Out of History’s Margins

Kyera Singleton ’11 is changing how one museum depicts slavery and the fight for freedom.

PAGE 12
ON THE COVER: “History allows me to imagine a more just future,” says Kyera Singleton ‘11.
PHOTO: NICOLE LOEB

FEATURES

Nine Reasons to Love Macalester Athletics Right Now 10
Cheer on the Scots with longtime M Club president Steve Cox ’76.

Out of History’s Margins 12
Kyera Singleton ‘11 is changing how one museum depicts slavery and the fight for freedom.

Interactive Education 14
Digital liberal arts initiatives are changing how faculty, staff, and students collaborate, share knowledge, and solve problems.

Record of Service 20
Macalester reflects on the legacy of former Vice President Walter Mondale ‘50.

Pathways for Change 26
We asked this year’s Alumni Award recipients about the places, people, and experiences that shape their focus.

Bridging the Gap 30
The aim of “radical centrist” Paul Smyke ’85 is to get people talking—and listening—to one another.

Lecture Notes: Inclusive Technology 32
Professor Lauren Milne works to make digital interfaces more accessible for people with disabilities.

DEPARTMENTS

Correspondence 2
Sounding Board 3
1600 Grand 4
Grad Walks, a Shaw Field performance, and accessibility on campus

Class Notes 34

Weddings 37

Books 38

In Memoriam 44

Last Look 48

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**Viewpoint exchange**

I have enjoyed learning—and school specifically—since I was a young girl. Curiosity is the fuel that pushes me to understand the world around me. To gain the knowledge I desire, I challenge my assumptions, and enhance my understanding of the world around me. Unsurprisingly, I love to read and always have multiple stacks of books, magazines, and newspapers nearby, waiting to be consumed.

This year I developed a tool that brings me great pleasures is to read the papers our incredible faculty members publish in academic journals. In doing so, I am discovering the work of the media creators and the scholars who have studied the cultural, political, and social contexts of the world around us.

Thank you for publishing Roger S. Peterson’s letter. It is legitimate to question whether safe spaces are merely immature and fragile. It is true that safe spaces are given attention and care. This gets glossed by the argument of today’s purportedly fragile and immature students. It is true that safe spaces are in the university context of higher learning. This gets glossed by the argument that today’s students lack critical thinking.

Peterson points to the current use of the term “group think” that has been alarmingly prevalent. Peterson argues that the term “group think” is being applied inappropriately to the current context of viewpoint diversity. Peterson argues that today’s youth are “scared of viewpoint diversity.” I am fascinated (and alarmed) by the work of chemistry professor Leah Witus and sociology professor Erik Olin Wright. In their research, they find that people in the United States are biological males should be allowed to compete in women’s sports? Is that something that is so self-evident that it should be accepted without question? One wouldn’t think so, and yet in some cases, it seems the shackles of “wokeness” prevent some from achieving freedom from certainty.

Regarding Roger S. Peterson’s remarks (Correspondence, Spring 2021): Your conclusion is a well-articulated point, and yet Peterson makes the point on the basis of evidence that is weak and not compelling.

In memory

I was saddened to learn of the passing of John Ring ‘54 (In Memoriam, Winter 2021). It is a great loss, and one that I am sorry to have to make this point on viewpoint diversity and Macalester’s lack thereof. I hope this article gets the attention of the Macalester community starting with President Rivier, and we see the change we have been looking for. This is a community where we take the lead in moving away from the liberal dominance of “group think” that has taken place in our society.

Nothing will happen until Macalester adds “promoting a campus environment that encourages viewpoint diversity” to its mission statement. I believe that a stated objective is the way to measure its success. For Macalester to claim itself as a true liberal arts college, it needs to be equal and inclusiveness of viewpoint diversity across the political spectrum.

One only has to look at the Commencement speech. Donald Trump chose to see the lack of such equality and inclusiveness as required of a true liberal arts education. As a precautionary measure, I have been surprised to discover that I sometimes agree with moderate and conservative thought. Having spent multiple years uncover blind spots in progressive thinking. I wish I had pursued more opportunities to explore this kind of thinking while at Macalester.

I also want to challenge one aspect of On Viewpoint Diversity’s analysis. The author notes that we now call “wokeness” which I understand is prevalent at Mac, is another philosophy that could benefit from some real academic analysis and discussion. For example, if Peterson would argue that my real concern is that critical thinking is being asked a student who was an avowed Marxist. I’ve even been surprised to discover that I sometimes agree with moderate and conservative thought. Having spent multiple years uncover blind spots in progressive thinking. I wish I had pursued more opportunities to explore this kind of thinking while at Macalester.

I was heartestrained to read “Freedom from Certainty?” When I attended Macalester, I recall sitting at a table with 10 students and attempting to explain to my friend that I was a liberal. I felt lived from the dialogue. The author noted that we now call “wokeness,” which I understand is prevalent at Mac, is another philosophy that could benefit from some real academic analysis and discussion. For example, if Peterson would argue that my real concern is that critical thinking is being asked a student who was an avowed Marxist. I’ve even been surprised to discover that I sometimes agree with moderate and conservative thought. Having spent multiple years uncover blind spots in progressive thinking. I wish I had pursued more opportunities to explore this kind of thinking while at Macalester.

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The pandemic radically transformed the way Macalester operates—and amid many challenges. Maya Lawnicki ’22 (Milwaukee, Wis.) saw an opportunity. In a course called “Being Human in STEM,” co-taught by professors Devavani Chatterjea and Louisa Bradtmiller, Lawnicki and her classmates discussed how quickly the college made fundamental changes to classrooms. “If we could make adjustments because of the pandemic so quickly, why couldn’t we make these same adjustments to diversity, equity, and inclusion that fast as well?” she says. “It made me think, what can I be doing now that can encourage conversations about inclusivity?”

The answer: a panel on inclusivity in teaching. Lawnicki recruited faculty to speak, and facilitated a discussion about creating inclusive classrooms in the pandemic and beyond. The panel was part of Radical MacACCESS, an annual program founded in 2018 to create space for students, faculty, and staff that identify as disabled. Led by a committee of twelve students this year and supported by Disability Services, Radical MacACCESS is designed to build community and foster discussion. This year, organizers hosted a keynote with Kay Ulanday Barrett, a poet, performer, and cultural strategist who advocates for disability justice. A virtual art gallery featured work by disabled and neurodiverse students, lifting up their experiences and voices.

As Lawnicki’s panel showed, the pandemic spotlighted the need to place accessibility front and center in the Macalester community. Students, faculty, and staff had to address the challenge of remote classes and programs, as well as the mental health impact of increased anxiety, depression, and isolation. Faculty recorded lectures, began class with “minute mingle” check-ins, and gave students the option of exploring multimedia assignments, such as podcasts and social media posts. Disability Services, a campus office that works to ensure equal access to academic and co-curricular activities, piloted remote drop-ins and online programs. These adjustments, far from being a stop-gap measure, have the potential to transform access at Macalester in the years to come.

Disability Services coordinator Josie Hurka emphasizes the importance of designing universal learning environments that work for everybody, comparing it to door opener buttons, which are used by everyone: “Everything we’re doing in terms of access and design works for everybody. Wouldn’t it be amazing if we didn’t need accessibility programming anymore?”

The students and staff of Radical MacACCESS see hope of this vision becoming a reality. Plans are already being developed to continue practices such as remote office hours and flexible attendance policies, as well as restructuring programs and teaching methods to serve students’ needs more holistically. “It’s not a return to normal,” says Melissa Fletcher, director of Disability Services. “It’s a return to better.”

“I wanted to explore the intersection between having a disability that affects speech versus communication as an overall medium,” Ashley Allen ’21 (Wayzata, Minn.) says about her portrait, part of Radical MacACCESS’s virtual art gallery. “My disability is not something most people notice—however, it continues to provide a foundation for how I view and experience the world.”
Unpacking Latinx Studies

“Our stories cannot be checked into boxes.” – poet Elizabeth Acevedo, “Afro-Latina”

“One of the stereotypes about the Latinx population is the perception of it as one homogeneous ethnic group,” Professor Alicia Muñoz says. “We talk about the ‘Latino vote.’ But it’s not the Latino vote. There are so many different political ideologies that when you try to simplify it and put it in a big block, you end up neglecting the richness of this particular population.”

In her course “Introduction to U.S. Latinx Studies,” Muñoz’s goal is to shine light on that richness through an interdisciplinary discussion of the Latinx experience in the United States with a focus on Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Cuban Americans. Through fiction, poetry, films, and critical essays, students examine issues of race and ethnicity, language, identity, gender and sexuality, politics, and immigration. They also connect their classroom work with Twin Cities people and places.

Muñoz, associate professor and chair of the Spanish and Portuguese Department, teaches in Spanish, though some readings are in English—and some are in both languages. During a segment on language, the class read and discussed “Lengualistic Algo,” a poem by Olga García Echeverría that seamlessly blends Spanish and English words and phrases together.

“The poem is about the use of language and how it’s connected with the identity of the person,” says Alexandra Policarpo ’24 (Belo Horizonte, Brazil). “If you are suppressing the language, you are also suppressing the person. It’s Spanglish because that’s what you look like versus what it means to speak Spanish when you are a white person. In the case of white speakers, it’s a positive skill, something that’s going to help your career. But this other group is marked as ethnic and foreign because they speak the language—moreover, they are encouraged to assimilate by suppressing that language over time.”

Community engagement is a central component of the course. For the last three years, Muñoz had partnered with a Minneapolis charter school. Students served as buddies to a group of Latinx fourth-graders, developing and sharing lessons about Latinx history and mentoring the children. During the pandemic, Muñoz pivoted to a new story map project in partnership with the Lake Street Council in Minneapolis.

“It’s an online interactive website tool that’s going to highlight some Latinx-owned businesses on Lake Street,” says Ian Witry ’23 (Minneapolis), a Spanish and Latin American studies double major and Portuguese minor. “It will provide some history, and you’ll be able to scroll down to see maps, timelines, and images to read and interact with.”

Students work in small groups during some of their class time to develop website content. When in-person classes resume, Muñoz says, she’s hoping that the story map project, too, will continue and expand.

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Recent work on the story map project has included a section on the Magnuson-Moss Act, legislation passed in 1974 that prevents federal contractors from using or storing hazardous materials in their buildings. Students were asked to research the act and its impact on Latinx communities, and they were tasked with creating a timeline and interactive map that would allow users to explore the history of the act and its effects. This project is ongoing, and Muñoz is looking to continue it in future semesters.

In another segment of the course, the class engaged with a contemporary Latinx作家, Pablo Aránguiz, whose fiction explores themes of identity, race, and immigration. Students read and analyzed excerpts from Aránguiz’s novel “Chicano” and discussed the ways in which the author uses language to convey meaning and create a sense of place.

In conclusion, Muñoz emphasizes the importance of understanding Latinx experiences and identities in the United States. “Our students cannot be checked into boxes.” She encourages students to approach these experiences with an open mind and a willingness to learn from diverse perspectives. “As they do for theater, hauntings will always be redefining who I am, redrawing my boundaries and making me new.” Actors on stage, from left: Ndunzi Kunsunga ’22 (Minneapolis); Elinor Jones ’21 (Ft. Collins, Colo.), facing away; Kendall Kieras ’24 (Des Moines, Wash.); and Ezra Nayaqam Mathia ’24 (Pasadena, Calif.). Set design by Alice Endo ’22 (Arlington, Va.) and costumes by Lynn Farrington.
ATHLETICS

Digital Drive

The Wrap-Up

Hannah Oross '22 (Minneapolis) broke her own school record in the pole vault by clearing 3.43 meters (11 feet, three inches) at the MAC championships.

The women's basketball team was a finalist for the 2020–21 Athletes for Hope University Awards, which honor student-athletes and teams nationwide for exceptional work and dedication to service. The team supported homeless youth through the Kids in Need Foundation and hosted AFH Fit visits with a St. Paul elementary school.

The highlight of the abbreviated men's basketball season came at St. Olaf, when Michael Piker '24 (Brookfield, Wis.) hit a game-tying three at the buzzer in regulation. Then, in overtime, Tyler McFarland '23 (Denver) drained another three-pointer with four seconds left to beat the Oles 78–77.

Head coach Jason Mohl earned MACC Coach of the Year honors for both men's and women's tennis, his fourth conference Coach of the Year honors.

Basketball and soccer player Kayla Togneri '21 (Ventura, Ca-lif.) received a Fulbright research/study award to support her neuroscience research in Peru.

Eleanor Michaud '23 (Long Grove, Ill.) is an Association of Collegiate Water Polo Coaches Division III All-American—the first Mac water polo player to be named to the first team. Anniika Krueger '22 (Emerald Hills, Calif.) and Laurel O'Hare '24 (Evansville, Ind.) received All-American honorable mention.

After 13 years leading the football program and becoming the all-time winningest coach in Scots football history, Tony Jennison transitioned into a new role in Mac’s Development Office, with a focus on athletics. Offensive coordinator KJuan Ware is interim head coach for the 2021 season.

ATHLETICS

SAVING LIVES, FAST

ATHLETICS

Kurt Stepnitz

The ATHLETICS section tells stories of Macalester’s teams and student-athletes.

The PASSION section will inspire you with profiles of alumni who pursue their passions.

The WRAP-UP section has short stories that offer a quick look at the week’s events.

The SHELF CONSCIOUS section is packed with travel tips and book recommendations.

SHELF CONSCIOUS

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

Kelly MacGregor is a geology professor specializing in glacial geomorphology.

Any standout books you’ve read recently?

I just finished a book called Hidden Valley Road, by Robert Kolker, about a family in Colorado where half of the children ended up having schizophrenia. It’s really an interesting history on how we have diagnosed and treated mental health challenges over the past century.

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

I have four answers, and that’s because I have favorite books that make a big impression on me at different times in my life. When I was a child, my parents gave me a book for Christmas called The Clan of the Cave Bear, by Jean M. Auel. In college I read On the Road, by Jack Kerouac. When I was a graduate student in the field working on glaciers in Alaska, I read Going to the Sun, by James McManus. And then one of my favorite books of all time is Straight Man, by Richard Russo.

What book is crucial to understanding your academic niche?

I assign The Control of Nature, by John McPhee, in most of my classes. I study surface processes on the planet, and the book is three stories about different ways that humans interact with the geological world.

Any guilty-pleasure reads?

I would say that 90 percent of my reading is guilty-pleasure reading, and most of that is young adult fiction. I love The Scorpio Races, by Maggie Stiefvater. I just finished a book called The Passage, by Stephen King, and was basically responsible for her own education. And then it pulls back the veil on what education—and especially higher education—is all about. From the perspective of somebody who didn’t grow up in a family where that was the norm. —Rebecca Edwards ’21

What book would you recommend to everybody at Macalester?

Educated, by Tara Westover. It describes a dramatic example of a troubled upbringing told by a woman who grew up in a large family and was basically responsible for her own education. And it describes how she made her way through getting into college, and pulls back the veil on what education—and especially higher education—is all about. From the perspective of somebody who didn’t grow up in a family where that was the norm.

—Kelly MacGregor
Steve Cox ‘76 claims he is not the Scots' biggest superfan, but let's review the evidence. He's frequently spotted in the stands cheering: “Go Mac!” He signs emails with blue and orange hearts. And he has raised support for Mac athletics for more than 30 years as a proud member—and longtime president—of the M Club for alumni athletes.

Mac athletes give their all, win or lose,” says Cox. A Waukegan, Illinois native who played soccer and hockey while earning a history degree. Initially the high school soccer veteran didn’t think he was good enough to make Mac’s team, but coaches sought him out soon after he arrived on campus. “I didn’t even bring my soccer shoes to college. Cox recalls. “I had to borrow someone’s bicycle to go buy a pair.” He added ice skates in his junior year after Coach Leo Collins saw him play intramural floor hockey.

Cox, like all athletes who complete an intercollegiate season, became an M Club member as a graduating senior. “Varsity head coaches—and athletes who were denied access to varsity sports before the 1972 passage of Title IX—also are members.” In 1990, Sheila Brewer, Mac’s athletic director at the time, encouraged Cox to add his youthful voice to the club’s board of directors. He became president in 1994 and, except for a three-year break, has held that role ever since.

The M Club’s goal, Cox explains, is to build enthusiasm among alumni and the Mac community for the 21 varsity athletic programs, which include baseball and football—Mac’s oldest sports—along with basketball, golf, soccer, softball, tennis, swimming and diving, track and field, cross country, and women’s volleyball and water polo. To accomplish that, the club’s directors host events to build excitement for athletics, support athletes both on and off the field, honor outstanding athletes past and present, and collaborate with the Athletics Working Group and the Student Athletics Advisory Committee to achieve shared goals.

Cox describes his work with the M Club as “one way he gives back to Macalester.” Macalester took a chance on me, and it turned out to be the perfect fit for me,” he explains. Recently retired from more than 40 years of teaching history in St. Paul’s public schools, Cox can devote even more energy toward boosting his beloved Scots. Here are nine of Cox’s reasons to stand up and cheer:

1. The Scots have claimed 15 NCAA Division III national championships including the 1978 women’s soccer crown, the 2014 title in one-meter diving, and 13 track and field victories. Phoebe Aguiar ‘19 outran the competition to win the indoor track and field women’s 800 meters two years ago.

2. Mac is a powerhouse in the pool: The women’s water polo team is a three-time winner (2017-2019) of the Collegiate Water Polo Association’s Division III Championship. Cox recalls being awed by the strength and stamina of those student-athletes, who keep moving in the water even during timeouts.

3. Mac athletics supports the college’s commitment to diversity. A transgender inclusion policy has been in effect since 2015. Earlier, in 2003, the M Club extended membership to women who played sports—ranging from basketball to badminton—in the decades before Title IX granted them access to varsity programs. “That was a huge step forward not only for the M Club but also for being more inclusive with Macalester athletics,” Cox says.

4. The M Club Hall of Fame—which you can visit online—celebrates outstanding Mac athletes and teams from more than 130 years of intercollegiate sports. At a banquet, new inductees share stories with current student-athletes about the lifelong impact of their athletic experiences, Cox says.

5. Mac soccer fans are known for their colorful—some would say irreverent—cheers. Mental Floss included them in a list of seven memorable sports chants.

6. Mac’s football tradition includes ancient rivalries and unique trophies. The winner of the Mac-Carleton College game—nicknamed the “Brain Bowl”—hoists the Book of Knowledge. The victor in the matchup with Hamline University brings home the Paint Bucket, created in the 1960s to end a series of spray-painting pranks on the competing campuses.

7. Never another traditions include Back to Mac—a perfect fall weekend for Scots fans packed with free sporting events, tailgating, an alumni mixer, and more. In the fall and spring, the M Club invites the community to fan appreciation days that feature games, swag giveaways, and free food. At Reunion, the M Club welcomes everyone to participate in the legendary three-person sledgehammer water balloon challenge, with prizes for teams who come closest to splashing Mac the Scot.

8. Winning isn’t the only priority for athletic director Donny Brooks and his department. Cox admires how coaches and athletic staff “look at the whole student, including their academic, social, and emotional well-being.” Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the department found ways for teams to meet and practice safely to provide student-athletes with a support system.

9. Scots excel in balancing athletics with academics. In the 2019-2020 school year, 161 student-athletes earned Academic All-Conference honors. And two—softball player Julia Carpenter ’20 and soccer player Jackson White ’20—were named Academic All-Americans.

Charles Buchanan is a freelance writer based in Birmingham, Alabama.
Out of History’s Margins

Kyera Singleton ’11 is changing how one museum depicts slavery and the fight for freedom.

As protests erupted across the country after George Floyd’s murder in May 2020, young activists of color gathered at the Royal House and Slave Quarters in Medford, Massachusetts, just outside Boston, to protest the existence of slave quarters in the city. When Kyera Singleton ’11 talked with the protesters, they were surprised to learn Singleton, a Black woman, was the museum’s director. “And what they thought the museum was—that we were either romanticizing this history or simply ignoring it—couldn’t possibly be the case if I was the executive director,” Singleton remembers. “That became a moment for me to say, ‘Let me tell you about what we do.’” The Royal House and Slave Quarters has operated for more than a century, its mission originally focused on telling the story of Massachusetts’s largest enslaving family. But new research initiated by the museum’s board of directors led to a reinterpretation of its mission, and in 2005 the museum added “Slave Quarters” to its name to counteract the original story. Singleton became the part-time executive director of the museum in April 2020. While today the museum focuses on the history of slavery, centering the lives of enslaved people, Singleton notes that the site’s preservation had nothing to do with that story. In fact, the slave quarters themselves are no longer in their original state; part of the building converted in the early twentieth century into meeting space and an apartment. That the quarters weren’t properly preserved illustrates whose history is celebrated, she says, and whose history is relegated to the margins. “As a Black woman leading this museum, I’m so happy that I get to lead the charge to change that,” Singleton says. “I get to say we’re going to do as much research as possible so we can make sure that those people who were compelled to work here matter.” Last summer’s interaction with protestors was a watershed moment at the beginning of Singleton’s tenure at the museum. It reinforced for her that museums—which have historically hidden or minimized their relationship to slavery or misrepresented the experience—can be painful for Black visitors, who so often aren’t able to influence how this history is depicted. “Besides making sure we get the history of slavery right, my role also includes asking communities what else they want to talk about, and what I learned is that people want to discuss what impacts them on a daily basis,” she says. “As a museum leader, it’s my responsibility to talk about how the past and legacies of slavery impact Black communities today.” Singleton began thinking critically about history—how it’s told and recorded—and an American studies and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies major at Mac. “Macalaster gave me the tools to think about who I was as a scholar and why,” she says. “It gave me a blueprint in so many ways. I wanted to think about how slavery is embedded not only in our history but also in this nation’s built environment. It’s all around us—yet it’s invisible.” Singleton also credits Macalaster with introducing her to working with communities, thanks to an internship at the TWCA St. Paul through an American studies course with Professor Karin Aguilar-San Juan. “The classroom gave me a space to think about my own values and desires in terms of doing community-based work,” Singleton says. “How can we empower people, especially when institutions stereotype the same communities they pretend to uplift?” You can walk into any community right now and people will give you a long list of solutions they think may fix the issues they face on a daily basis. I learned that all you have to do is listen. After graduating, Singleton enrolled in a PhD program in American culture at the University of Michigan. While a graduate student she moved to Atlanta to study at the James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference at Emory University. She also completed a policy fellowship at the ACLU of Georgia. A Harvard fellowship to complete her dissertation sent her to Massachusetts, where she is currently an American Democracy Fellow in the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History. Her vision for the Royal House and Slave Quarters is simple: “I have to center Black people as political agents in their own history. We have always fought for our own freedom, and everyone else’s, and continue to do so today.” Singleton is passionate about using her research skills to help people uncover long-hidden histories in the archives. Approaching historical records from new angles can yield discoveries that challenge the white supremacist structures that have hidden the stories of enslaved people. “If we ask different questions, we will get different results,” she says. Leading a museum during a pandemic challenged her to shift to programming online and to expand into social justice issues like mass incarceration, education, and housing inequality. Singleton also launched a poetry series to celebrate Black cultural production and joy. “At the root of all of this is that I love history, and I love what history can teach us,” Singleton says. “I love how our history allows me to imagine a more just future.”

Hillery Moses Mohaupt ’08 earned a master’s degree in public history and is a freelance writer in the greater Philadelphia area.

As protests erupted across the country after George Floyd’s murder in May 2020, young activists of color gathered at the Royal House and Slave Quarters in Medford, Massachusetts, just outside Boston, to protest the existence of slave quarters in the city. When Kyera Singleton ’11 talked with the protesters, they were surprised to learn Singleton, a Black woman, was the museum’s director. “And what they thought the museum was—that we were either romanticizing this history or simply ignoring it—couldn’t possibly be the case if I was the executive director,” Singleton remembers. “That became a moment for me to say, ‘Let me tell you about what we do.’” The Royal House and Slave Quarters has operated for more than a century, its mission originally focused on telling the story of Massachusetts’s largest enslaving family. But new research initiated by the museum’s board of directors led to a reinterpretation of its mission, and in 2005 the museum added “Slave Quarters” to its name to counteract the original story. Singleton became the part-time executive director of the museum in April 2020. While today the museum focuses on the history of slavery, centering the lives of enslaved people, Singleton notes that the site’s preservation had nothing to do with that story. In fact, the slave quarters themselves are no longer in their original state; part of the building converted in the early twentieth century into meeting space and an apartment. 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Interactive EDUCATION

Macalester’s Digital Liberal Arts initiatives are changing how faculty, staff, and students collaborate, share knowledge, and solve problems.
In today’s Germany, nearly one in four German residents is an immigrant, a foreign-born population that rivals that of the United States. Germany appointed its first female chancellor more than 15 years ago, and today women make up at least 30 percent of the governing boards of large corporations. More than seven percent of residents identify as LGBTQ, the highest percentage in all of Europe. The average German creates an annual carbon footprint of 9.4 tons of CO₂—about 40 percent less than the average American.

As the data points show, modern German society is progressive and diverse. But until recently, characters depicted as German speakers remained unchanged and out of step with the times. “I found myself constantly apologizing to my students for the way would have been nearly impossible a decade ago.”

Building a better textbook—one that was both more dynamic than a traditional textbook, and also more up to date in terms of context. Along with her colleague Amy Young, a professor at Iowa’s Central College, and a team of coauthors, Abel spent a month in Vienna, where the group recorded conversations with native and proficient non-native speakers; captured photos, and took videos of everyday life. Abel and her coauthors came up with a diverse set of characters to build a lesson plan around, then envisioned a choose-your-own-adventure learning format to steer first-year German learners toward real-world conversations.

Back in the U.S., they assembled all the pieces into Grenzenlos Deutsch—“Limitless German”—an online, open education resource for introductory German. Built on a WordPress platform with illustrations drawn by Macalester students, Grenzenlos Deutsch is changing the way German is taught at Macalester and many other institutions. It includes embedded audio files and videos featuring actual German speakers, as well as interactive exercises that allow students to check their progress in real-time. It’s a tool that associate professor Britt Abel and her coauthors came up with a diverse set of characters to build a lesson plan around, then envisioned a choose-your-own-adventure learning format to steer first-year German learners toward real-world conversations.

Creating a digital product as complex as Grenzenlos Deutsch without a coding degree would have been nearly impossible a decade ago.

But today, the proliferation of digital tools such as DIY website interfaces and story-mapping software allows even nontechnical users to build interactive educational experiences. Collectively, the use of these tools is known as the digital liberal arts (DLA), and it allows today’s faculty, staff, and students to present scholarship, collaborate with colleagues, and represent research findings in dynamic new ways. While computer-assisted tools have obvious applications in STEM courses, the technology is now making its way into humanities classrooms.

It’s about using these tools not just because digital is cool, but because the technology has a way of enabling projects that couldn’t otherwise be done,” says Andrea Kaston Tange, professor and chair of Macalester’s English Department for the last four years, and director of Mac’s Digital Liberal Arts program from 2019 until this past spring. “I define DLA as the methods, tools, and approaches for using digital technology to illuminate research or add to pedagogy in fields where people might not normally expect to see computer- or data-driven technologies used.”

With the help of recent grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Macalester has been rapidly expanding its capacity in this digital realm. Over the past several years, it has assembled a cross-disciplinary team from the DeWitt Wallace Library, the Digital Resource Center, and academic information associates to connect big ideas to the information technology it will take to build them. Macalester’s DLA program is helping faculty members deploy new digital platforms to create more meaningful assignments for students, share scholarship with new communities, and collaborate across disciplines.

While the digital humanities, also referred to as the digital humanities, have been buzzwords on college campuses for the past decade, Tange says the movement may have gotten a boost during the pandemic, as the constraints imposed by physical distancing and virtual learning prompted many faculty members to revise their course plans. As the campus shut down last spring, the DLA team took the lead in hosting a series of workshops to help faculty adapt to teaching virtual classes quickly. When classes moved to Zoom and Google Meet, many Mac professors began looking at digital projects as a way to build camaraderie and connections during a time when dynamic classroom discussions were elusive. For instance, assistant professor of history Katrina Phillips’s students researched and built an interactive chronology of Indigenous history with brief Wikipedia-style posts, many featuring maps and historic images. “I wanted it to be a project students could do anywhere, and I wanted to use it to build a sense of community, and get them to connect with each other by seeing what everyone else is doing and learning,” Phillips says.
To build the timeline, Phillips got help from academic information associates Brad Belbas ’ 88 and Ben Voigt, 10, part of a six-member team of tech-savvy specialists who support each of the school’s core departments while keeping faculty members up to date on what’s possible with new teaching technologies. While Macalester’s academic information associates may still often drop into a classroom to help students learn new tools and software to support their digital projects, the extra training isn’t always necessary. “We’re actually meeting students where they already are,” says Aisling Quigley, a postdoctoral fellow who took over as the DLA program’s director in June. With the ubiquity of digital technology, students are comfortable engaging with these tools on a daily basis. But they’re increasingly curious about ways they can organize and apply those skills, says Quigley, who also teaches a popular DLA course called “Introduction to Data Storytelling.” “I’ve been surprised to find that they want to know more about project management and how to scaffold a project and collaborate with teams—skills that some people might think are mundane, but that are new muscles that many students haven’t had a chance to flex before,” she says. “Students spend a lot of time on the internet and social media already, so the idea that their academic work can have a more public audience is very engaging to them.”

“Digital, community-based projects can help deepen the connections between the campus and community partners, and can help make knowledge more public, rather than the academy creating knowledge only for itself,” says Paul Schadewald, senior program director for Community-Based Learning and Scholarship at Macalester’s Office for Community-Based Learning and Scholarship. “In fact, some of Macalester’s most successful digital initiatives have been designed specifically through collaborations with community organizations. A prime example is Remembering Rondo—a 2016 project with community leaders from the Rondo neighborhood, which was divided in the 1950s and 1960s when the I-94 freeway was constructed through the heart of St. Paul’s historic African American community—displacing businesses and families.”

To help students learn new tools and software to support their projects, the Office of Community-Based Learning and Scholarship has been an early adopter of DLA. While digital initiatives are coming out of every discipline at Macalester, the Geography Department has been an early adopter of DLA. Classes have used geographic information systems technology that analyzes spatial data—latitude, longitude, patterns, and relationships—to research and explore the feasibility of launching an early childhood education program in St. Paul. Students from the Geography Department have used DLA to create student-made infographics into online books and used story-mapping software, which combines narrative texts, location maps, video, and other interactive content, to track how and where Mac alums have made use of a geography degree. “There’s definitely a certain coolness factor when you’re working with technology and tools that are relevant and that may even have an impact on your employability later on,” says geography professor Dan Trudeau. While he still sees a place for research papers and other more traditional assignments alongside digital projects, Trudeau says the potential audience for work that’s published online tends to raise the stakes considerably for many students. “They get caught up in the excitement of doing their best work when the projects they’re creating are for an audience that is not their teacher,” he says. “That accountability becomes an environment that motivates people to do great work.”

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The collaborative possibilities of DLA are an important part of its draw, says John Kim, associate professor and chair of Macalester’s Media and Cultural Studies Department. As a contributor to the Macalester’s Museum of Mississippi, an interdisciplinary exploration of human activity and impact on the Mississippi River, Kim and three multidisciplinary teams from the museum and the Social Sciences Department have created a digital project that students in 2019 traveled more than 800 miles of the river by canoe, working with a diverse set of collaborators including the National Park Service, New Orleans Center for the Gulf South, and the Mississippi Writers Hall of Fame. Students created a 360°-degree video, which they uploaded to the web, to capture the experience of traveling on the river. “It’s not about one at the exclusion of the other—now we’re using new tools to demonstrate even more the value of the humanities to create connections across time and populations of learners,” he says. “But the digital realm and traditional ways of learning about the humanities can complement one another.”

Another debate in higher education is whether digital initiatives, tools, and algorithms could eventually change the magic of diving deep into the humanities. If students can build online projects, the argument goes, will diving into books and debating and discussing with classmates have less value? In Tange’s experience, it’s quite the opposite. “The magic of a deep dive is actually enhanced by DLA projects, which have made digitized versions of archives available for much wider study, and provided students with expanded ways to present their own deep research work,” she says. “We aren’t replacing humanities with technology—we’re using new tools to demonstrate even more the value of the humanities to create connections across time and populations of learners.”

Laura Billings Coleman is a frequent contributor to Macalester Today.
When Harry Char ’51 enrolled at Macalester in 1948 midway through the year, he was renting a room off campus—until he got word one day that a spot had opened up in a Kirk triple. His roommates would be two upperclassmen, one of whom was Walter “Fritz” Mondale ’50.

At first, Char thought he’d simply lucked out by being assigned a roommate who didn’t actually spend much time in the room. Mondale had been part of the group that brought then-Minneapolis mayor Hubert H. Humphrey to campus in 1947. By the time Char moved in, Mondale was immersed in Humphrey’s Senate campaign. “He was so consumed with helping Hubert Humphrey get elected that he was gone from dawn to evening almost daily,” Char says.

But over the semester, the two did connect, and for Char, it lingers as a quiet reminder of a time-honored Macalester hallmark: the chance to live with, and learn from, people whose backgrounds and perspectives diverge from your own experiences. “We were so different,” Char says. “When we were free together, we’d visit and talk, mostly around politics. Fritz was a devoted and faithful, politically gifted Democrat. I was from Hawaii, then a territory with Republican leanings.” With Hawaii having no elected voting members of Congress and a governor appointed by the president, Char says politics seemed removed from his daily life before Macalester.

In addition to Humphrey’s successful Senate campaign, 1948 also marked a presidential election. One day, Republican candidate and overwhelming favorite Thomas Dewey’s motorcade was scheduled to drive by Macalester’s campus. “I was anxious to be there to cheer on our next president, and as I was leaving, Fritz asked me why I was rushing off,” Char says. “His admonition ‘You’re wasting your time’ didn’t deter me.”

In November that year, Democratic incumbent Harry S. Truman won in a shocking upset. “I should have listened,” Char says. “Fritz was so stable and sensible with political affairs.”

This past spring, the Macalester community mourned the loss and celebrated the legacy of former Vice President Mondale, who died April 20 at the age of 93. Although Mondale only attended Macalester for two and a half years, his time on campus was formative. He quickly gained a reputation for political advocacy and organizing on campus before delving into the political landscape beyond 1600 Grand. In Mondale’s first semester, his peers elected him class president, and he later chaired Macalester’s Students for Democratic Action chapter. He also competed in speech and debate, sang baritone in the men’s chorus, and traveled to England as one of 10 students selected for the Student Project for Amity among Nations (SPAN) program.

At Macalester, he told writer Nick Coleman in a 2017 Macalester Today interview, “I became more committed to progressive ideals; better educated about why they were important. I started to get a glimmer of history and of what people can do when they work together. And I started to wake up . . . I got an excitement about the decency of public policy that has stuck with me ever since.”

Because of financial challenges, Mondale transferred in his junior year to the University of Minnesota, where he would also later attend law school, after serving as a corporal in the U.S. Army. In 1955 he and Joan Adams Mondale ’52 were married by Joan’s father, longtime Macalester chaplain Rev. John Maxwell Adams, in the college’s student center. Then he began his career as a lawyer.
Mondale’s Public Service

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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In every respect we are becoming one people around this globe. That’s why education to learn about this world is so important, and that’s why Macalester’s work is so sacred. We must assume our global responsibilities beginning in college.” – Commencement, 2003

“I urge you strongly to take action. To get involved in the great issues, step across that line, and make a difference.” – Commencement, 2015

“The toughest speech I ever gave in my life, I gave right under that basketball hoop there [in the Mac fieldhouse], to a crowded, angry group of students and citizens from this area, who were troubled about my position and the Vietnam War. And I came home to do something that’s very hard for us to do in politics, to stand up and say ‘I’m wrong’. ‘I’m wrong and I had to change my mind,’ because it was wrong. And what I did, millions and millions of Americans did. We had pursued a course which was not sustainable and a tragedy in human lives, the tragedy in the divisions in American life, the tragedy in terms of the poisoned dialogue on the American campuses, was something that polarized this nation for nearly 20 years thereafter.” – Convocation, 1981

“Making the tough choices our society and our country face is front and center on American campuses, and colleges and universities are in a position to lead.” – Commencement, 2015

As Americans, I think we realize that we are in the midst of what can only be called a profound crisis of confidence and spirit… I think we realize that we are under pressure, under challenge, perhaps like we’ve never been before. In a real sense, we see dangers that I don’t think we expected to see. Dangers that erode the fundamental value of our vote, dangers which challenge our constitutional processes, and the enforcement of the law, and perhaps most fundamental of all, dangers which challenge what we thought was our most fundamental reliance on the truth, which comes from the top leaders of American society. These events have eroded public confidence to the point that virtually every poll that one looks at shows that the American people increasingly do not trust their government, do not trust the free processes of our society, and do not believe what public leaders tell them. And society cannot prosper or survive on that kind of cynical diet. As Lincoln once put it, with public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed.” – Commencement, 1973

“I am told that today’s graduates are known for their uncommon voluntary community service. Keep it up; we really need it. But our nation needs something else from young Americans: we need your involvement in politics; you need to vote. The great issues affecting your lives will be decided by government but your generation has strangely decided not to participate. In a recent study over 60 percent of college students had volunteered for community service but only 36 percent of you voted in the 2000 election.” – Commencement, 2003

“I don’t believe this country can compromise with the truth. I think the truth should be a minimum essential ingredient for the election of any decent person to public office from the lowest level to the highest level. Without truth, the American people cannot act responsibly on public policy. You can’t pass a law against lying, but you don’t have to elect liars. And this is something that the American people must decide on their own as voters and citizens. And it’s something which the graduates and the sponsors of Macalester College should have no trouble accepting.” – Commencement, 1973

As a student of Macalester I learned the value of listening and of public service. I was inspired by all the great teachers at Macalester who knew how to get us thinking. Even though I was a student of Macalester I was also a student of democracy and of the arts. I was inspired by the great public service leaders who were Macalester alumni. The lessons we learned here at Macalester have been invaluable to me.” – Commencement, 1993

“I urge you to be part of that change. It’s not just the job of the president of the United States, it’s your job to be part of that change.” – Commencement, 2015

In his own words

Monica L. Presser

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Appointed Minnesota’s attorney general, then elected to a second term

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MONDALE’S PUBLIC SERVICE
BACK TO CLASS

Professor and political scientist Patrick Schmidt teaches and researches public law and American politics, including American legal and political development. We asked him to reflect on the contributions and the challenges of Vice President Mondale’s decades in public service.

Political platform: Mondale was a progressive in the New Deal tradition, and he will always be remembered as a coauthor of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, a major piece of civil rights legislation. But even by that point, Mondale had built an impressive record on civil rights and a wide range of policies to work toward a more just society. Although as vice president and ambassador he built a legacy in the international arena, his heart was always with seeing a more caring, even moral country in its domestic affairs.

Minnesota impact: For decades, Mondale stood as a living monument to the state’s culture of good governance. There was never a whirl of scandal around him; he embodied the idea that public service was a noble calling and that government was about people working together to make the community better. He carried that torch for his mentor, Hubert Humphrey, and picked it up again when Paul Wellstone was tragically killed just days before Election Day in 2002.

National presence: To students of national politics, Mondale’s term as vice president transformed that office. His broad set of responsibilities, including international diplomacy, and close working relationship with President Carter influenced nearly all his successors. The words issued by former President Carter after VP Mondale’s death, that he considered his “dear friend... the best vice president in our country’s history” is both a beautiful testament to their relationship and actually a plausible claim. And as one marker of who he was, we should always remember his choice to put the first woman, Geraldine Ferraro, on a major party ticket.

Challenges: While Minnesota remembers him with great fondness, and especially his decency and political values, in a national perspective, we would have to take account of some of his weaknesses: he was personally charming and funny but came across as especially wooden when set against the “Great Communicator” of Ronald Reagan. Also, he led the party at a time when the party was struggling with its identity. By the time he stepped into the 2002 Senate race, some saw him as a representative of a different age, and as a candidate of nostalgia rather than a vision for the future.

With hindsight we understand: Politics needs great people, but individuals can’t stand against the tide. Mondale was a leader of the party in the transitional years of the ‘80s, when progressives, who were splintered after 1968 and vastly out of favor during the Reagan era. Unfortunately, when telling the story of Mondale’s life in politics, one chapter will be his overwhelming defeat as the Democratic nominee in 1984. With distance we came to understand that it didn’t really matter who the party nominated that year.

“One of the things that always impressed me about Fritz was his taking a very courageous stance against the Vietnam War. Fritz started out as a supporter, then fairly rapidly began questioning it. In 1969, when I was vice-chair of the Minnesota Young Demcrats, he came to Macalester to speak at a rally against the war. My memory of that day? You couldn’t pack any more people into that fieldhouse. If five marathons had come around, they would have had a fit. It was a rambunctious scene, and Mondale gave a great speech, which was well-received by Macalester students.” —Peter Fenz ’70

“Although I didn’t know Fritz and Joan when I was a student, Macalester is a small family, so we met each other at various gatherings over time. I spent six years on the Minneapolis City Council, and the first time I was sworn in, in 1978, my brother and sister-in-law came to the ceremony. Fritz was vice president at the time and happened to be in Minneapolis that day, and the city council president called to ask if he wanted to swear in the new council. I’m in the audience with my brother and sister-in-law and my fellow council members, and Fritz comes walking down the aisle. Everyone turns to watch him walk in, and then he looks at me and says, ‘Hi, Sally. And I stammered: ‘Hello, Mr. Vice President,’ and he walked on. My brother grabbed my arm and said, ‘Do you really know the vice president?! I thought he was going to faint. That’s typical of the person Fritz was: though gracious, giving of himself, just a delightful guy.’ —Sally Howard ’58

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“Although I didn’t know Fritz and Joan when I was a student, Macalester is a small family, so we met each other at various gatherings over time. I spent six years on the Minneapolis City Council, and the first time I was sworn in, in 1978, my brother and sister-in-law came to the ceremony. Fritz was vice presi- dent at the time and happened to be in Minneapolis that day, and the city council president called to ask if he wanted to swear in the new council. I’m in the audience with my brother and sister-in-law and my fellow council members, and Fritz comes walking down the aisle. Everyone turns to watch him walk in, and then he looks at me and says, ‘Hi, Sally. And I stammered: ‘Hello, Mr. Vice President,’ and he walked on. My brother grabbed my arm and said, ‘Do you really know the vice president?!’ I thought he was going to faint. That’s typical of the person Fritz was: though gracious, giving of himself, just a delightful guy.’ —Sally Howard ’58

“In my junior year, I received the new Joan Adams Mondale En- dowed Scholarship, which supports students in the arts because Joan Mondale was so active in the art world. I got to spend some time with Vice President Mondale in the ceramics studio. He knew a lot about ceramics, and that was a surprise for me: I didn’t expect someone like him to know what makes a good bowl or plate, and he was picking up pieces to test the weight and look at the technique. I gave him a bowl that I had made—probably my favorite at the time—and he told me he was going to eat his cereal the next morning in that bowl. I was very surprised but also very honored: some people think ceramic pieces are artifacts that belong on shelves, but when people tell me they’re going to use the pieces that I make, it means a lot to me.” —Egzon Sulja ’16

“When the studio art building was renamed in 2014 in Joan Ad- ams Mondale’s honor, I heard Vice President Mondale speak at the rededication, and I immediately got a sense of his presence. And I had this idea: what if he came to speak about his work in Japan with one of my classes? It would be so amazing. At that time I felt like a very young professor, and I was so nervous to approach him. But I figured it couldn’t hurt to ask. So during the reception, I approached him, planted my feet, and waited for my chance to introduce myself and tell him about my class. What impressed me so much then, and in all the steps that followed, was his common- sense graciousness. His interest was very natural and vivid; he wanted to visit the class, and he wanted to talk to students.

Later that year, he visited ‘Narratives of Alienation,’ my class about how modern Japanese fiction registers a sense of distance or exclusion from the world. My students prepared questions and were really excited. I saw them also dealing with a disconnect they observed: how the person sitting in front of them had been part of so much history. They had a lot of questions about that. He carried all of his experience with him, yet he was able to listen and talk with students candidly and directly, with curiosity about their perspectives. Despite all of his accomplishments, he was a human being first. I understood better than how he was a hero for a lot of people. I saw it up close.” —Professor Arthur Mitchell, Asian Languages and Cultures
If I can help train new leaders, that’s the best use of my time and experience.”

Douglas Johnson ’71

“Macalester helped me develop a language around the social justice issues that had always bothered me.”

FROM CHALLENGING RACISM at Prada to advocating for the rights of transgender people in prison, Demoya Gordon. 06 has dedicated her career to making positive change through the law. Gordon grew up in Jamaica. A law clerk as an attorney would make her parents proud, which was important to Gordon. But she also wanted her work to make the world more just and fair. At Macalester, Gordon realized she could explore law “in a way that would better the world,” says her nominator. The readings, teachings, and conversations at Macalester helped me develop a language around the social justice issues that had always bothered me.”

Gordon is currently a supervising attorney at the New York City Commission on Human Rights. There, she tackles discrimination in public spaces and base-based profiling by city law enforcement. Looking back, Gordon says she often doubted herself. Learning on her Macalester community helped. “I didn’t have the support of my Mac friends and professors . . . I don’t know if I would have made it.”

writes her nominator, “Demoya continues to see pathways for change, and I am grateful that she is among the many incredibly credible women who have been nurtured and sent out into the world by Macalster.”

AMY HAGSTROM MILLER ’89 is a woman of exceptional courage and determination,” writes her nominator. “She has what we call it in Texas grit.”

In 2016, that grit brought Hagstrom Miller all the way to the Supreme Court. Her clinics were the lead plaintiff in the Miller all the way to the Supreme Court. Her clinics were the lead plaintiff in the case that ended the ban on abortion in Texas. Her win created a national movement that has enabled thousands of torture survivors to dispute restrictions around abortion, and preserve access to abortion around the country.

Hagstrom Miller is the founder and CEO of Whole Woman’s Health, managing eight clinics in five states. After years working in different clinic settings, she learned that many approaches to abortion care services were rooted in patriarchy and traditional medical approaches. In

“They’re inspiring women doing good work in a very broken world.”

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“Having diverse minds in the same room will help propel science farther, faster.”

WHEN CANCER RESEARCHER Jaye Gardiner ’11 dreams up a solution to a problem, she’s not one to wait for someone else to take action. Take FOXCOS, which she cofounded in 2015 to increase scientific literacy through comics as a storytelling medium. Or the Unique Scientists website and trading cards, projects she helped organize to celebrate the diversity of scientists. Or the Black in Cancer group, which she co-organized last year to promote diversity in the cancer and biomedical research communities and support young scientists of color. Through these projects and more, Gardiner is making science more approachable and inclusive for people from diverse backgrounds.

“Everyone’s perspective is unique and based on their lived experience, and they will tackle and solve problems in a different way than someone else will,” says Gardiner, who works as a postdoctoral research trainee in Philadelphia’s Fox Chase Cancer Center, supported by numerous competitive traineeships. “Having diverse minds in the same room will help propel science farther, faster.”

writes her nominator, “Jaye has taken her love of science and her love of comics—two seemingly unrelated fields—and created a way to broaden the gap so that she can inspire and teach others.”

“His work is about telling the stories, making the connections, celebrating the work of the people he meets, and providing his readers with a clearer understanding of the world around us,” writes his nominator.

By introducing him to liberal theology, his Macalester peers prompted Herlinger to think about religion in a new way. Forty years later, his nominator calls him “one of the nation’s leading thinkers and writers focused on the intersection of religion and international issues.”

“Throughout his 40-year journalism career, Chris Herlinger ’81 has consistently and eloquently lived out views that are at the core of a Macalester education,” writes his nominator.

A New York-based international correspondent for National Catholic Reporter’s Global Sisters Report, Herlinger has reported from Bangladesh, South Sudan, Haiti, the Middle East, and Europe, covering the work of Catholic sisters, global humanitarian issues, and the United Nations. “I feel very drawn to the Catholic sisters I write about,” says Herlinger. “They’re inspiring women doing good work in a very broken world.”

Along with his daily journalism, Herlinger penned a trilogy: Food Fight: Struggling for Justice in a Hungry World, Bubble Nation: Haiti’s Pain, Haiti’s Promise and Where Mercy Fails: Darfur’s Struggle to Survive.

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“I thought this broad perspective and humility would be a good formula for a book group.”

EMILY P.G. ERICKSON ’08 calls her reason for wanting a Mac alumni book group “selfish,” but her efforts toward creating and directing MacReads are anything but.

In 2012, Erickson launched the monthly Twin Cities-based MacReads group. Macalester alumni tend to pay close attention to perspectives other than their own,” says Erickson, who worked as an urban planner, earned a master’s degree in psychology, and now works as a freelance writer. “I thought this broad perspective and humility would be a good formula for a book group.”

Over the past ten years, Erickson has devoted considerable time and energy into organizing MacReads. And every month, people show up. Clearly, alumni crave what she created: a fun and safe space to exchange ideas, much like what they encountered at Macalester.

After George Floyd was killed near her home, she wrote a trio of widely read essays about how parents can talk to their white children about race and justice. When the Alumni Board asked Erickson to help facilitate discussions on antiracism in education, parenting, and community activism, she answered the call.

Intelligent curiosity, compassion, and multiculturalism—Macalester helped sharpen these values, Erickson says, from “ideas that you talk about in high school to embodied action.”

“Data is produced with our beliefs and values embedded in it.”

“From the Moment” I met Nyalleng Moorosi ’06, writes her nominator, “I was both awed and inspired.”

A leader in the fields of artificial intelligence (AI) and data science, Moorosi helped set up the first Google Research Lab in Africa and co-founded an Africa-wide summer school focused on machine learning, all while researching how AI perpetuates inequality.

How a software engineer for Google AI, Moorosi aims to help people understand how data influences their lives. “Even the most perfectly quantitative space is not perfectly without bias,” Moorosi says. “Data is produced with our beliefs and values embedded in it.”

Along with her groundbreaking research, Moorosi has brought other women, especially Black women in Africa, along with her as trailblazers in a field made neither easy nor accessible for women.

Moorosi’s interest in computer science and research was cultivated by two women: Professor Susan Fox, who sparked Moorosi’s interest in computing, and Professor Libby Shoop, who introduced Moorosi to research. “The way teaching was carried on at Mac was transformative,” Moorosi says.

 Writes her nominator: “Nyalleng fully embodies Macalester values, continuing to see the goodness and potential in the world that energized so many of us during our Mac days.”

“I learned the enormous sense of the possible.”

SIXTEEN YEARS AGO, on a mission trip to help abused and abandoned girls in Honduras, Kris Amundson ’71 and two friends had a realization: if these girls could go to college, they could have far better lives. “We looked at each other,” says Amundson, “and we said, ‘We could do this.’”

With that, La BECA Women’s Scholarship Foundation began. “Beca means ‘scholarship’ in Spanish,” Amundson explains, “but we use it as an acronym for bringing education, compassion, and assistance to girls and women in Central and South America.” La BECA has awarded more than $550,000 in scholarships to 114 scholars in six countries.

She has remained a fighter for kids in politics, as a leader in K-12 education, and as founder of multiple nonprofits. Amundson served for 10 years in the Virginia House of Delegates and later as president and CEO of the National Association of State Boards of Education.

Most recently, Amundson wrote the book 81 Questions for Parents: Helping Your Kids Succeed in School, founded EduTutorVA, a nonprofit to tutor K-12 students at risk of falling behind during the pandemic, and co-chaired the Class of 1971’s 50th Reunion committee.

At Macalester, I learned the enormous sense of the possible,” says Amundson. “If you need to get something done, you get together a bunch of people and then you go do it.”

“Mac gave me the ability to grow into myself.”

Michael Coleman ’11 has stayed connected with Mac in so many ways since graduation, from serving for seven years on the Young Macalister Alumni Connect (YMac) steering committee to pitching in on alumni panels. (And that’s not even factoring in his role as a Mac tennis coach.) For Coleman, the explanation is easy: “Macalester feels like home to me—more than my actual house sometimes, more than the home I grew up in and loved,” he says. “No matter what’s going on, I can walk onto campus and feel good.”

Coleman’s college tennis experience created the foundation for his Mac connection, and he also worked as a residential assistant for three years, building community for new students.

He continues to build community through YMac programming: especially networking events that bring together alumni in different life stages. During the pandemic, YMac has drawn in more alumni through online events, in addition to helping students prepare for life after graduation. Soon, Coleman looks forward to resuming Durex Brothers coffee chats with students who reach out.

“If I had to choose one thing that Mac has given me for my career, it’s not even factoring in my role as a Mac tennis coach.”

“The most fun I had in my work life was as Macalester’s dean of students,” says Mary Ackerman ’70. “Macalester students are unbelievable. They’re smart, fun, critical, supportive, and creative—you don’t get anything better.”

As a student, says Ackerman, “Mac gave me the ability to grow into myself: to understand that I could lead and be passionate about things that mattered.”

After being hired as a Macalester admissions counselor, she eventually rose to become director of admissions, one of two women in the country in that role at the time. From 1979 to 1991, Ackerman created a nationally recognized student affairs program as dean of students.

In 2011, Ackerman retired and reignited her activist roots. Her new community grappled with a proposed pipeline, set to run through wetlands, wild rice paddies, tribal lands, and across the Mississippi. Ackerman and her husband gathered leaders from water conservation organizations around their kitchen table. Those efforts launched the Northern Water Alliance of Minnesota, a collaboration to preserve and protect clean water. Empowering others to use their voices continues to drive Ackerman, as it did during her tenure at Mac.

 Writes her nominator: “She’s an inspirational and brilliant leader.”

I want to set up future Mac students and alumni to do great things.”

MICHAEL COLEMAN ’11 has lived much of his own life within the Mac community. His mother is a Mac alumnus, his father was a Mac professor for 25 years, and his sister is a Mac alumna.

Coleman has spent three years as a residential assistant for upperclassmen on campus. Coleman has also worked as a residential assistant for three years, building community for new students.

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 “I want to set up future Mac students and alumni to do great things.”

Michael Coleman ’11

http://macalester.edu/alumni/alumni

EMILY P.G. ERICKSON ’08

Kris Amundson ’71

EMILY P.G. ERICKSON ’08

Kris Amundson ’71

Macalester Today Summer 2021

Mary Ackerman ’70

Read the full profiles and watch videos about each award recipient: macalester.edu/alumni/alumni awards
It’s the classic question for advice columnists everywhere.

My family is getting together for a celebration, and I’m concerned that my staunch right-wing uncle and my left-of-center cousins will end up in a shouting match—maybe even a food fight. What should I do (besides wearing a rain slicker and hoping for the best)?

If that seems like a tricky situation, then consider the everyday challenges faced by Paul Smyke ’85, a member of the executive committee and head of regional strategies for North America at the World Economic Forum.

The Forum’s annual meeting at Davos, Switzerland, is usually attended by CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, leaders from academia, business, government, and civil society. It’s a “protocol-free environment,” where businesspeople hang out with other businesspeople, scientists with other scientists, and heads of state/government, top academicians, media leaders, and arts and culture influencers. During his tenure, the group of politicians and businesspeople that have spoken at Davos and other Forum events includes presidents, vice presidents, governors, and more than 100 U.S. senators and members of Congress. They represent an incredible range of political and philosophical viewpoints.

With all the headlines that annual meeting generates, it might be surprising to learn that it’s just a small part of the Forum’s work. Davos is actually only about 30 percent of what we do on a year-round basis,” he says. “There are hundreds of different working groups tailing away all year long.” Forum gatherings are the kind of places where someone from an environmental nonprofit can have a conversation with the head of an oil company, or where a leader of Greenpeace can sit down with the CEO of McDonald’s. “We live in a world where businesspeople hang out with other businesspeople, scientists with other scientists,” he says. “At the Forum, we break down the silos, mix it up a little bit, and create conversations among those who don’t normally speak to each other.”

If this description is starting to make you wish for the kerfuffle at your last Thanksgiving dinner seem like small (mashed?) potatoes, Smyke has a unique perspective on how to pull off moments of constructive dialogue. He describes himself as being part of the “radical center,” a term popularized in the book of that title by Ted Halstead and Michael Lind. If you’d like to make some small steps toward civility, his suggestion is simple: “You have to start by being open to the idea that someone on the other side is a good and smart person who has reasons for thinking the way they do,” he says. “It’s easy to be condescending to those we don’t agree with, but that just increases alienation.”

Smyke’s job gives him the opportunity to model that openness and to encourage others to give it a try. At Forum gatherings, leaders from academia, business, government, and civil society might find themselves thrown together in what he describes as a “protocol-free environment,” where everyone is on an equal footing. “We invite thinkers and leaders from across disciplines to address a problem,” he says. “Sometimes, sparks will fly. If you aren’t used to hearing from those outside your sphere, it can be a real wake-up call to have your actions or intentions questioned, but that’s what should happen during a healthy debate.”

What’s the “secret sauce” of keeping things real but respectful? “The Forum is a ‘civility test lab,’ ” he says. “Sometimes, sparks will fly. If you aren’t used to hearing from those outside your sphere, it can be a real wake-up call to have your actions or intentions questioned, but that’s what should happen during a healthy debate.”

His “beat” at the Forum is U.S. and Canadian politics. Lately, he says with characteristic understatement, “there have been challenging days.” Before the pandemic, some days might have included meetings with half a dozen members of the House and Senate, officials who range across the political spectrum from the Tea Party to progressives. Smyke remains calm at the center. “I’ve done this job since the beginning of the Clinton administration,” he says. “No matter who’s in office, I just stay focused on building connections among government officials at all levels, from mayors to Capitol Hill, helping them connect with different stakeholders from around the world and trying to meet in the middle.”

It might come as no surprise that the formative years for a radical centrist happened in—where else?—Switzerland, where the World Economic Forum is headquartered. During his college search, Smyke’s guidance counselor suggested that Macalester’s international focus might be a good fit for him. “The symbolisms of flying the United Nations flag on campus was not lost on me, since I grew up in Geneva, the UN’s European headquarters,” he says.

At Mac, he got involved in residential life, becoming a residential assistant his sophomore year and being named residence hall director for Bigelow Hall his junior year. “I found my posse at Mac,” he says. “My freshman college roommate, Will Freeman, lives ten minutes from me in the Boston area, and we’re still friends. I stay connected with a ton of people from my years there.”

In addition to those friendships, the lessons learned on the St. Paul campus still resonate as far away as Davos. “I use my liberal arts education every day in my work at the Forum,” he says. “I’ve tried to be a fast learner on a wide range of topics, and I need to make the connections between issues and people.”

BY JULIE KENDRICK

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

Julie Kendrick is a Minneapolis-based writer whose work appears in HuffPost, Delta Sky magazine and the Star Tribune. @KendrickWorks
Inclusive Technology

By Elizabeth Campbell / Illustration by Michael Morgenstern

Computer science professor Lauren Milne’s research focuses on making digital interfaces more accessible for people with disabilities. Her previous projects include a touchscreen-based Braille program, accessible digital games for blind children, and a tool that helps blind programmers navigate code structure. She’s especially drawn to introductory programming environments, which are increasingly part of elementary school curriculums and how those can include kids who are blind or have low vision.

Elizabeth Campbell: What prompted your interest in working on accessible interfaces?

Lauren Milne: I majored in physics in college, but when I graduated, I knew I actually wanted to go into computer science. Before graduate school, I worked as a personal care assistant for a young man who had Angelman syndrome and used an AAC [augmented and alternative communication] device—basically a pad with icons that he could use to speak and communicate with people. It performed such a vital function, but there were also a lot of pieces that I thought could be improved. Some of those barriers are what led me to look at accessible interfaces.

I got a lot of support along the way, especially from my University of Washington advisor, Richard Ladner, who is passionate about working with students with disabilities. But a lot of it for me was just learning. I had experience working as a personal care assistant for someone with Angelman syndrome, but I did not have experience working with people who are blind. I had to learn about the tools and the community, and stay humble as a sighted researcher about what I don’t know.

EC: Sometimes people who are sighted or don’t have another disability will come in thinking they have all the answers, and we try to say, “Hey, we appreciate you working with us, but listen to us.”

LM: What I try to do is solve real problems. Richard would talk about how students would come in with proposals for fancy new additions to the white cane that often weren’t actually useful. We talked a lot about participatory design, and making sure that you’re solving a problem that’s actually a problem.

EC: What problems did you observe in introductory programming languages and how they work with screen reader technology?

LM: Traditional programming languages are text-based, so they work relatively well with screen readers, which is software that reads what is on a screen so that a blind person can use a computer or smartphone. But introductory programming languages are a lot more visual now. In particular, block-based programming environments (such as Scratch), which use puzzle-piece-like units of code, have become really popular. Because block-based programming relies heavily on visual metaphors, though, it’s not fully accessible for children with visual impairments.

We explored techniques to overcome these barriers and built Block4All, an accessible block-based environment on an iPad that uses audio and spatial cues to help blind children learn to program. For my project, I had the children figure out how to write a program where a little robot would be able to knock over Jenga towers. They were really pumped about using the robot.

EC: I wonder how many kids have felt encouraged through this work to pursue careers or courses of study after previously feeling discouraged with the lack of access.

LM: That’s one of my underlying goals: to get kids excited about potentially doing research and going into computer science or any STEM-related field. It’s very frustrating when STEM teaching tools aren’t accessible, because it sends such a poor message to students. I want to help mitigate that and say, “You are welcome. Please. We need you in this space.”

EC: Have you encountered opposition from people who don’t see a space for blind people in math, science, and technology?

LM: I don’t think I’ve necessarily faced opposition. A lot of times when I present my research, sighted people are surprised—they just didn’t know or hadn’t considered that blind people are programmers. And a lot of times when I talk with people at computer science education conferences who are sharing off awesome new programming environments that make it easy for sighted children to learn to program, I’ll ask, “Have you considered making it accessible?” That’s where I face some opposition. People say, “Oh, we don’t know how to do that.” or “We don’t have the resources to do that.” It’s a next step that never seems to get taken.

EC: How do you incorporate this research into your teaching?

LM: I taught a “Human Computer Interaction” course about research methods in designing technology, and I brought in guest lecturers to talk about designing for someone who might be different from you. For example, a blind researcher talked about how some design tools can actually propagate ableism (discrimination against people with disabilities). The classic example is that people think wearing a blindfold means they understand how someone who is blind would use an interface. And obviously that doesn’t fully represent a blind person’s experience.

EC: What are you working on now?

LM: I’m working with Professor Abby Marsh, a Mac computer science colleague, to look at security and privacy questions related to using assistive technology. Because a screen reader needs to be able to access information that’s underlying in the interface, developers have to balance keeping a system open and keeping it secure. And what happens if you’re using assistive technology on a website and that fact becomes exposed to the developer? We’re exploring the trade-off of people sharing personal information to improve accessibility. There’s so much data being collected about people. Where that information goes, and how it’s being used, are really interesting questions that people should think about.

Elizabeth Campbell, who is blind, is a reporter at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in Texas. She has a passion for greater accessibility in the workplace and beyond.
1970 The Class of 1970 will celebrate its 50th Reunion on campus June 3–5, 2022.

1971 The Class of 1971 will celebrate its 50th Reunion on campus June 3–5, 2022.

Barbara Phillips has been elected to the board of directors of the Women’s Environment and Development Organization, which was founded by Bela Abzug.

1972 The Class of 1972 will celebrate its 50th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

1974 Louise Fradenburg Joy retired from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 2018 and now practices psychoanalysis in downtown Santa Barbara. She has been a small business owner, claims adjuster, and web developer. Barbara Phillips has been elected to the board of directors of the Women’s Environment and Development Organization, which was founded by Bela Abzug.


1982 The Class of 1982 will celebrate its 40th Reunion on campus June 3–5, 2022.

1983 Karen Hoffman is now an instructional designer with the California Dental Association. She works remotely from her home in a small town in rural Arizona.

1984 Andrea Seviston retired in July 2020 after 35 years in academia and 14 years in corporate America.


1988 Omar Imady was a lead author on “Syria at War: Eight Years On,” a report from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Centre for Syrian Studies at the University of St. Andrews. He also co-authored the fourth edition of the Historical Dictionary of Syria, which has been updated to reflect recent events in the country.

1995 Artist Rafael Francisco Salas curated the exhibition “In Flowered Fields” at the Museum of Wisconsin Art in Milwaukee this past spring. Rafael paired his own recent work with rarely seen objects from the museum’s permanent collection to highlight the different approaches Wisconsin artists have taken in representing the landscape. Rafael is a professor of art at Ripon College and a contributing writer to Newcity Art Chicago.

2004 Masha Markovskaya Yevzelnov was named one of Minnesota Lawyers’ Attorneys of the Year for 2020. She also received the Minnesota State Bar Association Tax Law Section’s 2020 Jack Carlson Memorial Distinguished Service Award. Masha chairs the Tax Disputes and Litigation Group at Fredrikson & Byron.

2005 Elena Kamenskaya, a Japanese teacher at Eastern High School in Louisville, Ky., was named National Language Teacher of the Year by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in November.

2007 Will Clarke and his wife, Alison, welcomed a baby girl named the editor-in-chief of the digital publication Autostraddle.

2008 Carmen Phillips has been named the editor-in-chief of the digital publication Autodidact.

2009 Anna Min, a member of Mac’s Annex, is featured in an interview about her experiences as a student and her contributions to the Ann Arbor, Michigan-based queer liberation and community organization OutFront Minnesota.


2016 The Class of 2016 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2017 The Class of 2017 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2018 The Class of 2018 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2019 The Class of 2019 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2020 The Class of 2020 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2021 The Class of 2021 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2022 The Class of 2022 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2023 The Class of 2023 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2024 The Class of 2024 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2025 The Class of 2025 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2026 The Class of 2026 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2027 The Class of 2027 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2028 The Class of 2028 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2029 The Class of 2029 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2030 The Class of 2030 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2031 The Class of 2031 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2032 The Class of 2032 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2033 The Class of 2033 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2034 The Class of 2034 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2035 The Class of 2035 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2036 The Class of 2036 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2037 The Class of 2037 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2038 The Class of 2038 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2039 The Class of 2039 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2040 The Class of 2040 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.
Last October, Liz Hoefer helped launch the Galveston-Houston Immigrant Representation Project, a nonprofit organization that provides area immigrants with high-quality legal services.

2010
Quinn Rivenburgh became a licensed professional counselor and board-certified art therapist last year. In January, they joined Full Spectrum Therapy in Portland, Ore., as a mental health counselor for queer and trans youth and a supervisor for student counseling interns. Quinn also teaches as an adjunct in art therapy programs at Lewis and Clark College and Adler University.

2012
The Class of 2012 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2013
Rebecca Zimmerman Hornstein looked forward to becoming a rabbi upon her graduation from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in May 2021. She is a labor organizer, a progressive activist, and the campaign manager for a progressive city council candidate in Lynn, Mass. Rebecca also co-founded the website Rituals for Revolutionaries, which offers marriage rituals and counseling for those who may be skeptical of organized religion.

2014
Libie Motchan is co-founder of Fulton, a new venture that offers “supportive, sustainable, and comfortable” arch support insoles.

2015
Irene Gibson is a statistician in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Immigration Statistics. This year she was the lead author on the DHS report “COVID-19 Vulnerability by Immigration Status,” detailing population estimates, demographic profiles, status-specific risk factors, and health policies that apply to immigrants by status group. “Foreign-born noncitizens in the United States have different COVID-19 risks and outreach requirements than the U.S.-born population, and accounting for these differences can help create a more inclusive health system,” she wrote.

2017
The Class of 2017 will celebrate its 5th Reunion June 3–5, 2022.

2018
Anna Hitchcock is working as an artist and woodworker in Rhode Island. Her senior thesis sculpture, entitled Let Go!, was exhibited in New York City in 2019 and was recently featured in a show at the Messler Gallery in Rockport, Maine. A portrait of pain and transformation following sexual assault, Let Go! interjects intimacy into the Me Too movement and highlights the complex implications of overly relying on individual trauma to catalyze social change. Anna’s work can be viewed on her website: annahitchcock.com.

ALUMNI AWARD NOMINATIONS
Think about your Mac network

Who exemplifies Mac’s values of internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society?

Help us celebrate our alumni. Each year, Macalister seniors graduates with Alumni Awards—and nominations are now open for 2022.

To learn more about how to nominate a friend or classmate (especially in honor of an upcoming milestone Reunion), visit macalester.edu/alumni/alumniawards or email alumnioffice@macalester.edu.

The nomination deadline is Sept. 27.

Becca LaFoy ’12 married Greg Nash on Oct. 10, 2020, in an outdoor, masks-required ceremony in Grand Marais, Minn. Mac alumni in attendance included Becca’s parents (Randy LaFoy ’74 and Margaret Westin ’74) and brother (Ed LaFoy ’16), as well as Anna Schiltz Molina ’12.

Vassi Tomova ‘06 and Mukund Raghu were married on Sept. 22, 2019, in Athens, Greece, surrounded by many Mac friends.
Major Dramas & Other Catastrophes

"The divide between the digital and the real world no longer exists; we are interconnected all the time. What must we do to work out who we are, and where we belong? How do we find the space to grow, unite, and confront the systems of oppression? This conflict can be found in the fissures between the body, gender, and identity. Often the glitch is considered a mistake, a faulty overlaying, a bug in the system. Legacy Russell argues that we need to embrace the glitch in order to break down the binaries and limitations that define gender, race, sexuality."

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ADVICE FOR WRITERS:

In the summer of 2019, we—Seth Levine, a venture capitalist, and Elizabeth MacBride, a business journalist—set out to tell the stories of entrepreneurs beyond the high-tech enclaves we both know well. What did entrepreneurs look like in the middle of America and in communities outside the halo of traditional technology startup hotbeds?

What we discovered surprised us. The next generation of entrepreneurs doesn’t look anything like past generations, and defines the popular image of an “entrepreneur” as a young, white founder, building a technology company. In fact, almost the opposite is true. Increasingly, our next generation of entrepreneurs are Black, brown, female, and over 40. They are more likely to be building a business on Main Street than in Silicon Valley. They typically start businesses based on their passions and rooted in their communities. In many cases, they are building businesses in areas left behind after the uneven recovery that followed the Great Recession of 2008–2009.

We call these entrepreneurs New Builders. They are the future of America’s entrepreneurial legacy. This book tells their stories and explains how the financial systems and power networks that must change if we are to help them succeed.}

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遗产 Russell
08, Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto (Verso, 2020)

"The divide between the digital and the real world no longer exists; we are interconnected all the time. What must we do to work out who we are, and where we belong? How do we find the space to grow, unite, and confront the systems of oppression? This conflict can be found in the fissures between the body, gender, and identity. Often the glitch is considered a mistake, a faulty overlaying, a bug in the system. Legacy Russell argues that we need to embrace the glitch in order to break down the binaries and limitations that define gender, race, sexuality."

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Seth Levine ’94 and Elizabeth MacBride, The New Builders: Face to Face with the True Future of Business (Wiley, 2021)

"The imposition of WeWork in September 2019 was an astounding moment in business. Nearly $40 billion in value on paper vanished, virtually overnight, as the investment world woke up to the reality that America’s most valuable startup wasn’t a tech company but simply a real estate company—one that was losing more than $3.6 billion a year. Its charismatic hard-partying CEO, once lionized as the archetype of the modern-day ‘visionary’ startup founder, suddenly became a target for criticism, particularly for his self-enrichment. In the wake of the company’s sudden unraveling, investors lost money, and employees lost their jobs—the CEO left rich."

As reporters covering the saga for The Wall Street Journal, we had seats at the forefront of this downfall, chronicling the company as it buckled, and unearthing new details that became part of the story of its collapse. Still, despite an extensive reporting effort at the time, we were left with countless key questions unanswered.

At the story’s heart was a simple mystery: How did this happen? Why did some of the world’s top investors and bankers fall under the spell of this company? How did capitalism court to view something so inherently simple—a company leasing real estate—as a disruptive tech startup valued higher than Fortune 500 companies like FedEx and Target? Was the WeWork story an outlier, or was it simply the most vivid example of a cultural shift that had formed within twenty-first-century entrepreneurial and investment culture?"

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Eric Dregni ’93, For the Love of God: A Father and Son’s Search for Norwegian Happiness (University of Minnesota Press, 2021)

Lisa Schrenk ’86, The Oak Park Studio of Frank Lloyd Wright (University of Chicago Press, 2021)


Timothy B. Maltzow ’98, Gender and the Sunders of German Memory: From The Tin Drum to Pealing the Onion (Carden House, 2021)

Eric Dregni ’93, For the Love of God: A Father and Son’s Search for Norwegian Happiness (University of Minnesota Press, 2021)


"Warwick"

I learned from a sign that Warwick, Georgia is the home of the National Grits Festival.

My eyes were grateful for something to focus on besides the road shaven down by cotton plantations with names like Whispering Pines and Oak Grove and one called Liberty.

all of them choking the road from both sides, closing in to a point on the horizon that I would reach before settling on a new distance, vanishing point by vanishing point, connecting the dots in the Spanish moss line in a world I used to think was vanishing as well.
REUNION 2021

For the second year in a row, we celebrated Reunion online instead of on the Great Lawn, with a program designed to welcome all alumni from 65 classes attending this year’s event, and they joined Reunion from around the world, from Cyprus to Kenya to Singapore. This year’s program included all-class socials, class-specific gatherings, dance and Department of Multicultural Life workshops, and faculty and staff office hours. We commemorated milestones for class years ending in 1 and 6, and honored alumni who received Alumni Awards in recognition of their contributions to their community (see p. 26). We’re so grateful for all of our volunteers who helped plan events, as well as everyone who joined us to connect, reflect, and celebrate at Reunion 2021.

BY THE NUMBERS

2021 Most recent class represented
1946 Most senior Golden Scot in attendance
1996 Class with the most attendees
13 Countries represented
24 Total events
$21.2 MILLION committed to Macalester by milestone classes (including 1970 and 1971) in honor of their Reunions
$7.1 MILLION The Class of 1970’s Reunion gift
$13.7 MILLION The Class of 1971’s gift so far, setting a record for 50th Reunion giving
24 Mac trivia teams (including Mac of Ages, Scot Drop and Roll, and DeWitt the Cow)

Keep Connecting:
macdirect.macalester.edu

THE GLOBAL MAC NETWORK

The Alumni Board strives to connect alumni with one another and the college, wherever they are in the world. Each board member supports those efforts by joining a working group focused on athletic, career connections, or diversity. Through collaborations with Career Exploration and Entrepreneurship and Innovation, the Macalester Career Connections (MC2) working group helps alumni (and students) establish and build their careers. MC2 chair Ezequiel Jimenez ’13 shares more about current MC2 projects—and how you can pitch in.

Alumni Small Business Directory
In 2020, MC2 supported the college’s Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Alumni Engagement offices in launching a directory highlighting alumni-owned businesses, with more than 60 businesses on the list. “This is a good way for alumni to engage and support one another,” Jimenez says. “I’m very happy to buy something from an alum because I know it comes with care and attention to the values we carry.” Browse the directory (and add your business to the list): macalester.edu/alumni/mac-together.

The #HireMac push
Since March 2020, Mac alumni have shared more than 300 job and internship opportunities with the college’s Career Exploration team, which shares postings with current students and recent graduates. It’s a work in progress: fill out the Google form at bit.ly/helphiremac to share job and internship opportunities at your workplace.

MacExplore
Last January, more than 80 students participated in the college’s virtual MacExplore, which included career workshops and the opportunity to solve a case problem for a local organization, Alight. Sixty alumni served as mentors, providing students with feedback and advice prior to their final presentations.

Macalester Career Clubs
New this year: Macalester Career Clubs are designed to foster career exploration and connections, for alumni of all ages and graduation dates. The working group also helped assemble a downloadable kit for alumni who want to start their own club for a profession, geographic location, or interest area. Email Toni Phelan at aphelan@macalester.edu to start your own alumni club.

JOIN US NEXT:
Mac In Your City in-person and online / Sept 19–25

THE GLOBAL MAC NETWORK

GET INVOLVED

Reach out—and sign up. When Ezequiel Jimenez moved to the United Kingdom for a master’s degree program, he “immediately went to look at MacDirect to see who lives in London,” then started gathering with alumni in the city. Register at macdirect.macalester.edu to start connecting—the college is rolling out new features this summer.

Want to start your own Career Club? Email Toni Phelan at aphelan@macalester.edu.

Join the #HireMac campaign by sharing your job and internship opportunities: fill out the Google form at bit.ly/helphiremac.

Connect with alumni at Mac in Your City this September: macalester.edu/macinyourcity.

Celebrate someone in your network by nominating them for the Alumni Board or an Alumni Award: macalester.edu/alumni/alumniboard.

“And come to Reunion, even if it’s not your milestone year!” Jimenez says. “It’s a source of inspiration every year.”
**A BEST-PRACTICES INNOVATOR**

Gulam Ozairan Williams ’92 spends her weekdays focused on large-scale change—and the best practices that will help a company get there. At the global CEO advisory firm Teneo, where she’s the chief operating officer, Williams is applying proven best practices to help establish the young, fast-growing company as an industry leader.

After majoring in economics and international studies at Macalester, Williams worked in investment banking at Morgan Stanley, then attended Harvard Business School before moving to management consulting at the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). Early on, her path was more predictable than the ranks, but now she seeks out variety. “Every three years or so, I see how I can build on my current role and change it up,” she says. Yet over the course of nearly 30 years, she’s only worked for three companies. We asked Williams to share what she’s learned about embracing opportunity and continuous growth.

### Be flexible

At BCG, my responsibilities expanded over time, but my priorities were shifting. I had three children in less than four years, and my work required heavy travel. “I reached a point where I needed to find a different role for my personal and professional priorities to co-exist. BCG worked with me to create roles. Now that I’m on the management side, I’m all for that. Obviously, we can’t create jobs where there’s no need, but we need to be flexible. If someone raises their hand and wants to try something new, can we make something work?"

### Find the opportunity

I had to learn over the years to let go of my predefined expectations of what makes a “good” experience. You’re working on a client project, for example, and you get asked to work in an industry in which you have zero interest—but maybe you’re working with a manager who does team management really well or you are getting deeper expertise in a new business topic. Or maybe you’re going to be traveling heavily, and you can say, “I’m going to learn about doing a good job while being on the road all the time.” Find that piece that will test you in new ways.

### Let ideas percolate

I’m a very pragmatic thinker, and I used to bring that approach to brainstorming sessions. “That’s a good idea.” “That’s not a good idea.” Here’s how we should do it.” I learned to approach these sessions with a more open mind. I’ve learned to let ideas just percolate. Even if you don’t run with those ideas—eventually, they can be ideas—they can still change how you approach a project or problem by showing you a different perspective that may not have occurred to you.

### Give immediate feedback

It’s so important to give “just-in-time” feedback right after a big meeting or presentation—to take the time then to say what went well and what didn’t, rather than waiting until your next formal meeting together. Early in my career, a manager told me that I’d start my questions with “Don’t you think,” giving the impression that I had already made up my mind. My manager encouraged me to ask more open-ended questions. It’s simple, but it stuck with me.

### Expand who can be a mentor

I’ll hear people in my industry say, “I can’t find a mentor.” But a role model doesn’t need to be one individual. Think about what skills you want to learn, and see which colleagues are strong in each trait. Take 10 percent of one colleague, 20 percent of another, and create your own hybrid role model.

In 2019, Buole Strickland ’59 hosted his first alumni event as Mac’s Houston regional chapter lead; a reception at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, followed by time to explore the exhibits. There was only one hurdle: some members of the multigenerational group gathered on the museum’s plaza was in such deep conversation that they never even entered the museum.

For Strickland, it’s a vivid example of how the Mac connection endures. A thousand miles from St. Paul, “It’s validating, exhilarating, encouraging,” he says. “We share so much in common across generations. Even as campus changes, as student needs change, we still share the same core values.”

Strickland’s Mac experiences helped shape those values, especially in Professor Hildegard Binder Johnson’s human geography class. “When I was a first-year geography would’ve been toward the end of my list of potential majors,” Strickland says. “But she engendered in us such an expansive view of the world; and that lit a fire in me. She taught us about eighteenth-century geographer Alexander von Humboldt, who said, ‘The most dangerous world views are the views of those who haven’t viewed the world,’ and guided us to see the world with an inquisitive, analytical mind—but she also told us that there has to be an end to analysis, when you have to take action.”

Strickland has carried those lessons ever since, gravitating toward job opportunities and social justice engagement where he could make an impact, including his work at the end of his career at the University of Texas’s MD Anderson Cancer Center. He has also traveled internationally, with a keen interest in photography.

For many of his 40 years in Houston, Strickland focused his advocacy abroad. Then he started to wonder why there weren’t more Mac alumni events in Houston. “Someone needs to do this and I can be that someone.”

Strickland, a loyal Macalester Fund donor and James Wallace Society member, remembers realizing, “But it hasn’t been a one-person show—I’ve been pleased to see the response from other alumni in the area, too. I feel a double call to promote Mac regional activities and hopefully be a guiding light to encourage engagement and support for the school.”

Although the pandemic halted the chapter’s in-person plans, the group cosponsored Mac’s In Your City event with Dallas alumni by Zoom and will continue virtual options alongside future in-person events. One chapter event idea on Strickland’s list: “Someone could be the one who gets to that museum, so we can finally make it inside this time.”

**GET INVOLVED**

Visit macalester.edu/alumni to connect with regional alumni chapters around the world, learn more about 2021 Mac In Your City events, September 19-25; and explore other opportunities to support and engage with Macalester.

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**MAC ENTREPRENEUR:** Jaime Hasama ’18

**Founder and CEO**

SoCal Sunny Creative

**Los Angeles**

**BUSINESS FOCUS:** We are a social media marketing agency for nonprofits and social impact businesses, specifically focusing on animal welfare and racial justice. So far, it’s my most successful business and brings in the most revenue. We’ve worked with more than 50 organizations around the world.

**WHAT I’VE LEARNED:** Entrepreneurship is an amazing opportunity to build personal and general wealth, especially for BIPOC women. Being an entrepreneur requires vulnerability and courage and I wouldn’t have it any other way.

**UPCOMING FOCUS:** My goal this year is to double my 2020 revenue by increasing my client base and service offerings. I am also striving to be more strategic with my growth, which means hiring more team members to support the day-to-day while I focus on the long-term vision. Being a social entrepreneur is extremely fulfilling, but also exhausting, so prioritizing my mental health is a must.

Read more about Mac entrepreneurs by signing up for the college’s Entrepreneurship & Innovation monthly newsletter, where Jaime’s story appeared earlier this year: email ebrunnet@macalester.edu
We’ve missed gathering together—let’s reconnect, share memories, and start new conversations!

IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

SEPTEMBER 19–25, 2021

IN MEMORIAM

1944
Betsy Yeats Stepanovich, 99, died Feb. 8, 2021, in Santa Barbara, Calif. Her career as a nurse in West Vir- ginia, Tennessee and Minnesota is survived by two daughters, a son, numerous grandchildren, great-grand- children, and two brothers.

1949
Dave W. Clark, 94, of Newtown Square, Pa., died Feb. 7, 2021. He served in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II. Clark later taught and mentored student teaching positions with the De- partment of Defense in Germany, Turkey, Spain, Japan, and the Philippines. After returning to the United States, he worked as an educational administrator for the Department of Justice and retired from the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 1981 as north- eastern area director. Clark is survived by his wife, Mary Jean Petersen; two daughters, two sons, a granddaughter, and two great-grandchildren.

1950
Elizabeth Hooper Miller, 92, of Wake Forest, N.C., died May 1, 2021. She taught school in Jack- son, Minn., and worked for the Cincinnati Council of Camp Fire Girls in the Norwood, Ohio, YWCA; and the College of Wooster. Miller retired in 1995 after 22 years as a library technician at Wooster High School. She is survived by a daughter, a son, and four grandchildren.

1951
Donna Sandberg Campbell, 91, of Arden Hills, Minn., died April 14, 2021. After a career as an elementary school teacher, she retired from the International School of Minnesota in Eden Prairie. Campbell is survived by a daughter and a sister.

1952
Carroll E. "Pete" Peter, 91, of Roseville, Minn., died March 1, 2021. He retired in 1988 after serving as sociology professor at Concordia College for 40 years. Peter is survived by his wife, Helen; two daughters, two sons, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

1953
Jim Beebe Rose, 88, died March 3, 2021. After graduating from San Francisco Theological Seminary, Beebe was direc- tor of Christian education and pastor at churches in New York, California, Missouri, and Minnesota. The first woman appointed to the faculty of Eden Theological Seminary, Beebe also served as national president of United Presbyterian Church Educators and chairperson of the Person- nel Committee of the United Presbyterian Church’s General Assembly. She is survived by her husband, Fried, a daughter, a son, a granddaughter, and two great-grandchildren.

1955
Constance Pruden Johnson, 87, died March 6, 2021. Johnson was survived by three daughters, three granddaughters, and two great-granddaughters.

1958
Marcy N. Borchert, 85, of Fari- bault, Minn., died Feb. 17, 2021. She worked as a legal secretary for INS and as a county attorney. After her retirement, she created and sold needlepoint. She is survived by her husband, Robert; her sister, two granddaughters; and two great-granddaughters.

1959
Robert W. Awa, 89, of Shoreview, Minn., died April 14, 2021. He served with the U.S. Army in Germany during the Korean War and worked as a stockbroker. After his retirement from the investment business in 1979, he worked full-time as a volunteer. Awa is survived by his wife, Debra.

1960
Lesley "Joanne" Buggay, 82, died Jan. 7, 2021. Buggay taught in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and University of Minnesota’s College of Educa- tion and Human Development as a teacher and administrator. After her retirement, she worked part-time as a supervisor for Wells Fargo. Buggay is survived by her husband, Peter; and three children, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

1961
Richard A. Anderson, 81, of Chanhassen, Minn., died March 27, 2021. He performed under the stage name Richard Anson at theaters in the Twin Cities, including the Guthrie Theatre and the Round in the Round, and Chanhassen Dinner Theatres. He also appeared on television and in television advertisements and training films. After retiring from acting, Andersson worked as a substi- tute teacher. He is survived by his wife, Linda; a daughter, a son; three grandchildren; and a sister.

1962
Guy A. Gustafson, 80, died Feb. 24, 2021. He pursued careers in religious education, teaching English as a second language, and elementary education. Gus- tafson is survived by two daugh- ters, two sons, eight grandchild- ren, and three sisters.

1963
Emmy Lacy Jacobson, 93, died March 6, 2021. She worked as a teacher. Jacobson is survived by two daughters, a great-grand- daughter, and two great-grand- daughters.

1964
Florence Kalenious, 79, of Pine City, Minn. She was a retired elemen- tary school teacher.

1965
Willie Carey Wilson, 79, of St. Paul, Minn., died May 3, 2021, in Racine, Wis. She began her teaching career in Two Harbors, Minn., and lived a son, a daughter, and two great-grandchildren.

1966
Margaret "Mary" McKenzie Wrenn, 86, of Tucson, Ariz., died April 17, 2021. She led workshops, taught at Pima College, and exhibited her artwork at galleries through Arizona. Wrenn also served as president of the Southern Arizona Ceramics As- sociation. She is survived by her husband, Bob Wrenn; five children, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

1976
Ivan Kmit, 81, of Mora, Minn., died May 7, 2021. He served for several years in the Marine Reserves. Kmit is survived by his wife, Janet; two daughters, a son, six grandchildren, a great-grand- son, and a sister.

1977
Charlotte Horquist Wilson, 77, died Jan. 15, 2021. She is survived by two daughters, a son, four grandchildren, a great-grand- daughter, and a sister.

1978
Virginia Lawrence Elmer, 94, died Oct. 1, 2021. She is survived by her husband, Ken- neth Kub); three children, four grandchildren, and four great- grandchildren.

1979
Doris Steen Johnson, 95, of Edina, Minn., died April 16, 2021. She taught science at Min- nesota’s Bird Island High School for 34 years, retiring in 1987. A recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching, Johnson served as president and executive director of the Minnesota Science Teach- ers Association and as a board member of the National Science Teachers Association. After her retirement she worked at the Minnesota Department of Educa- tion and mentored student teachers at the University of St. Thomas. Johnson is survived by a son and three grandchildren.

1980
Jeanette "Jean" Stien Nelson, 94, of Brainerd, Minn., died April 11, 2021. She was a public school teacher and aunt who taught for two years at St. Aloysius School in Olivia, Minn. Johnson is survived by two sons, two daughters, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1981
LaVonne Haar Kennealy, 85, died March 15, 2021. She worked as a legal secretary for the U.S. Commander-in- Chief of the Pacific Command, retiring from the federal gov- ernment in 1990. She is survived by two daughters and five grandchildren.

1982
Richard A. Holm, 77, died May 5, 2021, in Shoreview, Minn. Holm is survived by his wife, Helen, two daughters, two grandsons, and a great-grandson.

1983
Margaret Oman Zold, 80, of Shoreview, Minn., died May 5, 2021. After working as a legal secretary for IDS and for a county attorney. After her retirement, she created and sold needlepoint. Zold is survived by her husband, Richard; her sister; and two great-grandchildren.

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IN MEMORIAM

Kevin K. Hogan, 94, of Hopkins, Minn., died March 31, 2021. After beginning his career with Monsanto as an environmental chemist, after leaving the company he founded a consulting firm that helped publish law for the Minnesota State Bar. He served as St. Paul city attorney and served as a referee with the Ramsey County AFL-CIO and a workers’ compensation judge. The Minnesota State Bar presented him with the 2018 Roseville E. Wahl Judicial Award of Excellence. He was a reference librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and continuing his studies at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. Fearing also played viola with various orchestras. She is survived by her parents, four sisters (including Patricia Gerber ’72), two daughters, and her brother, Kevin Fearing ’83.

Elizabeth “Penny” Nelson, 57, died March 18, 2021. After working as a primatologist with chimpanzees in Zanzibar and researching bats in Atlanta and researching bats in Atlanta, she returned to Pennsylvania as a producer, and guest host of the WHYY program “Fresh Air,” and later joined KQED-FM in California, where she worked for 25 years as a news writer, producer, and guest host of the programs “Forum” and “The California Report.” In addition, Nelson represented nonfiction writers as an agent with Manus, Salmi, Hernandez &.biz, a reference librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and continuing her studies at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. Fearing also played viola with various orchestras. She is survived by her parents, four sisters (including Patricia Gerber ’72), two daughters, and her brother, Kevin Fearing ’83.

Kevin P. Hogan, 70, died March 1, 2021. After beginning his career with Monsanto as an environmental chemist, after leaving the company he founded a consulting firm that helped publish law for the Minnesota State Bar. He served as St. Paul city attorney and served as a referee with the Ramsey County AFL-CIO and a workers’ compensation judge. The Minnesota State Bar presented him with the 2018 Roseville E. Wahl Judicial Award of Excellence. He was a reference librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and continuing his studies at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. Fearing also played viola with various orchestras. She is survived by her parents, four sisters (including Patricia Gerber ’72), two daughters, and her brother, Kevin Fearing ’83.

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THANK YOU, MAC FAMILY.

Through countless acts of kindness and generosity, you showed our community’s strength this past year. You reached out to lift up one another, you helped create hope, you expanded our students’ networks, and you demonstrated your care for students through your time and gifts. The college faced unprecedented challenges, and because of our Macalester family’s critical support, we were able to meet those challenges and build toward our future.

Because of you, we are stronger. Thank you for your support, and for being part of this community.
The Class of 2021 gathers together at a Senior Week social.