Education Illuminated

As the pandemic amplifies challenges in K–12 education, where do we go next? PAGE 26
ON THE COVER: “What I’m hoping to see as we come out of this is more questioning about how we want to live together,” says Mac educational studies professor Brian Lozenski. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: CHARLES JISCHKE

FEATURES

All Charged Up 14
Electric boat motors are the wave of the future—and Steve Trkla ’83 is leading the way.

The Writing Life 16
Twin Cities journalist Mary Ann Grossmann ’60 has been penning stories for 60 years.

Freedom From Certainty 20
What does it take to acknowledge the validity of other perspectives—or even admit that you might be wrong?

Education Illuminated 26
What did the pandemic reveal about challenges facing public education, and how should we think about what might be ahead?

Making Beauty 32
Dakota elder Walter “Super” LaBatte Jr. ’70 is an artist, historian, and culture bearer.

Lecture Notes: Celebrating Black History Through Theater 36
“I wanted us to investigate some of the documented theatrical history that led us to this moment,” Professor Harry Waters Jr. says.

DEPARTMENTS

Correspondence 2
Sounding Board 3
1600 Grand 4
Honoring the Class of 2021’s work, lessons, and perspectives.

Class Notes 38
Weddings 41
Books 42
In Memoriam 48
Last Look 52

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El-Kati’s legacy

I enjoyed tremendously the article on Professor Mahmood El-Kati (winter 2021). I was a freshman in 1969 and well remember the cultural upheaval taking place at that time. A class with Professor El-Kati was one place we knew we would encounter a majority of Black students. One final exam I did not attend because I was sick, and the good professor asking questions and waiting for the first verbal answer. It was like a Black History category on Jeopardy. I also remember Professor El-Kati’s participation in a protest march (the cause forgotten), and Professor El-Kati was at the front leading the chants. Thank you for this profile of a very impactful professor.

Joan Johnson Rooks ’73

Hemat, Calif.

Mahmood is the reason I teach history today. His knowledge of the subject, his engaging style, and his commanding presence left an everlasting impression. I have tried to duplicate his style for going on 43 years! His knowledge of the subject, his engaging style, and his commanding presence left an everlasting impression. I have tried to duplicate his style for going on 43 years!

Eric Anderson ’75

Pomona, Calif.

Professor El-Kati profoundly impacted my worldview as a student of history. His teaching still impacts my perspective of our country. Thank you.

B. Todd Jones ’79

St. Paul

Cheers

Thank you for putting the 1977 cheer squad in Macalester Today. We are so often not included in the history of Mac. It was a hard row to be on a Macalester cheer squad—when we were not being referred to as “the all Black team.” One pole that was not well publicized was in fall 1977. I was a Macalester student at that time. It was at the time of the Twin Cities protests. I participated in a protest march (the cause forgotten) and Professor El-Kati was at the front leading the chants.

Thank you for this profile of a very impactful professor.

Robin Garcia-Hrbek ’83

Rosemount, Minn.

Dear Professor El-Kati,

I was so grateful to read Dr. Rivera’s article “Practicing Gratitude.” It is unusual to hear this kind of sharing from an academic leader. Her talk on how to respond to this pandemic was pitch perfect. I’m impressed and filled with thanks that Macalester had a leader with this kind of spirit and grace. I think the ship is in good hands! Thank you for putting the 1977 cheer squad in Macalester Today. We are so often not included in the history of Mac. It was a hard row to be on a Macalester cheer squad—when we were not being referred to as “the all Black team.” One pole that was not well publicized was in fall 1977. I was a Macalester student at that time. It was at the time of the Twin Cities protests. I participated in a protest march (the cause forgotten) and Professor El-Kati was at the front leading the chants.

Thank you for this profile of a very impactful professor.

Robin Garcia-Hrbek ’83

Rosemount, Minn.

Thanks to Kim Walton ’79 and Robin Garcia-Hrbek ’83, we’ve identified the cheerleaders in “Last Look” (Winter 2022). From left: Vickie O’Neal Iddings ’79, Walton, and Garcia-Hrbek.

In viewpoint diversity

Inviting the invitation to answer what lessons from past experiences guide you today (“Wise Words for Turbulent Times”). When I was a pol sci major at Mac in the 60s, most of my classmates were Republicans. I was almost the lone DFLer. But we all got along fine, and I am still in touch with many of them. Viewpoint diversity was an accepted norm at Macalester back then. Now, I always try to see all sides of an issue, and, typically, there are more than two sides. It is a critical thinking, something missing at Macalester now. I am a registered independent in California.

When JFK died, my Republican friends reached out and comforted me. They told me they were in shock and wondered if I were okay. I recall we invited Barry Goldwater to speak in 64. As he entered the convention, nearly everyone stood in respect. None of my GOP friends asked for a safe haven that post-election morning in November. No comfort dogs were roaming the dorms. No one ridiculed them in class that day, so they did not complain about injustice, violence, or the pandemic. They saw this as a test of the tenacity, resilience, and hope we all have had to cultivate in this most challenging year.

Rev. Carl Anderson ’54

Mt. Prospect, III.

One of the most timely and interesting is- sues in a long while. Congrats.

Gerald Stacy ’62

Canyon Lake, Texas

CONNECT WITH US

Visit Mac’s social media hub at macalester.edu/mac-social and join in by using the #heymac hashtag when you post on Twitter or Instagram.

CORRESPONDENCE POLICY

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MACALESTER TODAY

Visitor’s guide to the campus

Macalester, now and for generations to come.

Looking Forward with Hope

A beautiful cardiac has taken up residence in the tree outside my bedroom window. It sings us up at sunrise as I prepare for work, reminding me that spring is coming. My spouse, Mike, and I have learned that Minnesotaans like to joke about the inordinately long length of winter, but the cardinal doesn’t seem to mind the cold. The per- sistence with which it sings each morning causes me to think about the tenacity, resilience, and hope we all have had to cultivate in this most challenging year.

Dr. Suzanne Rivera is president of Macalester College.
INTRO STATS AND CALC PROBS, REAL, BAYESIAN AND MATH STATS CAUSAL, NETWORK, BANG!
  — ZUOFU HUANG

CAFÉ MAC TOASTER, WHY DID YOU EAT MY BAGEL? WHY ARE YOU ON FIRE?
  — GABRIEL FISCH

I LEARNED TO PLAY PIPES, SANG WITH JAZZ AND POP COMBOS. NOW THE WORLD’S MY STAGE!
  — ELIAN SAMONIDES-HAMRICK

MADE AMAZING FRIENDS NEVER BEEN IN CARNEGIE FOUND LOVE FOR FRISBEE
  — JULIA RECORD

MY HOME FOR FOUR YEARS LOVE, LAUGHTER, TEARS AND GROWTH SIMPLY, THANK YOU.
  — ISABEL CONDE

I WASN’T A VERY SOCIALLY ACTIVE PERSON WHEN I FIRST CAME TO MAC, AND I DON’T THINK I AM ONE EVEN NOW. HOWEVER, I TRIED TO PARTICIPATE IN EVERY ACTIVITY DURING ORIENTATION AND GET TO KNOW AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. I THINK THIS WAS THE BEST DECISION THAT I MADE DURING MY YEARS AT MAC.
  — YOUNG HYUN (CHASE) YOO

THE WORLD IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL, NOT BINARY. ONE POOR GRADE, MISTAKE, OR HICCUP DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE FAILED AT LIFE.
  — FRANKLIN MARQUETTE

YOU WILL NEVER BE GIVEN THE TOOLS TO DISMANTLE THE SYSTEMS THAT OPPRESS YOU.
  — JENNINGS Mergenthal

ASK FOR EXTENSIONS. DON’T WASTE YOUR TIME CATERING TO PEOPLE WHO DON’T CARE ABOUT YOU. AND BY GOD, LEARN HOW TO COOK SO YOU DON’T SPEND EVERY MEAL AT CAFÉ MAC.
  — KELSEY RODRIGUEZ

BEST SPOT ON CAMPUS TO PROCRASTINATE: WITHOUT A DOUBT THE LIBRARY BASEMENT.
  — CARTER GALE

This spring all over the Mac community, we’re celebrating the Class of 2021 as our seniors prepare to set out on paths that will take them into communities all over the world. On May 15, in addition to the college’s virtual Commencement ceremony, much of the class will participate in one of two Grad Walks, designed to create an in-person celebration while maintaining the community’s health and safety during the pandemic. Join us in sending off our seniors by posting your well wishes on social media using the hashtag #heymac.

Our community is so grateful for the outpouring of support from alumni this year, including through Career Exploration initiatives. Here’s how you can support the Class of 2021, wherever you are in the world:

HELP #HIREMAC: If your company has openings for jobs or internships right now, fill out the Google form at bit.ly/helphiremac, and we’ll share them with students.

CONNECT DIRECTLY with students to share information about open positions: contact careerexploration@macalester.edu.

LOGIN TO THE NEW AND IMPROVED MACDIRECT: macalester.edu/macdirect. Our alumni platform features an improved search function with expanded options to update your profile and view your volunteer or giving history. (Even if you’ve used MacDirect in the past, you’ll need to create a new login.) In MacDirect, turn on your CareerHelper badges to signal that you are open and willing to connect with students for career advice.

We invited the Class of 2021’s graduating seniors to channel their Mac experiences into haiku or advice for new students. And they had a lot to say—visit macalester.edu/seniors for more responses.

YOUR TURN: What’s your advice for new students? Can you summarize your Mac years in a haiku? Share via email (mactoday@macalester.edu) or social media with the #heymac hashtag.
Several of the Class of 2021’s studio art majors share recent creations—and some of the highlights and lessons from all the hours they’ve spent in the Art Department.

Zarra TM
(Jacksonville, Fla.)
Acrylic paint on canvas, part of an in-progress triptych on dissociation

Favorite day in the Art Department:
Always critique day. No matter what level of the class, putting all the work up on the wall and really taking a breath to look is incredibly energizing. You learn as much from your peers as you do your instructors, and collaboration makes fulfilling art.

Emily Shang
(Beijing)
“Window,” oil painting

One thing I learned from art at Mac:
Art is a very powerful tool. Every decision in the theme, composition, colors, and more elements contributes to the message that one wants to communicate through the art with the audience.

Mai Xor Vang
(St. Paul)
Vector self-portrait using Adobe Illustrator

One thing I learned from art at Mac:
At Macalester, I was able to discover myself as an artist. I learned about my work ethic, my artistic style, and my process whether that be how I get inspired or stay inspired.

Malini Basu
(Kolkata, India)
Icon set, pen and ink, 2020

One thing I learned from art at Mac:
We have a tendency to miss so much of the world, simply because we’re not actively looking. We learned this in Sculpture 1 while sculpting busts of our fellow classmates, realizing how little we knew about the contours of a face. But I think it’s equally important to be constantly changing the lens through which we see our surroundings.

Ailsa Burke
(Iowa City, Iowa)
Untitled linoleum print, made in April 2020 from home

One thing I learned from art at Mac:
No matter the outcome of your creative process, what matters is showing up and putting time in and getting your energy flowing. It makes you feel better and it makes your art better.

Camilla Severi
(Cesena, Italy)
Vase, Raku clay with clear glaze

Favorite day in the Art Department:
I recently managed my first Raku ceramic firing. We take pots out of the kiln at 1,800 degrees, and they burn in barrels containing combustible materials such as sawdust and wood shavings. So many people helped out, and it was a great day.

Malini Basu
(Kolkata, India)
Icon set, pen and ink, 2020

One thing I learned from art at Mac:
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Long Nguyen
(Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam)
“13,789km away from home”

One thing I learned from art at Mac:
Push a little harder before deciding to give up on an idea.

Emily Shang
(Beijing)
“Window,” oil painting

One thing I learned from art at Mac:
Art is a very powerful tool. Every decision in the theme, composition, colors, and more elements contributes to the message that one wants to communicate through the art with the audience.
When Jim Smith ’21 is on the golf course, some may find his key to success a little unconventional: he likes to make conversation with his competition. “We might hit out there for up to nine or ten hours, and it’s all competition time, even though that may look different from an intense basketball or football game,” says Smith (Shippensburg ’07). “Finding things in common with people from other teams helps me stay present and energetic.”

Smith carries that spirit into community-building in all of his Macalester roles, from Kirk RA to Geography Department assistant student leader to Student-Athletes Advisory Council (SAAC) president. That’s no easy task this year. “It’s extremely challenging when people can’t be together in person—we all know this by now,” Smith says. “But there are also opportunities for communities to flourish as unique members share different parts of their identities. There’s tremendous opportunity for growth.”

For SAAC, that includes hosting a networking event to connect alumni athletes with more than 100 student-athletes, amplifying MAC and NCAA initiatives on mental health and diversity and inclusion, and building new interdepartmental campus relationships.

This spring, Smith is finishing his behavioral economics capstone before joining UnitedHealth Group as an advisory services analyst after graduation. He’s also a geography major, so naturally we asked for a tour of his favorite campus places—three spots where he seeks community and conversation (and one where he doesn’t).

**The Golf Simulator**

In the Leonard Center, the golf simulator in Room 36 is a hidden gem. You hit the ball into this floor-to-ceiling five-sided box, and cameras and sensors pick up data: how fast the ball's going, how much spin it's carrying. This connects to a computer system and shows you in real time on a projected screen where that ball would end up. In the winter, we use the golf simulator several times per week, and it’s a great time for concentrated instruction from Coach Greene. When we’re on the driving range in warmer weather, sometimes we’re all dimming for attention at the same time. This room is really where we work on our swings and improve.

**Geography Lounge**

There’s plenty of stimulating conversation, collaboration, and hobnobbing among students and professors here. It’s where I hold office hours when I’ve surprised “Contemporary Mongolia,” a first-year course taught by Professor Holly Baurus, a leading scholar on migration and rural livelihoods in the region. That class hooked me on the topic, and this winter I finished my geography capstone, “Competing Stabilizations: Air Pollution and Mitigation Initiatives in Ulaanbaatar.” This spring, I’m collaborating with my GTU [geography honors society] co-president, faculty, and staff to host the Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium. We’re grappling with figuring that out in a virtual environment.

**The LC Atrium**

I like really solid multiuse spaces like the Leonard Center Atrium. I’ve worked there, I’ve napped there. I’ve socialized there. I’ve left SAAC meetings there. It’s also been transformed into a dining area this year, so it’s one place where I find community right now. And people don’t always notice this, but by the big window looking out over Shaw Field, the old center court of Macalester’s basketball court is right there. I think that’s pretty neat.

**Old Main**

I love exploring Old Main’s nooks and crannies. On the fourth floor, there’s a tiny wooden folding desk that must be from the 1920s. I’m a taller guy, and boy, it’s uncomfortable. But when you really have to crunch and get something done, if you force yourself to sit in that 100-year-old desk, you can usually find a little success.

As we celebrate the Class of 2021, we pause our usual focus on faculty bookshelves to ask student government president Fatiyा Kedir ’21 (Minneapolis) about some of her formative reads.

**What’s a standout book that you’ve read recently?**

All About Love, by bell hooks, taught me a lot about radical love and self-care. I found that book right when I needed to find it, right after last summer. It helped me frame everything about the summer and about my own goals as I started my final year at college. It taught me something so basic, but fundamental to my work in my own community: that any work needs to always start and be rooted in the self.

**What’s one of your all-time favorite reads?**

Angela Davis: An Autobiography. Autobiographies can be overly glorifying, but I love this one because it seems very genuine. She’s an iconic Black woman, but in addition to that, she’s also an incredible being in the ways that she is able to truly reflect the full and true human experience in her writing. Her autobiography is no exception. She is able to be honest about the good, the bad, and the mixed, in a way that makes her even more impactful and powerful in my eyes.

**What book is crucial to understanding your academic niche?**

We read Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism in my international studies capstone class with Professor Ahmed Ismail. It was published in 1905, so you get the specific history about institutions that helped root capitalism in its present form. I’m really interested in seeing how it relates to civilizations today. neo-liberals, and why it’s so deeply enmeshed in the ways that we view each other. It changed the way that I view the system I live in.

**Any guilty-pleasure reads?**

Comic books—and manga even more—and although I don’t own many, I do enjoy stealing some from my brothers when I go home on the weekends. I went from Junie B. Jones when I was first learning English to Magic Tree House, then straight to chapter books. I thought I was so cool for reading chapter books, but I wish I had read more comic books then. I’m thankful for them now.

**What book would you recommend to everybody at Macalester?**

All About Love is one. We do have a sense of community and care at Macalester—we’re not competing with each other, but we can be really competitive toward ourselves. The way it talks about love is rooted in self-care in order to reach community care. Sedric McClues recommended one recently that I’m still reading: No Future Without Forgiveness, about the South African apartheid. Even if you don’t necessarily know much about apartheid or South Africa today, it’s really helpful to understand what forgiveness is in whether it’s self-forgiveness or forgiveness of people around you.

—Rebecca Edwards ’21
Adrian Johnson ’21 (Laramie, Wyoming) can’t really explain why he loves crossword puzzles so much.

He could speculate, as an international studies major, Johnson says he’s used to creative problem-solving, and has always loved giving himself a challenge.

But the truth is, the draw to crosswords surprised even him. “Honestly, I couldn’t tell you,” he says. “I’m really passionate and driven individually. I’ve tried all sorts of sports and clubs, and I learned a few magic tricks a while back. I just get really intensely focused on something, eventually not knowing exactly how I got there.”

What Johnson can pinpoint, though, is when he started to turn fleeting curiosity into action.

In 2019, he resolved to solve The New York Times Saturday crossword, generally considered the week’s most difficult. But when that came easier to him than anticipated, he was unsatisfied. “I told myself, ‘I’m gonna learn how to make one of these,’” he says.

Less than two years later, Johnson has sold crosswords to the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, and Universal Crossword. He has puzzles awaiting approval with publications and more in the works, including custom puzzles for individuals. Making crosswords, Johnson says, has become more than his latest passion du jour. He’s found a real home in the puzzle-making community and sincerely loves the craft. “I get a lot of joy out of just sitting down and coming up with ideas,” Johnson says. “It’s meditative in a way.”

Johnson breaks down the process of building a crossword. “Very broadly, there are two basic kinds of puzzles, the themed and the unthemed. The theme can be pretty much anything—it could refer to the direction of letters on the grid, or the grid art, or the words,” he says.

“The unthemed is all about just laying inventive and colorful answers—cool pieces of vocabulary that will make the people doing the puzzle feel good when they figure it out.”

After determining the puzzle’s direction, Johnson brainstormed words and phrases relevant to his idea. Then, he sits down with his crossword-developing software and begins to hash out the final grid.

“People who love crosswords—cool pieces of vocabulary that will make the people doing the puzzle feel good when they figure it out.” Johnson says he’s used to creative problem-solving, and has always loved giving himself a challenge.

At the end of the day, there’s a lot of uncertainty in life,” Johnson says. “But there’s only one right answer to a crossword puzzle. And however trivial that seems, I think it’s a really nice thing. I like giving that to people.” —Rebecca Edwards ’21

Here Come the Scots

**ACROSS**

1. Repairs
6. “That is to say ...”
11. Like cheese or wine, over time
15. Red-haired Disney mermaid
16. Like slippers or sweatpants, often
17. “Vein, ___ YH”
18. Wriggler inside an Apple computer
20. Big name in car rentals
21. “Any questions? Hit me!”
22. Tears, as pages of old class notes
24. Yadda, yadda, yadda
25. Vietnamese holiday
26. Hyper-masculine Hostess snack cake?
29. Leather shoes
31. Owner of the first bed Goldilocks slept in
32. She, he, hers
33. Down Under Bird
34. Second word of “The Star-Spangled Banner”
35. Rich cakes
38. Gridiron game in which players burst into a ’90s dance craze
43. Organ supplying an octopus’s defense mechanism
44. Female from a Scottish farm
45. Fish in a Japanese pond
49. Yang’s counterpart
4A. Reaction to a bad pun
5. Hyper-masculine Hostess snack cake?
5A. Female on many a Scottish farm
5B. Fish in a Japanese pond
5C. Yang’s counterpart
5D. Reaction to a bad pun
5E. Change, as the Constitution
5F. Two of a kind in an Eastern pantheon
5G. German exclamation of dismay
6. Gridiron game in which players burst into a ’90s dance craze
7. Tug on
8. Old TV or cell phone component
9. Indication that spring in St. Paul is here, perhaps
10. Impatient cry to a tropical bird?
11. Common (educational standards)
13. Prop for the Tin Man
15. Musical era epitomized by Juice Wrld
16. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
17. Colonial governor in many a political science class
18. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
19. Continent with the Pyramids of Giza
20. Midsummer May music festival
21. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
22. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
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65. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
66. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
67. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
68. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
69. Smooths, as a wooden surface
70. How you might look after lifting in the Leonard Center, informally

**DOWN**

1. Owner of the second bed Goldilocks slept in
2. They’re often named for Presidents
3. Cut while shaving
4. Activity in many a political science class
5. Lost steam
6. Absolutely gross
7. Do some lawn maintenance
8. Musical genre for Juice Wrld
9. Continent with the Pyramids of Giza
10. Woodland fairy
11. 13th director DuVernay
12. Approximately
13. Macalester’s M. Kelso Professorship in Art
14. Musical era epitomized by Saturday Night Fever
15. Grains of sand
23. “Se-xx-y!”
26. Poet Angelou, author of Phenomenal Woman
27. Sage, e.g.
28. Round before the final

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BEFORE THEY GRADUATE, seniors close their years at Macalester by digging into an in-depth capstone project. We asked a few how they approached this assignment—and what they learned.

By Rebecca Edwards ’21

Before you graduate, seniors close their years at Macalester by digging into an in-depth capstone project. We asked a few how they approached this assignment—and what they learned.

We know in neuroscience that the right hemisphere of the brain is the social side. But when it comes to risk-taking, the left hemisphere is the risky side and the right is the cautious side. I looked at the right side of the brain to see what was going on there during peer pressure to take risks—to see whether the cautious or social element was dominant.

The brain and body are contralaterally mapped, so the participants of our experiment used a hand gripper in their left hand to activate the right side of the brain, or vice versa. Then we gave them a modified version of the Iowa Gambling Task, where they had to pick cards in order to win money, but before they picked they were told which card a previous participant had selected, in order to activate a peer-pressure response.

Our results were really interesting: the groups that activated the left side of their brain took more risks when they were pressured to be cautious and the right dominated. The brain and body are contralaterally mapped, so the participants of our experiment used a hand gripper in their left hand to activate the right side of the brain, or vice versa. Then we gave them a modified version of the Iowa Gambling Task, where they had to pick cards in order to win money, but before they picked they were told which card a previous participant had selected, in order to activate a peer-pressure response.

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We started to conclude from that research that the cautious element at the right side of the brain has no matter dominance than the social element under a peer-pressure situation.

—Sam Hochberger ’21 (Maple Grove, Minn.)

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ON AN OVERCAST DAY IN AUGUST 2019, Steve Trkla ’83 piloted an electric boat toward the imposing Manhattan skyline. He wasn’t alone. As he neared Battery Park’s North Cove Marina, news helicopters buzzed overhead, and small boats carrying reporters from CNN and Fox News trailed behind. Surrounding him were 17 sailboats, harnessing the wind to traverse New York’s harbor.

They had come to escort the Malizia II, the zero-carbon racing sailboat that carried 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg on the last leg of her 15-day journey across the Atlantic. Thunberg, who had been invited to address the United Nations General Assembly, had opted to travel by boat to reduce carbon emissions on her trip. A flotilla of sailboats, each representing one of the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goals, had met her at the mouth of the harbor. Thunberg invited Trkla to join them in his company’s electric boat.

Trkla made the high-profile journey because he is president of the U.S. division of Torqeedo, a German company that is the leading maker of electric motors for watercraft. Its name is a mashup of “speed” and “torque,” the force a motor exerts. Torqeedo motors power both commercial and recreational boats, including kayaks, yachts, ferries, and barges. Admirers call it “the Tesla of the water.”

Trkla, a former software sales and marketing executive, is leading a revolution in boating. Electric motors currently power about 2 percent of boats, but that share is predicted to grow rapidly in the coming years. Torqeedo hit $40 million in sales last year and is projecting $100 million in annual sales by 2025.

“An electric drive fits the way many people actually boat,” Trkla says. “It’s quieter, cleaner, and easier. You can have a normal conversation and enjoy the sounds of nature. No more leaking, stinking gas cans, oil changes, or driving around looking for ethanol-free fuel. All you do is plug in at night. The next day your boat is charged and ready to go.”

Electric outlook
Europe will convert to electric boats faster than the U.S., Trkla says—in part because the U.S. recreational market is “still a very go-fast culture,” and electric motors’ benefits don’t include top speeds. He notes changes happening in the commercial market, though. Torqeedo’s recent projects include converting the San Antonio River Walk’s 44 boats to electric power, as well as similar transitions for water taxis in other cities.

Today’s electric boats remind Bill Yeargin, president of powerboat maker Correct Craft, of cell phones in the 1980s. “They were big and hugely expensive, and their batteries didn’t last more than a few short calls,” he says. But over the years they became more compact, powerful—and ubiquitous. “That’s what’s happening with electric boats, except it’s going to happen much faster,” he predicts.

That shift will first require a major advancement in batteries, says Electric Boat Association of America executive director Tom Hesselink. Trkla agrees—and with lithium battery technology already changing rapidly, he looks forward to the “magic point” when smaller, lighter, and higher-density batteries pack the same punch as gas. Trkla foresees an avalanche of boat builders changing their boats’ designs to better mesh with electric technology.

“We have definitely seen the paradigm shift, and it’s taking place dramatically,” he says. “We have blazed the trail.”

George Spencer is a freelance writer based in Hillsborough, North Carolina.
Over the last six decades, Mary Ann Grossmann ’60 has led a compelling professional life as a writer and editor with the St. Paul Pioneer Press. She sat in gilded chairs at New York City fashion shows. She traveled from one Middle East palace to another by royal helicopter. She chatted with the likes of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, iconic author Kurt Vonnegut, and feminist pioneer Betty Friedan. She penned the obituaries of her parents as well as her husband. "Whatever came, I took it in stride," Grossmann says. "You take the good with the bad and I'm certainly not complaining."

Encouraged to write by various English teachers throughout her formative years in West St. Paul, Grossmann pursued a journalism degree at Macalester—"Tuition was $300 a semester, and my mother about flipped," she recalls—and met her husband, the late Tom Thomsen ’60, in Dean Huntley Dupre’s French Revolution class. When she landed a job with the UPI wire service in Minneapolis before graduation, she walked into a male-dominated world, emboldened by parents who encouraged her to pursue her passions. While Grossmann’s metal finisher father and shoe-peddling mother were simply thrilled to call their daughter a college graduate, her pastor’s wife disapproved of a young woman entering a most "unladylike" profession. "Ladies didn’t go into journalism," Grossmann laughs. Grossmann, of course, happily bucked tradition, a spunky soul who joined the St. Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press in April 1961 and never left.

She inhabited a front-row seat to journalism’s—and society’s—evolution. She watched the Dispatch, the city’s afternoon paper, vanish and a newsroom of ringing phones, clacking upright typewriters, cigarette smoke, and the occasional argument cede to the digital revolution and a prevailing hush. Still, the job’s principal directive—to capture someone’s story—never changed. "Talk all you want about mechanics, but that’s what journalism’s really about," says Grossmann, whose first front-page story for the Pioneer Press revisited the famed Armistice Day Blizzard of 1940.

Grossmann served as Women’s Department editor for two decades, overseeing its transition from covering society—weddings, fashion, nonprofit galas, and the like—to features, which included reporting on issues such as feminism and abortion. "That wasn’t easy because the men running the paper, a bunch of World War II veterans, wanted change, but didn’t want any trouble," she says.

In 1983, a boss banished Grossmann to the books beat, where he assumed she would succumb to the boredom. As luck would have it, the Twin Cities literary community exploded around Grossmann. Small publishers like New Rivers Press, Graywolf Press, and Milkweed Editions emerged. The Loft, the largest writing center in the world, grew out of Minneapolis’s Dinkytown neighborhood. Renowned authors and their agents prioritized a Twin Cities stop on national tours. "Being sent to books turned out to be my revenge story because the dullest beat at the paper became the most fascinating," Grossmann says.

Though she retired in 2001 from full-time work at the Pioneer Press, she continues filing copy for the newspaper, largely reviewing books and highlighting authors. Her bylines now stretch into the thousands. "I couldn’t even venture a guess," Grossmann says of her story count, though she acknowledges that some hand-spun tales remain more memorable than others.

Twin Cities journalist Mary Ann Grossmann has been penning stories for 60 years.

"Good will enfolds women’s group"
— NOVEMBER 19, 1977 —

Grossmann ventured to Houston alongside thousands of other women for the first White House-sponsored National Women’s Conference. Though designed to unite women and provide those from differing backgrounds an opportunity to share their hopes and perspectives, which Grossmann noted in her November 19 story introducing the conference, the gathering quickly devolved into intense arguments about divisive issues, such as abortion and LGBTQ rights. Deluged by the tension, Grossmann escaped to a dog show in the Sam Houston Coliseum’s basement where she hugged a Saint Bernard before returning to the conference. "Professionalism should kick in, and it does, but I needed a break," she says of the contentious conference.
On a frigid winter morning in rural Willmar, Minnesota, Grossmann covered the first day of a groundbreaking, 400-plus day labor strike in which a small group of female employees picketed against inequities and discrimination at Citizens National Bank. The so-called Willmar 8 would soon draw the attention of The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, turning a bright spotlight on their small town and their cause.

“I remember the women picketing through two different winters in bulky snowsuits and I saw them get stronger and stronger,” Grossmann says. “I also saw the strike divide a small town where everyone knew everyone.”

Grossmann devoured the 600-plus pages of the final Harry Potter book so she could hustle an immediate review into the paper. Some devoted Potterheads charged that her resulting 620-word report discussing Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows should have carried a spoiler alert.

“I stayed up all night reading the book and wish I hadn’t, because it would have been a better review if I had taken my time,” she admits. “Journalism is often a balance between being quick and being better.”

Grossmann beams when recalling Michelle Obama’s 2019 visit to the Twin Cities as part of her tour for Becoming, the former first lady’s bestselling memoir. Grossmann’s recap captured the event’s bustling energy, Obama’s candor, and the undeniable optimism consuming an arena dominated by a multigenerational sea of women.

“There was something in this huge room that was so palpable, yet so invisible, and I found myself reaching for words I didn’t have,” Grossmann says. “It was all affirmation of how one lovely and decent person can make a difference.”

Daniel P. Smith is a Chicago-based freelance writer.
In today’s polarized world, arguments abound. From heated threads on social media, to a cacophony of talking heads on TV, to politicians who seemingly refuse to consider the other side, it can seem like everyone is more concerned with digging in their heels than digging into the underlying issues.

As a country, we’re having a hard time talking with each other—but at Macalester, faculty members are hoping they can equip their students to find another way.

The process doesn’t begin with tools and tricks for making a case, but rather an environment of trust—one where students learn to listen passionately and feel confident taking risks. From there, they develop a deep knowledge of their position and explore counterarguments, considering their positions from all angles and looking for fallibilities.

In genuine argumentation—a term defined by philosopher Henry Johnstone Jr.—no one is required to walk away with a changed mind, but both sides must be open to the possibility. We can’t demand that our opponents assume all the risks of being open to change, he argues, if we don’t ask the same of ourselves.
"Genuine argument is a deeply human and collaborative process," says political science professor Adrianne Christiansen. "It’s about figuring out what’s in the best interest of the community, and developing ideas with other people." Macalester seeks to create such a community. Whether it’s class exploring the roots of political ideology, a discussion about cultural norms with classmates from Sweden and Pakistan, or seeing the real-life implications of U.S. policy while working in the community, students are challenging their preconceived notions in an effort to more deeply understand others’ values and their vision for the future.

Get to know your “opponent”

In the opening days of her first-year course “Political Argumentation and Debate,” Christiansen lays the groundwork for healthy, robust deliberation. Students read about principles of arguing on the website of the Better Arguments Project, a national initiative created to bridge divides, and Henry Johnstone Jr.’s 1963 essay, “Some Reflections on Argumentation,” in which he explains his ideas of genuine argumentation and the importance of being truly open to another’s perspective. She also turns to a deck of cards designed to foster conversations at a diverse pace. After breaking students into pairs, she gives them a few questions to answer: What is one thing you would change about yourself? As the weeks progress, the groups get larger and the prompts more complex and controversial. For example, can online teaching offer a more equitable model of education?

“Over the course of five days, these students—who start as total strangers—experience sharing something about themselves that would normally not come up in a classroom,” Christiansen says. “The key is to create conditions where the students feel like they get to know each other and have an opportunity to be vulnerable.” She wants her students to establish trust and create a classroom environment where kindness reigns. Where there’s space to take risks and make mistakes without fear of being ridiculed. This, she says, is the setting for engaging in genuine argument.

“We argue,” she says, “but we want to do it in a better way, where human relationships are held up as central in overcoming our polarizations.”

Explore the backstory

Many students come to Macalester because the college resonates with their progressive beliefs, whether it’s the school’s tradition of social protest or an emphasis on diversity that goes back decades. Some students still identify with the ideas they held at the beginning but have a clearer sense of why. Other students have written an essay explaining why they don’t identify with the classical definition of liberalism because they’re even further left. Being able to speak that language, and enter that conversation, is important for everybody, whether they’re a biology major, or an econ major, or a classics major. They learn the meaning of genuine argumentation, and the importance of being truly open to another’s perspective. They immerse yourself, you practice.

The mainstream political discourse in this country is still from slightly center right to slightly center left. Reacting to that, we’re saying that the language and entry point that conversation is important for everybody, whether they’re a biology major, or an econ major, or a classics major. Once they have the vocabulary, Latham asks his students to write two papers, one at the end of each unit. First they explain why they are or are not liberal; then they answer the same question for conservatism. Students still identify with the ideas they held at the beginning but have a clearer sense of why. Other students might write an essay explaining why they don’t identify with the classical definition of liberalism because they’re even further left.

Whatever they land, Latham hopes they’re better equipped to handle intellectual challenges and can explain what they believe and why.

Ryan Specht ‘21 (Somerville, Ohio) says his conservative beliefs are rooted in his upbringing. He knows his parents voted Republican, even though they didn’t discuss it often. Specht also has a reverence for history and tradition that he says was a major influence. Until recently, though, his beliefs were gut instinct; he didn’t have the language to explain them.

“At Macalester,” he says, “I really started to realize that he didn’t have the language to explain them. But slowly began to see the drawbacks of that and eventually developed some language regarding my own conservatism. I grew confident enough to start pushing back against what my peers were saying about politics.”

Enrolling in Latham’s class helped him take his research a step further by bringing beyond present-day politics to understand the underlying philosophy. "It allowed me to understand more than just what I think about a particular policy," he says. "But why I value the moral and cultural traditions of this country: why is it that I believe the things I do.”

That grounded knowledge of conservatism is what Latham hopes all of his students—both conservative and liberal—take away from the class. In fact, the course is a deliberate effort to expose Macalester students to conservative thought, filling what he saw as a gap in the college’s course offerings. He originally developed it as “Conservative Political Thought,” but reengineered the course to contextualize how conservatism is, in part, a reaction to liberalism. It has a history, and why.

"Having people who think differently can lead to a better discussion,” he says. "We’re all actively disagreeing with each other. But at the same time, respecting each other and developing our ideas. I don’t have to completely agree with the person I talked with, but at least I understand their argument better, and hopefully I’ve developed my own.”

Seek out more information

For more than 50 years, sociology professor and chair Erik Larsen has taught “Social Science Inquiry,” a research methods course that asks students to collect data in response to a client’s question. The clients are typically campus offices and departments or community organizations. They’re seeking students’ perspectives on topics ranging from the college’s first-year courses, to the role of finances in their lives, to leadership and how the data is then used to inform policies and programs.

In small groups, students complete each stage of the research process: designing the questionnaire, collecting data, analyzing the data, and drafting a report. They have to consider the mindset of survey respondents and frame questions to solicit responses that accurately reflect what other people believe and how they act.

This semester, one group is exploring how students understand polarization, and whether it has any influence on their day-to-day lives. It’s a question posed by the Civic Engagement Center, in partnership with Move for America, which is launching a campaign to encourage more college students and recent graduates that aims to bridge the urban-rural divide in Minnesota.

An early draft of the students’ survey included questions about how comfortable people feel discussing their political views, and how often they talk about politics to friends and family members.

“The survey will focus on the idea of polarization,” Larsen says. “In the course, we encourage each other to get beyond the obvious to get to the questions that can help us understand the deeper cultural, moral or social phenomena that we only often talk about in the singular and the abstract.”

Consider every angle

While having the knowledge to back up your case is a key element of debate, genuine argument also requires an openness to seeing the world through another’s eyes.

At Macalester, students are exposed to a spectrum of thought—particularly due to the college’s emphasis on internationalism and multiculturalism. It’s one thing for American students who identify themselves...
as conservative or liberal to have a discussion about immigration in the United States. It’s another to have that same conversation with international students from Turkey, China, the West Bank, Colombia, and the Netherlands—not to mention students who immigrated to the United States.

Julius Ensernum Enserum 24 (West Chester, Pa.) says he brought that global mindset to Christiansen’s first-year argumentation class. Ensernum’s parents are Swedish diplomats. He was born in Sweden and has lived in New York City, Stockholm, Islamabad, Pakistan, London, Brussels, and Philadelphia.

He often applied a Swedish lens to discussions and essays. In one instance, Ensernum had to write a paper about immigration. He saw how the right-wing, anti-immigrant Sweden Democrats were surging in popularity—but for very different reasons than anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States. In Sweden, citizens are used to paying high taxes because they believe in providing a social safety net. But they also trust that others will work and support the system. Ensernum says that refugees, however, can struggle to gain employment, for example due to language barriers. This leads some Swedes to believe immigrants are destroying the welfare system.

While some students found a perspective shake-up by the decisions.

She needed to hear the voices of those who are affected by those problems in real life. She keeps the focus on communication, reasoning, and engaging with community and listening. “I want to try and promote critical thinking, because I think that was lacking in their values without lecturing those who feel otherwise.

She had the chance to test that approach after graduation when she phone-banked for student practice—passionate and empathetic listening—without worrying about their next move. She keeps the focus on communication, reasoning, and strategic arguing your case and preparing for tactics for testing arguments, which often involves strategizing your case and preparing for your opponent’s counterposition. But she also insists that students “think about their audience, which often involves missing or imperfect knowledge of the opposing side’s arguments, rather than encouraging classmates to change one another’s minds. She sees the whole process as serious work, with high-stakes implications. “The polarization in the U.S. and around the world today is so terrifying,” she says. “It’s very easy to move from polarization to hostility and animosity, and the desire to stamp out the ideas and people you don’t share your view.

This isn’t a fresh [exercise] to read about other people’s ideas. It’s absolutely essential if Americans want to maintain a model of democracy. ‘We have to be in a position to argue for it and be attentive to its weaknesses and inadequacies.”

In one season, she challenged her students to tackle that very question. After reading the 2018 book How Democracies Die, by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, Christiansen asked her students to write an argument about whether or not modern-day American democracy is worth it. One of her students, Janette Lopez Ramos 24 (Las Vegas), drew on her own background in speech and debate when formulating her opinion. She knew firsthand the importance of voicing her opinion, how to communicate with people who hold different opinions, how to be empathetic, and how to think critically about the world around her.

She argued that the reason that democracy is worth it, because democracy allows people to freely share their ideas, while also living in a community that’s respectful of others,” Ramos says. “Democracy gives power to the people and allows them to decide for themselves.”

**Open to having your mind changed**

If the goal of all of this work isn’t to change someone else’s mind, or even shift one person’s stance, what’s the point?

Latham says it’s part of his responsibility to help Macalester students prepare to navigate the outside world. While he describes Macalester as his dream job, many see the work of democracies valued for its transformative nature.

Be open to having your mind changed.

Kian Sobrabi says that’s what he hopes to take away from the push-pull of his experience on campus and in Mac CEP.

“I might end up 50 steps to the left in the next five years, or I might end up 50 steps to the right,” he says. “But it helps me know that no matter which way I end up falling, it’s not because I’m being pulled by one force, or pushed by another. It happened because of constant discussion and critical thinking from both sides.”

Kim Catley is a writer in Richmond, Virginia.
Among all professionals, K–12 educators have faced some of the biggest pandemic-prompted challenges in their work. The abrupt shutdowns and shift to remote learning upended the most fundamental aspects of their jobs. As the pandemic continued to rage, teachers and administrators were caught in the crossfire of public debates about whether and how to reopen schools. Politicians, school boards, and parents created often conflicting pressures, even as educators themselves weighed the difficult balance between anxieties about their own health and safety and the very real needs of their students.

Still, each weekday morning, these educators continue to put on game faces and conjure classrooms for students. Whether the setting is virtual, in-person, or some kind of hybrid, teachers are doing their best to mitigate the significant academic, social, and psychological losses of the last year. Many of the issues they are dealing with are not new, at least to them. The pandemic has shined a harsh light on the flaws of the educational system. Many teachers and administrators hope it will also illuminate a way forward.

Here, we talk to education experts about their experiences over the past year with the vulnerabilities in public education—and how we can improve it in the future.

BY MATTHEW DEWALD

Photo illustrations by Charles Jachke
Brian Lozenski says that education may not be the great equalizer we once believed.

When schools closed in March 2020, virtual learning exacerbated inequalities that in-person learning had helped mitigate and, to some extent, mask. Some students had computers and internet access at home, while others had no way to participate in virtual classes. Children who relied on school for subsidized breakfast and lunch were going hungry. Kids whose parents were essential workers were home alone, sometimes watching younger siblings while they did their own schoolwork. Meanwhile, students from better-resource families could log on to their classes with ease—or even learn in a ‘pod’ with a private tutor the parents had hired.

These aspects of the pandemic made blindingly apparent something that Brian Lozenski, an associate professor of urban and multicultural education at Macalester, had already observed. The resources families have going into school are the best predictor of what a school will do for them. This new awareness is prompting new questions about education’s effectiveness as an equalizer in American society.

“The pandemic has really jolted people into a different sense of reality,” he says. “What that showed us was that the cultural context of school is fundamental to any educational project,” he says. “Absent that, just relying on a skills-based, almost technical approach to education is really lacking.”

Lozenski hopes the pandemic has opened room for curricular revisions that emphasize interdisciplinary, social learning focused on asking big questions about how people relate to one another, whether politically, economically, or socially. He believes that not positioning students as “citizens-in-waiting” and instead treating them as fully engaged participants in society can better increase student motivation and achievement and better prepare them for the world they will enter.

“When I’m hoping to see as we come out of this is more questioning about how we want to live together,” Lozenski says. “We’re seeing some clear indications that our society is not functioning. A lot of communities have been naming this for decades, saying things aren’t working very well for us. I think you’re starting to see more and more people recognize that.”

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Beatrice Rendon plans to continue to use technology tools that appeal to more learning styles.

BEATRICE RENDON ’13, a second-grade teacher at Waite Park Community School in Minneapolis, started the 2020–21 school year with a challenge: Getting a Google Meet link to 30 seven-year-olds.

After that came talking them through downloading apps, building relationships with them, and coaching well-meaning parents who might not know how the technology worked either. Sometimes the home helpers were older siblings left home and in charge by working parents and then themselves trying to keep up with their own virtual learning. There were internet glitches, sound issues, and more as she and her students climbed the learning curve.

“It’s kind of a blur thinking back to the first six or eight weeks,” she says. “I just remember keeping everything super positive, and the kids being an amazing and patient.”

Out of those struggles came new insights into how she can use these technology tools to better reach all learners. For example, she has begun pre-recording instructions for activities and adding visual icons to guide students. This allows students who are not yet proficient readers to engage independently with the activities. The technology platform Rendon uses also increases her ability to offer differentiated instruction tailored to students’ strengths and needs.

As she develops these and other adaptations under challenging circumstances, she hopes that a greater recognition of teachers’ professionalism will be another outcome of the pandemic.

“My biggest wish for post-pandemic teaching and learning is that it’s more human,” she says. “I think everybody needs to take a deep breath and trust the education professionals. In a normal year, I’m teaching kids who are reading and doing math from a pre-K to a middle school level. Teaching kids who are behind is not new to any of us, but we’ll do it best if we’re supported and trusted.”

What lesson have you taken away from K–12 education over the past year? What ideas should be part of the conversation? Share your view with us: macetoday@macalester.edu.

Addy Kessler wants to encourage more curiosity and true learning.

ADDY KESSLER ’04 is already living in a world where many teachers can only dream about. She teaches product design at Lincoln High School in downtown Portland, Oregon, and has such strong support from her administration that her principal once asked her what her dream class would be and then approved the proposal she developed.

This support and the flexibility she inherently has as an arts educator play a key role in her satisfaction. While arts education has national standards, it hasn’t been saddled with detailed state mandates about content or the high-stakes standardized testing that teachers in other subject areas have—which can allow for more meaningful conversations and growth.

For example, instead of tests, she has students create portfolios. She grades students on the demonstration of technical and conceptual understanding, not on the quality and quantity of work. She engages in regular conversations about the work in progress, areas of improvement, and where they are finding success.

The approach encourages learning through a process of experimentation, self-analysis, and self-critique. Experimentation—“where the magic happens,” she says—is rewarded, even if it doesn’t work out the way the teacher or student had planned.

While she says she hears the phrase “learning loss” a lot these days, she thinks that’s not quite the right focus. “Students are learning. We don’t need to be forcing our usual expectations on to students during an unusual time,” she says.

Kessler says she’s learned a lot about supporting the social and emotional needs of her students during this past year, and the value of creating community. “I’ve had to change things up and learn how to connect with people in different ways—it has been challenging but also really great,” she says. “I think this will forever impact the way I approach my teaching going forward.”

Beatrice Rendon plans to continue to use technology tools that appeal to more learning styles.
Lesley Lavery wants to make the teaching profession more diverse and more appealing to young professionals.

BFORE THE PANDEMIC STRUCK, 17 percent of new teachers were leaving the profession within the first five years, according to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics. Lesley Lavery, an associate professor of political science at Macalester, won’t be surprised if that figure rises when data reflecting the pandemic era comes in.

Two-thirds of teachers leave the profession for reasons other than retirement, according to a 2017 report by the Learning Policy Institute. It cited lack of administrative support and dissatisfaction with working conditions among the top reasons for their departure. Both of these issues contribute to a dynamic that Lavery has seen during the pandemic. The federal government pushed decisions about school reopening to the governors. The governors then pushed the decisions down to local districts. Local districts sat back while teachers unions publicly voiced nuts-and-bolts concerns about a safe return to in-person learning. Teachers then took the blame if schools didn’t reopen.

“It’s often the case that it is the superintendent or a school board that is not ready to go back, but they don’t come out and say it,” Lavery says.

She believes that this kind of mixed messaging, plus concerns about pay levels, will make it particularly difficult to recruit teachers of color, which the profession desperately needs more of. In 2012, they made up just 18 percent of all public school students. “That’s not the type of work that is going to attract the diverse Black and brown teachers that make it through college,” she says. “They want a job that’s rewarding, and they want a job that pays well enough.”

Lesley Lavery wants to make the teaching profession more diverse and more appealing to young professionals.

LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER Leyla Suleiman ’17 was teaching at Park Center Senior High School in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, when, like the rest of her colleagues, she shifted to distance education in March 2020. Her experience as her district developed plans for returning to in-person learning has shown her the critical importance of broadening the voices that influence decision-making at the district level.

“Sometimes, they come up with policies that are detrimental to the students,” she says. “But those voices are not the voices that are directly affected by the decisions.”

Suleiman, who is now a doctoral student and dissertation adviser, “I think that’s a model for transforming assessment that really meets the needs of our kids,” he says.

Jesse Hagopian likens the process to the interaction of a doctoral student and dissertation adviser. “I think that’s a model for transforming assessment that really meets the needs of our kids,” he says.

Without it, she worries that the voices of her students and their families are not sufficiently heard on district policies. Local districts sat back while teacher unions publicly voiced nuts-and-bolts concerns about a safe return to in-person learning. Teachers then took the blame if schools didn’t reopen.

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Lesley Lavery wants to make the teaching profession more diverse and more appealing to young professionals.

Jumaane Saunders says we should rethink basic structures of the school day and year.

In February, Mac professors Lesley Lavery and Brian Lozenski talked with President Suzanne Rivera as part of a Big Questions conversation about whether the pandemic will make K-12 education more equitable. Watch the discussion: macalester.edu/bigquestions
For more than 30 years, Dakota elder Walter “Super” LaBatte Jr. ’70 has dedicated his considerable energy to owŋ’wasté kag’a, making beauty. His work includes handmade beaded moccasins, richly painted powwow drums, and making his own brain-tanned buckskin. LaBatte has not only developed a national audience for his work, he has also earned the respect of his Dakota community as a local historian and culture bearer.

Before LaBatte found success as an artist, he grew up in a traditional Dakota community, attended Macalester, and worked for many years in construction while doing art on the side. While he recognized early on that his greatest satisfaction came from creating his artwork, he wasn’t interested in the life of a “starving artist.” He continued to work construction until he retired at 53 and devoted himself full-time to his projects. While deeply passionate about his art, LaBatte is equally committed to preserving Dakota traditional skills and knowledge that are at risk of disappearing.

While LaBatte is enrolled at the Sisseton Wahpeton reservation in South Dakota, he grew up in the Peshohtanizi community near Granite Falls in southwestern Minnesota. His family lived simply, without a phone or television, relying instead on his dad’s stories for entertainment. His grandfather, Wahkde Ska, White Eagle, named LaBatte for his other grandfather, Was’icuŋ Hdinaz’iŋ, Spirit Returns. His parents, both fluent Dakota speakers, chose not to teach him the language because of their experiences growing up under intense pressure to assimilate, including boarding schools. Like many Dakota families who were struggling to adapt to white culture, many of their traditional arts and teachings were also not passed on between generations. In school, when LaBatte observed that people often believed in a romanticized stereotype that all Native people were artists, he rebelled by refusing to make art.

During the 1960s, LaBatte chose to attend Macalester, where he discovered he had a gift for language, declared German as his major, and applied for a study abroad program at the University of Vienna, Austria. While not accepted, it sparked his lifelong interest in travel. While at school, he also tried beadwork but quit when he realized it was not up to the quality he had seen in his community.

BY DIANE WILSON / PHOTOS BY THERESA SCARBROUGH
LaBatte credits Macalester for teaching him how to think in a critical, logical manner. “I learned to become wary of conclusions without the proper justification for those conclusions,” LaBatte says. “With that ability, I was able to solve problems.”

After graduation, LaBatte worked for several years at Burlington Northern. After he quit, he found a summer job working construction on a new tribal office building and realized that work “fit like a glove.” Unlike his former white-collar job, construction gave him a sense of immediate gratification in seeing the results of his work, without all the travel and internal politics. He moved to the Twin Cities for a job, and fell into a lifestyle of hard drinking.

In 1986, after a bout of pancreatitis, his mother told him that if he wanted to quit drinking, he should ask Wakan Tanka. After a great deal of prayer, LaBatte chose to become sober, a decision that would lead him back to his Dakota traditional ways. “The mind is very powerful,” LaBatte says. “It can take you to heaven or hell. It’s your choice.”

After a year of sobriety, LaBatte realized that he was missing a spiritual aspect in his life. He decided to start dancing at powwows, a community celebration that includes traditional dancing, singing, and feasting. Since he could not afford to buy an outfit or regalia, LaBatte decided that he would try beadwork again and make his own. When LaBatte showed his first pair of moccasins to his father, he became emotional while holding them, stroking the beads and saying, “I thought this was a lost art.” Years later, beaded moccasins would become one of LaBatte’s most requested artworks.

As he worked on his dance outfit, however, beading conventional leather was hard on his hands. A fellow dancer told him about brain-tanned buckskin that was made using a traditional process that few people remembered. Fortunately, LaBatte’s father had learned it from his own mother and taught LaBatte how to make his own buckskin. Soon he was tanning 30 to 50 hides each year and traveling to Montana to sell them. At that time, he was one of very few people who knew how to do this work.

A couple of years later, an adopted brother asked LaBatte if he could fix his broken powwow drum. After looking it over, LaBatte told him it asked LaBatte if he could fix his broken powwow drum. After looking it over, LaBatte told him it asked LaBatte if he could fix his broken powwow drum.
What opportunity does this moment create to investigate our contributions to and expansion of American theater and history?

This class looks at the Black experience in America through the lens of Black playwrights and Black plays, and grounds us in an understanding of what the Black theater community creates in response to history. These plays were all written in response to their time periods, and all of them talk to each other in a certain way. In asking my students how these plays speak to them, and investigating them through the lens of history, we’re having a different kind of discussion about the text and also about Black culture. Essentially it’s an American history course, and we’re teaching them a different way of accessing the histories, and looking at the ways Black people are telling stories and redefining forms within that history.

What texts and resources do you use to facilitate this type of work?

Before I ask students to write anything about their experience reading Black plays, they need to have a grounding in Black images and that historical grounding in the United States. One of the first things we did was watch the 1987 documentary Ethnic Nonsense, which everyone should own because it gives you the visual imagery and historical context of how Black people are dehumanized in this society. In the beginning they also read The Dutchman, by Amiri Baraka; For Colored Girls... by Ntozake Shange; and A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry—so you’ve got three different eras, three different writers, three different storytelling techniques. They offer so much information, and they each ground you in the history of the time. We look at the various ways that Black folks are telling stories that are different. What does it mean when this is particular body that is creating and telling?

How does a theatrical approach to this “grounding” differ from regular text analysis?

With Day of Absence by Douglas Turner Ward, for example, I had everybody make a white mask by cutting a paper plate in half. The play is about Black actors in white face, and as we read the play aloud in class, it added another layer that’s part of how students see learning experientially about racial dynamics. It’s not about making anybody feel guilty or telling anyone how to feel. It’s about facilitating an experience in community, so no one is outside of it, wondering alone “What do I do?” It’s creating something no one has to disappear from, because we are in it together. That’s acting, that’s ensemble: you are working from your body—you are the material, you are the research—so how are we using it, or how is it available? I want students to know they are a community capable of building experiences that can move them forward in unexpected ways.

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Theater classes are particularly hands-on and physically interactive spaces. How do you build community in remote instruction?

I offer a prompt and send students to Zoom breakout rooms: where they talk about characters, writers, the era, what spoke to them and why, what they found revealing or disturbing. Then they come back not only with a reflection on the text, but with a performance based on what they experienced with it. It allows them to have a communal experience with each other and share with the larger group, so everyone’s learning from each other’s experiences instead of me just lecturing about it. That way they’re going deeper into the readings and learning how to tell a story that’s experiential, instead of just reporting on the assignment. We’re not doing play analysis—we’re doing an experiential analysis.

How are you finding joy during this time?

I find it in community. I’m not a playwright or a novelist that can sit alone just writing. For me there’s something about the collaborative process that is always open to possibility in a different way. Knowing the exact outcome isn’t really interesting to me, because then we’re just going from “Okay, how do we do that?” to “Okay, we did that.” It’s similar to being in rehearsal when each moment is about discovery: finding what works, what doesn’t work, discovering something completely unexpected. That’s what brings me joy.

You’re retiring from teaching this spring. How has Mac prepared you for the next step?

I’m still connected to so many Macalester graduates who are working in the Twin Cities, and that’s a gift. I did not know was going to happen. They’re doing their own thing now, and it’s still peripherally connected to what I do and what we did together in the classroom—just working on a piece with a recent grad who is a sound designer. Macalester gave me access to an amazing artistic community. These communities created magic, and I got to help facilitate that. I want a picture of me like Obama, just dropping the mic.
Last fall, Kelsey Austin-King ’13 phoned back for Democratic challengers in competitive state legislature races through the Sister District chapter in San Jose, Calif. When she chatted about Midwestern winters with virtual phonebank captain Maureen Sheahan ’73, they realized their Macalester connection. “She was the first female student body president! It was a great experience,” Kelsey wrote.

1981

The Class of 1981 will celebrate its 40th Reunion June 2–6, 2021.

1983

David McKee was recently promoted to editor of Fashion Magazine, a British publication. He continues to work as a columnist and researcher for Las Vegas Advisor. He lives in Augusta, Georgia, with his wife, Jennifer, their two cats, and a turtle.

1984

Mark Salzwedel transferred to 210RAMS Gotham, a new business unit within the W2O Group, in January. He continues working as a senior medical editor. Last October, Mark moved from Brooklyn’s Bed-Stuy neighbor-}

1986

The Class of 1986 will celebrate its 35th Reunion June 2–6, 2021. Kristen Shepherd Hampton reports that she and Rob Hampton ’88 are enjoying their teenage daughters, Morgan (14) and Ava (17). Rob is a researcher and professor in Emory University’s Psychology Department, and Kristen teaches piano and ukulele lessons over Zoom to students on both sides of the United States and in Europe.

1991

The Class of 1991 will celebrate its 30th Reunion June 2–6, 2021.

1996


There’s plenty of podcast production happening on campus, too.

Big Questions compile glimpses into the minds and hearts of the people who comprise Macalester. maclesterquestions.buzzsprout.com

A Mac Weekly production. The Abstract features stories of scientific research, from profound failures to precious moments of triumph. themacweekly.com/category/podcasts/science-podcast

Groveland (another Mac Weekly podcast) features news that matters. themacweekly.com/category/podcasts/groveland

In the Macalester Scots Podcast, students and alumni share their Mac-athlete experiences athletics.macalester.edu/podcasts

This winter, the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life’s Podcast from Home shared snippets of our community’s lives and works to build a sense of home. anchor.fm/macalestercrsl

In Eul, the final month of the Jewish year, Macalester Jewish Organization created a daily podcast marking the journey toward Rosh Hashanah and offering voices of Jewish Macalster. anchor.fm/repshul

WHAT PODCASTS ARE YOU LOVING RIGHT NOW?

“Forest of Thought aims to explore the ecology of ideas that our lives are embedded in.” —Deborah Rieser ’74

“This Is Uncomfortable, hosted by Beema Khrisai, is about money and how it shapes life, relationships, and identity. Highly rec-ommend for young grads looking to learn more about finances in a casual way with an emphasis on intersectionality and very relatable situations.” —Zeena Yasmine Fuleihan ’18

“On the Media (credible cerebral journalism about how we frame the world), Articles of Interest (a miniseries about the cul-tural histories of different fashion items and trends), Bundyville (investigating the overlaps between anti-government extremism, fundamental Mormonism, and the American West), Reply All (a show about internet culture, which is to say culture), and The Cut (smart, current, endlessly listenable).” —Brian Stephenson ’10

“NPR’s Short Wave: science explained and discussed in a meaningful and easily understandable manner. And with great enthusiasm!” —Michael Skoien ’73

“Presidential from the Washington Post.” —Mike Garcia ’92

“Changes with Annie Macmanus has been a great addition to my library. It started in 2020 and aptly helped listeners navigate all the changes being dealt us. Time well spent listening to Annie and her eclectic mix of guests share the twists and turns their lives have taken.” —Meg Rummel Engelmann ’91

“Check out Peda RAP, a continuing medical education podcast for pediatricians. Mike Cossinni ’05 is an associate editor (and also my spouse)” —Amelia MacRae ’05

“I co-host Manufactured, a podcast featuring supplier perspec-tives on sustainable fashion. After managing two different garm-ent factories in Cambodia for five years, I feel strongly that factory voices are misunderstood and underrepresented in the sustainable fashion agenda, and that conventional ap-proaches to sustainable fashion are inadequate for driving the systemic transformation the industry so desperately needs.” —Kim van der Weerd ’09

“My all-time favorite podcast is Happier with Gretchen Rubin, in which she offers tips on hap-piness and good habits.” —Alex-andra McLaughlin ’16

“I am loving Hear to Slay with Tressie McMillan Cottom and Roxane Gay. Brilliant conversations about current events.” —Colleen M. Stockmann ’05

“Would you come back to Mac to teach?” —BY ROBERT KERR ’92

Send your answer via Twitter (@hey_mac), email mactoday@macalester.edu, or mail Macalester Today, Mac-alester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105.

Send MAC TODAY your class note via email at mactoday@macalester.edu or mail to Class Notes Editor, Communications and Marketing, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105-1899.
Wendell Bartnick has been promoted from associate to partner at Reed Smith LLP. He is based in the firm’s Houston office and is a member of the IP, Tech, and Data Group.

The Class of 2001 will celebrate its 20th Reunion June 2–6, 2021.

Last December, Katy Headley joined the firm’s Minneapolis office and is a member of the IP, Tech, and Data Group. She is based in the firm’s Houston office and is a member of the IP, Tech, and Data Group.

Wendell Bartnick has been promoted from associate to partner at Reed Smith LLP. He is based in the firm’s Houston office and is a member of the IP, Tech, and Data Group.

The Class of 2001 will celebrate its 20th Reunion June 2–6, 2021.

Last December, Katy Headley joined the firm’s Minneapolis office and is a member of the IP, Tech, and Data Group. She is based in the firm’s Houston office and is a member of the IP, Tech, and Data Group.

Wendell Bartnick has been promoted from associate to partner at Reed Smith LLP. He is based in the firm’s Houston office and is a member of the IP, Tech, and Data Group.
I endeavored to tell the story of monarch butterflies because of the ease with which they illustrate the magic of the natural world. Eastern monarch migrate 3,000 miles to overwinter in central Mexico’s mountain forests. Each year’s visitors to these roosting sites are the great, great grand children of those who rested there the previous year. And in the Soviet Union, monarchs are fascinated for other reasons: a monarch grows 2,000 times its egg mass by the time it turns into a chrysalis, for example, and they are poisonous to many, but not all, other organisms. Like other lepidoptera, they taste with their feet. And their dramatic life cycle is fun to observe.

Research has revealed that the monarch population has plummeted over the last 20 years from habitat loss, pesticides use, and climate change. In this book, I endeavored to tell the story of this fascinating and threatened species in an accurate, compelling, and beautiful way.
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

HYE WOMAN
Go behind the scenes of the Young Macalester Alumni Connect (yMac) group’s social media presence, and you’ll see no shortage of enthusiasm, thanks to Joanne Johnson ’16. “I love to overseeclamation points on the yMac Facebook page,” Johnson says. “I’m our biggest hype woman!”

Two years ago, Johnson joined yMac’s steering committee because she wanted to help young alumni to stay connected even as their relationship with the college changes. “My relationship with Mac is different from when I was a student, but I rely on it for the same things: new perspectives, creativity, and curiosity,” she says. We asked Johnson to share more about her own perspective.

CURRENTLY: I work at Washburn Center for Children, a Twin Cities non-profit children’s mental health agency. In August I moved to Chapel Hill, N.C., and became Washburn’s first full-time remote employee.

NEXT STEP: This fall, I’m starting the University of North Carolina’s master’s in public health program, with a focus on global health. My specific interest is in urban/rural health disparities: investigating the connections between the social and physical environments that structure communities and the effects they have on individual and population health.

FORMATIVE MAC CLASS: Taking “Intro to Urban Geography” in my first semester really taught me how to observe and ask questions about my surroundings.

KEY CAFE MAC ITEM: The soft-serve ice cream machine. Every day. All day.

FAVORITE YMAC EVENT: I really enjoy yMac trivia nights, mainly because we usually hold the event in the middle of freezing January, and it is a great excuse to drink and laugh with friends.

BEST TRIVIA CATEGORIES: Literature and music.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG ALUMNI: It is okay to make mistakes and fail. The biggest failures in my career have led to the biggest periods of professional and personal growth.

GET INVOLVED
Join the active yMac group on Facebook and follow @macalester alumni on Instagram to connect with the young alumni community. Find resources, and get event updates—and learn more about joining the yMac steering committee at macalester.edu/alumni/groups/yMac. For more information about other opportunities to volunteer and engage, visit macalester.edu/alumni.

CONNECTING THROUGH CONVERSATION

The Alumni Board strives to connect alumni with one another and the college. Each board member supports those efforts by joining a working group focused on athletics, career connections, or diversity. Diversity working group chair Kim Cole ’96 looks back at how her group navigated 2020 and shares plans for this spring and beyond, including how you can get involved.

Going virtual
Last February, the Alumni Board’s diversity working group talked about a new goal to do more online in 2020. We knew that so much of the work and connection among Mac alumni—and how we can bring together diverse communities of alumni—is global. We were deciding already that we wanted to try more virtual programming, even before the pandemic began.

Balancing efforts
Our working group’s focus is serving all the communities of diverse Macalester alumni. As the year progressed, current and very pressing tensions emerged around racial justice work in our country. We needed to balance that ongoing work with addressing the conversations about racism and racial justice happening around us.

Creating conversations in community
As we looked to create meaningful programming, we decided to focus on virtual events on antiracism. 100 alumni joined a session in December about antiracist parenting. After a brief introduction from psychology professor Cari Gillen-O’Neel, participants moved into self-selected breakout rooms with alumni facilitators on more specific topics about antiracist parenting, including age groups, media literacy, and antiracist book recommendations.

That peer-to-peer experience was a huge success, but we also heard that participants wanted to hear more from the facilitators. Our second antiracist parenting event, in April, featured a panel and Q&A with three alumni (Justin Branden ’00, Emily PG Erickson ’07, and Kris Amundson ’71) facilitated by Professor Gillen-O’Neel. Through those events, we saw the immense interest among our community in this topic, with many parents joining us and also grandparents and folks who were just curious to learn more.

Coming up
Our next online program on May 19 will focus on antiracism in the workplace, with an introduction for the whole group followed by breakout conversations on various sectors, career stages, and specific areas of workplace challenges related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Alumni Board is also carefully reviewing our own practices. We’ve created a DEI task force to evaluate current policies, implement new training, and examine ways in which the board can lead and model how to do our engagement work equitably and inclusively.

Diversity is an expansive, broad, and complex topic—and one that’s so woven into Mac’s core values. With our decision to zero in on virtual events this year, we’ve learned and practiced some impactful ways to engage a broader community. We’ll build on those efforts in the months ahead.

GET INVOLVED
- Register for our May 19 event on antiracism in the workplace: macalester.edu/alumni/lifelonglearning
- Join the conversation in our new Facebook group: “Macalester Alumni Discussing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.” We’re building community and sharing resources.
- Check out (and add to) the college’s antiracism resource list: macalester.edu/macetogether
- Celebrate someone in your network by nominating them for the Alumni Board or an Alumni Award: macalester.edu/alumni/alumniboard
- Read President Rivera’s latest update about equity and antiracism initiatives: macalester.edu/antiracism
THE EXECUTIVE UTILITY INFIELDER

Recent conventional business wisdom emphasizes specialization and subject matter expertise—and Mark Green ’89 has found success by fighting against that approach for most of his career. From turning around large operating segments within insurance companies like Allstate to starting his own insurance company with partners, Green has embraced learning from different perspectives within the industry. Today he works in Chicago as an executive vice president of Kemper, operating in a multifaceted role he describes as “executive utility infielder.” We asked the speech communication major about some of the lessons he’s learned so far.

Sit in different seats

When I got into insurance, I saw that in order to really be good at any of the roles, I needed to have a broad-based perspective of all of them. I sat in a lot of different seats, then I took those learnings and put them into practice as a general manager turnaround specialist.

I believe strongly in this from a business perspective, but it applies a lot more broadly. We don’t seem to value breadth of knowledge in the traditional sense anymore. I would posit that the more experience you get from different perspectives, and the more awareness you have about how each lever works within the business model, the more productive and valuable you are.

Expand your network

The more networking that you can do, the better off you’re going to be. Pick up the phone and find new people to talk to. Work LinkedIn. Work Instagram. I don’t care what social media you’re using—just get to know more people.

But go deep rather than broad. Sometimes I see people send out LinkedIn invitations to anybody whose profile says they’re in insurance, with a generic note that says, “I find your background fascinating.” That’s what not to do. Reach out with something specific and personal. Networking is about really getting to know people, and having people get to know you and like you, and be willing to support you and advocate on your behalf. Over time, if you have real depth, the breadth will come. Don’t rush it.

Back up your ideas with critical thinking and facts

I came to Macalester from a very small, fairly conservative town in Anarelaas, with 35 people in my graduating class. I was a moderate, which was fairly unique on campus. I had to defend every position I ever took, and I also like to think it might have been good for my classmates because it got them out of potential echo chambers. I couldn’t just take grants that I was right; I’d better have evidence, because the person across the table would explain why I was wrong, sometimes in excruciating detail. Macalester taught me how to think, and how to support my arguments and ideas. That’s been invaluable in my career.

Chase happiness

It took me way too long to realize what truly made me happy. To say I’m happy when I can give some business acumen to a charity board! I sit on, when I’m sitting around a fire pit with friends, when I’m out for a run or just hanging out with my kids on the couch watching ‘The Wishing Seas on Disney.’

When my wife passed away seven years ago, I was a senior executive in a high-pressure job, and for a few years, a nanny spent more time with my three young children than I did. Then the realization hit me: I want to spend time with my kids. I want to be more of a dad than an executive. Keeping up with the Joneses is really, really overrated. You have to make sacrifices, and while you don’t regret the character, perpetuating career success and creating an abundant citizenship that moves us all to a better place,” he says.

That’s MacMullan’s goal now with his art: to inspire hope and action. Fortunately, Hu now seems to be a significant, renewed movement of global consciousness with a true belief that we can still accomplish all of our most critical goals before our single carrier ship permanently runs aground, as he says. “As my own life answers an end to the very foreseeable future. I trust that proactive world citizens of means and influence will never let up until Mother Earth can once again adequately sustain herself.”

THE SCRAP METAL IMPRESSIONIST

Bruce MacMullan ’69 is a banker turned self-described “scrap metal impressionist.” A decade ago, he retired from a successful 37-year career and embarked on a new path, exploring art for the first time to express his ideas and social commentary. “I use only recycled materials on every project, and each became a story on its own,” he says.

His latest sculpture is Ceaseless Quest for a Safe Harbour, which grew from an old auto transmission and a discarded, tin can cover. “This is my attempt to symbolize the earth’s current status as a sort of incestuous ghost ship that has oftentimes floundered aimlessly for the last few hundred years.” MacMullan says. “The current critical condition of our ship has us listing dangerously toward inevitable destruction due largely to careless disregard. How can we envision a lasting continuation of Earth’s original hospitality as a role and secure homes for all of its people?”

MacMullan’s art practice isn’t the first time he’s changed direction. That started back at Macalester, where he switched majors from history to business in English literature. And his path at Mac wasn’t always easy—in fact, it often wasn’t easy. “I was an average student in high school and was simply trying to carry on a family tradition when I first enrolled at Mac,” MacMullan says. “Frankly, I was pressed from day one to simply stay afloat.”

When MacMullan got word in his last semester that he would indeed receive a diploma, he felt like he had “just turned a corner of life,” he wrote decades later in his 2014 memoir, Zero to Sixty: Memoirs of an Inexplicable Scot. That experience was formative, despite—or perhaps because of—the struggles. “For students of all types and potentials, Macalester remains a substantive scholastic environment with a very effective manner for building character, perpetuating career success and creating an abundant citizenship that moves us all to a better place,” he says.

Get Out the Vote

On her last day of canvassing outside Atlanta before the January U.S. Senate runoff election, Lisa Hu ’15 sketched a blue Georgia on her rental car. “I have been drawing the outline of Georgia in my journal since the November election,” Hu wrote in a Facebook post that day, “and now here we are. Almost there.”

Hu had traveled from California to advocate for Senate candidates Rev. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff through Seed the Vote, a Bay Area-based project dedicated to organizing frontline communities and supporting electoral work in swing states. After previous work with Seed the Vote, Hu trusted the organization to place her with grassroots organizations that invited, trained, and could absorb and mobilize a surfe of volunteers as part of their statewide strategy with coordinated local leadership.

And thanks to the coalition’s strict COVID-19 precautions, volunteers were able to connect with voters in person. Hu canvassed with the Asian American Advocacy Fund PAC in Atlanta’s north-eastern suburbs, part of a group that knocked on 100,000 doors statewide before the runoff. On Election Day, she volunteered with Asian Americans Advancing Justice Atlanta as a nonpartisan poll monitor. “I wanted to build power specifically in my own communities by organizing Asian American and Pacific Islander folks,” says Hu, whose grandparents and other family in Georgia motivated her decision to go. “I work in policy. I don’t identify as an organizer, so it felt really exciting and humbling to step into this new kind of role for the final stretch. Meeting people where they are—at terms of language, location, culture, the priorities they care about most—is imperative to galvanizing action. And organizing should drive policy work.”

Over eight days, Hu knocked on doors, answered questions, and handed out literature in English, Chinese, Hindi, Vietnamese, and Korean. She listened and talked with hundreds of voters about issues including COVID relief, health care, education, and immigration. And those conversations stayed with Hu long after her last day of doorknocking, and long after Warnock and Ossoff gave victory speeches and Hu returned to her job in Oakland as the Greenlining Institute’s senior director. “I’m so honored and grateful for all the deep multi-racial solidarity work, the strategic brilliance of long-term organizers, and the joy in our BPDC coalition,” she says.
Gayle Erlandson Flanders, 101, died Feb. 23, 2021. She worked in payroll, served as a Cub Scout and Girl Scout leader, and was a school library teacher, school teacher, and homemaker. She is survived by four daughters, a son, eight grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Harry B. Lincoln, 78, died Dec. 3, 2020. He served with the U.S. Army Air Corps in Italy during World War II. In 1951 Lincoln joined the faculty of Harpur College (which became Binghamton University) and served as a 36-year career teaching home economics and life skills to special-needs students. Lincoln was nominated for New York State Home Economics Teacher of the Year in 1977 and Tennis Teacher of the Year in 1983. He is survived by four sons, five granddaughters, two great-grandsons, a sister, and a brother.

Mary Fisher Marsden, 93, of Minneapolis died Nov. 17, 2019. She taught music in Richfield, Minn., and South Dakota, Engeman was active with Habitat for Humanity. She is survived by her husband, James, a daughter, two grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

Thomas J. Engeman, 88, died Dec. 20, 2020. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and embarked on a career in public television as a consultant and Techsystems for 35 years, and was also a real estate agent with Realty Center in Edina. Marsden is survived by her wife, Jean, two sons, and a granddaughter.

Rodger M. Schwartz, 91, of Minnetonka, Minn., died Dec. 26, 2020. He is survived by a daughter, three sons, five grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

L. Jean Styrk-Lawler, 88, June 24, 2020. She is survived by her husband, Bill Larson.

George N. Wemeir, 89, of Waconia, Minn., died Oct. 22, 2019. During her lifetime, she was a volunteer for young children (including Catherine Brithem ’15).

Rene E. Backus, 88, of Eden, Minn., born Nov. 24, 1927. She practiced pediatric neurology at the Minneapolis Clinic of Psychiatry and Neurology. Backus is survived by three daughters, two sons, 11 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Charles B. Storz, 90, of Nevis, Minn., died Oct. 6, 2020. He was a veteran of the Marines during the Korean War. Storz taught mathematics and coached flutist at Robbinsdale Junior High School until his retirement in 1992. He is survived by his wife, Lorna, three daughters, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Dolores Petersen Haggen, 89, of Bloomington, Minn., died Jan. 17, 2020. She is survived by her husband, a son, and three grandchildren.

Violette Richter Miller, 95, of Southampton, N.J., Feb. 1, 2020. She was a registered nurse for hospitals and schools in the district. She is survived by two daughters, four grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Bruce W. Ramsay, 91, of Apple Valley, Minn., Jan. 2, 2020. He worked for Honeywell/Alliant Technologies Systems for 35 years, and also was a real estate agent with Reality Center in Edina. Ramsay is survived by his wife, Jane, two sons, and a granddaughter.

Mary A. Nelson, 90, of Milwaukee, Wisc., died Dec. 9, 2020. She was a volunteer for Dearborn’s GED program and one of the top book advisors. In 1976, Mitchell Nelson is survived by his wife, Kathleen, three daughters, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Mary Lee Chance Gledhill, 85, died Jan. 21, 2021. Gledhill was a commentator and a youth director at Oak Grove Woods, Mich., and Edina, Minn. She received Macalester’s Staff Outstanding Service Award in 2016. Moffett is survived by his wife, two sons, and a brother.

James Erickson ’56, four nephews, including Francisco González Franco ’95, Ricardo González Franco ’99, and Camila Abraham ’04.

Carolyn “Betty” Henderson Dake, 88, of Tampa, Fla., died Nov. 19, 2020. She taught Sunday school classes and served on a number of mission trips. Robinson is survived by two sons, and a brother.

Marlene Brandt Teien, 84, of Cumberland, Wisc., Feb. 20, 2021. While teaching kindergarten in Bloomington, Minn., Teien won a national award for her husband, Erikson ’56, four great-grandchildren, and a brother.

Ken Moffett died Jan. 15, 2021. At Fairview Hospital, he was survived by his wife, Barbara, a daughter, a son, five grandchildren, and three brothers.

Doloroes “Dee” McKee, 90, of Sun City, Ariz., died Jan. 25, 2021. She was a longtime piano teacher, and founder of a community free clinic. McKee is survived by two daughters, three grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Dorota ‘Dee’ McKe, 90, of Waconia, Minn., died Dec. 5, 2020. After a career as a chemist, she was a Minnesota teacher. McKe is survived by two sisters and a brother.


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70 Lewis D. Baxter, 75, of Savannah, Ga., died Feb. 3, 2020. He served in the Air Force as a pilot in the Vietnam War. After retiring, Baxter attained the rank of lieutenant colonel and served at the U.S. Central Command and Special Operations Command in Tampa, Fla. He has worked for nonprofit organizations. Baxter is survived by his wife and sons, Charlie Baxter 69.

70 John R. Bartle, 70, died Jan. 8, 2021, in St. Louis Park, Minn. He taught elementary school in Japan for 14 years and taught English as a second language to adult immigrants in Minnesota. Bartle is survived by two sisters (including Carolyn Bartle 77) and two brothers.

69 Elizabeth Gibson, 69, died July 30, 2020. While employed with the Internal Revenue Service, she also developed an independent consulting company and co-wrote two books. Always a dog lover, she was active in rescuing and adopting greyhounds. Gibson is survived by her husband, Howard Stobodin, and a brother.

70 James G. Straka, 72, of St. Paul, died Nov. 20, 2020. He was a faculty member of Macalester’s Chemistry Department and worked in laboratories at the University of Minnesota, Fairview University Hospitals, the St. Paul Police Department, and Pace Analyt- ics. Straka also played French horn with local orchestras and conducted local musical theater productions. He is survived by a daughter, a son, and two sisters.

70 James E. Hooper, 75, died Oct. 20, 2020. He worked for Andersen Windows and coached high school girls’ lacrosse. Bement is survived by his wife, Donna, a daughter, a son, and a sister.

71 Diane Marr Leonard, 70, of Rome, N.Y., died March 17, 2019. She worked for Bank of Amer- ica and retired as a database administrator for Catholic Charities.

70 Cynthia G. Tolley, 64, of North Cape May, N.J., died Nov. 20, 2020. She ran a day care service from her home and worked as the office manager for her sis- ter’s dental practice for almost 20 years. Tolley had a daughter, son, and three sisters, including Carol Tolley Hastings 76.

70 Robert L. Bement, 71, of Stillwater, Minn., died Dec. 27, 2020. He worked for Andersen Windows and coached high school girls’ lacrosse. Bement is survived by his wife, Donna, a daughter, a son, and a sister.

69 Rebecca S. Rootes, 69, died Feb. 5, 2021. She served with the Peace Corps in the Philippines and joined the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as a legislative fellow. Over the next 29 years, Rootes held a num- ber of positions in NOAA and represented the organization internationally. She also helped launch the Women’s Aquatic- ally Network. Rootes is survived by her husband, Edward Murdy, two children, and a grandchild.

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"Hera come the Scots“ answer key from page 11
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Making a gift to the Macalester Fund is a declaration that you believe in Macalester students and in the future.

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RITES of SPRING

Today Mac students enjoy spring’s return by grabbing a spot on the Great Lawn for studying, relaxing, or throwing a Frisbee. Back in 1915 in the same spot, students reveled in a May Day celebration complete with winding ribbons around a maypole in front of Carnegie and Old Main.
On a sunny March day, Jonah Brumbach ’24 (Montclair, N.J.) takes a break from his “Introduction to Buddhism” homework for some leisure reading on Bateman Plaza.