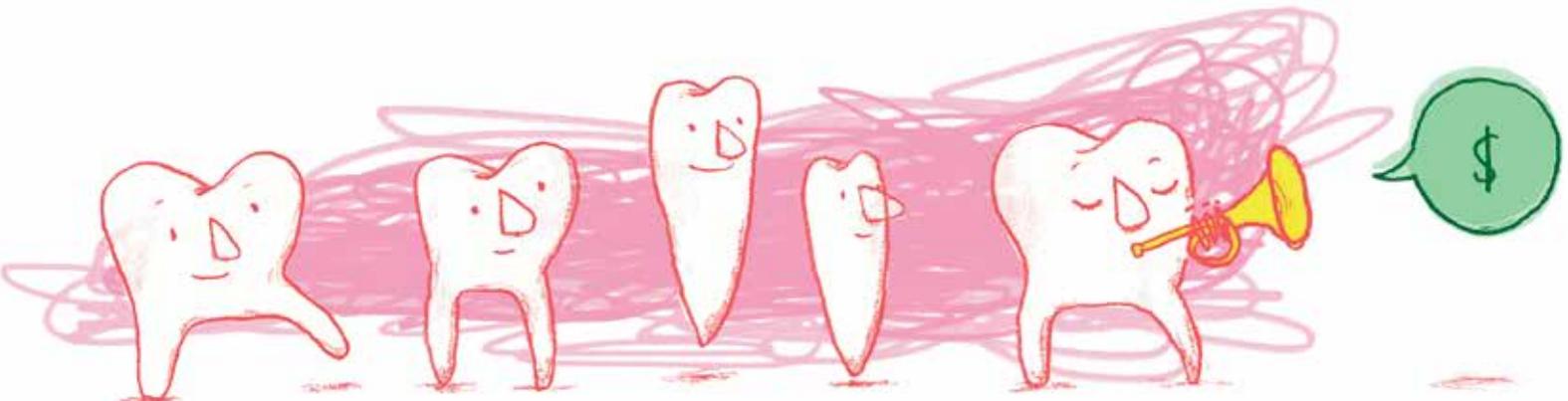
As we talk openly about sexuality, we remove stigmas and become less repressed, says Michelson, who co-hosts the HuffPost's Love+Sex podcast, which examines sexuality from an anthropological perspective. He's encouraged each time he hears from a listener who identifies with a topic featured on the show. "Once you've heard someone's personal story," he points out, "it's a lot harder to hate him."

## • Better access to dental care

Seven years ago, Minnesota became the first state to license dental therapists, a new, mid-level provider whose primary purpose is to increase access to dental health among underserved, uninsured, and low-income families.

Depending on their training, dental therapists can practice either independently or under a dentist's supervision. It's a new model being hailed nationally for providing quality care at a lower cost, says **Sarah Wovcha '89**, executive director of Children's Dental Services, a nonprofit consortium of clinics serving children throughout Minnesota. Wovcha also co-chairs the Minnesota Safety Net Coalition's oral health committee, which was instrumental in passing the dental therapist licensure legislation.

Nearly 60 dental therapists are currently practicing in Minnesota, working in public health settings to provide both preventive and restorative services to those most in need of affordable oral health care. "This program gets quality care to the places where it's needed most," Wovcha says.





## • Growth of community-based theater

**Maren Ward '93** and her cofounders started Bedlam Theatre to create plays with social commentary. “We wanted to impact the community,” she says. One of Bedlam’s first projects was to produce a play based on stories gleaned from Somalian and other East African immigrants new to Minnesota.

Today, their vision has a name: community-based theater, an artistic endeavor designed to tell the stories of people bound by a community, be it geographic, cultural, or thematic. Community-based theater also breaks down barriers between actors and audience. Bedlam combines a bar, a restaurant, and a stage in its Lowertown St. Paul location, inviting passersby to view productions through its street-level windows. “We’re creating new audiences by sharing a story and a moment, by witnessing some truth, and talking about it afterwards,” Ward says.

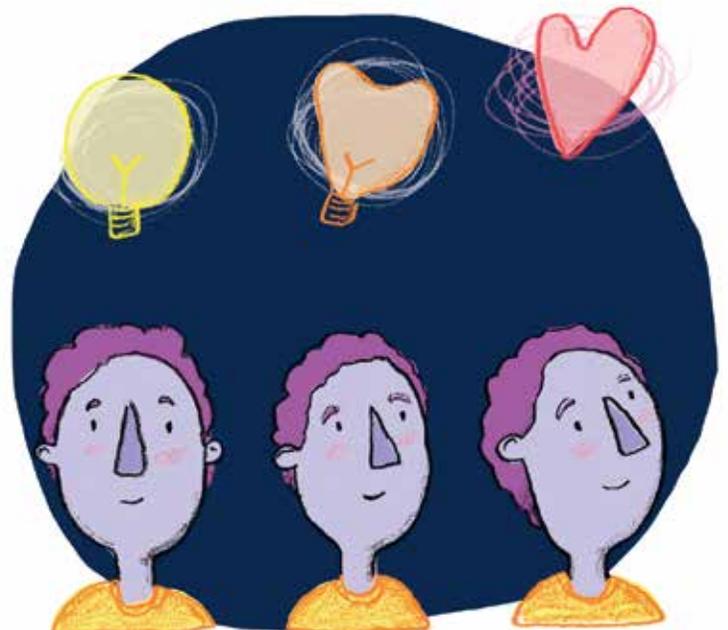
She also directs the zAmya Theater Project, a program of St. Stephen’s Human Services, in which people write and perform plays inspired by their experiences of homelessness. zAmya is community-based theater at its best, Ward says, engaging people with the issue of homelessness and getting them involved in efforts to end it.

## • Entrepreneurial problem solving

Our tendency to narrowly define entrepreneurship as a new for-profit technology or app business doesn’t do justice to the many entrepreneurs working outside that world, says **Seth Levine '94**, entrepreneur and managing director of the venture capital firm Foundry Group.

“We’re seeing a huge shift through the democratization of entrepreneurship, as innovators establish connections that extend beyond traditional geographic boundaries,” Levine says. “The world benefits as more people look to themselves as the engine to grow beyond their circumstances.”

One such example, he says, is the Unreasonable Institute—an accelerator program that’s strengthening the global impact of entrepreneurship. The institute provides resources and training—such as mentors, funders, coaching, and curriculum—to select entrepreneurs working on creative solutions to the world’s greatest social and environmental challenges. From 2010 to 2014, the Unreasonable Institute supported 93 ventures in 59 countries, including MANA Nutrition, which is working to solve malnutrition in children, and Greenlink Energy, which is using solar installations to transform schools and health facilities in Africa.



## • Challenging negative attitudes

In 2013 Minnesota voters defeated a discriminatory anti-LGBT constitutional marriage amendment. When the Supreme Court ruled to legalize same-sex marriage in 2015, large numbers expressed their rainbow-colored support of the decision. Such resistance to the anti-gay movement is heartening, says political science professor **Paul Dosh**, and just one example of how people are beginning to challenge prevailing negative attitudes that often immobilize us.

"I'm inspired and optimistic about the future because of the civil way we are coming together as communities to respond to societal issues that need to be addressed," Dosh says. Civil activism has the power to change lives, he says, as evidenced by movements such as Black Lives Matter, the first sustained civil rights push since the 1960s, and Occupy Homes Minnesota, a grassroots organization that fights for safe and equitable housing.

There also is greater mobilization around climate change, Dosh says, with young people leading the charge. "They've grown up recognizing that climate change is a crisis caused by humans and that they need to take action," he says, providing hope that such generational consensus will lead to significant progress in addressing the issue.





## • Increased mobilization of young people

**Chris Messinger '00** sees reason for hope every day at his job as executive director of Boston Mobilization, a social justice leadership development program for teenagers. “Our society is set up to be very segregated, but the teens I work with are building meaningful connections across divides,” Messinger says. “These amazing young people are working together for change.”

Teens involved in Boston Mobilization facilitate social justice training around issues ranging from race and racism to community organizing; bridge the gap across the false geographic divide of city and suburbs to build a stronger network for change; and take action on issues that impact young people. They have addressed racism in schools through Speak Up! A Personal Stories Project, which produced an anthology of 25 stories, discussion questions, and action resources now being used in schools nationwide. They’ve also worked for increasing the minimum wage, reducing toxic diesel emissions, and securing funding for youth summer jobs.

“Young people are articulating new ways of doing justice work,” Messinger says. “They are demonstrating collaborative and visionary leadership.”



## • Commitment to urban ministry

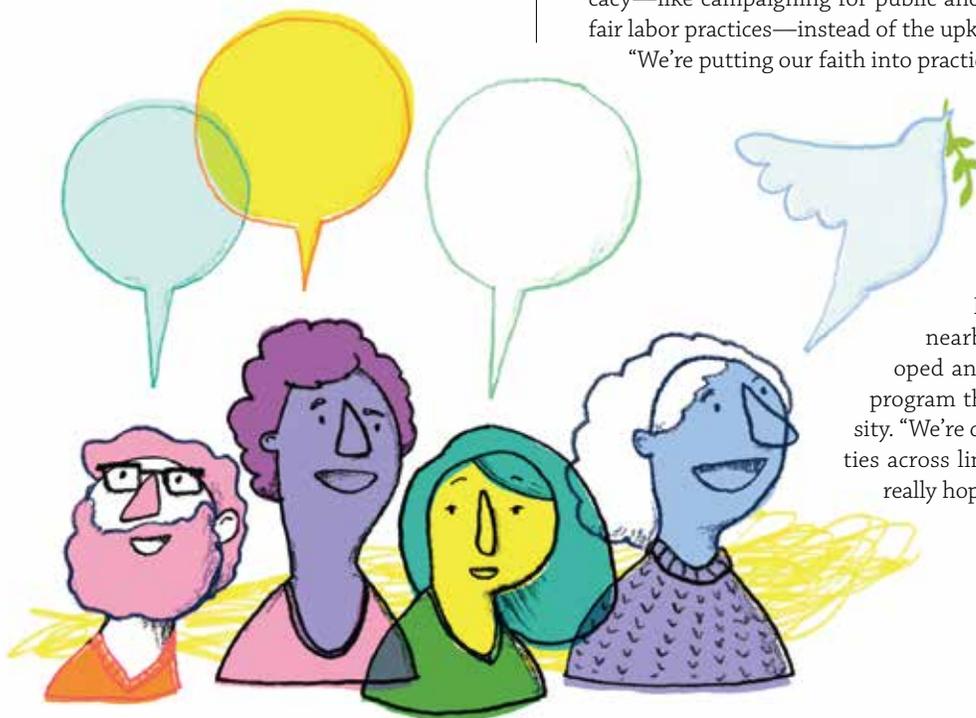
When **Erik Christensen '95** became the pastor of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Chicago in 2006, the congregation had just 12 members, most of whom were over 60. The church has since undergone a dramatic turnaround and today its membership is closer to 100 people of all ages and backgrounds.

“We are more in keeping with the Logan Square neighborhood that we serve,” he says, “which is young, rapidly changing, and ethnically diverse.” Christensen credits the transformation to his congregation’s public commitment to urban ministry. The church sold its century-old building and moved into a storefront to allow it to focus resources and energy on community advocacy—like campaigning for public and affordable housing and fair labor practices—instead of the upkeep of an old structure.

“We’re putting our faith into practice,” Christensen says.

By embracing storytelling during worship, church members have discovered the richness of life and faith experiences in their community. St.

Luke’s and three other nearby churches have developed an ecumenical storytelling program that celebrates that diversity. “We’re discovering huge similarities across lines of difference and it’s really hopeful,” Christensen says.





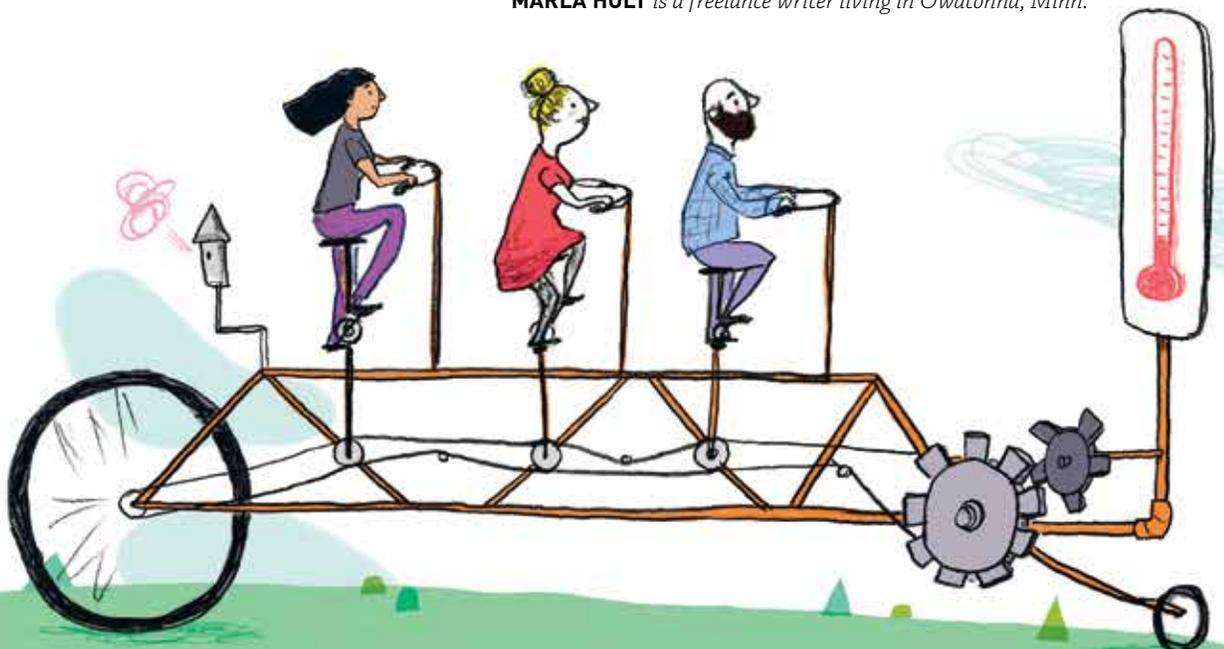
## • More use of renewable energy

A landmark climate accord, signed by 196 nations at the 2015 Paris Climate Summit, provides a broad foundation for meaningful progress on climate change. It commits those nations to pursue efforts to limit the planet's temperature increase to less than two degrees Celsius.

"The agreement was definitely a shot of sunshine," says environmental studies professor **Roopali Phadke**, who attended the summit with a group of Macalester students. "It's the beginning of a century-long project to mitigate the effects of global warming on climate change. One of the ways nations can work toward that is by supporting renewable energy sources."

Notably, Congress recently granted multi-year extensions to renewable energy tax credits for wind and solar power, an action expected to increase demand and continue to help drive down costs. Minnesota, one of the most progressive states for renewable energy, is leading the way by supporting initiatives such as community solar gardens and District Energy, North America's largest hot-water district heating system. Macalester, for its part, has signed a 25-year agreement with SunEdison to offset 100 percent of the college's electricity use with solar energy. **M**

**MARLA HOLT** is a freelance writer living in Owatonna, Minn.



# Neuroscience

# ADVANCER

BY **REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ '06** → PHOTO BY **DAVID J. TURNER**

**T**oday one in nine Americans over 65—that's more than five million people—have Alzheimer's Disease. Another million are living with Parkinson's Disease, the second most common neurodegenerative disorder. Those numbers are only expected to grow as Baby Boomers age: the Alzheimer's Association projects that nearly 14 million people in the U.S. will be diagnosed with these diseases by 2050.

These harrowing statistics tell only part of the story. They don't account for the lost earning power, medical spending, and impact on the patient, family, and caregivers, all of which are skyrocketing. "This is a personal tragedy, but it's also a public health nightmare," says University of Minnesota neuroscience researcher **Michael Lee '85**, co-director of the Institute of Translational Neuroscience's Center for Neurodegenerative Disease. "The impending crisis will be a huge burden on society if we don't do anything about it."

Lee's team is at the leading edge of helping us understand these disorders. (His work focuses on Parkinson's, but because new research shows how Alzheimer's and Parkinson's processes overlap, his group studies both disorders.) Until recently, most Parkinson's research examined the loss of dopamine neurons linked to the movement disorder, with the goal to modulate and enhance those neurons. That has been effective for treating symptoms, Lee explains, but not for identifying (or preventing) what actually causes the disease. The Alzheimer's research effort has experienced similar roadblocks: clinical drug trials have enormous support, but no treatments have yet been proven to stop the continued brain damage.

What Lee and his colleagues are trying to understand goes farther back in the diseases' chronology. In both Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, the initial loss of brain cells begins at least one decade (and sometimes up to three decades) before symptoms emerge. Lee's lab is seeking to identify why those cells become sick and die in the first place.

"We're trying to cure the Parkinson's process, not just the symptoms," he says. "There are great therapies to alleviate some of the obvious symptoms, but patients often still develop other symptoms, like dementia, and symptomatic therapies become less effective. We need to understand the disease mechanisms: How does the disease kill neurons? If we can understand that, we can come up with ways to intervene and slow or stop the progression—or even prevent it altogether."

## A passion for discovery

Lee enrolled at Macalester as a pre-med student, but doing research as a psychology major steered him toward a different path. "Being at Mac made me braver," says Lee. "Questioning everything was a big focus—I don't have to believe everything I see."

At Macalester and later in his neuroscience graduate work at the University of Virginia, Lee found that he even loved the daily minutiae

of research: pipetting, looking through microscopes, and reading about earlier findings.

A turning point in his career came early in his tenure at Johns Hopkins University, where he completed his post-doc and taught for 12 years. He joined a research team during a boom in human molecular genetics, when his lead researcher was just beginning to employ the transgenic mouse model. That technology introduces mutant genes into mice, which then develop features of human diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. It was a key catalyst for the shift away from researching dopamine and toward better understanding the disease process.

## Getting closer to a cure

Transgenic mouse models continue to drive progress in Lee's lab today, where 10 researchers are tackling several related projects to study how the diseases take shape and progress. Lee's group was the first to describe the progressive degeneration of neurons in the Alzheimer's mouse model. His team was also first to identify a link between abnormal protein clumps called Lewy bodies—key Parkinson's indicators—and cell death. A key goal is to prevent those proteins from clumping together in the first place.

Because of the implications of his research, Lee insists that his researchers be extra rigorous and persistent. "He ensures that science is done correctly and great thought goes into experimental design and execution," says **Percy Griffin '13**, who began volunteering in the lab as a student and now works there full time.

Lee has seen the federal government's funding for research ebb and flow through the years. Although Congress doubled its Alzheimer's research funding last year, grant applications for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other government sources have become more competitive. Backing up a proposal with lots of data improves its chances of being funded, but also makes it difficult to take a chance on a new research question.

That's where private funding—in Lee's lab, from both foundations and individual donors—can help, by supporting new projects. "In my lab there's room to do things off the beaten path," Lee says. "Sometimes a finding might take 10 years. If you don't have the infrastructure for an active, ongoing investigation, accidental discoveries are less likely."

In the next five years, Lee hopes to test and show efficacy for a series of Parkinson's treatments in clinical trials. Although his team is ultimately pursuing a cure, each step in the right direction can have huge implications. A therapy that preserves patients' quality of life and allows them to live at home for even one extra year can have a tremendous impact.

In talking with Parkinson's and Alzheimer's patients, Lee tries to balance hope with the realities of research. "They know it's a long, evolving process," he says. "I hope they also know we're doing everything we can to come up with a cure." **M**

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**REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ '06** is a staff writer.

University of  
Minnesota  
researcher **Michael  
Lee '85** is helping  
us understand  
Alzheimer's and  
Parkinson's  
Diseases.



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**DEADLINES FOR CLASS NOTES:**  
Feb. 15 for the Spring issue;  
May 15 for the Summer issue;  
Aug. 15 for the Fall issue; and  
Nov. 15 for the Winter issue.

**PHOTO POLICY FOR CLASS NOTES:**

- We publish one photo per wedding.
- We do not have space to publish baby photos.
- We welcome photos of alumni gathered together anywhere in the world but cannot guarantee to publish every photo. We publish as many as space permits.
- Photos must be high-resolution (300 dots per inch) or approximately 1MB or greater in file size.

If you have a question about your class note, call Editor Lynette Lamb at 651-696-6452.



## MAC AROUND THE WORLD



Numerous “bio-bods” from the classes of 1969 and 1970 joined former Macalester biology professor Dan Frenzel for dinner in St. Paul. Front row (from left): Barb Brodie Erickson '70, Professor Frenzel, and Barbara Wenstrom Shank '70. Second row: Melissa Nellis '70, Nancy Keogh Dunning '69, and Laurie Langen Latimer '70. Back row: Brent Clark '70, Paul Letourneau '69, Kurt Rusterholz '70, Sandra Sackett '69, and Richard Shank '70.



## MAC AROUND THE WORLD



Geography professor Bill Moseley (center) was pleasantly surprised to run into Julia Eagles '06 and Ari Ofsevit '06 at the finish line of the City of Lakes XC Ski Loppet in February.

### 1942

The [Minneapolis] *Star Tribune* profiled ophthalmologist **Lowell Gess** in January. He began doing medical missionary work in Africa in the early 1950s and opened an eye clinic in Sierra Leone in the 1960s. In January 2015 Lowell returned to Sierra Leone during the height of the country's Ebola crisis and discovered that several patients who had been declared free of Ebola were suffering vision loss because the virus had remained undetected in their eyes. Lowell brought this problem to the attention of the international health community and planned to meet with Ebola researchers earlier this year to discuss it.

in March 2015. Since 2013, he has bought broken toys from Goodwill, repaired them, and then donated them to such places as a local childcare center and the elementary school where he served as principal from 1972 to 1976. He has performed as an accordionist with the bands the Melody Men and the Old Timers, as well as with his wife, JoAnne.

### 1956

**George** and **Sally Horton Prill** have lived in Boutwells Landing, a senior community near Stillwater, Minn., since May 2010.

### 1958

**Mary Hartle Larson** reports that her six years of service on the Macalester Alumni Board has given her “a renewed sense of enthusiasm for the college.”

### 1953

The Joliet, Ill., *Herald News* profiled retired teacher and school administrator **Art Mackay**

**1963**

**Howard Mielke** has been celebrated for his research and teaching at Tulane University School of Medicine. He appreciates the opportunities that came about through his connections with Hildegard Johnson, Daniel Frenzel, and Dr. Walters.

**1965**

**Terry Nagel** and his wife, Louise, have moved to Portland, Ore. They planned to buy a condominium downtown.

**R. Newell Searle** planned to spend the winter teaching English in a Zapotec pueblo in Oaxaca, Mexico.

On a recent trip to Southeast Asia, **Karen Wahlund** visited Thailand and Cambodia. "I have wanted to visit Burma/Myanmar since 1965, when I was a SWAP participant in Hong Kong," she wrote. "I finally

made it here, and so far it is as wonderful as I had hoped."

Macalester friends joined **Margee Smith Wheeler** in December to celebrate the seventh anniversary of her marriage to the late **Steven Wheeler '66**, who passed away last July. "I am beginning to find my life's rhythm and priorities without him," Margee wrote.

**1966**

*The Class of 1966 will be celebrating its 50th Reunion June 3-5, 2016.*

**1967**

Assistant Hennepin County Attorney **Toni Bunker Beitz** received a professional achievement award from the Minnesota County Attorneys Association last December. She has worked in the county's civil division for 28 years.



## MAC AROUND THE WORLD



Several alumni attended the Nov. 7, 2015, funeral of Bob "Skel" Skelton '76. Joining Maurice Robinson '76 to remember "the consummate instigator with a penchant for practical jokes" were Brian Gulbranson '78, Steve Lonergan '76, Rick Streff '76, Bill Phillips '75, Mike Randall '76, and Brigid Randall Raskin '77.



## MAC AROUND THE WORLD



A Mac grad who is head of the American International School in Chennai, India, met the parents of Mac alumnus Carly Stein Schmitt '03, whose sister he works with. Shown here are (from right) head of school Andrew Hoover '85, teacher Morgan Wettergren, and her parents David Wettergren and Gretchen Stein P '03.

**1969**

**Charles Baxter** was named one of three finalists for the Story Prize for his short fiction collection *There's Something I Want You to Do*. Charles is the Edelstein-Keller Professor of Writing at the University of Minnesota and has written five other short story collections and five novels.

While relaxing at a remote resort in Nicaragua, **Herschel Jones** met fellow Macalester soccer player **Gordon Jensen '77** and had a long conversation about the sport at the school.

**1970**

Since joining the National Park Service's Scholars Roundtable in May 2014, **Mark Meinke** has supported the agency's LGBTQ Heritage Initiative. In January, he cofounded the Rainbow Heritage Network, an organization that advocates for the landmarking and preservation of queer historic sites. Mark's efforts have resulted in the nomination of the Furies Collective in Washington, D.C., and the Bayard Rustin home in New York City for inclusion in the NPS National Register.

**1971**

*The Class of 1971 will be celebrating its 45th Reunion June 3-5, 2016.*

**1972**

Former Macalester Director of Athletics **Ken Andrews** is executive director of the Middle Atlantic Conference. Headquartered near Harrisburg, Pa., the MAC serves 17 Division III colleges that sponsor 24 different sports. Ken was named Conference Commissioner of the Year by the Eastern College Athletic Conference.

Nonviolent Peaceforce, the organization that **Mel Duncan** helped launch 17 years ago, was nominated for a 2016 Nobel Peace Prize. The [St. Paul] *Pioneer Press* reported in February that the American Friends Service Committee nominated Nonviolent Peaceforce for its efforts to protect civilians caught in the crossfire of armed conflict. The organization has field workers in refugee and displaced-person camps in South Sudan, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Ukraine.

**1973**

After more than 41 years as a registrar, **Jeffrey von Munkwitz-Smith** has retired as assistant vice president and university registrar at Boston University. A past president of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, Jeffrey continues to consult on projects for the organization and edits its journal, *College & University*. He lives in Portland, Maine, with **Lesla**

# Class Notes



## MAC AROUND THE WORLD



**Michael Lens '00**, assistant professor of urban planning at UCLA, recently hosted a dinner for Mac alums studying with him at UCLA. Shown here are (back row, from left): **Mike Lens '00**, **Evan Moorman '14**, **Luke Clapp '10**, and **Mike Samuelson '09**; (front row, from left) **Molly Lens '00**, **Hannah Fong '13**, **Anne Brown '10**, and **Annah Walters '08**.

**von Munkwitz-Smith**, who retired from the University of Connecticut four years ago.

**1974**

**Rick Gerharter's** work appeared in *Daily and Transcendent*, an exhibit of more than 25 years' worth of queer photojournalistic portraits that was on view at the San Francisco Public Library's Jewett Gallery last winter.

**David Haney** will begin his tenure as president of Centenary College in July. He has been vice president for academic affairs at Emory & Henry College for the past four years.

**1975**

**Susan Hirtz Greif** launched a Montgomery County, Md., affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, an organization dedicated to promoting a love of books and

improving early childhood literacy and kindergarten readiness by providing books to children up to five years old.

**1976**

*The Class of 1976 will be celebrating its 40th Reunion June 3-5, 2016.*

**Bob Mantell** is director of psychology training at Hamm Clinic, a community mental health center in downtown St. Paul.

A year ago **Benjamin Wilson** left SmartEtailing, where he had spent 15 years building and consulting on websites for bike shops nationwide. He is now semi-retired and self-employed with a web design business specializing in WordPress sites.

**1978**

**Jim Sitter** was named the winner of the 2016 Kay Sexton Award,

which recognizes individuals and organizations dedicated to books, reading, and literary activities in Minnesota. Jim is the founding executive director of the Minnesota Center for Book Arts. He also launched the book distribution company Bookslinger, served as executive director of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, and co-founded LitNet, a nationwide coalition of nonprofit literary organizations.

**1980**

**Thomas Jaeger** served the indigenous Mayan community in Guatemala's Central Highlands region during a recent weeklong medical mission. Although it was his first time in Central America, Thomas reports that he was influenced by the experiences of **Jim Strudell** and **Jon Peara '81**, who traveled to Costa Rica as undergraduates.

**1983**

**Leatha Grein Wolter** was named a 2015 Attorney of the Year by *Minnesota Lawyer* magazine. A partner at Meagher & Geer and founder of the firm's anti-fraud counseling and litigation practice group, Leatha was recognized for her work against insurance fraud. She is also a trial tactics instructor and regularly gives presentations to clients, trade groups, and other businesses.

**1984**

**Dan Lundeen** is a partner with the Marsh, Lundeen, Stone, and Associates group at Merrill Lynch in Vienna, Va. He previously spent 30 years as an executive with several public and private asset management firms. Dan also serves as a trustee for a charitable foundation that supports educational, environmental, healthcare, and community organizations and is a board

member of the Great Falls, Va., chapter of Rotary International. He and his wife, **Amy Steeg Lundeen**, live in Great Falls, where they raised their four children.

## 1986

*The Class of 1986 will be celebrating its 30th Reunion June 3–5, 2016.*

## 1989

**Gary O'Connor** has commissioned a libretto *The Art of Fugue: The Opera*, a project to adapt J.S. Bach's *The Art of Fugue* into an intermezzo-length opera.

## 1990

**Michael Starobin** has been awarded a patent for a process to project full-motion video onto spherical

surfaces. Numerous movies have been presented around the world using this method, most recently *Water Falls*.

## 1991

**Katherine Pendergrass Norlander** is the author of *Geek Culture*, a coffee-table book about the Minnesota science fiction convention CONvergence.

## 1993

In March, **Christopher Duffrin** was appointed president of the Center for Energy and Environment, a Minnesota-based clean energy nonprofit. He spent the previous eight years at the community-focused energy efficiency nonprofit Neighborhood Energy Connection.

**Keiko Sugisaka** was appointed an at-large member of the State of Minnesota's Commission on Judicial Selection in February. Keiko is a litigation partner and chair of the tort and product liability practice group at Maslon LLP.

## 1995

**Christopher Tassava** finished his third Arrowhead 135 winter ultramarathon race on Jan. 26, covering more than 135 miles of snowmobile trails from International Falls to Tower, Minn., on his fatbike in 25 hours and 59 minutes.

## 1996

*The Class of 1996 will be celebrating its 20th Reunion June 3–5, 2016.*

## 1998

**Adam Nyhan** has joined Opticlaw Law LLC, a business law firm in Portland, Maine, as "of counsel." He previously practiced law in New York City for 11 years and cofounded a tech startup in Los Angeles.

**Kirk Prestegard** and **Maggie Ney '00** welcomed the birth of Anabelle Joy Prestegard on July 4, 2015.

## 2000

The German Baseball and Softball Federation named **Tom Gillespie** head coach of its U18 National Team in January. Tom continues his work with Play Global!, a foundation that supports the

*Continued on page 42 →*

## Books

### From 100 Places in Greece Every Woman Should Go by Amanda Summer '78

(SOLAS HOUSE, 2016)

The road comes to an end in Kironi, but no worries! All you need do is turn the car around and retrace your steps back to Vathy. I can guarantee you won't be disappointed to have to do it twice—for experiencing this stunning drive in reverse will surely fill you with nostos for this beautiful island, and remind you, as echoed in Cavafy's timeless poem, that it's all about the journey.

*Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.*

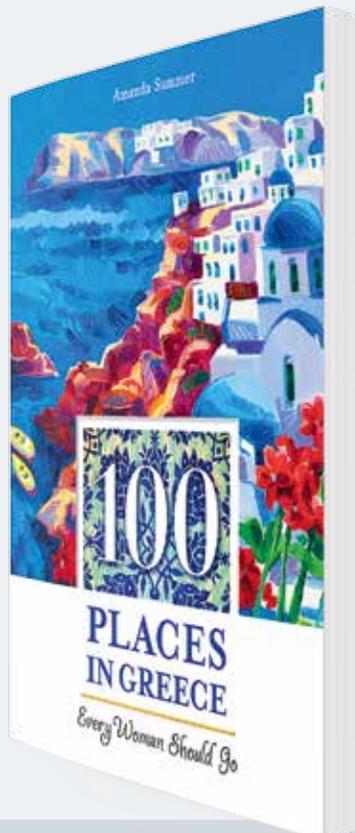
*Without her you would not have set out.*

*She has nothing left to give you now.*

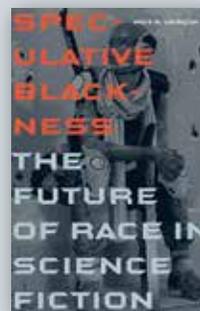
*And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.*

*Wise as you will have become, so full of experience.*

*You will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.*



**Karen Aguilar-San Juan**, associate professor of American Studies, and Frank Joyce, editors, *The People Make the Peace: Lessons from the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (JUST WORLD BOOKS, 2016)



**André Carrington '03**, *Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction* (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, 2016)

**Lesley Gill '77**, *A Century of Violence in a Red City: Popular Struggle, Counterinsurgency, and Human Rights in Colombia* (DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016)

**Robert W. Haynes '73**, editor, *Critical Insights: Horton Foote* (SALEM PRESS, 2016)

**William G. Moseley**, professor of geography, Matthew A. Schnurr, and Rachel Bezner-Kerr, editors, *Africa's Green Revolution: Critical Perspectives on New Agricultural Technologies and Systems* (ROUTLEDGE, 2016)

**Erin Twamley '09**, *Renewable Energy: Discover the Fuel of the Future* (NOMAD PRESS, 2016)



# ▶ Mac Weddings



- 1. Brian Stephenson '10** and Elise Tolish were married on Oct. 3, 2015, in Minneapolis, joined by many Mac friends.
- 2. Margarite Blignaut '11** and **Willem Laursen '11** were married on Oct. 10, 2015, in Black Earth, Wis., accompanied by many Mac friends.
- 3. Natalie Foote '10** and Adam Rogozinsky were married in Chicago on Nov. 8, 2015, accompanied by many Mac friends.
- 4. Seth Lind '01** and Gabrielle Steinhardt were married on Sept. 6, 2015, in Witwen, Wis., joined by many Mac friends.
- 5. Robert (Bob) Conrow '64** and James Long were married in Miami, Fla., on Dec. 29, 2015, joined by their respective families.



**6.** Nick Seymour '08 and Robin Lagorio were married in Hopland, Calif., on Oct. 25, 2014. Mac friends joining them (from left): Eric Olson '86, Andrew Bahrenburg '08, Nick Seymour '08, Seth Madison '08, Andy Pope-Rolewski '08, and Dustin Chavez-Davis '08.

**7.** Carleton Gholz '99 and Ceylan Akturk were married in Troy, Mich., on Aug. 1, 2016. Joining them (from left): Jane Yager '00, Darren Clarke '99, Lisa Pagnucci '99, Cailin O'Connor '98, and Jennifer Undis '96.

**8.** Briana Redman '08 and Keith McGuinness were married June 6, 2015, in Sonoma, Calif.

# Mac Weddings



1



2



3

1. **Steven Kotok '92** and Karina Cherfa were married in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Aug. 2, 2015. Joining them (from left): **Jed Sunden '92**, **Jason Coulter '92**, **Jon Shurin '92**, **Nicole Lindstrom '92**, and **David S. Miller '92**.
2. **Philip B. Platt '71** and Tina Colwell were married on Sept. 20, 2015, in St. Paul.
3. **Catherine Davies '00** and Omar Ben Hamouda were married in Tunis, Tunisia, on Aug. 1, 2015. **Paul Aleckson '00**, **Kate Stebbins Stinson '00**, **Craig Ortner '00**, and Catherine's father, **David Davies '68**, celebrated with them.
4. **Brittany Anderson '01** and Athan Bezaitis were married in Oakland, Calif., on May 9, 2015. Brittany's Mac roommate, **May Mahala '01**, was in the bridal party.



4



5



8



6



9



7

5. **Eileen Fitzpatrick '06** and Julien Fergeau were married in Migné-Auxances, France, on July 18, 2015.
6. **Julia Stanfield Norman '07** and **Paul Norman '07** were married on July 4, 2015, in Knoxville, Tenn., joined by many Mac friends.
7. **Stephanie Kobbe Peterson '08** and Drew Peterson were married on Oct. 17, 2015, in Minneapolis.
8. **Nadia Stennes-Spidahl '11** and Daniel Gillitzer were married on Sept. 4, 2015, in Wisconsin, joined by many Mac friends.
9. **Annah Walters '08** and **Mike Samuelson '09** were married Nov. 21, 2015, in Los Angeles. **Carson Gorecki '09** officiated, and "many, many" Macalester alumni celebrated with them.

# Class Notes



## MAC AROUND THE WORLD



Kate Maruyama '05 (right) and Todd Skauge '13 work with CET Academic Programs, a study abroad organization that sends college students to eight countries around the world. They're shown here in front of the house where Mao slept in Moganshan, China (outside Shanghai), while taking part in a CET staff retreat.

→ Continued from page 37

development of baseball in Africa, and has scouted for the Pittsburgh Pirates since 2011.

### 2002

**Mary Robert Nahm Garrett** received the Appalachian College Association Fellowship in support of her sabbatical at the University of Nottingham for the 2016-17 academic year. She plans to work on improving the synthesis of photoelectric materials so that energy that would otherwise be wasted as heat is put to mechanical use.

### 2005

**Emily Griswold** became associate director of the onchocerciasis, lymphatic filariasis, and schistosomiasis programs at the Carter Center in Atlanta last April.

### 2006

*The Class of 2006 will be celebrating its 10th Reunion June 3-5, 2016.*

**8th Annual Macalester Summer Session**

**MACALESTER ALUMNI COLLEGE**  
**July 28-29, 2016**

**HOW WILL CITIES SURVIVE?**

**Faculty Convener:** David Lanegran  
Emeritus Professor of Urban Geography  
[alumnioffice@macalester.edu](mailto:alumnioffice@macalester.edu)  
651-696-6295



## MAC AROUND THE WORLD



Mac alums gather for food and fun in Seoul, South Korea: Erin Twamley '09, Maximillian Joseph '11, Judith Grace Atieno Wodzack '15, Anna Lee '16, and Lillian Hexter '16.

Since receiving a PhD in classical studies from the University of Michigan in 2014, **Evelyn Adkins** has worked at Kenyon College and Penn State University. She has accepted a position as assistant professor for the 2016-17 academic year at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome, the same study-abroad program she attended as a Macalester student.

**Cris Ramón** came in second place for the German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum Young Writers Award, which recognizes work co-authored by North Americans and Europeans on the future of the transatlantic relationship. The title of Cris's paper is "A World Beyond Disorder: A Vision for a Transatlantic-Led Global Solidarity Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis."

### 2007

**Phillip Higgs** works for the Midwest region of Whole Foods Market. He led an eco-friendly art installation project at Whole Foods' St. Paul store last February.

**Désirée Weber**, a PhD candidate in political science at Northwestern University, received a 2016 K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award from the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Her work focuses on the relationship of language to political pedagogy and politics.

### 2008

**Emily Goodman Erickson** and **Lance Tarn Erickson '04** announce the birth of Owen Tarn Erickson on June 19, 2015.

**Alexis Walstad** has been named co-executive director of the Karen Organization of Minnesota, which helps Burmese refugees find housing, employment, and educational opportunities. Alexis joined KOM as development director in 2012 and began serving as interim executive director last August.

### 2009

**Franz Meyer** is running for the office of Milwaukee County Board Supervisor. He is currently a teacher coach in the Milwaukee schools.

**Erin Twamley** has moved to Seoul, South Korea, where she hopes to teach English. She is the author of two books for middle-schoolers, *Climate Change: Discover How It Impacts Spaceship Earth* and

*Renewable Energy: Discover the Fuel of the Future.*

### 2010

**Federico Burlon** planned to join Impactt, a consultancy specializing in human rights and working conditions in global supply chains, in January 2016. He previously spent four years as sustainability manager at Tesco.

**Amelia McNamara** received a PhD in statistics from the University of California-Los Angeles last June. She is visiting assistant professor of statistical and data sciences at Smith College.

### 2011

*The Class of 2011 will be celebrating its 5th Reunion June 3-5, 2016.*

## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ALUMNI VOLUNTEERS

BY **NEELY HEUBACH '06**, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

Given that service to society is a key Macalester value, it's not surprising that alumni volunteers are critical partners in advancing and strengthening both the college and the larger Macalester community. In fact, more than a thousand alumni volunteer for the college each year in a wide variety of roles.

Alumni volunteers make it possible to hold 40 simultaneous events around the world for MAC in the City and to throw the giant party that is Reunion. Alumni volunteers serve on the Board of Trustees, Alumni Board, yMac committee, and chapter groups; they return to campus to judge mock trial tournaments and coach athletes; they encourage their classmates to support the Annual Fund. And more than anything else, alumni volunteers connect with current students.

From sending MacMail to graduating seniors to speaking on campus, alumni volunteers are an important part of student life. Students are hungry to speak with alumni because we've already made the journey they're anticipating. They want to hear stories from the other side.

So yes, we can help them, but they can also help us. There is nothing like talking with a current student to send you careening back in time to your own four years at Mac. Every time I meet students I am intimidated by their accomplishments, interests, and language proficiencies but also reminded that they're just as nervous as I was trying to imagine post-college life. It makes me think about what I wish I'd done differently and the things about my future I wish I could have seen at 21.

Maybe this is why so many of us gravitate toward talking with current students. In fact, in the last four years, more than 60 percent of active alumni volunteers participated in a program that connected them with students. Unsurprisingly, many of those programs centered around vocational discernment and career prep-

aration. And we are thankful for each and every one of you.

The college's new strategic plan, Thrive, specifically points out the importance of alumni helping students with career discernment, and asks that every major department establish and strengthen connections with alumni. But to weave alumni connections into the fabric of our community, we need your help.

The easiest way to help students with careers is to activate your Career Helper badge on MacDirect, the alumni directory ([macdirect.macalester.edu](http://macdirect.macalester.edu)). Next to your profile picture you'll find a small networking icon, which displays in grey if inactive. Activating this Career Helper badge marks you as a potential resource for both current students and fellow alumni; your Career Helper badge will show up next to your name in search results, and you'll also be flagged as a potential volunteer for your major department.

While you're at it, please make sure we have your current employment information. Students using the database search most often by major, location, and employment; rather than seeking one specific alum to speak with, some prefer to scroll through the list to see what alumni from their major are "doing" with their degrees. You might not hear from a student, but they are looking at your information nevertheless. Because this is the same database that Alumni Relations, the Career Development Center, and academic departments use when seeking speakers, updating with MacDirect helps everyone.

You may not hear from a student right away or be invited to speak on a panel immediately. Even though it might take awhile for the right opportunity to present itself, please know that just by being available you may be helping a student who is nervous about life after graduation. You never know who in the Macalester community you might someday help. **M**



## Class Agent

In his last semester at Macalester, **Hossein Alidaee '13** joined the senior class gift committee—and he has volunteered as an Annual Fund class agent ever since.

After graduation, Alidaee worked as a research assistant at Northwestern University. Now in Washington, D.C., at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, he develops methods for identifying system risk in financial markets. He has also continued his

Northwestern University research remotely, focused on projects related to improving the adoption of agricultural technology in Malawi and Mali.

For Alidaee, serving as a class agent is about helping Macalester grow. It's easy to brainstorm ways to improve Mac, he says, but that is only part of the equation. "We can all think of ways to make Macalester stronger," he says. "But that happens through a bigger endowment and budget, and the only way to get there is if alumni give whatever they can. We all need to step up."



# In Memoriam

**1936**

**Marvel Wangensteen Entzminger**, 100, of Colfax, Wis., died Dec. 6, 2015. She retired from teaching in 1977. Mrs. Entzminger is survived by two daughters, a son, nine grandchildren, and 27 great- and great-great-grandchildren.

**1941**

**Scott H. DeLong**, 96, died Nov. 15, 2015, in Minnetonka, Minn. He served in the Army during World War II and the Korean War, attaining the rank of lieutenant, and worked for most of his life with a lumber business in Anoka, Minn. Mr. DeLong is survived by a daughter, two sons (including **Scott DeLong '71**), four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a brother, **Richard DeLong '43**.

**Dorothy Matchan French**, 97, of Zumbrota, Minn., died Dec. 23, 2015. She taught school in the Zumbrota area for more than 20 years. Mrs. French is survived by a daughter, a son, seven grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

**1942**

**Ruth Nelson Wallace**, 95, died Feb. 6, 2016. She is survived by two daughters (including **Kathie Wallace Rowland '69**), two sons, 11 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

**1943**

**Phyllis Tucker Jahnke**, 94, of White Bear Lake, Minn., died Feb. 6, 2016. She taught speech at South Dakota University and served in Germany with the Women's Army Corps. Mrs. Jahnke is survived by two daughters, a son, and four grandchildren.

**1944**

**Jack B. Lowrey**, 93, of Indian Hills, Colo., died Jan. 19, 2016. He put his medical degree to use in the Army during the Korean War and saw patients for 50 years at Porter and Swedish Hospitals in Denver. Dr. Lowrey is survived by his wife, Eleanor, three daughters (including **Georgia Lowrey Wiesner '73**), two sons, 15 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

**Lawrence J. Swanson**, 91, of South St. Paul, Minn., died Aug. 28, 2015. He is survived by two daughters, three sons, eight grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and a brother.

**1946**

**Marie Morton Bartz**, 91, of Beach, N.D., died Dec. 20, 2015. She worked as a secretary with the North Dakota Department of Transportation and Farmers and Merchants Bank and retired in 1975. Mrs. Bartz is survived by three sons, five grandchildren, and a sister.

**1947**

**Dorothy Mae Oas Hilsen**, 90, died on Dec. 11, 2015, in Seattle. Dorothy and her husband, Norman, moved to Seattle shortly after they married on December 11, 1948. They raised four children on some land overlooking Puget Sound. Although Dorothy eventually earned a master's degree in psychotherapy and counseling, her first love was always Macalester College.

Dorothy was an enthusiastic learner, having graduated from Macalester with two majors and three minors. She also edited *The Mac Weekly*. Dorothy held a lifelong admiration for former Vice President Hubert Humphrey, who had been her political science professor at Macalester. She is survived by four children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**1948**

**John R. Comer**, 92, of Albuquerque, N.M., died Jan. 6, 2016. He served as a paratrooper during World War II and worked in the insurance industry for more than 50 years. Mr. Comer is survived by a daughter and a son.

**1949**

**John D. Arnstrom** of Coon Rapids, Minn., died Dec. 2, 2014. He is survived by his wife, Ardyce, a daughter, a son, and three grandchildren.



**REGISTER NOW** [macalester.edu/reunion](http://macalester.edu/reunion)



**AT A REUNION EVERYONE SHOWS UP OLDER  
AND GROWS YOUNG AGAIN**

**JUNE 3-5, 2016**

# In Memoriam

**Mary "Alix" Sherk Elam**, 86, of Winchester, Va., died Dec. 14, 2015. She was a social worker with St. Elizabeth's Hospital and the U.S. Army. After retiring from the Army in 1992, she was a social worker and bereavement counselor with Calvert Hospice. Mrs. Elam is survived by a daughter, three sons, nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

**Mary Schoder Ingram**, 87, of Warren, N.J., died Dec. 18, 2015. She was an active volunteer for more than 30 years with such organizations as the Warren Board of Health, United Family, and the Starfish Food Pantry. Mrs. Ingram is survived by four children, 10 grandchildren, a great-granddaughter, and a sister.

## 1950

**Richard E. Henslin**, 86, died Dec. 2, 2015. He served in the Army from 1952 to 1954 at Fort Jackson, S.C. He was a dairy and crop farmer and sold oil products and seed corn to other farmers in the area. Mr. Henslin was also a board member of his rural school district. He is survived by his wife, Marie, a daughter, three sons, 12 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.

**Oleg Jardetzky**, 86, died Jan. 10, 2016. He joined the faculty of Harvard Medical School's Department of Pharmacology in 1957, where he established the first nuclear magnetic resonance laboratory dedicated to biological research. After a few years with Merck, Sharp, and Dohme Laboratories, Mr. Jardetzky returned to academia. He was a professor of pharmacology at the Stanford University School of Medicine for more than 40 years and did pioneering research as the founder and director of the Stanford Magnetic Resonance Laboratory. A child of Russian émigrés to Yugoslavia, Mr. Jardetzky wrote two books about his family's history, one of which received a prize from the International Union of Heraldry and Genealogy in 1998. He is survived by three sons and four grandchildren.

**Donald A. Metz**, 88, died on Feb. 7, 2016, in Medina, Minn. He was a general practitioner physician at the Robbinsdale Clinic in Robbinsdale, Minn., for 35 years.

He also was a Navy veteran a pilot, a sailor, a gardener, and an orchardist. Mr. Metz is survived by his wife, Beverly, five daughters, 10 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

## 1951

**George P. Miller**, 86, of Catonsville, Md., died Feb. 24, 2016. He worked as a photojournalist for the *Fargo Forum*, KSTP-TV, the *Milwaukee Journal, Together* magazine, and the U.S. Information Agency. Mr. Miller is survived by his wife, Judy, a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, and a half-brother.

**Gloria K. Nelson**, 87, of St. Cloud, Minn., died Jan. 12, 2016. She was active in her church for more than 50 years and volunteered with the Red Cross, United Way, St. Cloud Hospital, Meals on Wheels, the Girl Scouts, and the Campfire Girls. Mrs. Nelson is survived by three daughters.

## 1952

**John R. Nelson**, 85, of Caddo Gap, Ark., died June 19, 2015. He worked for Honeywell. An avid golfer, Mr. Nelson designed and built golf courses in Somerset, Wis., and Norman, Ark. He is survived by his wife, Geneta, four daughters, three sons, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## 1953

**Elmer F. Beckman**, 97, of Brooklyn Park, Minn., died Feb. 11, 2016. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and owned and operated the High Point Lodge nursing home near Clear Lake, Minn., for 33 years. He also designed and manufactured the Beckway top for pickup trucks and flew search-and-rescue and transport missions for the Civil Air Patrol. Mr. Beckman is survived by his wife, Flo, two daughters, a son, three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, a sister, and two brothers.

**J. Wesley Blake**, 84, of White Bear Lake, Minn., died Jan. 7, 2016. He is survived by his wife, Bertha, three daughters, a son, 10 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and two sisters.

**David T. Carlstedt** of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, died Dec. 16, 2015. He received a Purple Heart for his service in World War II and worked as an elementary school teacher and an office building manager. Mr. Carlstedt and his wife, **Mary Jean Stokes Carlstedt '53**, hosted Vietnamese refugees during the 1980s and launched Friends of Internationals, an organization for international students. Mr. Carlstedt is survived by his wife, two daughters, a son, eight grandchildren, and three siblings.

**Nancy Monat Johnson**, 84, of Shoreview, Minn., died Jan. 21, 2016. She taught kindergarten and first and second grades in Winona, Minn., San Diego, and St. Paul for more than 32 years, retiring in 1992. Mrs. Johnson is survived by her husband, George, a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, and a brother.

## 1954

**Jerry M. Ingalls**, 83, of Monticello, Wis., died Nov. 26, 2015. He practiced as a general surgeon in Paris, Ill., from 1963 to 1988. He then worked as medical director of Monroe Clinic and Hospital and president of the Monroe Medical Foundation. He also served on the board of directors of the Wisconsin State Medical Society and the South Central Wisconsin Chapter of the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Society and was the youngest person to hold the office of president of the Illinois State Medical Society. Dr. Ingalls is survived by his wife, Myrna, three daughters, two sons, seven grandchildren, and a sister.

## 1956

**Richard E. Flathman**, 81, died Sept. 6, 2015, in San Rafael, Calif. He was George Armstrong Kelly Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, where he taught for 35 years. A recipient of the David and Elaine Spitz Prize and a Guggenheim Fellowship, Mr. Flathman was a pioneer in the application of analytic philosophy to political science. A book about his work is forthcoming from Routledge. Mr. Flathman is survived by his wife, Nancy Wold Flathman '56, and three daughters.

## 1957

**Donald A. Shoemaker**, 84, of White Bear Lake, Minn., died Dec. 16, 2015. He served as a radio communications specialist in the Korean War and became a partner in Brookman Motors in Lake Elmo, Minn. He was also a judge and official in the Upper Midwest Golden Gloves. Mr. Shoemaker is survived by three sons, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

## 1959

**David A. Johnson**, 77, of Arlington, Va., died Aug. 6, 2014. He is survived by a sister.

**Duane W. Mau**, 78, of Ashby, Minn., died Dec. 17, 2015. He taught at Kellogg Junior High in Rochester, Minn. After his retirement, Mr. Mau and his wife, Marilyn Schaeffer Mau '60, sold antiques in the Ashby area. Mr. Mau is survived by his wife, three sons, four grandsons, a sister, and a brother.

## 1961

**Rosita Menedez Payne**, 80, died Nov. 23, 2015, in Tallahassee, Fla. She taught Spanish and provided counseling with the U.S. Army's educational program in Panama, at the Pentagon, and at Fort Myers, Fla. Mrs. Payne is survived by her husband, Clarence, a daughter, five grandchildren, and three siblings.

## 1963

**Russell A. Peterson**, 72, of Minneapolis died May 30, 2014. He had a long career in software development and marketing. Mr. Peterson is survived by his wife, Ann, a daughter, a son, and a sister.

## 1966

**Clarence J. Lundquist**, 71, of St. Joseph, Minn., died Jan. 25, 2016. He served with the Army for two years in Vietnam. He taught business and social studies and coached sophomore football in Chatfield and Little Falls, Minn., retiring in 2001. He was also governmental relations chair for Education Minnesota and a member of the executive board of the National Joint Powers Alliance risk management pool. Mr. Lundquist is survived by his wife, Deanna, and a sister.

## 1967

**Gertrud A. Mayer**, 92, of Roseville, Minn., died Nov. 22, 2015. She taught German at Macalester College for several years and in the Roseville School District for 19 years. Mrs. Mayer is survived by a daughter, a son, six grandchildren, a great-grandson, and a sister.

**Judye Burton Reiland**, 70, died Nov. 14, 2015, in Rochester, Minn. She worked for many years as an administrative assistant. Mrs. Reiland is survived by her husband, Robert, a daughter, a son, four grandchildren, and a brother.

## 1968

**Rolf W. Westphal**, 70, of International Falls, Minn., and Spring Hill, Fla., died Feb. 10, 2016. He was a professor and an artist whose works can be seen throughout the United States and in Turkey, Finland, Poland, and British Columbia. Mr. Westphal is survived by his first wife, Susan Schug, and a son.

## 1970

**Janet Glaeser Bailey**, 67, died Oct. 16, 2015, in Livingston, Mont. She practiced law in Livingston. Mrs. Bailey is survived by her husband, **John Bailey '69**, a sister, and a brother.

**Susan Rhodes Bye**, 67, of St. Anthony, Minn., died Jan. 2, 2016. She worked for Hewlett-Packard as an electrical technician and technical writer for 24 years. She was also passionate about weaving and other textile arts and was a member of weavers' guilds in Seattle and Minnesota. Mrs. Bye is survived by her husband, Steve, a sister, and two brothers.

## 1971

**Andrea Field Albrecht**, 67, of St. Paul died Jan. 19, 2016. She taught special education, sold real estate, served as an aide to a member of the St. Paul City Council, and worked as neighborhood liaison at the University of St. Thomas. Mrs. Albrecht is survived by two daughters, two grandchildren, her mother, four sisters, and a brother.

**John P. Low**, 62, of Calabasas, Calif., died Sept. 7, 2012. He was a principal with John Palmer Low Designs and did design work for exhibits on King Tutankhamun and the Vatican. Mr. Low is survived by his wife, **Deborah Gordon Low '72**, his parents, and a sister.

## 1972

**Karen Nienaber Landry**, 65, died Dec. 31, 2015, in Venice Beach, Calif. An actress who divided her time between Los Angeles and the Twin Cities, Ms. Landry co-wrote and starred in the film *Patti Rocks*, which was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for screenwriting. She also appeared on such television shows as *Six Feet Under*, *St. Elsewhere*, and *Beverly Hills 90210* and worked at the Guthrie Theater, Penumbra Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, and Park Square Theatre, all in the Twin Cities. Ms. Landry was also an artist whose paintings were shown in Los Angeles. She is survived by her husband, Chris Mulkey, two daughters, a granddaughter, and three sisters.

## 1976

**Robert M. Skelton**, 62, of Royal Oak, Mich., died Nov. 2, 2015. He worked for Chrysler for 30 years. Mr. Skelton is survived by his wife, Theresa, a daughter, two sons, and six siblings.

## 1989

**John E. Scola**, 48, died Dec. 14, 2015. He worked for Xandex, AT&T, and Lawrence Berkeley National Labs. Mr. Scola is survived by his son, his parents, and a brother.

## 1993

**Michael J. Keogh**, 44, of Minneapolis died unexpectedly on Dec. 19, 2015. He is survived by his wife, Nicole DeMario, his parents, his grandmother, two sisters, and a brother.

## Other Losses



**Mary Kay Briggs**, longtime, beloved manager of Macalester's Alumni House and the President's House, died Jan. 15, 2016, after a long battle with cancer. She had worked at Macalester since 2005. President Brian Rosenberg wrote of her, "Mary Kay had a special gift for welcoming everyone with her warm smile and generous hospitality. She was devoted to Macalester and shared this enthusiasm with everyone she encountered." She is survived by a daughter, two sons, and her significant other, Jotham Blodgett. Last winter the board of trustees renamed The Alumni House Briggs House.

# Death, the Prosperity Gospel and Me

BY KATE BOWLER '02

The following piece is excerpted from a longer essay that appeared in The New York Times (Feb. 13, 2016).

ON A THURSDAY MORNING a few months ago, I got a call from my doctor's assistant telling me that I have Stage 4 cancer. The stomach cramps I was suffering from were not caused by a faulty gallbladder, but by a massive tumor.

I am 35. I did what you'd expect of someone whose world has suddenly become very small. I sank to my knees and cried. I called my husband. I waited until he arrived so we could wrap our arms around each other and say the things that must be said. *I have loved you forever. I am so grateful for our life together. Please take care of our son.*

But one of my first thoughts was also *Oh, God, this is ironic.* I recently wrote a book called *Blessed*.

I am a historian of the American prosperity gospel. Put simply, the prosperity gospel is the belief that God grants health and wealth to those with the right kind of faith. I spent 10 years interviewing televangelists with spiritual formulas for how to earn God's miracle money. I went on pilgrimage with the faith healer Benny Hinn and 900 tourists to retrace Jesus' steps in the Holy Land and see what people would risk for the chance at their own miracle. I ruined family vacations by insisting on being dropped off at the showiest megachurch in town. If there was a river running through the sanctuary, an eagle flying freely in the auditorium or an enormous, spinning statue of a golden globe, I was there.

One of the prosperity gospel's greatest triumphs is its popularization of the term *blessed*. Though it predated the prosperity gospel, it was prosperity preachers who blanketed the airwaves with it. *Blessed* is the shorthand for the prosperity message. We see it everywhere, from a TV show called *The Blessed Life* to the self-justification of Joel Osteen, the pastor of America's largest church, who said, "Jesus died that we might live an abundant life."

*Blessed* is a loaded term because it blurs the distinction between gift and reward. It can be a term of pure gratitude. "Thank you, God. I could not have secured this for myself." But it can also imply that it was deserved. "Thank you, me. For being the kind of person who gets it right." It is a perfect word for an American society that says it believes the American dream is based on hard work, not luck.

One of the most endearing and saddest things about being sick is watching people's attempts to make sense of your problem. My academic friends did what researchers do and Googled the hell out of it. Buried in all their concern is the unspoken question: Do I have any control?

I can also hear it in all my hippie friends' attempts to find the most healing kale salad for me. I can eat my way out of cancer. Or, if I were

to follow my prosperity gospel friends' advice, I can positively declare that it has no power over me and set myself free.

The most I can say about why I have cancer, medically speaking, is that bodies

are delicate and prone to error. As a Christian, I can say that the Kingdom of God is not yet fully here, and so we get sick and die. And as a scholar, I can say that our society is steeped in a culture of facile reasoning. What goes around comes around. Karma is a bitch. And God is always, for some reason, going around closing doors and opening windows. God is *super* into that.

The prosperity gospel tries to solve the riddle of human suffering. It is an explanation for the problem of evil. It provides an answer to the question: Why me? The prosperity gospel popularized a Christian explanation for why some people make it and some do not. They revolutionized prayer as an instrument for getting God always to say "yes." It offers a guarantee: Follow these rules, and God will reward you.

The prosperity gospel holds to this illusion of control until the very end. If a believer gets sick and dies, shame compounds the grief. Those who are loved and lost are just that — those who have lost the test of faith. In my work, I have heard countless stories of refusing to acknowledge that the end had finally come. There is no graceful death, no *ars moriendi*, in the prosperity gospel. There are only jarring disappointments after fevered attempts to deny its inevitability.

The prosperity gospel has taken a religion based on the contemplation of a dying man and stripped it of its call to surrender all. Perhaps worse, it has replaced Christian faith with the most painful forms of certainty. The movement has perfected a rarefied form of America's addiction to self-rule, which denies much of our humanity: our fragile bodies, our finitude, our need to stare down our deaths (at least once in a while) and be filled with dread and wonder. At some point, we must say to ourselves, *I'm going to need to let go.* **M**

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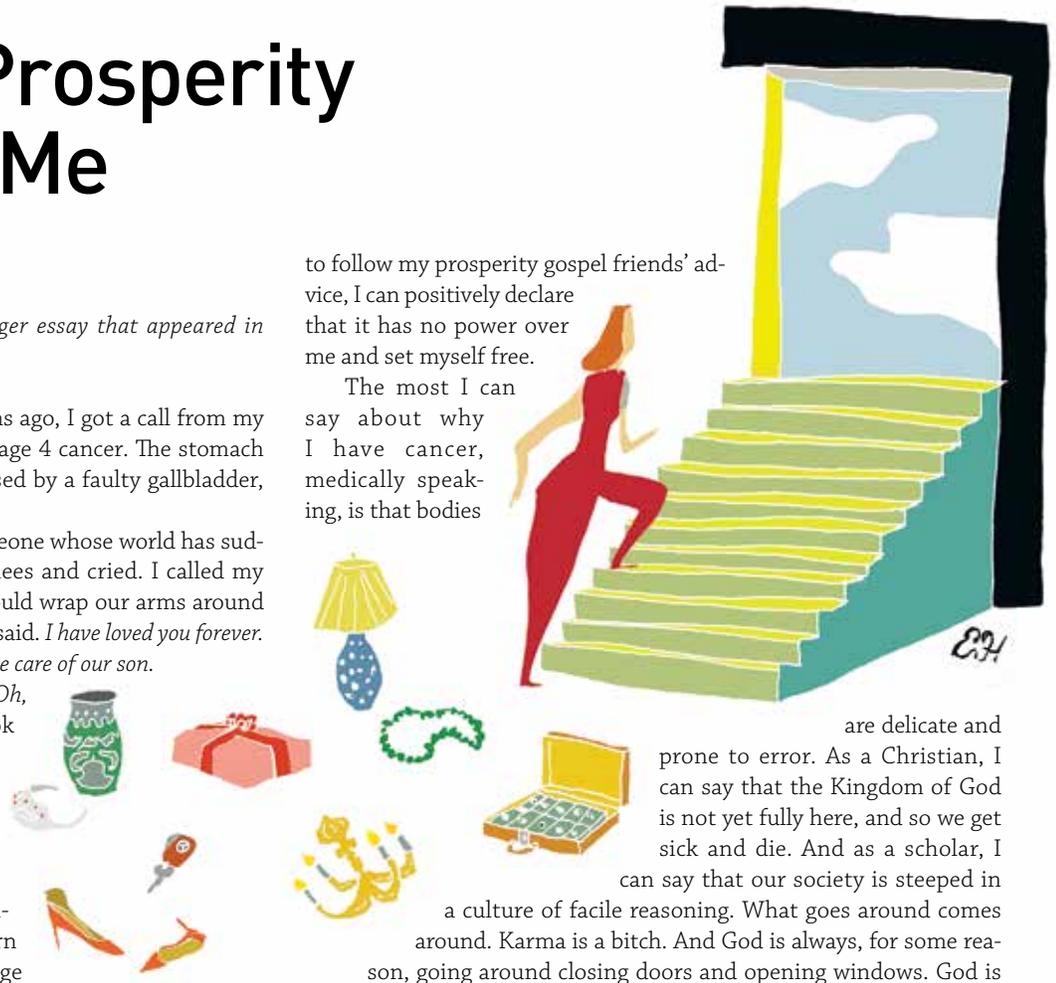


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