

TODAY

“When we pull together in reflection, we remember that

WE’RE NOT ALONE.

It’s there, when we quiet the panic, we can access deep wisdom, not just in ourselves, but with each other to figure out what to do next.”



Reverend Dr. Hannah Adams Ingram

College chaplain and associate dean for Institutional Equity

CARE IN COMMUNITY

The Macalester community has worked to mobilize its vast network of care amid turmoil in the Twin Cities. Read more on page 16.



12



14



20

FEATURES

The Power of Listening 12

Dr. Dziwe Ntaba '95 partners with the communities he serves to deliver the most effective medical care.

The Creator of Universes 14

Scenic artist Polly Allen Robbins '85 helps shape unforgettable visual worlds in movies and television.

Care in Community 16

The Macalester community has worked to mobilize its vast network of care amid turmoil in the Twin Cities.

Degrees of Progress 20

Amid a cultural conversation about the value of a college degree, Mac alumni in university administration still give strong marks to higher education.

Chasing Zero Waste 26

Macalester is working to reach a landfill diversion milestone before any other US campus.

Lecture Notes: Working in America 32

In Working in America, Professor Elizabeth Engle helps students decode trendy headlines and analyze the underlying forces transforming how we work.



26



32

DEPARTMENTS

Connections 2

Sounding Board 3

1600 Grand 4

Short-Term Study Away, Native Games Night, Scots LEAD, and more

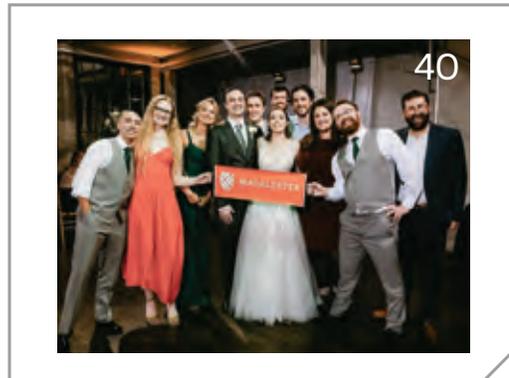
Class Notes 34

Books 36

Weddings 40

In Memoriam 44

Last Look 48



40

STAFF

EDITOR

Abraham Swee
aswee@macalester.edu

ART DIRECTION

The ESC Plan

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Ashli Cean Landa

CLASS NOTES EDITOR

Robert Kerr '92

CONTRIBUTORS

Kelsey Fox '17
 Catherine Kane '26

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Michelle Benson



MACALESTER

CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Carrie Norbin Killoran '94

PRESIDENT

Dr. Suzanne M. Rivera

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT

Joanna E. Curtis '97

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT

OF ENGAGEMENT

Catie Gardner Smith

MACALESTER TODAY (Volume 114, Number 1)

is published by Macalester College. It is mailed free of charge to alumni and friends of the college three times a year.

Circulation is 32,000.

TO UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS:

Email: alumnioffice@macalester.edu

Call: 651-696-6295

Write: Alumni Engagement Office, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105-1899

TO SHARE COMMENTS OR IDEAS:

Email: mactoday@macalester.edu

Phone: 651-696-6443

Front-Row Seat

I was pleasantly surprised to read the article about the Macalester Trio, “A Resonant History,” by Mac college archivist Ely Sheinfeld in the fall 2025 issue. Sophomore through senior years at Mac (1990–1993), I had the good fortune to have a work-study assignment as a piano accompanist and page turner for the Music Department. I also took lessons from pianist Don Betts all four years of school. As page turner, I had a front-row seat to many of Don’s performances, including with the Macalester Trio. One of my last gigs with Don was spring semester of senior year, when the group sustained an all-night rehearsal and recording session in the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center Concert Hall with the composer, Gunther Schuller. Schuller was a detailed and precise taskmaster. It was fascinating to see my teacher being taught and pulling an all-nighter!

Thanks, Macalester, the Music Department, Don Betts, and Shelley Hanson (my clarinet teacher) for such incredible and formative experiences. Although I’m not a professional musician (I’m a university archivist, so shout-out to Ely and all other Mac-related archivists!!), I’m still an active player. And, thanks to Mac and Ely for accepting, preserving, cataloging, and digitizing Don’s compositions.

Ruth Bryan '93



A Radio Mystery

I read with great interest “Stereo Types” in the fall issue. It reminded me of a decades-long mystery. I was the general manager of the radio station (then called KMCL) during my senior year, 1961–62. If my memory serves, we revived the station and moved into the balcony office in the Student Union in early 1961, creating an announcer’s booth, reception area, and engineering space. We scrounged professional mics, an Ampex 300 tape deck, and other equipment from various sources. Our program director was Richey Adams.

Five years later, my wife (Judy Judd '62) and I were exchange students in the Soviet Union, where I was doing research at the University of Vilnius in Lithuania for my PhD in history. Imagine our surprise when one morning we heard the unmistakably mellow tones of Richey on VOA (Voice of America). We had lost track of Richey since our wedding in 1963, but now we knew where he had landed. It was a nostalgic event that recalled our times at KMCL, but to this day we have no idea as to the subsequent whereabouts of Richey. A mystery.

Karl von Loewe '62

Mystery No Longer

In your recent article about the radio station you included the attached photo. John Gallos was identified but I’m quite certain that the handsome guy operating the equipment is my uncle Chris Wedes '49. People from the Seattle area may remember him as the children’s TV personality J.P.

Kirsten Wedes '81

CONNECT WITH US   

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

CORRESPONDENCE POLICY

We invite letters of 300 words or fewer. Messages may be edited for clarity, style, and space and will be published based on their relevance to issues discussed in *Macalester Today*. Share your thoughts:

- Email: mactoday@macalester.edu
- Mail: *Macalester Today*, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105

Minnesota Nice

As I write this column in early February, it feels impossible to predict what will happen three days from now, much less in March when this magazine will arrive in your hands.

Wherever you are, I imagine you have seen images of the turmoil we have been experiencing in Minnesota, including lethal violence perpetrated by federal agents against civilians in Minneapolis. Members of our campus community and residents in the surrounding neighborhoods are understandably upset, and there is a sense of uncertainty about the future reminiscent of the summer of 2020.

I hope that, in addition to the sad and frightening news, you also have seen evidence of the extraordinary valor and compassion on display in this place we call home. We all know the phrase “Minnesota Nice” can be used playfully to describe a certain style of Midwestern kindness. But this is next-level. Throughout the state, people from every walk of life have organized peaceful demonstrations, food drives, school safety patrols, and other forms of mutual aid for strangers. On campus, we also have been working hard to support our students, colleagues, and neighbors—especially those who are most vulnerable.

As we navigate the turbulence, I have been thinking about psychiatrist Dr. Viktor Frankl’s observation that “the last of the human freedoms [is] to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances.” We did not choose for our home to be at the center of our country’s broken heart (again) but, at Macalester, we are choosing to meet the moment with an attitude of determination and resolve that should make all alumni proud to be Scots.

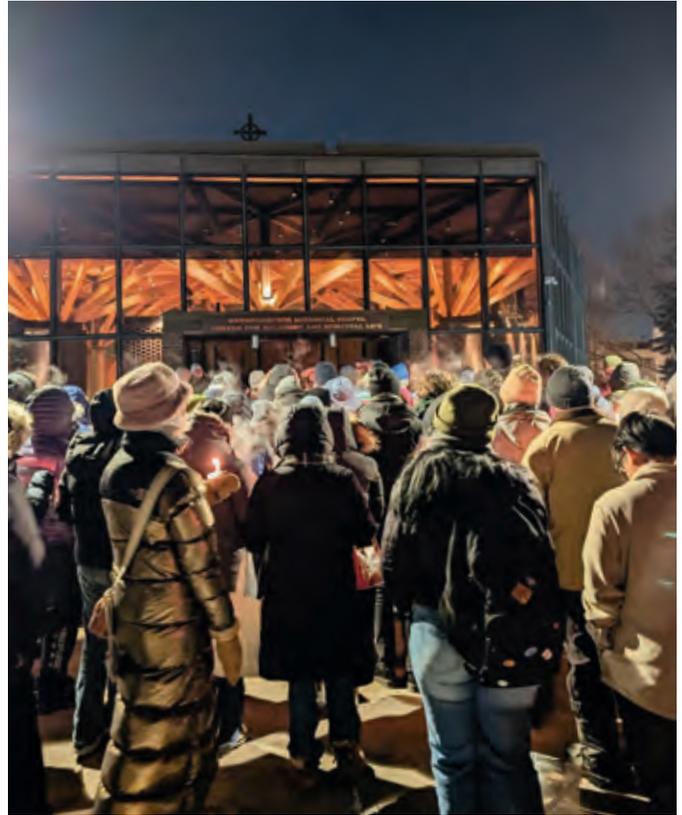
There’s cause for optimism everywhere you look on our campus: a bustling Café Mac, a packed Idea Lab, bagpipers practicing in JWall, spectators cheering in the LC, capstone presentations in the Library, and religious services in the Chapel.

Less visible but just as important are the intentional changes we’ve made to increase support for students and enhance security on campus. Some changes affect everyone, like requiring ID cards to access buildings, and some are focused strategically on protecting those at greatest risk of harm.

One thing that’s been especially inspiring to me is the way our campus community has mobilized to protect the rights of local Twin Cities residents. This will not come as a surprise to anyone who knows Macalester, but it should be appreciated as a manifestation of our values put into practice.

Similarly, I’ve been moved by stories of courageous social action undertaken by Mac alumni in Minnesota and beyond. Some have been making their voices heard at peaceful demonstrations, others have been delivering meals quietly to families afraid to leave their homes. One particular point of pride is that Macalester alumni, overrepresented in Minnesota politics, have been advocates for constitutional rights in the state legislature, in other elected positions, and in visible civic leadership roles.

I frequently reflect upon the outsized influence Macalester has in the world—not only in government and law, but also fields



Members of the Macalester community gather to take part in the state-wide vigil Shine a Light for Minnesota on January 24.

as varied as finance, education, healthcare, journalism, religion, and entertainment. Our distinctive approach to the liberal arts, powered by an imperative to contribute to the common good, has equipped generations of alumni with the tools—and the attitudes (to use Frankl’s word)—to assume responsibility for making an impact in their workplaces and communities. We don’t merely prepare our students for employment; we prepare them for lives of meaning and purpose.

We see this sense of duty in the way Mac alumni offer support to the students and employees in our campus community, too. Each time we have faced an extraordinary challenge in St. Paul, our global network of Scots has stepped up to offer assistance. Some of it comes in the form of philanthropy, some as volunteerism, and some as words of affirmation for the faculty and staff employees for whom working with students is more than a job—it’s a calling. Your support makes a tremendous difference.

The past few weeks have been very difficult. And, as I write this, we continue to face considerable challenges. But, as I shared on a January webinar in which more than seven hundred alumni and friends participated, I cannot imagine riding out this storm in any other place. Our state and this college have been shining examples of compassion, kindness, and resistance to injustice.

Minnesota nice, indeed.

Dr. Suzanne M. Rivera is president of Macalester College.

For current campus updates from President Rivera, visit macalester.edu/president/messages.

1600
GRANDINTERNSHIPS
IN ACTION

Macalester students have been busy this academic year, interning at more than fifty sites within just a few miles of campus. These experiences help define a Mac education—76 percent of recent graduates completed an internship during their time on campus, exploring career interests, developing professional skills, and discovering new ways to make an impact.

**Shweta Shankar '26**

Internship site: Tubman
Majors: Political science and international studies with legal studies concentration

As a legal advocate at Tubman, a Twin Cities nonprofit serving survivors of domestic violence, homelessness, and trafficking, Shankar worked directly with domestic violence survivors in Washington County courts. She advocated for no-contact orders alongside prosecutors, attended hearings, and took client meetings.

**Mostafa Abdelmageed '27**

Internship site: Minnesota Attorney General's Office
Major: Neuroscience

Just two weeks after arriving in the US from Egypt, Abdelmageed started volunteering to teach English to refugees. That commitment to service led him to the Attorney General's Office, where he explored departments from cybersecurity to healthcare licensing.

“

There are some people whose name will pop up in the database, and I'll just be able to tell whose story it is that I'm looking at. These are experiences that I'm taking with me to law school—that individual stories do matter.”

“

I didn't know there was an intersectionality between healthcare and law. This internship showed me that you can do both at the same time.”



In January, geology students hiked up to 13,000 feet on Mercedario, one of the highest peaks in the Andes—for several in the group, their highest climb and their first chance to be close to a glacier.

STRATEGIC PLAN IN ACTION:

SHORT-TERM STUDY AWAY

Over winter break, sixteen geology students were in class more than five thousand miles away from Olin-Rice, honing field method skills and studying the diversity of geological processes at work in Argentina's Andes mountain ranges.

Taught by professors Kristi Curry Rogers and Ray Rogers, the longstanding Geological Excursions class is part of a growing group of Mac courses with short-term study away components, linked to the strategic plan's commitment to create such experiential learning opportunities for students who might not otherwise have the option. Last year, as part of a call for proposals from faculty and staff, the Center for Study Away (CSA) hosted listening and program development sessions—and CSA director Shanti Freitas says the interest and response from students, faculty, and staff have been robust.

"Short-term study away opportunities expand access for students who might not be able

to participate in a semester-long program," says Freitas. "These programs are particularly impactful because they're embedded in an on-campus course, so students connect their classroom learning to an off-campus experience—while guided by Mac faculty and staff members—and then integrate that place-based learning back into their Macalester education."

In addition to the Argentina geology program, this spring, professors Duchess Harris and Julie Dolan will teach a course on gender and transnational politics with a study away component in Northern Ireland in May. And in the 2026–27 academic year, five more courses with embedded travel are in the works: Blacks in Paris (France), Francophone Culture of/ in America (Louisiana), Unlearning from the Andes to the Amazon (Ecuador), Perspectives in Costa Rica (Costa Rica), and Ways of Being Home (Guatemala).



More information:
macalester.edu/strategic-plan



CO-LEARNING AI

Professor and student navigate an emerging field together

In the summer of 2020, international studies professor David Moore found himself preparing for a semester unlike any he had taught before. In response, he sketched out an entirely new class, *Global Contagions, Past and Present*, one that would help students make sense of both the historical forces and the lived realities of disease.

Recently, Moore has been feeling a similar unease about the spread of a new global phenomenon, artificial intelligence. Once again, he endeavored to hash out these ideas in a class he is teaching this semester, *Thinking Internationally About (and With) AI and ChatGPT*. To assist in the creation of the class, he tapped Ellie Spangler '26 to co-write the syllabus and precept.

The syllabus explores AI and labor, modern media, academia, and the environmental impacts of data centers. The course grounds contemporary debates in a long history of technological imagination. Students watch *Terminator 2* and read the 1920 Czech play Rossum's *Universal Robots*, which introduced the word "robot" to the world.

For Moore, one of the most compelling aspects of the course has been watching students collectively build their understand-

ing of AI in real time. With no established canon of scholarship on the subject, and few authoritative academic voices to lean on, the traditional model of a seasoned professor imparting expertise simply doesn't apply. Instead, the class learns alongside one another, exploring an emerging field as it takes shape.

They've even coined a term, "cognitive shirking," to describe the ways AI can degrade a learning experience when it replaces, rather than supports, meaningful cognitive effort.

"If you use ChatGPT to write your entire essay or generate all of your code for a computer science assignment, you've skipped so many steps in the process that you're not getting much benefit for your cognitive growth," Spangler explains.

"Because we are all reacting to this as it unfolds, it has flattened the usual classroom dynamic of expert and pupil," Moore says. "We are engaging with a new field of study as it's being created."

This has often led to moments of co-discovery and students being able to make particularly meaningful contributions in class.

Moore and Spangler both say that there is palpable concern in the room during their discussions: for what AI means for the future of labor, human creativity, and the environment. As for higher education, Spangler notes that AI chatbots are "completely engaged with information that is already known and has been fed into the model." Academia, on the other hand, is "oriented toward what we don't yet know—and toward creating new ways of understanding the world around us."

—Catherine Kane '26



FRESH THREADS, LASTING BONDS

It's a new Mac classic. Senior Sweatshirt Day gifted our graduating seniors with a special class-specific sweatshirt—a cozy reminder of chilly days in St. Paul.



DAVID J. TURNER

1600
GRAND



Student workers, Claire Fabian '26 and Waverly Espe '29, receive a new shipment of food and household supplies for the Open Pantry.

REMOVING BARRIERS

Campus pantry expands reach

When Macalester College Student Government founded the Open Pantry in 2017 to address growing food insecurity on campus, it was a volunteer-run organization ordering groceries from Amazon. Almost a decade later, the pantry has expanded into a comprehensive food resource to help meet a critical need. With 1,300 visits between June and November 2025 alone, the pantry distributed 15,400 pounds of food—a significant increase from 2024's total of 10,700 pounds.

"We're on pace to triple the amount of food going out compared to 2024, and more than double the number of visitors," says Andy Williams, director of Campus Center and programming, who oversees the pantry's operations.

While disruptions to federal food assistance programs are a concern, Williams says the usage increase is also the result of intentional efforts to reduce stigma, increase access, and raise awareness. The pantry moved to the Campus Center in 2024, and now operates with card-reader access, allowing students to visit anonymously when-

ever the building is open. Orientation includes a campus tour that stops at the pantry, ensuring students know where it is and how to use it—and that it's open to everyone.

"The message is: If you think you need it, use it," says Williams.

The pantry has also broadened its offerings through a partnership with the student-run co-op MacShare. Vouchers now provide access to fresh produce and other staples that the shelf-stable pantry can't supply. A new \$50,000 grant from Hunger Free Campus will continue to support this partnership through July 2027, and a recently formed food insecurity committee is taking a campus-wide approach to identifying and addressing gaps in support.

"While the pantry won't completely solve food insecurity, we can still do our part to make it less of an obstacle," says Williams. "The Open Pantry helps students meet one of their most fundamental needs, and focus on what they came to Mac to do: learn, grow, and make good memories."

DAVID J. TURNER



Windows into the Past

For her final project in *Leaves to Landscapes: A Visual Journey Through Plant Ecology and Art*, Abby White '26 investigated how the landscape surrounding Old Main has transformed over time. After completing research at the Macalester College Archives, White illustrated her findings using three-dimensional tunnel books—layered paper boxes that create a sense of depth. Each box captures the flora of a different era, allowing viewers to step onto the Great Lawn at different points over the last 150 years. The project is just one example of the course's interdisciplinary approach. Co-taught by Professor Mary Heskell (Biology) and Professor Megan Vossler (Art and Art History), the class challenged students to synthesize their own ecological observations with a range of studio art practices.





NATIVE GAMES NIGHT

The Macalester Idea Lab came to life this winter as students learned about the Ojibwe language and culture through play. A special game night, sponsored by the Macalester Native and Indigenous (MNI) Initiative and the Department of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, featured Nashke Native Games.

The game company, based out of Minnesota and founded by Tony Drews, aims to transform Ojibwe culture and language into

reimagined traditional and contemporary gameplay to support Ojibwe language and culture preservation and revitalization.

Students tried games like Ginebig, a reimagined Snake Game played with carved wooden pieces, and Makizinataagewin or the Moccasin Game, which is a gambling game often played in teams. Through these joyful and engaging activities, students discovered how heritage can be preserved and passed down through the generations.





Scots take part in a sophomore retreat focused on enhancing teamwork and communication skills.

ATHLETICS

Scots LEAD

Locking in on leadership development

Coming into Mac, student-athlete Joey Falls '29 had plenty of sports-based leadership experience as a three-year veteran on his high school football team's leadership council and one year as captain. But, the first-year admits, "If you had asked me to define my leadership skills, I would have probably given you a blank stare and made up some on-the-fly response."

That's where Scots LEAD comes in. "In the First-Year Forum, the CliftonStrengths assessment helped me identify, define, and articulate my leadership skills," the offensive lineman says, "allowing me

to home in on my strengths, reflect and improve upon my weaker skills, and use my unique abilities to uplift the people around me."

Falls' experience is just the beginning of Scots LEAD, Athletics' personal, professional, and leadership development program for student-athletes, intentionally sequenced to support each year of the Mac experience.

What is it?

"Scots LEAD is not only a program—it's a statement," says Devyn Smith, assistant athletic director, student-athlete success and development and Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) advisor. "We are preparing the Scots to lead authentically, intentionally, and impactfully, both on and off the playing surfaces." Now in its fifth year, the program focuses on self-awareness, values, strengths, communication, and applied leadership to give students practical tools they can use within their teams and beyond athletics.

How does it work?

Core initiatives include leadership forums, retreats, and capstone opportuni-

ties designed for Scots at different stages of their leadership journey; a competitor series aimed at fostering resilience and confidence; and professional development designed to translate athletic experience into career success.

Does it work?

Our student-athletes think so. "One of my favorite takeaways from one of the Scots LEAD programs was from the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey—'seek first to understand, then to be understood,'" says Adi Megiddo '26, guard, women's basketball. "It's changed the way I approach conversations, helping me grow as a leader."

Beyond leadership, one other theme continues to emerge, from first-years to seniors. "Our first week of school, we all got to know each other, and talk about our goals and values," says Megiddo. "It's provided me with long-lasting friendships to this day."

"It's given me an avenue to form strong relationships with other student-athletes," echoes Falls. "The friendships I made during Scots LEAD helped me feel like I belonged within the Mac community."




Department of
Emergency Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The Power of Listening

Dziwe Ntaba '95 partners with the communities he serves to deliver the most effective medical care.

BY ROBYN ROSS

Dziwe Ntaba '95 had been working in emergency rooms for fifteen years when he sat down to visit with a woman named Farah. Like a growing number of Minnesotans, she had struggled with opioid use disorder, but now she was in recovery. After Farah (a pseudonym) filed a complaint about her previous experience in the ER while seeking treatment for addiction, Ntaba had invited her to provide feedback. "Most doctors practicing today were not taught much, if anything, about the neuroscience of addiction in medical school," Ntaba says. "In fact, many still think of addiction as a moral failing rather than a biological disease."

Farah was blunt. It was difficult and humiliating to navigate the healthcare system, she said. When she had sought help from the emergency room at her most vulnerable moment, clinicians had treated her rudely and refused to admit her to the hospital. Ntaba swallowed his excuses and asked Farah to keep going. How could the ER improve its work with people with substance use disorder if he didn't have the humility to listen and learn from her criticism?

Farah's story "completely changed my perspective on my own work environment, my own patients, my own colleagues and how we practice medicine," Ntaba says. "It's a very different opportunity to sit down and force yourself to listen, with the assumption that we are the problem."

Throughout his career in medicine, Ntaba has tried to listen more than he talks. Whether he's working in remote parts of Africa or in a teaching hospital a few miles from Macalester, he engages the community where he practices as a vital partner in delivering care.

Ntaba was born in New York but spent his early years in Malawi, his father's home country. When he was eight years old, he and his mother moved to Min-

nesota, where Ntaba graduated from high school. He came to Mac to play soccer and majored in biology, developing an affinity for science in courses taught by Jan Serie and Lin Aanonsen. Beloved psychology professor Walter D. Mink's Brain, Mind, and Behavior class laid the foundation for work Ntaba would undertake years later when he shifted his focus to addiction.

He earned a medical degree from Oregon Health and Science University and a master's in public health from Harvard University. There, he became close friends with fellow student Deogratias Niyizonkiza, a survivor of genocide in Rwanda and Burundi and the subject of Tracy Kidder's book *Strength in What Remains*. Together, the two launched Village Health Works in 2007 in a remote, rural area of southwestern Burundi.

The project, which began as a three-room clinic, today encompasses a 150-bed teaching hospital, food security initiatives, and a premier boarding school. Its success is due partly to community health workers, trusted local leaders who reach out to residents who may be distrustful of the medical system and connect them with resources for prenatal care or treatment for stigmatized conditions like tuberculosis. Once those patients engage with the clinic and have positive results, they become trusted messengers themselves. It's a virtuous cycle, Ntaba says: "You're not just helping one patient with that investment. You're helping their social network."

Back in Minneapolis, Ntaba saw a steady increase in opioid overdoses at M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Medical Center, where he is a teaching professor in emergency medicine. His team was helping patients with opioid use disorder start taking the medication buprenorphine, which stabilizes brain chemistry and prevents craving and withdrawal. But many people who could benefit from the

medication were not coming to the hospital because, as Ntaba later learned from Farah, they associated the healthcare system with trauma, shame, and judgment.

Then Ntaba met Nicole, an activist and outreach worker in the local Native community—in which, Minnesota Department of Health data show, people are twenty-four times more likely to die of an overdose than white people. Ntaba observed how Nicole could talk with people who were suspicious of the healthcare system, share her own recovery journey, persuade her listeners to come to the hospital, and accompany them until their treatment plan was set. Nicole was trusted in a way that doctors were not. "They won't even start listening to me unless I get endorsement from her," Ntaba says.

Building on what he's learned, Ntaba is working with partners across the Twin Cities metro area to develop a more robust opioid response strategy. Community clinics that have adopted the low-barrier buprenorphine model now offer rapid, free, same-day access to medication. An outreach program will hire people from the Twin Cities' most vulnerable communities who have personal experience of addiction and recovery and who will be able to testify to the success of medication for addiction treatment with their peers. And middle school students are beginning to experience an expanded substance use prevention curriculum through BrainWaves, a program of the University of Minnesota's Masonic Institute for the Developing Brain.

All of the work applies lessons from Ntaba's overseas experiences and his respectful conversations with people like Farah. And, he says, it's built on what he learned in Mink's class at Macalester: "Understanding linkages between the brain, mind, and behavior really goes a long way."

Robyn Ross is a writer in Austin, Texas.



THE CREATOR OF UNIVERSES

SCENIC ARTIST POLLY ALLEN ROBBINS '85 HELPS SHAPE UNFORGETTABLE VISUAL WORLDS IN MOVIES AND TELEVISION.

BY ERIN PETERSON

Polly Allen Robbins '85 painted many of the iconic objects and sets for the Academy Award-winning animated film *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*. She's been hired by top national brands to help create striking stop-motion commercials. And her work has been showcased in an exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

But it's possible that none of that would have happened if she hadn't bombed a computer science test at Macalester. "We were learning how to do BASIC programming, and the instructor told us a good percentage of us would get to the first test and decide we couldn't do it. And that's how far I got," she recalls. "I knew it wasn't going to work out, so I combed through the course catalog and decided to transfer to Dan Keyser's Theater Technology and Design class."

In Keyser's class, she and a half-dozen other students learned the foundations of technical theater: the basics of drafting and scenic construction, painting techniques, and principles of lighting and design. She loved the hands-on craft and the collaborative energy of production work, especially as the group built and finished the sets for Macalester's spring play.

And Robbins wasn't just good at it—she was hooked. She graduated with an interdepartmental independent major in studio art and theater technology and design.

During her twenties, she worked on set design projects for some of the Twin Cities' most prestigious theaters—Guthrie, Penumbra, and the Children's Theatre Company. She then entered the University of Texas–Austin's highly respected theater design program, and, after earning her MFA, headed to Portland, Oregon, where she's been ever since.

She found her way to Will Vinton Studios, a pioneering animation outfit known for its iconic California Raisins claymation projects. Portland was becoming a hotbed for stop-motion animation, and many of Robbins' skills—painting, fabrication, and lighting—translated almost seamlessly. Unlike two-dimensional animation drawn by hand, stop-motion animation pieces together thousands of photos of three-dimensional objects arranged on a miniature set. Among her projects with the studio was *The PJs*, an Eddie Murphy-created stop-motion animation television show that debuted in 1999 and ran for two years.

She eventually took on specialty painting and fabrication roles for projects that varied widely in tone, like the unsettling Adult Swim show *The Shivering Truth*, from animation studio

ShadowMachine, and the vibrant Nickelodeon project *Tiny Chef*. She's been called in to help craft holiday commercials for Buffalo Wild Wings and Petco. When she's not working on stop-motion animation projects, she often works as a set painter, most recently for Apple TV's *Palm Royale*.

Robbins brings her signature collaborative spirit and attention to detail to each project. As a rule, her job is not to stand out with a specific style. "I'm like an actor who is stepping into a role," she says. "I'm collaborating with an entire team to bring one style to an audience that is supported by a story."

For example, she was one of nine scenic artists on *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, a stop-motion animation of the nineteenth-century tale set in Italy. She describes the experience as a "dream project," even though she was doing much of her work during the pandemic.

Her work shows up across the film, including on a large crucifix that appears in numerous scenes. While the object itself was constructed by another artist, she painstakingly applied layers of masking tape and paint to create the precise, striking wood-grain finish the piece needed.

After COVID-19 shut studios down in early 2020, she found herself doing much of her work at home. "At some point, they delivered the attic to me," she recalls. "It's the first place we meet Pinocchio in the movie, and I painted it in my garage."

Helping create a set during a pandemic was one of Robbins' tougher challenges, but the chance to solve seemingly impossible puzzles attracted her to the work in the first place. "This is a field that pulls together people who are passionate about solving problems as a community," she says. "You'll start something and realize: *I have no idea how to do this*. But you know you'll figure it out."

The results speak for themselves: the film was recognized with numerous awards, including a Golden Globe for best animated motion picture and an Oscar for best animated feature film. Even today, Robbins still feels a deep connection to the film—a pride that she suspects is shared by all 350 people who worked on the project. "What I contributed was just a tiny piece, but I feel such complete ownership of the finished product," she says.

It echoes what she discovered in Dan Keyser's class decades ago: when you build something together, the result can be extraordinary.

Erin Peterson is a Minneapolis-based writer.



CARE IN COMMUNITY



**The Macalester
community
has worked
to mobilize its
vast network
of care amid
turmoil in the
Twin Cities.**

BY ABRAHAM SWEE

On a bitterly cold January afternoon,

Leah Hood '05 stood outside Green Central Elementary in Minneapolis. Her Macalester stocking cap purposely chosen for this moment, she wasn't there to pick up a child. Instead, she was there to watch, scanning the street for unmarked immigration enforcement vehicles, providing an extra layer of support as the school day ended and students began their journey home.

"I cannot stop our families from being targeted, but I can help them to see and understand that they are not alone, that people care about them," Hood says.

Miles away, Adrienne Christiansen, professor emerita of political science at Macalester, sat on a street corner in downtown Minneapolis. Just weeks after foot surgery, she'd been ordered by her doctor to stay off her feet. She was obeying those orders, but as thousands of demonstrators marched past her apartment, she simply could not stay inside.

"I needed to be there," Christiansen says. "I cannot march right now, but by God, I can cheer."

Back on campus in St. Paul, Macalester students had recently returned from winter break, and were already hard at work organizing. Group chats coordinated rides, grocery deliveries, and support for classmates who didn't feel safe leaving their homes. Posters advertised help with errands. Walking patrols were formed for Scots to escort their peers to class.

Collectively, these acts, varied in scale, represent the Macalester community's response to an unprecedented crisis: turmoil unleashed in the Twin Cities by a surge in federal law enforcement. Over many weeks, Minnesotans have witnessed disturbing scenes, including the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti at the hands of agents working for US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and US Customs and Border Protection.

Mobilizing in the face of violence and injustice, Mac alumni, students, staff, and faculty have joined a broader movement across the Twin Cities, showing up at school gates, street corners, in grocery aisles, and behind the wheel. Beyond Minnesota, they have sent words of affirmation, opened their wallets, and reached out to their representatives in Congress. Together, their acts have helped create a network of care, work that the Macalester community hopes will contribute to a more just and peaceful world.

STANDING WATCH

For Hood, an educator, the work has taken many forms. Beyond her school patrols at elementary schools, she's collected \$4,000 for neighbors from friends and fellow alums. She's delivered groceries to students sheltering in place. And she's driven people to work when they didn't feel safe driving on their own.

"My students are literally in hiding, and they're trusting me with their address, their locations," Hood

Editor's note: This story went to press in mid-February, in the midst of the ongoing and unprecedented surge in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity this winter in Minnesota. While circumstances continue to evolve, this article features stories of how Macalester community members are showing up, through acts of care that define who we are.



Leah Hood '05 outside a Minneapolis elementary school.

says. "It feels like an honor. And it feels like a heavy responsibility."

Hood traces that responsibility back to her time at Macalester. "The commitment to global citizenship and social justice that Macalester has always espoused was definitely nurtured in me," she says. "The people I attended Macalester with are still to this day the smartest, bravest, most outspoken, most giving, fiercely compassionate human beings in the world."

That compassion is visible in a Minnesota Mac group chat that's been "extremely active" in recent weeks. When Hood needed winter clothes for a student's child, she posted the request. Within minutes, alumni responded: "I got you. Pick it up whenever."

When a local church needed boxes for grocery deliveries, the Mac chat group fulfilled the request in minutes. "The activism and generosity and commitment to community service that Macalester grads have is really second to none."

PROTESTING AS CARE

From her 15th floor apartment, Adrienne Christiansen has had a birds-eye view of the many Minneapolis protests held in response to the federal law enforcement surge. And on multiple occasions, she's rolled herself down to the street corner to cheer them on.

So determined in her haste to make it to the street, she hasn't always worn the warmest of clothes. During one protest, with temperatures hovering around nine below zero, a woman left the march and placed her own knit cap on Christiansen's head. Other protestors repeatedly approached her with hand warmers.

"I was absolutely floored by that human kindness," she says. "It felt a bit like Halloween, except instead of candy, I came home with hope and pockets full of hand warmers."

In 2017, the political science professor took Macalester students and staff to Washington, DC, for the Women's March. Gathering together to march and protest, she argues, is a critical act of community care.

"When you see 50,000 people gather in your town to say, 'no, this is wrong,' all of a sudden the sense of isolation disappears. You realize that other people also care deeply about you," Christiansen says. "And now, with ICE being here like an occupying force, to show up is quite literally to say: 'Even at the risk of being knocked down or pistol whipped or arrested, I'll take that risk to show my care.'"

GATHERING TOGETHER

The Reverend Dr. Hannah Adams Ingram, college chaplain and associate dean for Institutional Equity, began working at Macalester last summer. She chose Macalester because of the college's commitment to create change, honor diversity in backgrounds and viewpoints, and respect all community members. Just months into her tenure, she has witnessed Scots live out those values.

"People are trying to take to heart that community togetherness is the antidote to the kind of violence that festers when we don't know each other well," Adams Ingram says.

The chaplain helped organize campus vigils in response to the deaths of Good and Pretti. The chance to gather, mourn, and reflect as neighbors, Adams Ingram says, offers people the opportunity to start seeing a path forward.

"Sometimes 'thoughts and prayers' get a bad rap, but it's when we come together in these moments, when we pull together in reflection and are inspired by one another, we remember that we're not alone," Adams Ingram says. "And it's there, when we quiet the panic, we can access deep wisdom, not just in ourselves, but with each other to figure out what to do next."

All around Macalester, Adams Ingram has watched strangers gathering for impromptu acts of care: Students walking each other home. Neighbors arranging potlucks. And Minnesotans meeting over a lit candle.

"You never like to see crisis or tragedy be what spurs

us to action," Adams Ingram says. "But it has spurred us to action, and now we're seeing people take care of one another, try to connect with one another, and I'm really excited to see where that could go."

SUSTAINING THE WORK

Carlos Mariani Rosa '79 has helped organize support for schools across Minnesota. The former Minnesota state representative, who now serves as executive director of the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership, has developed training materials for educators on how to respond to the federal law enforcement surge.

"Our ability to run public schools and to be a community in Minnesota has been threatened, but we're not giving up. Minnesotans are acting," says Mariani Rosa, who has watched volunteers teaching students in homes, arranging food drives, and showing up for countless school patrols. "It's just remarkable what folks are doing in terms of stepping up and putting their lives on the line, giving their time and resources to protect their neighbors."

While inspired by those actions, he encourages anyone looking to get involved to first reflect on their motivations.

"It's important to reflect, because that gives you the deep will to make sure this isn't a one-off kind of thing," Mariani Rosa says. "Instead, what will be required to make lasting change is community building and forming deep relationships."

SAFE PASSAGE

As students prepared to return for spring semester, news outlets reported that rideshare drivers felt unsafe, due to the presence of ICE agents, picking up passengers at Minneapolis-St. Paul airport. The college's leadership team faced a dilemma: how would hundreds of students get back to campus?

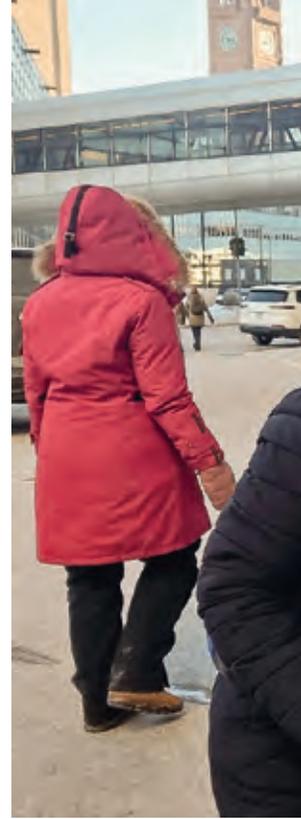
It didn't take long before the college's van pool was identified as a solution. Student Affairs booked the fleet for two days straight, and within minutes, faculty and staff had filled about fifty volunteer shifts to drive the shuttles.

From top: Adrienne Christiansen and her daughter-in-law Chelsea Dischinger appear at a recent protest in downtown Minneapolis.

The Macalester shuttle van fleet back on campus after providing safe transportation from the airport for students returning ahead of spring semester.

Carlos Mariani Rosa '79 in St. Paul after meeting with community leaders.

A poster on campus advertises a student-led effort to help classmates with transportation to and from class, as well as grocery deliveries.





FINDING YOUR LANE

Contributing in this time of crisis has rarely looked the same from one Scot to another. Some have taken to the streets. Others have worked behind the scenes. All contribute meaningfully to the common good, according to President Suzanne Rivera.

“We all have to pick our own swim lane,” Rivera says. “Where’s the place that we can have impact that feels right to us given our own personal level of risk and what assets we can bring to the table? Everybody has a different point of entry to this.”

Professor Duchess Harris, who chairs Mac’s History Department, has been watching the current turmoil with an eye on the past. In early January, she called on Minnesota Governor Tim Walz to deploy the National Guard to ensure students could safely attend school—an action that echoes how troops were used to desegregate Arkansas schools decades ago.

Harris believes Minnesotans and their neighbors should feel empowered to contribute in a multitude of ways to protect American democracy.

“When community members believe that government actors are acting outside of the law, there are accountability mechanisms,” Harris says. “Accountability is not only legal, it’s democratic. Public protest, legislative pressure, media scrutiny, and sustained civic engagement—those are not failures of the system. They are responses to its limits.”

For Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty ’86, the work has meant relying on the community in unprecedented ways. When her office was denied access to evidence by federal investigators in the killings of Good and Pretti, Moriarty created a public portal asking residents to submit videos and information.

“I think this was first of its kind, maybe in the country,” Moriarty says. “We’ve received lots of information that’s been extraordinarily helpful.”

As Moriarty works to ensure justice is still served in a time of turmoil, she is motivated each day by the care she sees across the state. “We can stand up, we can stick together, we can care for each other, and we can speak out.”



“Our Macalester community was just clamoring to help,” Tom Halverson, dean of the faculty, says. “It was almost like people wanted to do more than we could offer.” Ultimately, thirty faculty and staff members helped transport nearly two hundred students to campus.

“This is a community that’s deeply involved in the Twin Cities and especially wants to care for the people on our campus,” Halverson says. “And I think we sent a strong message to everyone watching—this is the kind of place Macalester is.”

That message was amplified this January by significant donations from the global Mac community. More than 300 people have donated \$55,000 to support Mac’s community members through the Open Pantry and the International Student Support Fund.



THE PATH FORWARD

Hope can be hard to find in the midst of a crisis. But care in community, these Scots believe, will light the way to a brighter future.

“Crisis points lay bare our values and whether we’re going to live into them,” Adams Ingram says. “Right now, we’re seeing the Mac community lean into its values to build the world it believes is possible.”

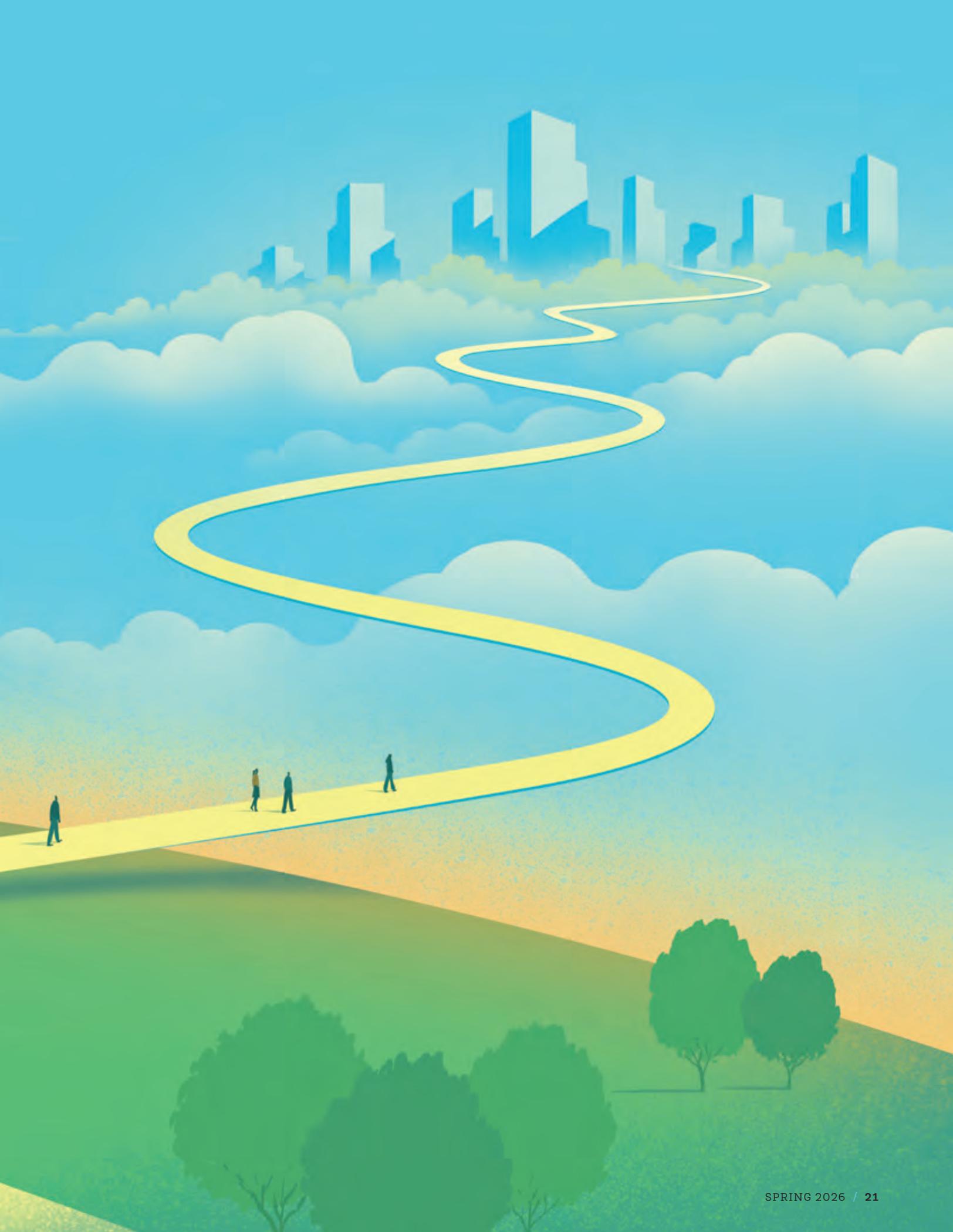
“Regardless of the great perils in front of us, Minnesotans are still coming forward, not cowering behind closed doors, not just complaining, but putting themselves forward,” Mariani Rosa says. “It’s a remarkable trait, and I’m so proud to be a Macite and I’m so proud to be a Minnesotan.”

DEGREES OF PROGRESS

Amid a cultural conversation about the value of a college degree, Mac alumni in university administration still give strong marks to higher education.

BY ROBYN ROSS / ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVIDE BONAZZI





Even before universities

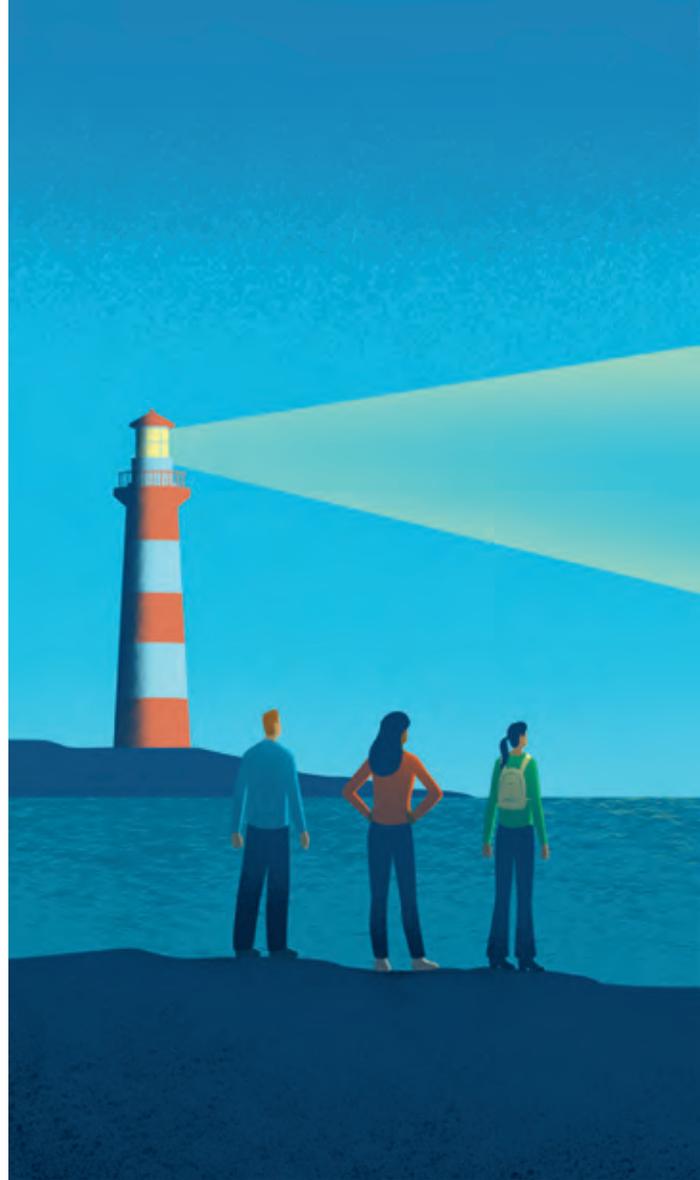
came under scrutiny by the Trump administration, a cultural conversation was under way about the value of a college degree. Thought leaders wondered aloud: Is the high cost of tuition worth paying? Are the skills students learn at college relevant to the workplace? Do all students have fair access to higher education? What is the purpose of college?

“Higher education is evolving, yet our mission remains largely unchanged,” says Lisa Anderson-Levy, Macalester’s executive vice president and provost. “We’re still fundamentally in the business of helping young people figure out their place in the world and empowering them to contribute meaningfully to a society that’s becoming increasingly complex.” That noble pursuit exists in tandem with career preparation at liberal arts schools, which cultivate timeless and transferable skills: Clear communication. Critical thinking. The ability to analyze data and transform it into a narrative.

Not everyone wants or needs to go to college. Still, surveys clearly show that college graduates’ lifetime earnings eclipse those of people without a degree, and graduates are more likely to pursue a job they consider a calling. Overall life satisfaction is higher among those who’ve continued their education.

“A big part of what we’re doing at liberal arts schools is helping students have exposure to different ideas and develop their critical thinking skills and their ability to adapt to change,” says Laura Renée Chandler ’03, special advisor to the provost and dean for community engagement at Colby College. “That’s a huge purpose of college, along with helping students be prepared to interact with people from different backgrounds and experiences.”

In these pages we talk with four Macalester alumni who work in higher education administration, along with the co-chair of Mac’s Strategic Plan Implementation Committee, Paul Overvoorde, about the challenges facing colleges and universities—and why they still give higher ed an A.



No. 1

The college search has gotten easier; recruiting students is getting much harder.

When Rick Bischoff '89 was conducting his college search, he drove half an hour to the library in his small Washington town to skim the hefty *Fiske Guide to Colleges*. Later, he sifted through the brochures colleges had mailed him, doing his best to pick the schools that looked like they had smart students. These days, “our ability to reach the right student with the right message is vastly different than it was forty years ago,” says Bischoff, the senior vice president for enrollment management at Chapman University. A small-town kid with internet access can learn about any college from their bedroom and communicate with multiple admission offices via email and text.

Colleges still flood prospective students with postal mail, but the deluge starts much earlier, as even freshmen (and their parents) are thinking about college.



Enrollment management directors like Bischoff also harness digital advertising and social media and rely on sophisticated data analytics to determine which students receive what communication. The Common Application has both simplified the process, by allowing students to fill out one set of paperwork for multiple schools, and made it more complex, by increasing the number of applications those schools receive and making admission more competitive.

Bischoff's job is about to get a lot harder. This year marks the precipice of the "demographic cliff," a sharp decline in the number of high school students. Far fewer babies were born during the Great Recession that began in 2008, as young people focused on economic concerns—and the trend has not reversed. Already, the number of high school graduates in parts of the Northeast and Midwest has shrunk.

Colleges that draw applicants from across the country—rather than the immediate region—are better positioned to weather the changes. "One of Macalester's strengths is that it has, for quite some time, been recruiting very broadly and has developed a national reputation," says Overvoorde, who, beyond his strategic planning work at Mac, also serves as an associate provost.

"Having that diversified portfolio of where our students are arriving from is a big advantage." Mac's expansive international recruiting and long relationship with United World Colleges may buffer it against the uncertainty many colleges face as the Trump administration has reduced access to student visas.

One type of institution is not short on students: private Historically Black Colleges and Universities, which have seen domestic application numbers skyrocket in the past few years. Howard University, where Tonija M. Hope '97 is associate provost for international programs, has experienced four record-breaking application seasons. "I believe it is because a lot of these attempts to make students of color feel comfortable at traditionally white institutions are disappearing, and so they are flocking to us," she says.

No. 2

It's a great—if stressful—time to be a college student.

"From the student perspective, the experience of going to college today is as good as it has ever been," Bischoff says. "Colleges and universities have put a lot of attention into the student experience." That focus is somewhat self-serving, he adds: *U.S. News* rankings factor in retention and graduation rates, and happy students are more likely to stay in school and graduate. To attract students in an increasingly competitive marketplace, colleges are investing in better facilities and experiences. Public flagship universities in particular, Bischoff says, have improved undergraduate teaching and added honors programs and additional housing.

Colleges of all types, including Macalester, have expanded career and internship programs as students worry more about finding a job. "Students are under a lot of pressure," Chandler says. "They want to have a career that makes their family happy but also will help them care for their family members as they get older. So they are working really hard, and they are really stressed."

As part of its strategic plan, Macalester is updating its general education curriculum with the goal of more clearly articulating the value of skills such as critical thinking and writing in a career context. The college is also working to expand participation in high-impact practices such as internships, study away, and summer research opportunities. Among recent graduating classes, 88 percent of students participated in at least one of these activities. It's an impressive number—but, Overvoorde says, "for the 12 percent that do not participate, we have started to gather some information about whether there are barriers: life circumstances or other

OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS



RICK BISCHOFF '89

Mac major: mathematics
Senior vice president of enrollment management at Chapman University.

College highlights: Political science faculty Dorothy Dodge and Chuck Green. Educational studies professor Ruthanne Kurth-Schai sparking an interest in educational policy. His first job in admission as a work-study student.



LAURA RENÉE CHANDLER '03

Mac major: political science
Special advisor to the provost and dean for community engagement at Colby College.

College highlights: Spirited classroom debates with Harry Hirsch in political science. Mentorship from Peter Rachleff in history. The course Blacks in Paris with Duchess Harris in American studies and a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship.



MARK ANDERSON '81

Mac major: biology
Executive vice president for medical affairs, dean of the division of the biological sciences, and dean of the Pritzker School of Medicine at the University of Chicago.

College highlights: Engaging teaching by Truman Schwartz and Janet Carlson in chemistry and Russ Whitehead in biology. A stint during January term in a biomedical research lab.



TONIJA M. HOPE '97

Mac majors: Latin American studies and Spanish
Assistant provost for international programs at Howard University.

College highlights: Studying in the Dominican Republic during the country's 1996 presidential elections and writing an honors thesis about race and politics in the DR. Dancing mere feet from Prince during a spontaneous visit to Paisley Park.



PAUL OVERVOORDE

Associate provost at Macalester, co-chair of the Strategic Plan Implementation Committee, and professor of biology.

This is his twenty-fourth year at Macalester.

issues that have cropped up that have prevented people from participating." The college can then determine how best to close the gaps.

Numerous institutions are investing in study away, particularly in shorter, faculty-led trips that are more accessible than semester-long programs. This is especially true at Howard University, where Hope says faculty-led programs are a strategic priority in the College of Arts and Sciences. "The transformation that happens to students when they leave their comfort zone; the level of independence gained from solving problems on their own; the amount of social capital gained from having had an experience abroad—when they come back, it's like they're a whole new person."

No. 3

All of this takes money.

Every college and university is focused on the sustainability of its financial model, Overvoorde says. "At Macalester, we've been very fortunate because the model has been generously supported by alumni donations," he says. The more financial aid donors contribute, the more the college can sustain its mission.

Medical schools, too, are trying to raise enough money to support the best students, says Mark Anderson '81, dean of the Pritzker School of Medicine at the University of Chicago. The University of Chicago currently awards full-tuition scholarships to about half its students, and some assistance to 90 percent of them. But it's not enough. The institution has prioritized being able to underwrite the full cost of tuition as well as housing, food, textbooks, test fees, and professional travel for meritorious students who lack the means to attend. "What I'm trying to solve here at the University of Chicago is making sure we don't turn away the very best people who we're trying to recruit because they can't afford it," Anderson says.

His and his colleagues' work has been complicated by funding cuts under HR1, the "One Big Beautiful Bill" signed into law by President Trump in summer 2025. The university's teaching hospital, like others across the country, serves a large number of patients who rely on Medicaid to pay their bills. Such hospitals already struggle to balance the books, as Medicaid does not cover the full cost of care. But the cuts to Medicaid in the One Big Beautiful Bill exacerbated the problem.



“I remember my mom saying, ‘I really want you to go to Macalester, because if you go here, you’ll be able to do anything.’ I still think that’s true for students: finding the right institution that provides the necessary supports for them opens up a world of possibilities.”

—LAURA RENÉE CHANDLER '03

“Couple that with the cuts to our other mission, which is research,” Anderson says, pointing to proposed budget reductions for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). “Almost all of the current therapeutics came out of foundational, fundamental work that was NIH-sponsored. Those cuts, should they manifest, would make it even harder to do this research that has such a clear return on investment.”

As funding issues grow, the pipeline of students interested in becoming scientists is often put in jeopardy. “The tools we have to make scientific discoveries are just mind-blowing, and the ability to have impact as a young scientist is better than ever before,” Anderson says. “My biggest concern is that talented young people considering careers in scientific research aimed at curing diseases will be dissuaded from pursuing this important work.”

No. 4

Colleges want to support all kinds of students—regardless of what that’s called.

The practices that have been called “diversity, equity, and inclusion” have existed under various names for decades. “The impetus comes from the Civil Rights Movement and changes that were happening both in society and within higher education,” Chandler says. More recently, colleges and universities have realized it’s not enough simply to recruit students from varied backgrounds without providing the resources they need to succeed. “These efforts have expanded to include things like inclusion and belonging that focus on the overall climate of the institution and how welcoming it is,” she says.

Such efforts include offering adequate financial aid and organizing heritage month programming. Hiring faculty from diverse backgrounds is key, says Chandler, who describes her Macalester experience as significantly shaped by professors such as Duchess Harris in American studies and Kendrick Brown in psychology. “I remember thinking how amazing it was to have these faculty members of color with PhDs who were incredible teachers,” she says. “It’s important for students to see themselves reflected in the classroom.”

Chandler’s own work at Colby College focuses on faculty development, multicultural programs, and restorative practices such as talking circles that build community and help it deal constructively with conflict. She also oversees support programs for the 17 percent of Colby students who are, like Chandler, the first generation in their families to attend college.

The current pushback against inclusion efforts is part of an ongoing cycle, Chandler says. “These fights have been going on for quite some time, and this is the newest iteration. I have ancestors and people who came before me who were fighting this and didn’t know what the outcome was going to be, but they continued to push forward, and I will do the same. This moment is particularly challenging and difficult, but the importance of the work remains.”

Robyn Ross is a writer in Austin, Texas.





CHASING ZERO WASTE

Macalester is working to become the first US college to reach the sustainability milestone.

BY ASHLI CEAN LANDA

In the corner of the Sustainability Office's kitchen stands a small box full of powerful little friends—wriggling earthworms.

"We love the worms," Megan Butler, the director of sustainability at Mac, says fondly.

The soft-bodied invertebrates, mini compost creators, are small but mighty contributors to Mac's commitment to zero waste. Fed food scraps from staff lunches and dinner events, the worms enjoy a nearly endless buffet, delicacies that their human neighbors intentionally saved from the waste bin. Eventually the Sustainability Office hopes to find the little composters additional homes in staff and dorm kitchenettes around campus.

"We want to make sure that when people are at Mac, they recognize that sustainability is part of the culture here—this is really important, and a part of who we are," Butler says.

It's all part of Macalester's work to advance a lofty—but definitely attainable—goal: to become the first campus in the US to achieve zero waste.

Zero waste, as defined by the Zero Waste International Alliance, means regularly diverting 90 percent of all waste from landfills, incinerators, or other dis-

posal mechanisms, through reuse, repair, recycling, or composting—anything that promotes maximum use of an item or material. Macalester has been reaching for this goal since 2011. Current diversion rates sit around 73 percent—and while progress has not always been steady or linear, it's an astronomical improvement since the college recorded a rate of 19 percent in 2007.

No institution in the US has reached the magic number yet, but Macalester leads the pack among peer colleges. The college has earned first place in the national Campus Race to Zero Waste and maintained a 70+ percent diversion rate for the past three years. It fell only four points short of becoming the first small campus to earn a platinum ranking in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). The self-reporting framework is offered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) for institutions to measure sustainability efforts.

To hit this benchmark, Macalester has been busy. Each year, the community saves thousands of pounds of food from the trash, mends countless outfits, rehomes mini fridges, and repairs dozens of bicycles in the campus bike shop. The list goes on and on.



▲
Tomás Prendergast '27 learns how to fix a bicycle in the campus bike shop, which offers free repairs and bike education to students.

Building a zero-waste culture

Guiding the work is the new 2025 Zero Waste Action Plan (ZWAP), developed in partnership with the nonprofit Post-Landfill Action Network. The culmination of three years and more than 700 hours of work from five student fellows and Sustainability Office staff, the plan has three areas of focus: infrastructure, behavior, and policy.

The college has made significant investments in infrastructure in recent years—it boasts compost and recycling facilities in every residence hall, a reusable to-go food container system called Reuzzi for students, and all-compostable catering supplies from Bon Appétit. Together, these efforts make zero waste measures easy to access and easy to internalize, which supports the second focus area, behavior.

Atlas fellows Abby White '26 and Lorenna Graham '26, who helped develop the new ZWAP, both note that even perfect infrastructure and policy proposals will fall short without behavioral change. "A huge part is education and making it as easy as possible," Graham says.

"Using language that makes it feel possible helps," adds White. "Some people might not know exactly what 'zero waste' means. So creating fun events and promoting free resources on campus

helps students understand what it actually is—we're not saying you can never throw anything away again. We're not the garbage police!"

While working on developing the ZWAP, the two fellows contributed to a financial assessment of infrastructure, logistical planning for new programs, and helped create new training videos and activities for students who take the Sustainable Scots first-year workshop.

"We're working on creating a culture of sustainability and zero waste—we want it to be one of the pillars of Macalester," Graham says. "It's like, you come to this school, and you're gonna do your homework: we're academically rigorous. And we're stewards of our community: we're going to be sustainable."

Even though progress can be challenging at times, they both say that the Macalester community is still on board. "It feels very easy to participate in sustainability and zero waste here," White says.

Laurice Jimu '27 checks out a shirt in the campus reuse center. The center rehomes thousands of donated items every year. ▶

DAVID J. TURNER (5)



◀ **Mila Petit '27, Sophie Moeller '27, and Charlie Gee '26 host weekly mending hours to help students learn how to fix, adjust, or bedazzle their clothing.**

The Sustainability Office has other ways to subtly encourage people to get involved in zero waste efforts, too. Learn-to-mend and repair workshops happen frequently in the Idea Lab, and the office has partnered with clubs across campus to encourage more people to participate in environmental and outdoors activities—putting on a learn-to-bike workshop with the Biking Club and a Camping 101 program with the Outdoors Club.

“The idea is to get more people outside, hoping that that will lead to more of an appreciation,” Butler says. “If somebody has a good experience with camping, maybe they’re also going to recycle and compost more because they’ve had that positive interaction with sustainability in other ways.”

Student-driven change

Other projects the students are working on include setting up an internal digital asset management system to redistribute hard-to-recycle items like furniture throughout campus, maintaining the Reuzzi takeout container infrastructure, participating in weekly food recovery and delivery, piloting an app that alerts students within MacNav (Mac’s student-facing app) when there’s leftover food from events, running reuse/repair workshops, piloting projects like appointing a “green representative” for each sports team, and partnering with community and student organizations on environmental justice initiatives.

One of the most visible efforts on campus is MacShare, a student-run food co-op that brings local, sustainable, and cheaper produce to campus. Student volunteers purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and other staples like tofu and eggs from local co-ops and then sell them at cost out of the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center.

“MacShare was initially conceived as a justice-focused mutual-aid organization,” explains Nurain Jiwani '26, who has been involved since his first year and also co-leads food recovery efforts across campus. “Living up to that vision is both a great goal and a great challenge. MacShare distributes free food to students who need it via free vouchers, which are funded by the Open Pantry. We do what we do because we believe everyone should have access to affordable and healthy food.”

The Free Swap Outlet/Garage is one of the Sustainability Office’s top points of pride, and a major cornerstone of the ‘infrastructure’ bucket of the ZWAP. The free item exchanges, one located on Summit Avenue and another in the garage in the Sustainability Office’s backyard, are open to students, staff, faculty, and community members. Also contributing are local organizations that distribute



Consuela Espinoza, a cook with Bon Appétit, works to separate trimmings during meal preparation. The trimmings will be sent to Barthold Farms as part of Mac's food to hogs program.



clothes, appliances, and other items to folks in need around the Twin Cities. It's a big win for both reaching diversion goals and supporting the community.

"It really serves an important purpose and has a big impact," Butler says. "And the sheer scale of it is impressive. It's a crazy quantity of things we're processing. It's unheard of for such a small campus."

Environmental impacts

Environmental justice, community engagement, and mutual aid are northstars of the ZWAP. Initiatives like food recovery work toward zero waste goals but, more importantly, help reduce food insecurity on and off campus.

The Sustainability Office partners with Loaves and Fishes, a Minneapolis non-profit that provides healthy meals to food-insecure Minnesotans. Students, volunteers, and Bon Appétit staff recover food from Café Mac each week. Recovered food—anything that is untouched, unopened, and safe to eat—is then driven by students to Loaves and Fishes' distribution centers. Any food classified as waste is sent first to a nearby pig farm, or to composting.

Most of the waste produced on campus is food-related. At the same time, food insecurity is increasing across the Twin Cities. "It feels wrong to have both," Butler says. "I think it inspires us to keep investing time and effort into making sure food is accessible that would have otherwise been wasted."

"Marginalized communities bear responsibility for waste they didn't produce," says Jiwani. "Macalester is a community in and of itself, and it can be easy to forget about the larger community we live in. If our neighbors need the food we don't want anymore, the least we can do is to share it."

Food recovery is just one part of environmental justice work, though. Butler emphasizes that historically disadvantaged communities already bear a disproportionate burden of waste's environmental impacts—pollution, hazards, and toxic emissions. The less Mac can throw away, the better.

"Waste doesn't just go away," she says. "At Macalester, we send our waste to landfills and incinerators in Red Wing and Mankato—it's the same story, with a disproportionately burdened community bearing the brunt. It's just not in our backyard anymore. We need to do our part to reduce and eliminate these impacts."

Finding joy in the work

The enthusiasm found within Facilities Services and the Sustainability Office is infectious—an attitude that Butler intentionally takes, knowing the emotional toll this work can require.





MEGAN BUTLER
DIRECTOR OF
SUSTAINABILITY



Waste doesn't just go away. At Macalester, we send our waste to landfills and incinerators in Red Wing and Mankato—it's the same story, with a disproportionately burdened community bearing the brunt. It's just not in our backyard anymore."

"I know climate anxiety around environmental issues can really shut folks down," she says, "so I really focus on what can be done, and the empowering components of everyday actions—which is something I need, as an inherently impatient person. On this scale, I can see the impact of my work every day, and getting to interact with people—it's rejuvenating."

White echoes this. "It can feel so daunting, but there's so many ways on campus, almost entirely student-led, to help make a difference," she says. "We might not be stopping climate change, but we're helping provide people with things they need and finding solutions to other sustainability problems so that they don't negatively affect others."

Jiwani sees this firsthand during MacShare hours, too. "It's more than an on-campus market—it's a community space. Every Friday, a line starts to form before we open, abuzz with energy. I love to chat with everybody and help them pick out their produce. My favorite part is when a new customer gets to the end of the line and I can see their surprise at the low total. It's a great feeling knowing that we are helping increase food access on campus."

"We know we're not going to end all waste by implementing all these initiatives," says Graham, "but it's so important to remember that doing what you can is better than doing nothing."

◀ **Abby White '26 and Milana Krishnevsky '28 work to prepare uneaten food from the campus dining center to donate to local nonprofit Loaves and Fishes.**

FROM TOP: DAVID J. TURNER (2); ABRAHAM SWEE



BEYOND ZERO WASTE

As an institution, Macalester is committed to advancing sustainability goals of all kinds—not just zero waste. Reducing emissions and energy consumption is a central facet of the college's strategic plan. And one of the biggest examples of that commitment will soon be found underneath the college's new residence hall and welcome center, which is currently under construction.

Crews are installing a geothermal pump system under the new building, a rare feature for colleges in urban and northern climates. Aquifer-based geothermal systems are a newer technology that taps into the thermal energy stored in groundwater. Underground temperatures are steady year-round, creating opportunities for thermal exchange. During summer months, the naturally cool groundwater provides a head start on air conditioning, and in winter, the same water is significantly warmer than the air outside, requiring less heating to meet indoor temperature needs.

Eventually, the college plans to expand the energy-efficient system across campus. "The geothermal technology being integrated into the building provides urban campuses with a viable pathway for moving away from fossil fuels," says Nathan Lief, associate vice president for facilities services. "As the system is expanded to include other buildings, it will be a game changer in lowering emissions and reducing costs for the college."

To help create a culture of sustainability around these issues, the Sustainability Office regularly promotes opportunities to get a better sense of how bigger-picture infrastructure works at the college. Boiler plant and steam tunnel tours, along with a solar panel tour of campus rooftops, are community favorites.

Sustainability features of the new residence hall and welcome center

- ▶ A geothermal plant to serve the entire campus north of Grand Avenue
- ▶ A rooftop solar array
- ▶ A high-performance envelope (the building's outer shell)
- ▶ Landscaping with native plantings and a green roof on the building's terrace



WORKING IN AMERICA

BY ABRAHAM SWEE / ILLUSTRATION BY PABLO LOBATO

The world of work is constantly evolving, and so are the words we use to describe it. From “panic hiring” to “the great resignation,” post-pandemic buzzwords reveal just how much our feelings around work have shifted. In economics professor Elizabeth Engle’s course *Working in America*, students work to understand the trendy headlines but also the underlying forces shaping markets. At the top of the list in 2026, technological disruption—hello, artificial intelligence. Other factors at play: labor market discrimination, unionization, and the minimum wage. Through economic models and real-world analysis, Engle works to inspire a new generation of critical minds, ready to engage energetically (and skeptically) with new ideas and policy proposals.

The job market sure has a lot of trendy terms these days. What are these buzzwords telling us?

I love all the fun names because they highlight aspects of the market that economists haven’t traditionally measured. Often we’re focused on: Do you have a job? How much does it pay you? How many hours are you working? But a lot of these broader trends that have been spotted post-pandemic are more about how people experience their work and their satisfaction with that work and their relationship with their employer. For example, the term “quiet quitting” implies that you’re not actually working your hardest and

from that we can examine why you may be cutting back. Having that knowledge can challenge our traditional models and inspire economists to think further about how a worker’s engagement affects their own experience and the firm’s productivity, together.

Working in America has changed drastically over time. What are some of the biggest changes you explore with students?

One of the big things that I try to keep up with is technological developments and how they shape work. A big one we talked about this semester is artificial intelligence. Usually technological advances hit low-skilled jobs, positions that typically require minimal formal education or specialized training, the hardest. Meanwhile, impacts to high-skilled workers, who typically rely on higher education, are more limited. But AI has the potential to reverse that. That kind of flip is really interesting to me and something I’m exploring alongside my students.

What does labor economics teach us about how workers might adapt in the era of artificial intelligence?

New technology in the labor market brings with it transitions. When you have a technology that can substitute what some workers do, there’s always concern that those workers may be out of a



job. And yet, we've never created a piece of technology that has led to mass unemployment. The market has always found other things for people to do because people are such versatile instruments. Of course, that's not to say the period of transition is comfortable or that it's accessible to all workers, but generally, the market provides new avenues of opportunity. As for AI, is it going to follow that same pattern? No one can say for certain, but we have a lot of past examples that suggest that it will.

With a new administration in the White House, there's been a lot of give and take with tariffs, immigration, and tax policy. How do you help students think through the impact of those policies?

One of my favorite things in this class is our final project, a policy brief. This is an opportunity for students to pick a policy, examine the literature on such a policy, apply our models from class, and then to try and make predictions about the effects of such a policy and to estimate the costs and benefits. This year, I've had students examining the new \$100,000 fee for H-1B visas for foreign workers. Others researched Minnesota's new sick and safe leave program. No matter the policy, students have a chance to deeply engage with something happening now, and often they can share what they find with decision makers and make a difference.

How does this kind of detailed policy review benefit economics majors and non-majors?

What I want students to walk away with is the instinct to think through a policy that sounds like a good idea. There are a lot of policy ideas or fixes for the labor market thrown out there that sound really awesome. But what I want is to develop the instinct in all of our students—no matter their major—to think through, okay, what does this do to all the people involved? What are the costs and benefits of this policy? To have that moment to step back and analyze in addition to saying, "Yeah, that sounds like a great goal. Will it get us there and at what cost?"

As a labor economist, what kind of research do you participate in outside the classroom?

A lot of my work right now focuses on the home health and personal care market. These are workers who go to the residences of older adults and people with disabilities to help them with the kind of daily activities you need to do to continue living independently. Right now, I'm looking at the supply of workers into those jobs. If we have an economic downturn, we could see an influx of workers here. On the other hand, if the economy is booming, workers may look elsewhere. As we have a large chunk of our population aging into need for these services, the home health industry is expected to experience rapid growth in the coming years.

CLASS NOTES

1971

The Class of 1971 will celebrate its 55th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

1972

Gary Mainor recently attended his first Macalester Alumni Board meeting. "If you are an older alum like me, you should seriously look into how the college has changed," Gary writes. "It is full of new opportunities for students."

1973

Mike Carr has endowed the Reading Boost Fund, a new charitable fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. The fund supports efforts to promote childhood literacy and a love of reading in children of all ages.

1976

The Class of 1976 will celebrate its 50th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

1977

Kent Meyer is interim pastor for St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Delano, Minn. "This is easily the most liberal church I have ever served," he writes. "So nice to be able to preach without pulling my punches."

1981

The Class of 1981 will celebrate its 45th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

1982

Joe Marty, who believes "the one bright spot in the movie business has been the growth of nonprofit local cinemas," has embarked on a second career

Send **MAC TODAY** your class note through MacConnect, via email at mactoday@macalester.edu, or by mail to Class Notes Editor, Communications and Marketing, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105-1899.

CLASS NOTES PHOTO POLICY:

We publish one photo per wedding.

We welcome photos of alumni gathered together anywhere in the world and publish as many photos as space permits.

Photos must be high-resolution, approximately

2MB or greater in file size.

Email alumnioffice@macalester.edu to request a Mac banner for an upcoming wedding or other gathering.

If you have a question about your class note, email mactoday@macalester.edu.

as chairman of the board of The Picture House Regional Film Center in southern Westchester County, N.Y. He is working on a capital campaign to remodel two cinemas to meet a "21st-century standard."

1984

Gretchen Legler has lived in Farmington, Maine, with her partner, Ruth Hill, since 2000, when Gretchen accepted a tenure-track position in English and creative writing at the University of Maine. She plans to retire this year.

1986

The Class of 1986 will celebrate its 40th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

1988

While Ellie Pierce has been screening her new documentary film *Abraham's Bridge* at festivals, conferences, and special events, she has "had the pleasure to connect with some amazing Mac alumnae." Kimberly Wortmann '07 convened a panel and invited Ellie to her class at Wake Forest University. "Alyson Schiller Muzila '96 has also been part of my film journey, too, through Women in Film and Video of New England," Ellie writes.

1991

The Class of 1991 will celebrate its 35th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

David Cline has been named Fred J. Hansen Chair of Peace Studies at San Diego State University, where he is also professor of history and the founding director of the institution's Center for Public and Oral History. His most recent books



Several Macalester alums held a mini-reunion in Napa, Calif. Front (from left): Amy Shapiro Ochi '85, Jean Butterfield '85, and Cari Asta Anderson '85. Back: Kate Siggerud '85, Bob Ochi '85, and David Anderson '85. Also pictured: Kate's husband, Jim.



President Suzanne M. Rivera and first spouse Michael B. Householder hosted Charles Macalester Society members for dinner, honoring their exceptional legacy of philanthropic leadership. Front row (from left): Janet Rajala Nelson '72, Rivera, Ellen Siewert '70, and Tom Morin. Back: Rudy Guglielmo, Tom Nelson '70, Fred Nolan '72, Paul Olson '72, Pam Olson, Householder, Cindy Weldon '89, Vice President for Advancement Joanna Curtis '97, and Executive Vice President and Provost Lisa Anderson-Levy.

are *Roll and Flow: The Cultural Politics of Surfing and Skateboarding* and *Twice Forgotten: African Americans and the Korean War*. David is also working on two major public history and public art projects about the US-Mexico border.

Michele Garnett McKenzie has been named executive director of The Advocates for Human

Rights, a Minneapolis-based non-governmental organization. Michele joined the organization in 1999 as a staff attorney and later led its immigration legal services, advocacy, communications, and operations efforts.

(Continued on page 37)

Margo Dinneen '65

For Margo Dinneen '65, nothing should end up in a landfill if it can find a meaningful second home. That philosophy led her to bring Macalester mementos from her Prior Lake home to the College Archives—photographs and documents that are now filling gaps in the college's understanding of student life and international travel opportunities from the 1960s and beyond.

During the summer of 1964, Dinneen was one of the early participants in Macalester's Student Work Abroad Project (SWAP), traveling to Hong Kong to work at the local Hilton Hotel. While at Mac, Dinneen also participated in another international travel program, Ambassadors for Friendship, and later helped coordinate reunions for both programs in 1986 and 2010.

This past fall, her materials contributed to a research project in Professor Jess Pearson's history course, *Time Travelers: Tourism in Global History*, where students researched the beginnings of study away at Macalester. For Dinneen, donating these materials and working with current students has been an easy and meaningful way to give back to her alma mater.

How did it feel to have current Macalester students researching your study away experiences?

To me, history feels "ancient"! Maybe current students do feel that our records from the mid-60s are "ancient!" Through this experience, I've learned that all current events do eventually become historical!

It's actually unbelievable to me that the students could do their research from our old SWAP and Ambassadors paper records and AV items when there wasn't even equipment to access them on (e.g., slide projector, CD, or DVD player). Those students gave wonderful reports on what they had learned, and they also asked great questions of me!

Why does this work preserving the past resonate with you?

Deep in my heart I feel like I've always been kind of an archivist. Now, in my eighties, I knew I needed to pass things on. It was obvious that I couldn't keep all my wonderful treasures from Macalester, thus off to the archives. My entire motivation came from our philosophy that we don't want anything to go in a landfill if there can be another home for it!

What do you carry with you from your own college experience?

Innumerable opportunities to travel! Equally, friends whom I treasure deeply! In addition to events on campus, I am blessed to be in conversation weekly with eighteen 1965 classmates who live across the US, six others annually, and a few more occasionally. Thank you, Macalester College!



Nancy Podewell Colvin '66 and Judy Aanstad '68 discovered they share an alma mater after meeting in a Silver Sneakers class at a YMCA in Winston-Salem, N.C.



Katie Barrett Wiik '00, Paul Nelson '72, and Macalester Professor of American Studies Duchess Harris organized a panel at the Appellate Judges Education Institute Summit in Minneapolis.



Kim Miller '72 and her daughter, Molly Brookfield '09, visited their family's old babysitter, Wendy Guyot '97, at Wendy's home in Portland, Ore. Kim and Molly celebrated Wendy's fiftieth birthday with a visit to her favorite Russian restaurant. From left: Wendy, Molly, and Kim.



Patrick Drigans '81 reports that he, Bernadette Samanant McCormick '81, and Dave Smith '81 "had a fun time golfing together" on Oct. 1 in Golden Valley, Minn.



Becky Troth '78 reports that she and two other members of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Bethesda, Md., Susan Hirtz Greif '75 and Holly Elwood '90, "somehow figured out that we are all Mac grads." The church's director of music has a daughter who is also a Mac alumna, Kelly Hardin '14.



Margo Dinneen, right, in Hong Kong



Peter Bognanni '01, Associate professor of English and creative writing. *How to Lose Yourself Completely* (Balzer + Bray, 2026)



Anthony Smith '73 and Steven J. McCabe. *Dr. Sterling Bunnell: From Son of the Gold Rush to Founding Father of Hand Surgery* (American Society for Surgery of the Hand, 2025)



David Lapakko '72. *He Didn't Know What He Didn't Know* (Innovative Ink, 2025) The “almost entirely autobiographical” coming-of-age novella is partly based on Lapakko’s experiences as a Macalester student.



Mise en Scène: Illustrating French Interiors

By Cora Trout '16. (2025)

Illustrator Cora Trout’s latest project combines paintings of ten distinct spaces across Île-de-France—from a palace to a 1950s suburban home. A French major at Macalester, Trout created the work during a two-month residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. We spoke with her about the project, recently featured at the Columbia Art League.

How did it feel to immerse yourself in these French interiors?

It was special to work on these paintings while I was in Paris. My desk at the Cité Internationale des Arts overlooked the Seine, and I could see the spire of Notre Dame. When I returned to St. Louis, painting these interiors brought me back to Paris. Even thousands of miles away, I could feel connected to the city again.

What got you interested in this project?

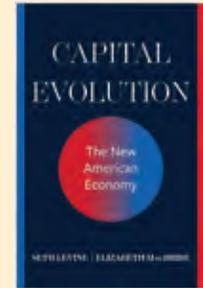
I first became interested in French interior design after coming across Jean Badovici’s *Intérieurs Français* (1925) and the *Répertoire du Goût Moderne* (1928–29), a five-volume set of folios depicting domestic interior design illustrated by many famous designers and architects. These books were part of the “advice literature” genre circulating in Paris at the time. They helped shape the debate over what constituted good taste, and sought to disseminate those views on an international scale.

What do you hope someone viewing these illustrations takes away?

Many of the locations I feature in my book were, at the time of their creation, tangible manifestations of power and wealth. And their interiors followed suit. Today, these interiors help us understand furniture and furnishings as objects of social history. A room—her chairs, cushions, curtains, commodes, china, all of it—is a mirror for human emotions, needs, and desires, however rational or irrational they may be. I hope this book helps people think differently about the spaces they inhabit. I also hope they can feel transported to another place.



Pamela Sjodin '68. *Mr. Boonjie and the Moon dust Quest* (Beaver’s Pond Press, 2025)



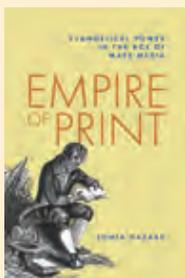
Seth Levine '94 and Elizabeth MacBride. *Capital Evolution* (Matt Holt Books, 2025)



Heidi Waterhouse '98. *Progressive Delivery* (IT Revolution, 2025)



Billan Omar '20. *Soomaali Mi'yaa? Exploring Somalinitas in South Africa* (Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2025)



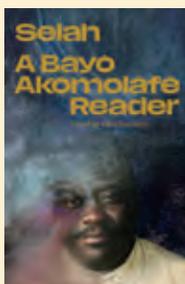
Sonia Hazard '08. *Empire of Print: Evangelical Power in an Age of Mass Media* (Oxford University Press, 2025)

A religious studies and art history double major, Hazard examines how the American Tract Society built a nineteenth-century media network that shaped information distribution across the United States. The book, dedicated to her late religious studies professor Paula Cooley, explores how power operates through everyday information systems. "I hope readers see that the story I'm telling about the nineteenth century is not the distant past, but a moment that helps illuminate the roots of our modern media environment," Hazard says. The cover was designed by Patricia Olson '73, Hazard's mother.



Jonathan Bernstein '11. *What Do You Do When You're Lonesome: The Authorized Biography of Justin Townes Earle* (Hachette, 2026)

A fact-checker and journalist at *Rolling Stone*, Bernstein traces the book's origins to his sophomore year at Macalester, when he first saw Justin Townes Earle perform at the Turf Club. The biography explores the late singer-songwriter's life and legacy. "One of my aims in writing this book was to try to investigate some entrenched and in many ways harmful ideas in music, and in our culture at large, about the correlation between creativity and self-destruction," Bernstein says.



Báyò Akómóláfé, Hubert Humphrey Distinguished Professor of American Studies. *Selah: A Bayò Akómóláfé Reader* (Ayin Press, 2026)

Known for investigating the fundamental assumptions of our current culture in crisis, Akómóláfé's collection presents a wide range of aphorisms, poems, and philosophical ideas. Taken together, they examine his signature concepts of ontofugitivity, ecocognitive assemblage theory and postactivism, drawing inspiration from thinkers ranging from Édouard Glissant to Octavia Butler. The title of the collection draws on a Hebrew word suggesting ecstatic exclamation.



Jeff Goltz '71 (left), Alan Peterson '71 (center), and Steve Rufer '71 (right) enjoyed four days of hiking at Lake O'Hara in Yoho National Park in British Columbia, Canada, in September.



Four members of a Minneapolis YMCA class realized they were all Macalester alums when one showed up wearing a Mac T-shirt. From left: Ray Piirainen '76, Ted Hovet '87, Rachele Mitchell Herrmann '66, and John Welsh '75.



Brian Berkopce '91 and "dearest friends" Cecilia Campero '91 and Fernando Romero '91 attended the inauguration of Bolivian President Rodrigo Paz on Nov. 8, 2025. Brian has been Paz's friend for more than thirty years. Cecilia is the Bolivian president's cousin, and Fernando is minister of planning and development in the new administration. Front row: Fernando's wife, Daniela, and Fernando. Back: Cecilia (in orange) and Brian.

CLASS NOTES

1993

David Pacheco has been promoted to captain at the Minnetonka, Minn., Fire Department, where he has worked since 2020. He invites anyone in the area interested in scheduling a fire station visit or a ride-along on one of the engines to reach out to him.

1994

Nicole Groves planned to launch Sourwood Pediatrics, PLLC in Black Mountain, N.C., in January 2026. "After twenty-plus years working in the insurance-based corporate healthcare delivery model, I am thrilled to be moving on to direct primary care," she writes.

1996

The Class of 1996 will celebrate its 30th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

2001

The Class of 2001 will celebrate its 25th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

2006

The Class of 2006 will celebrate its 20th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

Amanda Westley Ziegler completed a PhD in education at National University. As director of library services, access, and scholarship at NU, she leads "a fully digital library that supports more than 22,000 students."

2011

The Class of 2011 will celebrate its 15th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

2013

Rachel Gunsalus and Huong Nguyen-Hilfiger '10 are among "40 Under 40" emerging public health leaders recognized by the de Beaumont Foundation. Rachel is training and workforce capacity manager in public health for Seattle and King County, and Huong is chief data officer in the Division of

CLASS NOTES

2022

Hannah Deutschlander Benick and her husband, Lance, of Austin, Texas, welcomed a son, Banks, in September 2025.

Public Health and director of the Office of Health Informatics at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

2023

Amelia Ryan received an MA in French from Middlebury Language Schools' Betty Ashbury Jones MA '86 School of French in August 2025.

2014

Sarah Fleming and Mark van der Linden welcomed their first child, Henry, on Oct. 11, 2024. After a decade-long career in social service, Sarah is now a visiting assistant professor of social work at Luther College and is pursuing a PhD in social work at Simmons University.



Three members of the Class of 2001 attended a Shasqi company retreat in Pescadero, Calif.: Jose Mejia Oneto '01, Sebastian Sanchez de Lozada '01, and Anushka Shevde Arellano '01.

2016

The Class of 2016 will celebrate its 10th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.

2021

The Class of 2021 will celebrate its 5th Reunion June 4-7, 2026.



Amy Knox '92, Dan Schacht '91, Lauren Wilson '92, and Steve Frenkel '91 held a mini-reunion in Hopkinton, Mass., where Dan lives with his family.



While Chris Dwyer '05 was visiting Bogotá, Colombia, Zachary Naiman '97 introduced himself after noticing that Chris's daughter was wearing a Macalester sweatshirt. "It pays to wear your Mac gear," Chris writes.



A group of Macalester alums originally from Hyde Park returned to the Chicago neighborhood "to enjoy the view of Lake Michigan." Pictured "in the glasses of Bob Horwitz '84" (from left): Merrill Boone '83, Jon Steinhoff, photographer Mike Link, Scott Habermehl '84, and TJ Naim '84.

MacConnect

MacConnect: Your Alumni Hub

Log in to MacConnect to personalize your profile, explore events near you, and find alumni friends in your area. You can also update your interests and communication preferences.

Make sure your information is up to date and start connecting today!

Questions?

Email alumnioffice@macalester.edu



macalester.edu/MacConnect

Welcome!

Thank you for visiting MacConnect, the online community for Macalester alumni to stay in touch with the college and each other.

Join the new regional engagement volunteer committee: alumni@macalester.edu

[Update Profile](#)

[Search Alumni](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

Alumni Resources

- [MacConnect FAQ](#)
- [The Mac Alumni](#)
- [Student to Alumni](#)
- [Social & Events of The Mac Today](#)
- [Career Services for Alumni](#)
- [Dishes & Drinks of The Mac Today](#)
- [Alumni Association](#)
- [STOR Access for Alumni](#)
- [Alumni Business Directory](#)
- [Printed Mac Alumni for Alumni](#)

Macalester on Social Media

MEET ALUMNI BOARD PRESIDENT KEVIN FINNEGAN '11

We spoke with the Chicago-based Scot who graduated with a major in political science and a minor in educational studies. As the current Alumni Board president, he's focused on strengthening the bonds between Mac alumni and the college community.

What do you do when you're not volunteering with Macalester?

My full-time position is at an education tech startup, AwardSpring, where I work as a customer solutions lead. Basically I lead go-to-market strategy and sales for a customer relationship management product for the company. I work a lot with fundraising folks, advancement staff, and executive directors from largely the community college and technical college space, which is a natural extension of my lifelong focus on helping students achieve their college and career goals. Outside of work, I spend most of my time with my partner, our toddler, and our dog, who keep me both busy and deeply fulfilled.

Why did you join the Alumni Board, and what have you been working on?

Joining the board is something that I, in true Mac fashion, would probably never have raised my hand for myself, but instead I got nominated (thanks, Joe Shearer '11!). I had heard from some fellow alumni that there's some really great work happening here, and was excited by the chance to connect and work alongside fellow Mac folks, people who are smart, empathetic, and bring a learning mindset to everything they do.

There's always something interesting and new to work on with the Alumni Board. One of the first task forces that I helped lead was a diversity, equity, and inclusion task force, where we took a look at ourselves, internally. Are we showing up in the right places? Are we looking at our processes through an equity lens?

As a former athlete—I played football at Mac—it's also been fun to amplify the work of Macalester Athletics and volunteer with their leadership program, Scots LEAD. The program works to prepare student-athletes for life after Mac and I've been able to facilitate a bunch of sessions with Scots as they prepare for their next chapter.

What are you most excited to be working on this year as president?

One of my biggest priorities has been to deepen the alumni connection to the college. A lot of folks can't get back to campus for various reasons, but there are still plenty of opportunities to connect. That's a big part of what we are working on this year: amplifying those opportunities, tracking engagement, and finding areas we can improve.



How do you recommend alums take that first step to reconnect with Mac?

Taking the next step for some people could be as simple as reading *Macalester Today*. For others it is logging on to MacConnect and registering as a career helper—it will only be a matter of time before fellow Scots start reaching out to network and ask for advice. And then, there really are a lot more in-person opportunities than you could ever imagine. I'd recommend checking out where the nearest Mac in Your City is taking place (it might surprise you how many awesome events your fellow Scots are hosting) or finally coming back for Reunion. It's a blast to be back on campus.

What event are you most looking forward to this year at Mac?

That's got to be graduation. As Alumni Board president, I'll have the privilege of welcoming new graduates into Macalester's community of more than 30,000 alumni, a moment I'm very much looking forward to. Macalester brings together so many people from around the globe, and what a wonderful chance to celebrate their pride and the possibility of what's coming next. Macalester is an experience unlike any other, and as a college access and success professional, I think I have to be, you know, obligated to really love a graduation. But a Macalester graduation, with the bagpipes and all, you've got to love that even more.

► To learn more about the Alumni Board and upcoming opportunities, visit macalester.edu/alumni/alumniboard.



1. **Jared Jageler '22** and **Keaton Bergeron** were married Oct. 4, 2025, in Lenox, Mass. Pictured at the after-party, from left: **Katie McCarthy '22**, **Josh Wink '22**, **Angus Fraser '22**, the groom and bride, **Ian Smith '22**, **Claire McCabe '22**, and **Izzy Valdivia '22**.
2. **Emma Erikson '20** and **Jake Heasley '20** were married May 17, 2025, in Hood River, Ore. They celebrated with several Macalester classmates. Pictured (from left): **Sam Liberman '20**, **Tess Mueller '21**, **James Hartzler '20**, **Jimmy Cooke '20**, **Caleb Huntington '20**, **Keaton Belbas '20**, and **Leah Meisel '20**.



3. **Grace Petrie Perzana '16** and **Aidan Morzenti Perzana '16** were married Oct. 19, 2024, "amidst a sea of Maccies." From left: **Spencer Carter '16**, **Jeffrey Lyman '16**, **Spencer Wade '16**, **John Stark '16**, **Gabrielle Anderson '16**, **Winter Young '16**, **Alex Frank '16**, **Jesse Goldblum '14**, **Imaan Azeem '22**, **Lucas Myers '17**, **Rafa Viana Furer '22**, **Maggie McKenna '16**, **Aidan**, **Grace**, **Shelley Furer '88**, **Alex Rack '16**, **Colleen Cowie '18**, **Glen Goldman '88**, **David Munkvold '17**, **Jodie Brown Boderman '88**, **Julia Turner '16**, **Grace Wolff '16**, **Walter Benson '16**, **Mackenzie Martin '16**, **Jon Riddle '16**, and **Emma Soglin '16**.
4. **Grace Newton '16** and **Anthony Jiang** were married Aug. 31, 2024, in Madison, Wis. Front row (from left): **Andy Kaesermann '16**, **Jon Straker '16**, **Anna Winkler '16**, **Kevin Dowling '16**, **Katrina Mellin '16**, and **Kacie Reilly '16**. Back: **Edda Veelik '17**, **Ally Milenkovic '17**, **Jenny Brooks '16**, the newlyweds, **Tilly Bartelt '16**, **Laura Einerson '16**, **Lillian Hexter '16**, and **Rachel Fogel '16**.

5. **Sophie Kurschner '18** and **Brian McNamara '18** were married May 25, 2025, in Mount Hood, Ore. Several Macalester classmates joined them to celebrate. Pictured (from left): **Giselle Lora '18**, **Saakshi Daswani '18**, **Jessica Yost '18**, **İlter Çakmak '18**, **Brian**, **Sophie**, **Anandi Gupta '18**, **Ceci Caro '18**, **Mariah Shriner '18**, and **Suveer Daswani '18**.

CELEBRATE WITH MAC!

Email alumnioffice@macalester.edu to request a Mac banner for an upcoming wedding or other gathering.



6



7



8

6. **Emma Daszkiewicz '19** and **Gabriel Brown '19** were married Nov. 8, 2025, on the Skansonia Ferry in Seattle. Joining them to celebrate were (from left): **Paige Pfeiffer '19**, **Julia Hirsch '20**, **Garrett Schoonover '19**, **David Blomquist '19**, **Riley Yawn-White '19**, **Emily McPhillips '19**, **Maya Jones '19**, **Ben Kaufman '16**, **Elena Friedman '16**, **Ansel Colby '19**, **Hannah Whittle '19**, **Jemma Kloss '19**, **Mari Dorney-Riffle '19**, **Jayce Taylor '19**, **Emma Carray '20**, and **Elise Mills '20**.

7. **Maddie Coy-Bjork '19** and **Andrew Boyer '17** were married Oct. 11, 2025, in Seattle. Many Macalester friends attended the ceremony. Front row (from left): **Steph Rice-Hoffner '19**, **Ruby Kinnamon '19**, **Jo Ireland '19**, **Madeline Murnane '19**, **Miller Shor '19**, **Hannah Hoffman '19**, **Maddie**, **Andrew**, **Rachel Ladd '17**, **Hannah Scout Field '17**, and **Caleb Drickey '17**. Back row: **Nick Guo '17**, **Anjali Mani '20**, **Sasha Hixson '19**, **David Isaacson '19**, **Eliza Macy '20**, **Tucker Stevenson '19**, **Zach Skluzacek '19**, **Taylor Durbin '19**, **Paul Reischmann '19**, **Sophie Nadler '19**, **Josh Marcus '17**, **Aman Rai '19**, **Hank Hietala '17**, **Nicola Morrow '17**, **Danny Mussie '17**, **Lydia Fermanich '17**, **Max Meyerhoff '17**, **Mary Coy '91**, and **Patrick Coy-Bjork '24**.

8. **Melissa Feinman '17** and **Jack Fitzpatrick** were married Oct. 26, 2025, in Garrison, N.Y. Pictured (from left): **Sophie Keane '16**, **Ben Haltmaier '17**, **Allie Korbey '17**, **Clara Drew '17**, **Connor Valenti '17**, **Melissa**, **Atticus Kleen '17**, **Joe Klein '16**, **Dozandri Mendoza '17**, **Sierra Pancoast '17**, and **Alyssa Christian '17**.



9



10



11

9. **Allie Korbey '17** and **Ben Haltmaier '17** were married Sept. 20, 2025, at Tanglewood in Lenox, Mass. Pictured (from left): **Melissa Feinman '17**, **Ari Hymoff '17**, **Max Horvath '17**, **Jake Greenberg '17**, **Kate Rhodes '17**, **Ben**, **Allie**, **Pia Mingkwan '17**, **Tre Nowaczynski '17**, **Eliza Ramsey '17**, **Zach Gullerud '17**, and **Alyssa Christian '17**.

10. **Missy Stevanovic Baumhardt '19** and **Michael Baumhardt** were married July 2, 2025, in Richfield, Wis. Several Macalester friends attended the "magical and Shrek-theme-adjacent reception" on Aug. 2. Pictured from left: **Elizabeth Fugikawa '19**, the newlyweds, **Kira Drew Pollack '18**, and **Luke Brown '19**. "Extra love to our friends **M. Outlaw '20** and **James Cannon '20**, who sent love from afar," Missy writes.

11. **Ali Gammons Brancazio '19** and **Sam Brancazio '19** were married Aug. 31, 2025. From left: a non-Macalester alum friend of Ali, **Kaia Lund '18**, **Elizabete Romanovska '19**, **Sam**, **Max Brown '20**, **Nick Storlie '19** (behind Ali), **Jacob Hill '19**, **Elizabeth Emanuel '19**, **Ian Gorrell-Brown '19**, and **Henry Nieberg '19**.

Kiante Miles '20

Kiante Miles '20 started performing poetry in high school. At Macalester, he took it to the next level: performing works at campus events, writing a book, and, with support from the Live It Fund, built a poetry program for high school students in Minnesota and his home state of Oklahoma. He did it all while playing football for the Scots and working towards a computer science degree.

After graduating in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, Miles landed his first job as a data engineer. At the time, financial security seemed paramount, and pursuing poetry professionally took a back seat. For several years, he would focus his energy on building data pipelines and writing code. But in 2024, a connection from his time at Macalester called him up out of the blue and asked: "Are you still doing poetry?"

That phone call reignited a passion. Today, Miles continues his work as a data engineer at Hagerty. But when he clocks out of his nine-to-five, his work as a poet is just beginning. Companies now hire Miles to perform custom motivational pieces for corporate conferences and events. The dual career track has taught him crucial lessons about following what truly matters. "Anytime you feel your heart and soul tugging and pulling in a direction, you probably should follow it. You're more than likely going to regret not following it sooner."

Here, he shares what he's learned about balancing interests and why your liberal arts degree is worth more than you might think. Plus, a poem in his own words.

Your degree is more than your major

A liberal arts degree is so much more than skills in one facet of life. It's about communicating with people from different backgrounds and lan-

Zipper

By Kiante Miles

There's a difference between independence and standing alone
Between being in the crowd and playing your part in it

Regardless of where you're standing in line,
There will always be a pull, a tug.
It might not always be from the front.
You might be going back...
To your dreams.
To your gift.
You may need to go back
In order to clear the path ahead.

guages, fostering collaboration, and developing critical thinking. All those different aspects of a liberal arts education show up in any workforce. I wish I'd understood that better when I first graduated—I would have felt more satisfied with where I was at.

Don't be afraid to take the plunge

When you're considering a career pivot, ask yourself two questions: What happens if you do, and what happens if you don't? A lot of times we play these games of "What if I quit and it fails?" We overcomplicate things and make life the obstacle. Go in with a plan that considers failure, yes, but still pursue the thing, because that's what's going to fulfill your heart and soul.

The person you are matters more than credentials

The biggest thing I've learned on the job is that the type of person you are is going to have way more effect on what jobs you're able to get than certifications and qualifications. Your real qualification is how you take up



space in a room. If you take up positive space in a room, companies are going to want you. Go ahead and take a career risk, because more often than not, companies can teach technical skills, but they can't teach that energy.

Tap the MacConnect network

One of the biggest resources I've used is MacConnect. Anytime I need anything—a financial advisor, connections in my field, information about a company—I look for Mac alumni. And what I've found is Mac alums who are always willing to connect over coffee. Macalester alumni truly want to help people in the Macalester family. Don't be afraid to reach out.

Value real confidence

The mentors I've valued most are people who are okay with saying "I don't know, but let's go find the answer." It shows you're willing to not just make something up, but that you are confident in your own abilities. It's a subtle way to show real confidence.



Gretchen Legler '84 met up with Louise Edwards-Simpson '85 and Russell Edwards-Simpson '82 at Five Islands Lobster Company in Georgetown, Maine, "for a meal and a good, long catch-up." Russell, Louise, and their children vacation regularly in Russell's native state of Maine.



Last August, Ken Johnson '93, Dave Hutchison '93, Peter West '93, and Mark Vanderwel '93 gathered over a long weekend in upstate New York to reconnect.



Tom Ziebell '69 and Sara Satrom Ziebell '72 hosted Burke Strickland '69 in Oklahoma City.

SPRINGFEST MOMENTS

Since 1973, Macalester's Springfest has been a long cherished tradition—a chance for students to take a break from their studies, soak up the sun (sometimes on a snowy field), and enjoy live music. The festival has featured everyone from local favorites Soul Asylum and The Suburbs to more contemporary acts like Laundry Day and Skaiwater.

We asked Scots to share their favorite Springfest memories. Five decades apart, here are two of the stories of music and community that we received.



Rich Levinson '76, Christopher Ward '76, Morrey Nellis '73, and George Moore '76 attend the very first Springfest.

Grassroots Start

My favorite Springfest memory is helping organize and attending the very first one in 1973, held in the Kirk courtyard.

The concept originated thanks to the U of M who would throw a "Spring Fling" event to offer some relief and fun before finals. So we figured that if the U can do it, so can we but we'll just give it another name, "Springfest!"

We were able to park the beer truck, equipped with multiple taps, right in the Kirk courtyard. A reel-to-reel party tape was given to the Mac radio station to play throughout the afternoon. Courtyard Kirk residents had their stereos tuned to the Mac station and "turned up to 11" with their speakers propped up in their dorm windows. The weather cooperated, students had fun, and it was well attended! —Steve Cox '76



Xavier Gordon '10, Celeste Prince '10, Callie Thuma '10, and Lara Adekola '10 attend Springfest their senior year.

More Than Just the Music

My senior year, the theme was Glow Hard or Glow Home. The planning committee had really done some extra work for the festival: t-shirts, promotional videos with our current president B. Rose (Brian Rosenberg), and even a mixtape to get ready for the show! I just remember how much the team had put into creating an experience we could enjoy even if some of the acts weren't hugely popular.

—Celeste Prince '10

1947

Margaret Monroe Olson, 99, died July 2, 2025. She taught at Bellflower High School in California for fifteen years. Survivors include a daughter, three sons, six grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and sister Mary Monroe Tomhave '51.

1949

Norma Jean Mattern Wigfield, 98, of Olney, Md., died Nov. 3, 2025. She was a homemaker and worked as a teacher for eleven years. Survivors include two sons (including Allan Wigfield '73), five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and brother Allan Mattern '57.

1950

Doug Ostergren, 96, of Shoreview, Minn., died Feb. 27, 2025. He served in the Air Force and practiced dentistry in Roseville, Minn., for thirty-five years. Survivors include his wife, Phyllis, three children (including Janet Ostergren Hardel '79), seven grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

1951

Charlotte K. Davis, 97, died Oct. 9, 2025, in La Crosse, Wis. She retired in 1991 after a forty-year career as an elementary school teacher in Rochester, Minn.

1952

Kathryn Bottemiller Fair, 95, died Aug. 11, 2025. She taught grade school for five years and worked as a librarian at an elementary school in New York. With her husband, John, she raised two daughters and a son and had a granddaughter.

Donna Sellner Genck, 96, of St. Paul died Sept. 20, 2025. She was an active volunteer with her church and numerous community organizations. Survivors include a daughter, two sons (including Andrew Genck '82), a sister, and a brother.

Donald Liebenstein, 95, died Aug. 28, 2025. He taught high school in Roseville, Minn., for thirty-eight years. Survivors include his spouse, Beverly Moore Liebenstein '52, three children, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Jean Ekberg Maxwell, 95, of Woodstock, Ill., died Sept. 23, 2025. After retiring from a career as a medical technician, X-ray technologist, and nuclear medical technologist, she worked as a licensed realtor in Wisconsin and Illinois. Survivors include a sister.

Marilyn Nelson Stassen-McLaughlin, 94, died in late January 2025. She worked at Punahou School in Hawaii for thirty-one years, teaching seventh- and eighth-grade English and group reading for most of that time. In addition to writing biographical fiction and articles on teaching junior-high English, Stassen-McLaughlin was co-author of the book *Princess Victoria Ka'iulani: Last Heir of the Hawaiian Kingdom*. Survivors include daughter Martha Stassen '81.

1953

Alvin C. Currier, 93, of Cumberland, Wis., died Oct. 27, 2025. After his ordination in the Presbyterian Church, Currier served numerous congregations in Minnesota and Wisconsin, served as Macalester's chaplain for eleven years, and established St. Herman's Hermitage in Colfax, Wis., in 1975. In 1987, with his wife, Anastasia, he launched Currier Tours, which offered group excursions in Germany's Black Forest. Survivors include his wife, four children (including Cathryn Currier Layer '76), seven grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Arden Hill Granger, 93, of Morris, Minn., died Nov. 22, 2025. She edited a state trucking association publication and the Minneapolis Athletic Club magazine. Granger later served as the first public relations director at the University of

Minnesota-Morris, where she also worked as special events coordinator and supported staff during the institution's chancellor searches. Survivors include two daughters, a son, four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, a sister, and a brother.

Joan Wise Kelsch, 94, of Mandan, N.D., died Aug. 12, 2025. She taught elementary school and was a stay-at-home mother. Survivors include three children, seven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

Patricia Bloom Penschorn, 92, died April 30, 2024, in Chisago City, Minn. Survivors include three daughters and five grandchildren.

1956

John H. Corrigan, 91, of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, died Aug. 6, 2025. He worked for the 3M Company and pursued a career in graphic arts and design sales. Survivors include four children, three grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

Mary Furlough Woerner, 91, died July 22, 2025, in Waterloo, Iowa. After pursuing a teaching career in Cuba, California, and Iowa and working as a public health nurse in New York, Woerner was a nursing instructor at North Iowa Area Community College for twenty-five years. Survivors include daughter Francie Woerner '95, a son, six grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

1957

Wilson M. Salter, 90, died Aug. 23, 2025. Survivors include a daughter and two granddaughters.

Beverly Olson Stueber, 90, died Oct. 10, 2025, in Lakeway, Texas. She worked as a kindergarten teacher, a church secretary, and a Welcome Wagon associate. Survivors include two daughters, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Bonnie Dickson Zopfi, 89, of Little Canada, Minn., died Oct. 7, 2024. She was a member of the Minnesota Porcelain Art Guild and the China Painting Teachers Society of Minnesota. Survivors include two children and a sister.

1958

James D. Shannon, 89, died Oct. 8, 2025. He served as a Navy chaplain for twenty years, including two tours in Vietnam. In addition to serving as a Presbyterian pastor and music director at multiple churches and as a chaplain in long-term care centers, Shannon played piano as a soloist and with bands throughout the Twin Cities. He received Macalester's Distinguished Citizen Award. Survivors include daughter Deborah Goepfrich '02.

1959

Katharine Cole Burke, 88, died Aug. 31, 2025. She worked as an elementary and special education teacher for more than five decades. Survivors include three daughters and seven grandchildren.

Charlotte B. Gabrielson, 93, died July 8, 2025. Survivors include two sisters.

Nancy Stuessy Mansergh, 88, died Oct. 30, 2025, in Lake Elmo, Minn. She taught art, co-founded a nursery school, and served as founding manager of and a counselor with an employee assistance program at NCR Comten. Mansergh also served on Macalester's Alumni Board. She had four children, three grandchildren, and a brother.

Stanley J. Meyer, 87, of White Bear Lake, Minn., died April 22, 2025. He taught Spanish in North St. Paul, Minn. Survivors include his wife, Susanne Bakke Meyer '60, a daughter, a son, and two grandsons.

Ronald I. Miller, 92, of St. Paul died Sept. 19, 2025. He served abroad in the military and worked as a real estate agent.

// COMMUNITY LOSSES

Miller also won blue ribbons at the Minnesota State Fair for his baked goods, taught baking classes, and taught English to Russian immigrants at the St. Paul Jewish Federation. Survivors include two children, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Nida Clark Ryan, 97, of Lewistown, Mont., died Nov. 30, 2022. She assisted her husband, Paul, in his career as a Presbyterian pastor in various ministries in Montana and Idaho. Survivors include four children, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Jack L. Vold, 88, died Nov. 20, 2025. He taught junior-high math in Hopkins, Minn., for thirty-four years. Vold also coached basketball in Hopkins. He and his wife, Shirley, had a son and two granddaughters.

1960

Sebastian J. "Sam" Hernandez, 95, of Stillwater, Minn., died Sept. 6, 2025. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War, taught history and Spanish, and worked as an assistant principal. Hernandez was also a district consultant on Hispanic urban affairs in St. Paul and became involved in efforts promoting cultural diversity, human relations, and cross-cultural communication in the corporate world and higher education. Survivors include his wife, Peggy, four children, six grandchildren, and three siblings.

Carol Beaurline Ward, 87, of South St. Paul, Minn., died Oct. 25, 2025. After teaching kindergarten for five years, Ward became a homemaker. She also taught piano for more than fifty years and served as coordinator for Mobile Meals for more than thirty years. Survivors include two children, two grandchildren, and two siblings.

1961

Gayle Ostedt Alberg, 86, of White Bear Lake, Minn., died

Oct. 4, 2025. She was a social worker with the Ramsey County Welfare Department before becoming a full-time parent. Survivors include three sons (including Thomas Alberg '87), four grandchildren, and a brother.

David G. Hahn, 85, of Big Lake and Maple Grove, Minn., and Gold Canyon, Ariz., died July 12, 2025. He taught at Anoka High School, where he also coached golf and managed the school store. Hahn also co-owned a pool and spa store. He and his wife, Jan, had two children, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Dallas E. Herrick, 86, died Oct. 17, 2025. He served in the US Army and worked in the accounting department at Ecolab for twenty-seven years. Survivors include his wife, Judy, two daughters, four grandchildren, and three siblings.

1962

Edward B. "Burt" Bigelow, 89, died in Lee's Summit, Mo., on Sept. 9, 2025. After working at Boeing Aerospace, Bigelow worked as a real estate agent and a special education teacher. He also volunteered with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. Survivors include his wife, Mary Lois Albright Bigelow '62, three children, numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and a sister.

1963

Douglas L. Kulesa, 84, died Oct. 7, 2025. He worked for Samsonite Corporation, Information Handling Services, and 3t Systems. Kulesa also sang tenor with the Denver MountainAires Barbershop Chorus and performed with the group in Hawaii on the 80th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. Survivors include his wife, Nita, three children, eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

1964

Oscar V. Heath, 93, of Edina,



Mark O. Holte, a former technical supervisor in Macalester's Art Department, died Sept. 16, 2025, at the age of 73. From 1987 until his retirement in 2017, Holte taught technical skills and supported the Macalester community.

According to the Art Department, "Under his direction, the 3D Shop was a place full of acceptance, creativity, learning, adventure, laughter, and surprises." Holte and his wife, Pat Harty, had two daughters.



Sung Kyu Kim, professor emeritus of physics at Macalester, died Nov. 18, 2025, in St. Paul. His fifty-one-year career at Macalester began after an article in *Time* magazine inspired him to write a letter of interest to the college. Thousands

of Macalester students took his Contemporary Concepts course, and many alumni considered his classes highlights of their college careers. The longest-tenured faculty member in Macalester's history, Kim received the college's Burlington Northern Foundation Faculty Achievement Award in 1993. He was also named one of the "Best 300 Professors" by *The Princeton Review*. Survivors include his wife, Sherry, four children, eight grandchildren, two sisters, and three brothers.



Anita Malon, who served for five years as an administrative assistant to the president of Macalester, died Oct. 14, 2025, in St. Paul. She was 89. Malon also worked as an administrative assistant to the dean of New York University's law school and as an executive assistant to philanthropists Rachel Mellon and Ted Shen. Survivors include daughter Stephanie Malon-Rufi '99, two grandchildren, and sister Patricia Engel Huse '55.

Minn., died Aug. 29, 2025. He served in the US Navy during the Korean War and was later a member of the Naval Reserve. He worked as a sailmaker for thirty-six years. Survivors include his partner, Judy Langford, two children, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and a half-brother.

1966

Brenda Weaton Collins, 80, died Sept. 14, 2025, in Brewster, Mass. She worked as a collection development librarian for the National Library of Medicine and the Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard University, as library director at the New England College of Optometry, and as coordinator of library resources at Wilkens

Library at Cape Cod Community College. Collins also gave presentations on the role of women in the Civil War and wrote articles on history for *Harwich Neighbors* magazine. Survivors include her husband, William, and a sister.

Robert G. Holly, 81, died Sept. 10, 2025. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War, attaining the rank of lieutenant. Holly was later associate director of the clinical exercise program at the Pritikin Longevity Center in Santa Monica, Calif., and a senior lecturer in the physical education department at the University of California-Davis. Survivors include his wife, Irene, two children, two grandchildren, and a brother.

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Sachow Phillips, 81, died July 9, 2025. She taught junior-high English for many years and directed several shows at Madhatters Community Theatre in Wadena, Minn. Survivors include her husband, Sam, two children, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

1967

James M. Burkhart, 80, of Clovis, Calif., died Oct. 6, 2025. He worked for S&J Ranch for forty years. Survivors include his wife, Nancy, a daughter, and a grandson.

1968

Rosemary T. Brown, 77, died July 19, 2023. She was a social worker and administrator for PPS. Survivors include a son and two siblings.

Sandra Cheesebrough Hall, 79, of Lake Bluff, Ill., died Aug. 12, 2025. She was a teacher and school librarian, working for three decades at the elementary and high school level in the Osseo, Minn., School District. Survivors include two daughters, three grandsons, and a sister.

Charlotte J. Koski, 79, of Minneapolis died Oct. 17, 2025. She was a longtime employee of Ramsey County, Minn.

1969

Thomas R. Martin, 77, died Sept. 14, 2025. He was professor emeritus of medicine at the University of Washington–Seattle. He held various leadership positions with the American Thoracic Society and served as president of the organization from 2002 to 2003. Martin became global head of respiratory clinical development at Novartis Pharmaceuticals in 2011 and came out of retirement during the COVID pandemic to work on clinical trials of a possible therapy for seriously ill patients. Survivors include his wife, Diane Pedelty Martin '68, two daughters, three grandchildren, and five siblings, including brother Rick Martin '75.

Jamie Goertz Orcutt, 77, died Aug. 11, 2025. She was a columnist and editor at the Wausau, Wis., Daily Herald. Survivors include her husband, Rob, and two brothers.

1971

Karen L. Olson died June 10, 2025. She practiced psychiatry in Portland and Cumberland, Maine, worked with immigrants from Afghanistan and Iraq through Opportunity Alliance's mental health clinic, and practiced at Veterans Affairs outpatient clinics in Portland and Saco, Maine. Survivors include her husband, Stephen Hull, two children, and a brother.

1972

Karyn Markuson Alexander, 75, died Nov. 20, 2025, in Shakopee, Minn. She worked as a software consultant for such companies as Ecolab, Intel, and Oracle. Survivors include a son, five grandchildren, and two sisters.

James J. Myers, 76, of Anoka, Minn., died Oct. 13, 2025. After teaching high school biology for six years, Myers began a thirty-year career in the medical device industry with such companies as CPI, MiniMed Technologies, Distrionic Medical, and Johnson & Johnson. He earned a master beekeeping degree from the University of Nebraska after his retirement and operated Cedar Creek Honey for ten years. Survivors include his wife, Sally, two sons, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Kay Rodriguez Young, 73, of Halfway, Ore., died Oct. 3, 2024. She worked as a wilderness guard for the Forest Service and taught outdoor school in Portland, Ore. She later worked for the Pine Eagle School District for twenty-six years. Survivors include her husband, Jim, three children, two grandchildren, a sister, and a brother.

// COMMUNITY LOSSES



James Moe, a former boiler operator at Macalester, died Oct. 21, 2025, at the age of 52. He lived in Hastings, Minn. Survivors include his spouse, Mayleen, and three children.



Former Macalester dance faculty member **Toni Pierce-Sands** died Nov. 25, 2025, at the age of 63. She mentored many Macalester students and advised dance faculty on best practices. She performed with Minnesota Dance Theatre, Tanz

Forum in Germany, Rick Odums in Paris, and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. As co-founder and artistic director of TU Dance in St. Paul, "Pierce-Sands became a cornerstone of the local dance and art community," according to the St. Paul Pioneer Press. She also taught full time at the University of Minnesota and directed the school's University Dance Theatre. Survivors include her husband, Uri Sands, and a son.



Former Macalester faculty member **Laurence Savett** died Nov. 13, 2025. He was 89. After retiring from a career in internal medicine in 1997, Savett taught and advised students at Macalester and other institutions who planned to enter health professions. He also wrote the book *The Human Side of Medicine* and wrote for and served on the editorial board of the journal *Creative Nursing*. Survivors include his wife, Sue, a daughter, a son, and three grandchildren.

1973

Cynthia D. Buckingham, 74, died Oct. 8, 2025. After working for the US Department of Labor and the Federation of State Humanities Councils, Buckingham began working for the Utah Endowment of the Humanities in 1982 as associate director. She retired in 1997 as executive director of the organization. Survivors include her husband, Jim Bach '72, two daughters (including Alissa Buckingham Ahearn '08), three grandchildren, and two brothers (including Douglas Buckingham '76).

1976

Lauren E. Keeper, 71, died July 28, 2025, in Houston. She worked in public relations, television news production, and sales. Keeper was also one of the first Uber drivers in Houston.

1978

Margaret C. Flanagan, 68, died Aug. 15, 2025, in St. Paul. She developed nonprofit boards and raised millions of dollars over the course of forty years for numerous organizations in Minnesota. Survivors include two siblings.

Deborah R. Gray, 68, of Montgomery, Ala., died Aug. 24, 2025. During her career in marketing and communications, she worked in both national cable and broadcast television, print production, radio broadcasting, and electronic media. She moved to Montgomery to help her father establish the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center. She was involved with the center for twenty-eight years and served as its managing/executive director. Survivors include her father, a sister, and two brothers.

1980

Elizabeth E. Dunn, 67, died Oct. 14, 2025, in St. Paul. After practicing law, Dunn became a teacher in the St. Paul Public Schools. She also served as managing director of CitySongs Youth Choir. Survivors include her brothers.

1981

Joan E. Baclawski, 66, of Webster Groves, Mo., died Sept. 2, 2025. She worked as a director of marketing and public relations in the health care industry and was a professor at St. Louis Community College. Survivors include two children, two grandchildren, and a brother.

Pamela Mathis Cassidy, 65, died Jan. 13, 2025, in Houston.

1982

Porter McNeil, 65, of Moline, Ill., died Sept. 12, 2025. He was a public affairs and com-

munications consultant who was involved in many political campaigns and worked with the Democratic Party of Illinois in 2024. McNeil also served on the Rock Island County Board. Survivors include his wife, Mary, three children, a grandson, and four siblings (including Chris McNeil '83).

1983

David C. McKee, 64, of Duluth, Minn., died July 29, 2025. He served in the US Navy Medical Corps and practiced as a neurologist for thirty-eight years in the Midwest, Oregon, and Quebec. Survivors include his wife, Marie-Laure, three daughters, a son, a sister, and a twin brother.

1996

Joan M. Quam, 81, of Waconia, Minn., died Sept. 7, 2025. After working in the music department at Waconia High School, she worked at Macalester

College and Waconia Moravian Church. Quam also performed with the Dale Warland Singers. Survivors include three children, four grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and a brother.

2000

Jessica Steinberg Mehr, 47, died Nov. 5, 2025. She worked at Consulting Radiologists before becoming a stay-at-home mom. Survivors include her husband, Jef, two children, her parents, and three brothers.

2004

Irina Asmolova Gerry, 44, died Oct. 20, 2025. After working as a consultant at Deloitte and holding positions in marketing and innovation at Danone North America, Gerry co-founded Change Foods in 2020 and was the company's chief marketing officer until September 2024. She was also a founding member of the Precision Fermenta-

tion Alliance. Survivors include her husband, Ryan Gerry '02, and two sons.

2012

Marissa Bianco, 34, of Brooklyn, N.Y., died Nov. 13, 2024.

2026

Macalester student Binta Maina, 21, died unexpectedly in November 2025. She was majoring in biology and neuroscience. A cherished member of the Macalester community—bright, kind, and full of life—she is remembered for many things, including her vibrant sense of style, and her deep love for family and friends. A triplet, survivors include brothers Ondieki Maina '26 and Bockarie Maina '26.

REUNION

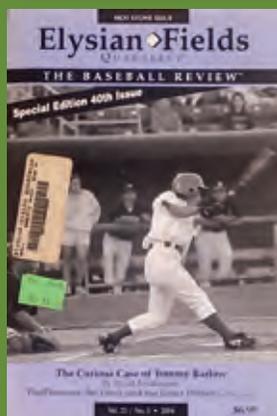
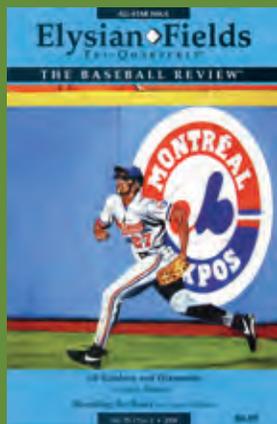
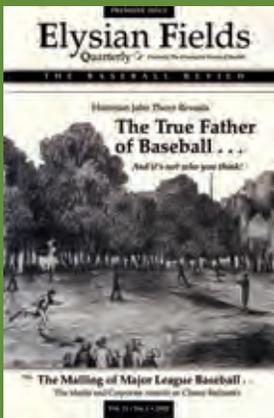
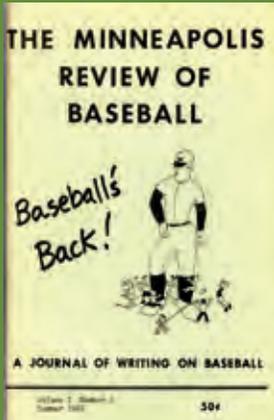
Save the Date for Scots Pride Reunion June 10–13, 2027

Join us in 2027 for the return of the Scots Pride Reunion—bringing together LGBTQIA+ Macalester alumni across class years to reconnect, celebrate, and build community.

Want in? Let's plan together.

Scan the QR code to raise your hand and help shape the Scots Pride Reunion 2027.





PLAYING THE LONG GAME

Baseball collection rounds the bases back to Mac

Each semester, the Archives welcomes many classes into our space for the purpose of conducting research using our collections. However, this past fall, we had a new experience in the Archives—the closing of a circle, if you will: a class titled Baseball: History and Literature, co-taught by history and English professors, came in to use our Elysian Fields Quarterly/Minneapolis Review of Baseball collection for their research. This collection, which was donated to us in the summer of 2023 by former editor Tom Goldstein, is the business archive and collected output of a literary journal (1981–2008) of writing on baseball from a fan’s perspective.

The journal was begun by Mac alum Ken LaZebnik '76 and his friend Steve Lehman as a way to combine their twin loves of baseball and writing, and as the journal’s mission statement noted in the first issue, “to supply a rallying point for fan opinion.” The “closing of the circle” part of this story is that what originally spurred LaZebnik to create the journal was a class that he took as a student at Mac during the 1970s on baseball literature co-taught by English professors Harley Henry and Bob Warde.

However, the true closing of the circle moment came when the class arrived in the Archives to do their research, only to be greeted by Professor Warde, Steve Lehman, and Tom Goldstein, who were there to give substantial background on the collection and on the original Mac course that was the inspiration for the journal.

The Elysian Fields Quarterly/Minneapolis Review of Baseball collection contains an almost full run of the journal, accepted and rejected writing submissions and correspondence, original artwork, proofs, publicity and advertising materials, awards received, photographs, ephemera, and oversized promotional materials. It is fully processed and available for research by appointment.

— Ely Sheinfeld, college archivist



Do you have a suggestion about what to cover next? Please email us at archives@macalester.edu.

GIVE TO MACALESTER DAYS

MARCH 25–27, 2026

In *Degrees of Progress* (page 20), you read how a liberal arts education is more important now than ever, and our students agree.

“As we live in an unprecedented time of transition, we find ourselves in a unique position to shape what comes next and actively contribute to making the future better than the present. Regardless of whether you intend to or not, whether you believe you have the capacity to or not, everyone here will change the world in some way.”

—Willow Albano '26,
Macalester College Student Government President
Opening Convocation

Today's Macalester students will help shape the world of tomorrow.
Support an education rooted in the values we share during
Give to Macalester Days, March 25–27, 2026.

MACALESTER FUND

macalester.edu/gtmd
866-814-0640



MACALESTER COLLEGE

1600 Grand Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105-1899



Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1339
Madison, WI

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



US SPEEDSKATING/ANGEL STAVE

Olympics Debut

Conor McDermott-Mostowy '24 competes in the men's 1,000-meter speed skating event at the Milano Cortina Winter Olympics. Placing ninth in the finals with a time of 1:08.48, the Scot celebrated a successful Olympic debut and a top ten finish: "It was so special to share this moment with so many friends and family both here in Milan and virtually." Among those cheering him on in Italy was his former Mac biology professor Mary Montgomery.