

In which we discuss

HEATHER BOOTH · “ETHICS CLASS” BY TED COHEN · AFRICAN DIASPORA ART

Also *Cora the soccer dog* · *Rhythm and Jews* · *New Urbanist Memes for Transit-Oriented Teens* · *JÜV*

The CORE

THE COLLEGE
MAGAZINE

Winter 2019 Supplement to
The University of Chicago Magazine





Wallace

Hoover

Rickert

Blackstone

Snowy Island

Blackstone

Graham

A chef struts through Bartlett Dining Commons. UChicago made the 2018 lists of top ten dining halls compiled by *Best Colleges* and *College Magazine*, which included this highlight: "On Wednesdays they sell one dollar milkshakes." Read alumni memories of Shake Day and other beloved traditions on page 4.

Photography by Tom Rossiter

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Front cover: Art collector Patric McCoy, AB'69, at home. Photography by Nathan Keay.
Back cover: UChicago Photographic Archive, University of Chicago Library.

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From the editor

MISS UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

In 2011, after writing an article about the history of beauty pageants at the University (really), I interviewed Jean (Sitterly) Treese, AB'66, then associate dean in the College. Treese had come in second in the 1963 Miss University of Chicago contest, held in conjunction with the annual Washington Prom in February. "In high school I would have been the last person nominated for Miss Anything," she said. "My mom thought it was a stitch."

Treese told me about other vanished folkways too. In New Dorms, the first co-ed dorm on campus, the doors between the women's and men's wings were cemented closed: "You couldn't get through unless you had a blowtorch." She was called "Miss Sitterly" in class. She wore skirts every day. She wore white gloves to church and to fly.

At the end of her senior year she got married. "There was the general feeling—although not so strongly on this campus—that if you didn't have an MRS by the time you graduated, or one in the works, that you had failed college somehow."

But times they were a-changing. Just a few years later, a refrigerator won the beauty contest. "As I recall, it was a write-in candidate," Treese said. "Of course the organizers didn't let the refrigerator win. But it began the demise of Wash Prom and the Miss U of C contest."

Read more about traditions—including the one Treese helped invent in 1983—on page 4.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

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Academics

NEW MAJOR, NEW MINORS

This academic year the College launched an **astrophysics** major. Previously, students interested in stars and galaxies majored in physics and took astrophysics courses as electives. The new major includes a central sequence on astronomy and astrophysics, as well as statistics, computer science, observational techniques, and a research placement. Ten students are expected to graduate this year with the new degree.

The College also introduced four new minors: neuroscience, Renaissance studies, media arts and design, and digital studies of language, culture, and history. In addition,

the economics major now offers a business economics specialization.

Fourth-year Hannah Trower added a **Renaissance studies** minor to her majors in Russian and Eastern European studies (REES) and linguistics—even though it’s not immediately apparent how they fit together. “Russia didn’t really have a Renaissance,” she says. “But it was still influenced by Renaissance ideas coming from the West. There are a ton of buildings—churches, government buildings—built by Italian architects all over Russia. I’ve always been fascinated by that dichotomy.”

Third-year Lela Jenkins, who’s interested in graphic design, added

the **media arts and design (MAAD)** minor to her major in art history and her minor in Romance languages and literatures. All MAAD minors must complete a final portfolio of digital media art and analytical essays.

“Unlike a lot of my classes,” she says, “popular culture and contemporary media is something that regularly comes up in class discussion.”

Fourth-year Boone Ayala, originally working toward a computer science major, found he was much more passionate about history. But his computer science coursework was helpful, giving him “skills and tools to analyze history that most historians do not possess.” The



digital studies of language, culture, and history minor was a perfect fit, combining software skills with humanities research.

Third-year Anna Rose, majoring in economics with a minor in theater and performance studies (TAPS), is pursuing the **business economics** specialization. The program includes coursework at the Chicago Booth School of Business. “I am really enjoying a course called Building the New Venture,” says Rose, “which is a hands-on entrepreneurship class that teaches the basic principles of starting a company.” She’s also looking forward to taking accounting and behavioral economics at Booth.

The Milky Way, seen from the Atacama Desert in Chile, where UChicago is part of a project to build the Giant Magellan Telescope.

Briefly

WHAT'S NEW IN THE COLLEGE

- The College will launch a new **Hong Kong economics program** in winter quarter 2020. Economics, the second College program to be established in Hong Kong after Colonizations, will be taught at the new Hong Kong campus, where the Chicago Booth School of Business runs its executive MBA program. This is the College’s first study abroad offering for economics majors. Previously, students interested in studying economics abroad had to choose direct enrollment programs at foreign universities.
- **Sarah Nakasone**, Class of 2019, has been awarded a **Marshall Scholarship** to study in the United Kingdom. A global studies major, Nakasone is planning a career in HIV prevention. “I’m curious about how women draw on their social networks to spread sexual health information,” she says, “and how we as researchers and medical providers can assist those networks instead of fearing them.” Nakasone will pursue a master of science in control of infectious disease from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, followed by a PhD in epidemiology and population health from University College London.
- The newly expanded **College Center for Research and Fellowships**, formerly the College Center for Scholarly Advancement, now oversees undergraduate research opportunities as well as nationally competitive fellowships (such as the Marshall) and postgraduate experiences. The intent is to connect undergraduates more easily with research opportunities on campus and beyond.
- Last year the College Summer Institute in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences was offered for the first time. This year’s research theme, **Thinking Beyond the Human: On Animals, A.I., and Others**, will bring faculty from linguistics, philosophy, and English together with 15 selected undergraduate scholars for an intensive summer research experience at the Neubauer Collegium.
- Starting next academic year, all incoming College students will be required to live in **on-campus housing for two years** instead of one year. Woodlawn Residential Commons, a 1,200-bed residence facility that will help house more undergrads, is under construction and will open the following year, 2020–21. The new residence hall is located just north of 61st Street between University and Woodlawn avenues.



Photography by Zoia Yi, Class of 2020

Olivero and Millington with Cora after their game. Cora can be frequently spotted dribbling a ball across the quads, even in snow.



UChicago creatures

2019 WORLD PUP

“She’s a little bit of a presence on campus,” says Jane Dailey, associate professor in History, the Law School, and the College, of her 12-year-old border collie Cora, also known as “the soccer dog.”

As word of Cora’s ball handling skills spread, last spring UChicago Athletics arranged an informal game with some two-legged soccer players: Caroline Olivero, AB’18, and second-year Bryce Millington.

Cora started chasing soccer balls around the family home as a puppy. When she’s on her game, “another dog can sniff her and she won’t even acknowledge its presence,” says Dailey. “She’ll dribble a tennis ball too. It’s just her thing.”

—*Jeanie Chung*



Left to right: Maude Hutchins, wife of President Robert Hutchins (1929–51); Muriel Beadle, wife of President George Beadle (1961–68); Hanna Holborn Gray, President (1978–93), now Harry Pratt Judson Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus.

University history

BAD WIFE, GOOD WIFE, HER OWN WIFE

An evening of book club gossip about Maude Hutchins, Muriel Beadle, and Hanna Holborn Gray.



In the cramped quarters of the Hyde Park Historical Society, a small group gears up for an evening of historical side-eye. The topic of the evening's book club discussion is ostensibly "Remarkable Women of the University of Chicago: Hanna Holborn Gray, Muriel Beadle, Maude Hutchins," but it soon becomes apparent that no University figure will be spared.

A gentleman named Sam, seemingly a regular book club attendee, is mid-diatribes. He declares Lawrence Kimpton, the University's sixth president, "a certified moron," then shifts his attention to a slim paperback volume published by the University of Chicago Press, which, he notes with disdain, lacks an index. "How does anyone *allow* something like this?" he fumes.

"Sam, you're on a roll tonight," says Michal Safar, president of the Hyde

Park Historical Society. She leads the monthly book club, selecting the topics and lengthy reading lists. The attendees are mostly in their 60s and 70s and have varying connections to the University: there are alumni, retired staff members, and Hyde Parkers with an interest in neighborhood history.

Safar begins with **Maude Hutchins**, who, one suspects, would have relished this evening's shade-throwing. Maude, a sculptor and portrait artist, had a flair for the dramatic and enjoyed shocking people, Safar explains. She once used a stylized nude drawing she'd made of her 11-year-old daughter as the family's Christmas card.

Safar begins tentatively: "This is..." "Weird," says one attendee. "Salacious," says another. "...interesting," Safar concludes.

As her troubled marriage to University president Robert Maynard Hutchins came to an end (they divorced in 1948), Maude began writing racy dime novels. Some people think the novels were largely an attempt to embarrass her ex-husband, Safar says. She passes around Maude's 1950 novel, *A Diary of Love* (New Directions), which features a risqué cover and the tagline "The sexual awakening of a teen-age girl!"

One of the attendees has read Maude's novel *Georgiana* (New Directions, 1948), but didn't think much of it. Safar agrees: "I found her novels unreadable. I found her life fascinating."

The group's mood lightens as the discussion shifts to **Muriel Beadle**, a onetime journalist who married the Nebraska-born geneticist George W. Beadle in 1953. Several have read and enjoyed Muriel's *Where Has All*



the Ivy Gone: A Memoir of University Life (Doubleday, 1972), about the couple's experiences during George's presidency.

If Maude Hutchins hated the wining-and-dining part of being a president's wife, Muriel Beadle seemed to relish it—she was “the good wife,” Safar observes. One attendee remembers the Beadles as unusually down-to-earth. It wasn't unusual to see George puttering in a campus plot, she says, where he grew unusual varietals of corn.

The Beadles were also serious cat people, Safar notes. Among Muriel's publications is *The Cat: History, Biology, and Behavior* (Simon and Schuster, 1977). The couple kept 17 cats at their home in Pasadena, California, but gave all but two away before they moved to Chicago. (One later got onto the sharply pitched roof of the president's house; George,

belayed by a terrified campus cop, gamely retrieved the wayward feline.)

Next up: **Hanna Holborn Gray**, the University's first and so far only female president. Safar holds up Gray's memoir, *An Academic Life* (Princeton University Press, 2018), and declares she liked it. A man who has been quiet for most of the evening responds with a very UChicago question: “You liked it because of what? What criteria did you use?”

Several attendees were struck by Gray's recounting of her family's experience as German-Jewish émigrés in the 1930s. Some found the book too circumspect and wished for more Muriel Beadle-esque frankness. Gray is used to that: “Much interest was shown in my domestic life and arrangements,” she notes in the book. At the grocery store, shoppers would “look with undisguised curiosity into

my shopping cart.” One day she discovered “a distinguished professor of law” peeking into her garage window, “presumably to find out what kind of car we drove.” Well, what kind of car was it? Gray isn't telling.

An Academic Life is upfront about some aspects of her life as a woman in academia. Her husband Charles Gray, a legal history scholar, sometimes skipped events, which did not “seem to arouse concerns, as it would likely have done had he been a female spouse,” Gray notes without bitterness. “Not having a wife, I did the planning and oversight of dinners and receptions, selected the menus, and arranged the seating. I like doing those things.” No grist here for the book group, who by the end of the meeting are back to gossiping about University figures not on the syllabus.

—Susie Allen, AB'09

NEW URBANIST MEMES FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED TEENS

It started as a joke. Then it became a thing.

You might imagine that the appeal of a joke Facebook group about new urbanism—a design movement that promotes mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods and public transit—would be somewhat limited. And you would be wrong.

Juliet Eldred, AB'17 (geographical studies and visual arts), started New Urbanist Memes for Transit-Oriented Teens (NUMTOT) in March 2017, during finals week. Eldred is now an analyst at a transportation consulting firm in Boston, and NUMTOT has more than 125,000 members. There are three administrators, including Emily Orenstein, Class of 2019, and nine moderators. The group had to add moderators in Australia because discussions got heated while the American moderators were asleep.

NUMTOT has been written about in Chicago magazine, the Atlantic's Citylab blog ("The Transit-Oriented Teens Are Coming to Save Your City"), the Guardian, and the New York Times. It's inspired more than 60 spinoff groups, including Two Wheeled Memes for Bicycle Oriented Teens, Transit Focused Snaps for Composition Minded Chaps, Teutonische Städtebau-Meme für verkehrinteressierte junge Erwachsene, and NUMTinder.

One day this past summer Eldred took time during her lunch hour to explain the NUMTOT phenomenon.

First, you're not actually a teen.

No. It's a ridiculous Facebook meme group naming convention, Blank Memes for Blank Teens.

How did NUMTOT get so famous?

It struck a nerve in a way I don't think any of us were expecting. Things you would think are niche—street design and trains and planning—

are actually relevant to everybody and affect our day-to-day lives.

Do your parents understand the memes?

My mom is in the group. She's very supportive. Sometimes she'll call me a NUMTOT and I'm like, "Mother, please don't." She does occasionally ask me to explain things. It's weird and sort of cringey to have to explain.

It's not just a meme group though.

I sometimes wish people were less serious. We started it as a joke group. It was never intended to be a serious discussion group.

Back in November 2016, I had started the Facebook group I Feel Personally Attacked by This Relatable Map, mostly about maps and stuff. In March 2017 there was a thread about highway planning. It ended up devolving into joking about Robert Moses [the urban planner who wanted to drop a highway on Greenwich Village] and Jane Jacobs [author of *The Death and Life of American Cities* (Random House, 1961) and Moses's archenemy]. That led to the idea of starting a new urbanist shitposting Facebook group.

Is there a long-term plan?

Usually Facebook groups burn out on their own. This group hasn't shown any signs of doing that. The broader mission, which has sort of become a reality, is to connect people to real-life organizing and activism opportunities.

I actually went to a NUMTOT Meetup group in Somerville [Massachusetts] that I had no part in organizing. There were 20 people there. I was really surprised.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

NUMTOT versions of the Distracted Boyfriend and Distracted Girlfriend memes.



Fighting affordable housing advocates on social media

Market Urbanists

Fighting exclusionary zoning laws that lead to regional hyper-segregation



Living in a city

Millennials

Suburbs

HOW TO SELL TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Jacob Chang of JÜV Consulting has some advice.

Jacob Chang, Class of 2021, is the director of trends and marketing for the consulting firm JÜV. The staff, all in their teens or 20s, advise corporations on what's in and out and how to market to young people.

As told to Anne Ford, AM'99

I've always enjoyed knowing a lot about what young people are up to. The biggest thing Generation Z says right now is "Let's get this bread." * People say that to signal that they're

working hard and doing their best to earn money, make a living, succeed. They started saying it ironically, but now it's kind of blown up.

Around two years ago, I became part of JÜV Consulting, which was founded by two of my best friends from high school. JÜV is a marketing consultancy run by members of Generation Z. The idea behind it is that adults should not try to market to young people, because they don't understand the trends. Companies should be talking to young people

like us and hearing things straight from the source. We've grown from a really small staff to a team of about 100. We range in age from about 14 to 22, except for our HR director, who's like 26 or 27. At our age, none of us really knows how HR works.

The biggest misconception about Generation Z is that we're not important to market to. Actually, we are growing in age and in the ability to buy stuff. What we also tell our clients is that Generation Z is extremely performative, given that

Jacob Chang, Class of 2021 (second from left), and the JÜV leadership team.



“The idea behind it is that adults should not try to market to young people, because they don’t understand the trends.”

—Jacob Chang, Class of 2021

we’ve grown up with social media. Because of that, we have a really good idea for telling what’s authentic from what’s not. So if brands try to be something they’re not, we’ll see right through that.

Over the summer, I worked on JÜV full-time. We all worked and lived in a Brooklyn loft, doing everything we could to get the company growing. We plan to do that again next summer.

It’s definitely made me better at managing my time. On a day like

today you might see me going to a couple of classes while reaching out to potential clients, or going online and browsing new forums. I spend a lot of time on personal social media as well, which everyone wastes time on, but I don’t feel bad because it’s part of my job.

I’m a double major in economics and philosophy. I wouldn’t say philosophy has any direct application to my work, but it’s a valuable subject because it lets you open your mind to the big problems,

and consultants are all about solving big problems.

We find our clients are pretty respectful. There are times we aren’t taken seriously, of course, when people say, “Hey, these are just kids. Are they really doing a good job?” And, of course, we are.

** As of interview time, October 2018, Chang predicted that by press time, “Let’s get this bread!” will still be quite relevant.”*





Music

CARILLON MY WAYWARD SONG

There'll be peace when you are done.

If you're going to play the carillon, you need to think about your shoes. The 100-ton, 72-bell instrument at the top of Rockefeller Chapel has 31 foot pedals and 71 batons, which you strike with your fists. The batons operate the smaller bells, the pedals the larger ones.

"Most people don't play music with their feet," says Michael Petruzzelli, Class of 2019, president of the UChicago Guild of Student Carilloners. Getting used to it takes time. He wears slip-on canvas shoes, which he calls his "carillon shoes," because they have thinner soles to better feel the pedals.

Petruzzelli is one of 20 students—mostly undergrads, along with students from the School of Social Service Administration,

the Law School, and the Division of the Humanities—who each play a 30-minute weekly concert on the University carillon, one of the world's largest. Before each concert, guild members lead tours of the bell tower for anyone who's interested.

As students graduate, spots open up. "Because no students arrive at the University knowing how to play the carillon," says University carillonneur Joey Brink, "we have to start teaching from the very basics." Brink performs for major university events, plays a daily recital, and supervises the guild.

The competition for those open spots has grown. While Petruzzelli was one of seven students who auditioned his first year, audition

Maria Kronic, Class of 2021, with the instrument that everyone in the neighborhood can hear, but few have seen.

THAT SONG RINGS A BELL

“I love how you have such a large dynamic range, and the physicality of it.”

*—Elma Ling Hoffman,
UChicago Guild of
Student Carillonners*



manager Elma Ling Hoffman and guild vice president Maria Kronic, both Class of 2021, were among 21 who auditioned last year. This year 36 students came to the initial meeting; after six weeks of lessons (only requirement: the ability to read music), 22 auditioned on November 18 for six available slots.

“We’ve gotten better at advertising,” Kronic says.

Petruzzelli saw a sign at the Student Activities Fair: “Want to learn to play the bells at Rockefeller?” Kronic read about the group on her class Facebook page, and then her house president, a guild member, encouraged her to join. Hoffman, in contrast, came to UChicago knowing she wanted to play the carillon after getting to know the carillonner at her high school, Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania.

All three have backgrounds in piano. Playing the carillon, which Hoffman describes as “a physically cathartic instrument,” isn’t necessarily like playing the piano, but closer than anything else.

“I love how you have such a large dynamic range, and the physicality of it,” Hoffman says, “especially with

the lower bells. They’re so heavy that you really have to work to put your body weight into it.”

Outside of their scheduled concerts, guild members can rehearse on one of the three practice carillons in Rockefeller’s basement, and they have regular lessons with Brink. Most end up playing 30 minutes to an hour, five or six days a week. Guild members also have bimonthly dinners together and take an annual road trip to carillons across the Midwest—they visited the one at the Mayo Clinic in 2018.

When they climb the 271 steps to the top of Rockefeller Chapel to play their solitary instrument, the student carillonners are aware their fellow guild members are listening. Knowing who plays when, Hoffman loves to hear other students gradually master a particular piece over a period of weeks.

“It’s just this feeling of absolute support and joy,” she says, “where I’m like, ‘I know you’re up there in that tower, even though no one can see you. I see you improving.’”

—Jeanie Chung

There are no limits to what carillonners can play other than their imaginations (and occasionally their arm spans).

While many students choose classical pieces—especially the work of Ronald Barnes, who composed specifically for carillon—University carillonner Joey Brink drew attention from *Buzzfeed* for playing Drake’s “Hotline Bling” and has been known to play songs including Toto’s “Africa” and, during the 2016 World Series, “Go Cubs Go.” One student, now graduated, liked to play Aqua’s “Barbie Girl.”

“If it has a melody,” says Maria Kronic, Class of 2021, “you can pretty much arrange it.”

Carillonner picks:

Pachelbel’s Canon
“Light of the Seven”
from *Game of Thrones*

The theme from the BBC’s
Pride and Prejudice

Notable requests:

“Hedwig’s Theme” from
the *Harry Potter* films
“Mia and Sebastian’s
Theme” from *La La Land*

Resisted adaptation:

The bells’ sustained resonance can muddy melodies with intricate rhythms. One student tried to arrange the theme from the anime series *Yuri on Ice* but found there were “too many notes,” said Elma Ling Hoffman, Class of 2021.

Adaptation goal:

Kronic is working on a version of “Summertime” from George Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* after hearing a guest carillonner improvise it at Rockefeller.

Odd request:

The Soviet national anthem*

—Jeanie Chung

*The request was made in jest, but Michael Petruzzelli, Class of 2019, played it anyway.



Photo courtesy Rhythm and Jews

RnJ members (left to right) Ruth Selipsky, '20; Miranda Grisa, '21; Tristan Kitch, '19; Yilei Bai, '21; Noah Friedlander, '21; and Liana Massey, '22, on a winter break trip to New York. Earlier that day they performed in Central Park.

Music

TALK YIDDISH TO ME

*“Been around the world don’t speak the language / But your bubbe don’t need explaining”
—Rhythm and Jews version of the Jason Derulo song “Talk Dirty to Me”*

This past September Rhythm and Jews (RnJ), which bills itself as “the University of Chicago’s premier Jewish a cappella group,” had its 15 seconds of fame on NPR’s quiz show “Wait Wait ... Don’t Tell Me!”

Celebrity guest Anna Kendrick, star of the Pitch Perfect movies about collegiate a cappella singing, was given the names of four a cappella groups and challenged to identify which were real and which were fake. She correctly identified The Tempo Tantrums (Ohio University) but not The Rhythm Method (Binghamton University) before being asked about Rhythm and Jews.

Kendrick: I love that. I hope that’s real.

Peter Sagal: Yes, it is. University of Chicago represent.

(APPLAUSE)

The Core spoke with RnJ members Tristan Kitch, Class of 2019 (president), Noah Friedlander, Class of 2021 (tour director), and Helen Cain, Class of 2019 (music director), about the group’s name, history, and “Jewish-adjacent” repertoire.

So none of you heard Peter Sagal say your name.

CAIN: I’m a fan. I just happened not to be listening. The weird thing is, half-baked music puns are the mainstay of a cappella group names. We didn’t think we were all that unique.

“Half-baked music puns are the mainstay of a cappella group names. We didn’t think we were all that unique.”

—Helen Cain, Class of 2019

KITCH: The group started off in the 1990s as Shircago, which is a play on the Hebrew word for song.

CAIN: The founding members wanted to go be professional, so the people left behind had to come up with another name. At one point it was an exclusively Jewish group, and then it opened up.

Are most members Jewish?

CAIN: Currently less than half. Last year a quarter. We’ve been calling ourselves culturally Jewish, because a lot of our music is tangentially Jewish. We do a lot of Bruno Mars, whose father is Jewish. We call him our Jewish icon.

Do the songs tend to be Jewish?

CAIN: No. We’d like at least one in four songs to have a Jewish connection.

We sometimes change lyrics. One of our big hits was “Talk Yiddish,” a parody of “Talk Dirty” by Jason Derulo: “Been around the world, don’t speak the language, but your bubbe don’t need explaining.”

How are songs chosen?

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CAIN: Team Music being me and my assistant music director. In the past lots of people chose Disney songs. I had to put a moratorium on that.

KITCH: We take what we do very seriously, but we don’t take ourselves too seriously.

CAIN: Levity is our way of combatting what is increasingly called angst-appella. There’s a lot of angst lately on the scene.

You perform at the Latke-Hamantash debate every year. Is there a set repertoire for that?

CAIN: We want to keep it Jewish-adjacent for sure.

Did you invent this word?

CAIN: Maybe.

KITCH: We’ve been saying it a lot lately.

How hard is it to join RnJ?

CAIN: Last year we had about 40 people audition. We took about 15 to 20 for callbacks. We let in four.

FRIEDLANDER: But some of the people we didn’t let in went to other a cappella groups.

CAIN: The system here is a mutual matching system. The groups have their decisions, but then you also rank which groups you want to be in in order.

FRIEDLANDER: It’s a whole optimization algorithm.

KITCH: I believe it’s the same one they use to place doctors at residencies.

Are there some people who try out but just can’t carry a tune?

CAIN: Yeah, there are. Usually in our rejection emails we say, Get some practice with other, larger ensembles. Weirdly enough UChicago is not the place to do a cappella casually.

—Carrie Golus, AB’91, AM’93

A CAPPELLA ENSEMBLES AT UCHICAGO

Chicago Aag
Coed South Asian fusion

Make a Joyful Noise
Christian music ministry

Men in Drag
All-female

Ransom Notes
Coed

Run for Cover
All-male

Unaccompanied Women
All-female, the oldest a cappella group on campus

Voices in Your Head
Coed, open to wider Chicago community

“Half-baked music puns are the mainstay of a cappella group names. We didn’t think we were all that unique.”

—Helen Cain, Class of 2019

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ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE

For activist Heather Booth, AB'67, AM'70, the personal has been the political for more than 50 years.

By Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

Photography by John Zich



Heather Booth speaks at the Women's March to the Polls in Chicago in early October 2018.



n a bitter October day, thousands of people have converged on Columbus Drive for the Women's March to the Polls.

Among them is Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, AB'69, MAT'77, threading her way toward the stage through the thick crowd. Preckwinkle campaign workers are circulating too, collecting signatures to get her on the 2019 Chicago mayoral ballot.

Artist Jacqueline Edelberg, AB'89, AM'91, PhD'96, in a Mylar dress and silver face paint, is collecting hope notes for children separated from their parents at the border. (Her project, "Mylar for Disco, not Deportation," references the blankets issued to the kids.)

The marchers' accessories include the usual Trump-in-a-diaper balloons, pussy hats in assorted shades of pink, and impassioned hand-lettered signs: some sincere, some furious, some obscene. One lone dissenter trolls the crowd with a sign reading (in part) "Trump Is Your President. Get Over It." He elicits a few half-hearted boos.

Heather Booth, AB'67, AM'70, was scheduled to speak at 11 a.m. By the time she takes the stage closer to 12:15 p.m.—after numerous other speakers, singers, rappers, and video messages from prominent Democrats—the crowd has grown restless in the cold.

"Are you ready to resist?" Booth yells into the microphone. "Are you ready to organize?" Her fiery delivery, like a union boss or street preacher, is surprising from a diminutive woman in her 70s. She's a sparrow with the roar of a lion. "Are you ready to fight? Are you ready to WIN?" The crowd yells back its assent.

"We are in a time of both great peril and inspiration," Booth declares. "The inspiration is all around us—if—we—organize! It's been true in history, it's true now."

In the summer of 1964, she says, she was part of the Freedom Summer Project in Mississippi, one of hundreds of northern college students who traveled south to help register voters and bring national attention to the civil rights movement. "Because people organized, within a year there was a Voting Rights Act," she says. "When we organize, we can change the world." The crowd claps and cheers.

Back at school, she learned that a friend was "pregnant and nearly suicidal." At the time abortion was a felony in Illinois. Through connections in the civil rights movement, she helped her friend find a doctor. "And then word must have spread and someone else called,"

she tells the crowd. Booth's act of compassion for a friend grew into Jane, an underground abortion service that lasted until 1973, the year of the *Roe v. Wade* decision.

As she tells the story of Jane, 15 women dressed like handmaids from the dystopian television show *The Handmaid's Tale* silently assemble behind her. They remain there, eyes downcast, for the rest of the speech. "We will never go back!" Booth insists.

She quotes historian Howard Zinn, noting that her son Gene teaches his work in the Chicago Public Schools: "It would be naive to depend on the Supreme Court to defend the rights of poor people, women, people of color, dissenters of all kinds. Those rights only come alive when citizens organize, protest, demonstrate, strike, boycott, rebel, and violate the law in order to uphold justice.' When we organize, we—can—win—back—justice!"

Booth pulls out a pussy hat and puts it on dramatically. The crowd roars its approval.

"So are you ready to resist?" she hollers. "Are you ready to—" But the audience is cheering so loudly, it drowns her out.

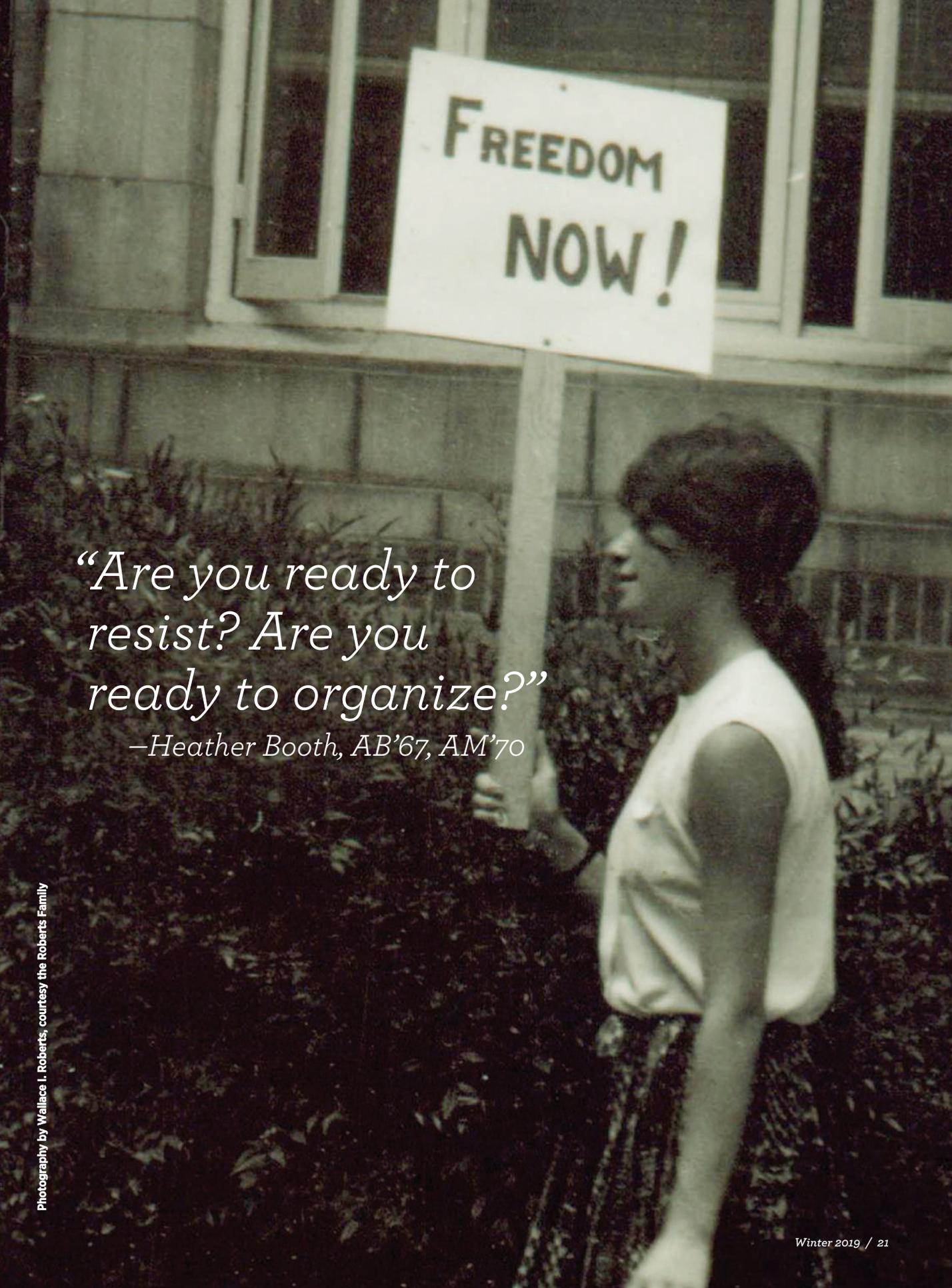
A recent documentary, *Heather Booth: Changing the World* (Lilly Rivlin, 2016), describes Booth as "the most important person you've never heard of." (The video, which aired on some PBS affiliates in December, may change that. There are also two Hollywood movies about Jane in production: *This Is Jane*, directed by Kimberley Peirce, AB'90, and *Ask for Jane*.)

Along similar lines, a 2017 *Huffington Post* article, "She's the Best Answer to Donald Trump You Never Heard Of," calls Booth "one of the nation's most influential organizers for progressive causes. Inside almost every liberal drive over the past five decades—for fair pay, equal justice, abortion rights, workers' rights, voter rights, civil rights, immigration rights, child care—you will find Booth."

"A polite, soft-spoken woman who introduced herself as Heather Booth" is how conservative commentator Glenn Beck described her on his Fox News show. "She seems like a nice enough lady, but she's actually very important, isn't she?"

It's hard to pinpoint the exact beginning of Booth's career. Maybe it starts in 1973, with the founding of Midwest Academy, a training center for progressive organizers. Maybe in 1965, when she started Jane as a second-year living in New Dorms (later Woodward Court, now defunct). Maybe in 1964, during Freedom Summer.

Booth on a 1964 picket line in Shaw, Mississippi, in support of voter registration. Soon after this photo was taken, she was arrested for the first time.



FREEDOM
NOW!

*“Are you ready to
resist? Are you
ready to organize?”*

—Heather Booth, AB’67, AM’70

“If you look at significant times in the movement, Heather is there someplace. I mean, it’s like Zelig.”

—from Heather Booth: *Changing the World*

Maybe 1963, when shortly after her arrival at UChicago she joined the Chicago Public Schools boycott to protest inferior facilities for African American students. Or earlier, when as a young teenager growing up in Long Island she passed out fliers against the death penalty in Times Square. “Someone spit on me,” she recalled in a 2012 interview. “It was pretty shocking.”

“If you look at significant times in the movement, Heather is there someplace,” her friend Jane Silver says in *Heather Booth: Changing the World*. “I mean, it’s like *Zelig*.” The two spent the summer of 1963 working on a kibbutz in Israel—another possible starting point for her origin story.

“I don’t know that I had a concept of a career,” Booth says in a profile for Women’s Information Network (WIN), a resource for young pro-choice Democratic women; Booth serves on its advisory council. “I had a sense of values and purpose and wanted to have an impact in building a better society.”

And yet Booth’s career is remarkably coherent: no switchbacks, no meanderings, just a strong straight line in a leftward direction. After years of organizing, she shifted into electoral work in 1980: “otherwise we are fighting with one hand tied behind our back.” She was deputy field director for the 1983 campaign to elect Harold Washington, the first African American mayor of Chicago. She was field director for the 1992 campaign for Carol Moseley Braun, JD’72, the first black woman to serve in the US Senate.

In 2000 she was director of the NAACP National Voter Fund, which helped to increase African American election turnout by nearly 2 million voters. In 2010 she was the founding director of Americans for Financial Reform, which helped create the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. (In the documentary, Senator Elizabeth Warren says that when she wanted to establish the bureau and had no idea how, she was given two words of advice: “Heather Booth.”) That’s just a whistle-stop tour of Booth’s career.

Heather Booth, née Tobis, is a Southerner, sort of. She was born in 1945 in Brookhaven, Mississippi, where her father, a physician in the army, was stationed, but spent most of her childhood in Brooklyn and Long Island. Decades in Chicago and Washington, DC, have not entirely erased her New York accent, even on frequently used words like “call” (i.e. “cawl”).

It’s a few hours before her speech at the Women’s March; Booth has taken some time to chat in the press tent, just behind the stage where bands are doing ear-splitting soundchecks. She wears her pink hat and a thin brown coat more suitable for the climate of DC, where she has lived since 1989. But Booth—who has spoken often of how boring, uncomfortable, and difficult organizing can be—is too tough to complain.

Instead she talks about how happy she was as an undergrad: “I felt my world opened up,” she says. “I found people of shared values, shared commitments. It was challenging, creative, engaging. I loved being at the University from the minute I arrived.”

Her most memorable professors include the late historian Jesse Lemisch, “who helped to explain how history is made from the bottom up,” she says, not merely “the history of great men.” From sociology professor Dick Flacks (who had cofounded Students for a Democratic Society a few years before) she learned that “if issues are social problems, they can have social solutions,” she says. “You can take social action to address those problems.”

Though she loved her classes, Booth chafed against some University policies, such as the 11 p.m. curfew for women in campus housing. (The men’s curfew was midnight.) One night she came in late because she was comforting a friend after a breakup. She was interrogated and searched for contraceptives. “It was a much more innocent time,” she says, “and I was outraged that they would think I had contraceptives.” After a sleep-in at the flagpole on the quads and other protests, the so-called parietal hours became one of those abandoned practices that to younger generations hardly sound real.

When another friend, who lived off campus, was raped at knife-point, Booth went with her to Student Health to get a gynecological exam. (It’s a story she repeats during her speech, not specifying which university.) Her friend was told gynecological exams weren’t covered. “She was also given a lecture on her

Top: Heather and Paul Booth at their wedding in 1967. Bottom: marching in support of childcare with her son Gene.

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Top: Heather and Paul Booth at their wedding in 1967. Bottom: marching in support of childcare with her son Gene.

promiscuity,” Booth says. (Here, during the speech, the audience boos with outrage.) “But over time, because people organized and protested—not just at the University, but in the country—of course Student Health now covers gynecological exams. But unless you organize, you can’t take any rights for granted.”

The sexism women experienced within the student movement was another irritant. In 1965 Flacks encouraged her to attend a Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) conference in Champaign-Urbana to discuss what was called, incredibly, “The Woman Question.”

“Women would be talking and the men would be doing what we now call mansplaining,” Booth says. “The women would say, ‘I’m not listened to,’ and the men would say, ‘Oh yes you are.’ ‘You’re just expecting me to make the coffee.’ ‘Oh no, that’s not true.’”

Soon afterward, at a campus SDS meeting in Ida Noyes, Booth was addressing the group when a man interrupted her: “Ah, shut up.”

“I was so shocked that he would be so rude that I tapped all the women on the shoulder after I was done speaking, and I said, Let’s go upstairs,” she says. Together they formed the Women’s Radical Action Project (WRAP), one of the first women’s liberation groups in the country. (Booth won’t name the man whose boorishness inspired it. “He’s since died,” she says. “He turned to me for advice and support in the later years of his life and I never did raise this to him.”)

In May 1966, when Booth was a third-year, she was one of 450 students who participated in a sit-in of the Administration Building (now Levi Hall)—the beginning of a wave of nationwide student protests against the war in Vietnam. The University had agreed to provide the class rank of all male students to the Selective Service; lower-ranked students might lose their student deferments and be drafted.

The campaign, organized by Students Against the Rank, was eventually successful: the University stopped compiling an all-male student rank. But for Booth, the long-term significance of the sit-in was not political, but personal.

Paul Booth, a Swarthmore alumnus who was national secretary of SDS—its top job—came to support the protesters; at the time SDS’s national headquarters was on 63rd Street in Woodlawn. In the documentary he tells the story of their meeting “in a very sweet way,” Heather Booth says. The scene in the video unfolds like this:



“I spy Heather Tobis. This is what you say when you go to a sit-in if you want to meet somebody. You say, ‘Could I sit here?’ (He turns from the camera to Heather, smiles broadly, and directs the rest of the story at her.) And she said, ‘Yes!’ And then it became a sit-in. It lasted several days and nights, and we got to know each other very well.”

“We sat and talked, day and night, and after three days he asked me to marry him,” Booth says. “And after five days I said I would, but we should wait for a year, till I graduate.” (At the time, dropping out of college to get an MRS degree was not unusual.) “We were married until he died in January,” meaning January 2018.

Soon after they met, Paul Booth was pushed out of SDS for being a member of the “old guard”—at age 23. But like his wife, he went on to have a prominent career as an organizer; they made a formidable team.

Paul Booth was one of the first former campus activists to join the labor movement, retiring after 43 years with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. He tried to build coalitions between the labor movement and progressive causes such as civil rights, immigrant rights, women’s rights, and peace. “It was a very grounded career,” he says in *Heather Booth: Changing the World*. “Just the opposite of hers.”

Almost immediately after their marriage in 1967, the Booths had to make a tough decision. “My husband was going to be drafted, and there was going to be a punitive draft because he was an antiwar leader,” Heather Booth recalled in an interview with the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union History Project. “One way to get out of the draft was to have a kid.” Their first son, Eugene, named for socialist labor leader Eugene Debs, was born in 1968. Their second son, Daniel, after Daniel De Leon, the socialist editor, was born in 1969.

In a 2017 speech for TedX Pennsylvania Avenue, Booth describes those years: “In 1971 I was a housewife in Chicago with two little kids under three.” (“Housewife” is modest; she was also a leader of Chicago’s women’s liberation movement and coauthor of the 1968 feminist manifesto “Toward a Radical Movement.”) Booth and a group of other mothers founded the Action Committee for Decent Childcare (ACDC), holding community meetings to build support across the city. “People flocked to us,” Booth says in the TED Talk, “because they had been dealing with a problem that they felt was theirs alone, and just a personal problem, when in fact it was a social problem and needed a social solution.”

With no childcare, the kids came too: both Gene and Dan were marching before they could walk. (Gene was too young to remember the childcare demonstrations, but one of his earliest memories is sitting on his father’s shoulders, chanting in support of farm workers: “You got to boycott lettuce, you got to boycott grapes, you got to boycott the wine that Gallo makes, you got to organize,

you got to unionize!”) Less than a year after its founding, ACDC won a simplified licensing process for childcare facilities and \$1 million in city funding.

In 1973 Booth scored another win, a \$5,000 back pay settlement; a few years earlier she had been fired from an editorial job for trying to organize the secretaries. With the money, and her husband’s help, she set up Midwest Academy, a training center for progressive organizers. Its first space was the basement of a church near Clark and Fullerton; it’s now on Kedzie just south of Lawrence.

Booth created the center “because it seemed the movement was falling apart,” she told the *Chicago Reader* in 1989. “My husband and I had left SDS in 1967, when it started to lose faith in the American public. We were called the ‘old new left.’ We had kids; we believed in the nuclear family; we didn’t do drugs. We believed there were a lot of positive lessons to learn from the ‘60s, but better strategic planning was needed.”

In her TED Talk, she lists Midwest Academy’s three organizing principles:

1. Based on values, win real improvements in people’s lives.
2. Give people a sense of their own power to achieve those goals.
3. Build for systemic structural change.

(Like anything political online, Booth’s TED Talk inspires polarized comments. On the one side: “she’s truly the only light in these dark times.” On the other: “Her talking style is very subtly egoic and manipulative. Her ultimate goal is not for democracy.”)

Midwest Academy is known for its detailed strategy chart, which includes numerous questions to help activists sharpen their focus: What constitutes victory? What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal? Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help the organization?

Who are your opponents? What will your victory cost them? What will they do/spend to oppose you? How strong are they?

Both Heather and Paul had gone through the training program run by Saul Alinsky, PhB’30, often called the father of community organizing. Women couldn’t be organizers, Heather was told during the training. “It was a very male crowd,” Paul Booth recalls in *Heather Booth: Changing the World*. “It was a lot of testosterone. When Heather went to school, it was almost all fellas in the room.”

As a response, Midwest Academy’s first class was all women. Over 45 years, more than 25,000 activists from Planned Parenthood, NARAL, NAACP, the Sierra Club, and innumerable smaller groups have trained at Midwest Academy.

Heather and Paul Booth were married for more than 50 years. In 2004 Paul was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. But he showed no symptoms until a 2017 trip to Cuba with Heather and other friends. His death this past January was swift and unexpected.



Booth on blocked-off Columbus Drive before the Women's March to the Polls.

Sitting in the press tent at the Women's March, Heather Booth looks down at her hands in her lap. "It's really thrown my world upside-down," she says quietly. "It's quite stunning, what grief is, in a way that I didn't understand it ever before. He was my partner. Not only the love of my life—everything."

On the last day of his life, Heather had signed up for a sit-in on Capitol Hill, organized by Jews for Dreamers: "Civil disobedience in support of a pathway to citizenship," she says. "I said I'd cancel it, of course. Paul said no, no, I really should go."

Heather was arrested. When she returned to the hospital, "he was almost giddily happy," she says. "He was looking at the live streaming pictures from the sit-in. Even on this last day of his life, he was committed to change. He kept up that commitment, and I try to carry on his commitment now."

In the documentary video, there's a shot of her making calls in her home office. Booth's desk is a controlled chaos of papers and files, horizontal and vertical; pinned to a shelf is the phrase "Pessimism of the intellect and optimism of will."

It's a quotation from Italian activist Antonio Gramsci, jailed by the Fascists in World War II.

"You don't stop struggling because of a few setbacks," Booth told the *Chicago Reader* in 1989, just before her move to DC. "Whenever I'm teaching an organizing class, I ask: 'How are rights won? Are they given to us by some benevolent president or mayor? Or did they emerge from the struggles of people?' If we don't learn that change comes from struggle, we're lost."

In interviews and speeches, she returns relentlessly to one simple message: "If we organize, we can change the world." It's the title of her TED Talk about childcare and Midwest Academy. It's in her interview with WIN—a network dedicated to building the next generation of Heather Booths—in all capitals.

The exact phrasing shifts. "If we organize..." is sometimes "When we organize..." or "Unless we organize..." Sometimes it's followed by more specific advice about stamina, as in the WIN interview: "Realize we are organizing for the long haul—this is a marathon, not just a sprint," Booth says. "So take care of yourself and each other." ❀



ETHICS CLASS

A short story by Ted Cohen, AB'62

Max Stine waited in his office. These were not scheduled office hours, but he'd told the student to come at this time so they'd not be disturbed. He'd picked this time to conflict with the department meeting, excusing himself from the meeting because he had this appointment. The only part of his work he still enjoyed was the teaching. He recalled John Updike's remark about "the agony of the working teacher." Updike was speaking of his father, a high school teacher. There was no agony in Max's teaching. His students were college kids, and none of them were forced into his classes. They chose to be there, usually because of the recommendations of older students. There was no agony in teaching them: it was closer to ecstasy. Max gave them everything he had—what he knew about the texts, what he knew about the problems of philosophy, what he knew about life in general and his own life in particular.

Yes, Max loved the teaching. The rest he'd like to be rid of, especially department meetings. He'd attended about a thousand, even chaired many. Departmental colleagues were decent and intelligent, but they talked and talked, and so did he. He was as guilty of this as anyone. His wife had pointed out that he was long-winded and she guessed that professors grow used to talking and talking to people who have to listen without interruption.

During meetings sometimes a colleague would complain about a university procedure, saying that things had been done better at his former university. When that happened, Max felt like saying, "If things were so good there, why did you leave to come here," but he never did. It wouldn't have been a fair remark;

besides, although he accepted being the department's old man, he didn't want to be the crotchety old fart. He thought of his father, who wouldn't have said "crotchety" but would have said "grouchy." Max knew more words than his father had known, but he thought his father was the better man. His father had suffered slights, indignities, and hurts, but he didn't dwell on them. His late father had been able to do what Max's wife's late mother had called "rising above it." Max didn't rise.

There was one member of the department who didn't talk so much at meetings. He sometimes didn't talk at all, and when he did, it was late in the conversation and he spoke briefly, almost always saying something genuinely useful. This young fellow was also an amateur magician. Max wondered whether the calm concentration required to do magic helped his colleague keep himself quiet when there was no reason to speak, and he wondered whether a philosophy professor's resisting the temptation to oration was itself an exhibition of magic.

If lately Max talked less during department meetings, it was because he felt marginalized by the newcomers and because he was, finally, conscious of how much he might say that was unneeded. It's especially important not to waste time talking or doing anything else when you're growing old.

Max would have liked to have been smoking, but it was no longer permitted. First they stopped him from smoking in class, then he couldn't smoke in any of the public spaces in the buildings, and now he couldn't smoke even in his own office. One more unpleasant change.

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ETHICS CLASS

A short story by Ted Cohen, AB'62

Max Stine waited in his office. These were not scheduled office hours, but he'd told the student to come at this time so they'd not be disturbed. He'd picked this time to conflict with the department meeting, excusing himself from the meeting because he had this appointment. The only part of his work he still enjoyed was the teaching. He recalled John Updike's remark about "the agony of the working teacher." Updike was speaking of his father, a high school teacher. There was no agony in Max's teaching. His students were college kids, and none of them were forced into his classes. They chose to be there, usually because of the recommendations of older students. There was no agony in teaching them: it was closer to ecstasy. Max gave them everything he had—what he knew about the texts, what he knew about the problems of philosophy, what he knew about life in general and his own life in particular.

Yes, Max loved the teaching. The rest he'd like to be rid of, especially department meetings. He'd attended about a thousand, even chaired many. Departmental colleagues were decent and intelligent, but they talked and talked, and so did he. He was as guilty of this as anyone. His wife had pointed out that he was long-winded and she guessed that professors grow used to talking and talking to people who have to listen without interruption.

During meetings sometimes a colleague would complain about a university procedure, saying that things had been done better at his former university. When that happened, Max felt like saying, "If things were so good there, why did you leave to come here," but he never did. It wouldn't have been a fair remark;

besides, although he accepted being the department's old man, he didn't want to be the crotchety old fart. He thought of his father, who wouldn't have said "crotchety" but would have said "grouchy." Max knew more words than his father had known, but he thought his father was the better man. His father had suffered slights, indignities, and hurts, but he didn't dwell on them. His late father had been able to do what Max's wife's late mother had called "rising above it." Max didn't rise.

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Much had changed, he thought, as he contemplated Philip Waters's behavior in class. Wherever he'd gone to high school, he

was almost certainly one of those kids who was thought to be special, as Waters certainly thought of himself. His view, repeated over and over in class, was that the only reason why anyone ever did anything was because it pleased him and that was all the justification that could or needed to be given. He presented this view relentlessly, often beating down other students and remaining immune to anything they or Max might say in opposition. Waters had been like this since the first day of class. They'd begun with some discussion of David Hume's moral theory, and this kid had immediately announced his view of the final truth in such matters, namely that there is no objective difference between right and wrong, and, further, that people, whatever they may say, always simply act in ways that will please them. A mixture of psychological and ethical egoism, Max thought, although he'd never encountered such a view in anyone as young as this student, this eighteen-year-old Philip Waters.

He'd known plenty of single-minded, self-confident types. How could he not, having spent so long with academics? When you argued against them, it was hopeless. If they were Marxists, they wrote you off as having an insufficiently raised class consciousness. If they were Freudians, they said you were repressing or in denial or something. And, of course, if they were ardent Christians—not common in academia but not unheard of—they could tell that you'd somehow not been touched by grace. And it was not that different when you dealt with someone who treated texts as scriptures—an ardent Kantian, say, who simply could not fathom your opinion that Kant is largely full of shit. But he'd never known anyone so single-minded and sure of himself at this age as Philip Waters.

The kid was a psychological egoist, Max thought, or an ethical egoist. He strained to remember the difference. Probably it was both psychological and ethical egoism. Max couldn't remember just how those categories went. There were so many, dating back to graduate school. Universal egoism, teleology, deontology, externalism, internalism, realism, nominalism, logicism, intuitionism, and on and on. To what purpose? Lately Max had run through a mental inventory of those who had taught him philosophy, realizing with shock that nearly all of them had died. One who hadn't died had once written, "Such 'explanations' are no doubt essential, and they

may account for everything we need to know except why any man of intelligence has ever been attracted to the subject of philosophy."

Yes, Max thought, and yet people continued to make these categories and stuff them. Max supposed it helped people see where they stood, although it had never helped him in the least.

*His late father had
been able to do what
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And the books, the books treated like scripture. Years spent trying to figure out what the Kraut (as Max thought of him) meant by "Dasein." Or the earlier Prussian with his transcendental rigmarole. When he'd been a student, the Germans were neglected or at best marginalized, but now they were roaring back. Even in his own field: Adorno, God help us, and Heidegger, who said we need a god and then became one for his epigones. Max supposed that it might have been wrong to ignore those German texts, but now they were back. The baby had returned, but so had the bathwater. Yeats's lines came to mind—

And what rough beast, its hour come round
at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

—and Max thought the beast in question could be German philosophy. Sinking deeper into his rambling thought, he recalled lines from the Auden poem:

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god ...

As Max began to emerge from his reflections, he thought of himself and how he'd avoided the isms and no longer slaved over the great books. He just wanted to be a philosopher, and maybe he was, although he wasn't sure just who thought so.

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Max pulled himself completely out of the reveries about his career, his father, department meetings, and the Germans, wondering whether he had an irrational fixation on the Germans. Fixation, maybe. But why irrational? At that he fell into another reflection as he remembered that much later in the day he would be visited by the graduate students who were assisting him in his class.

Earlier in his career he'd had many graduate students working with him, but no more. Now his clientele were mainly college kids, especially freshmen in the class in which Waters now annoyed him. Where had the graduate students gone? Maybe they were uninterested in his field, in his work. Maybe they were uninterested in him. He didn't much care, although he enjoyed their company at department events. He did wonder what those graduate students thought when they were appointed his course assistants and saw his popular classes. Did they dislike his style and write his popularity off to something unphilosophical? Well, he didn't much care what they thought, although he enjoyed their help and good humor. But what did Max care about?

And earlier in his career he had often been invited to lecture elsewhere. For a time, he had given more outside lectures than anyone else in the department, but those invitations had dwindled to a trickle. He was nearing the end of his career, and it seemed his sun was setting. He published less frequently, although regularly. Recently an essay of his had been translated into Slovak, joining earlier pieces of his that had been translated into Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and Polish, and now he was invited to give a keynote address in Bratislava. Well, he thought, maybe he was rising in the East.

The knock at the door was not tentative, although it wasn't aggressive. As he rose to go to the door, he thought of the door-knocking in the Saul Bellow novel. This knocking was also "not so innocent," although Max knew this kid was no Augie March.

Max opened the door and silently waved the student to a chair, then took his own seat behind the desk.

"I'm in your class, Professor Stine. My name is Philip Waters."

"I know," said Max, and fell silent.

"I've come to ask about my paper grade."

"Yes."

"You gave my paper an F."

"Yes, I did that."

Waters looked angry but also flustered, and

he said, as calmly as he could, "But the paper deserves much better than that."

"Yes," said Max, his face a blank.

"Then you'll change the grade?"

"Of course not," said Max, still speaking slowly.

"But why not," asked Waters, "if you admit that it should have a better grade?"

Finally Max spoke at length. "I don't see that there's any 'should' to it, Mr. Waters. You've finally persuaded me that the only reason why anyone does anything is in order to further his own pleasure. It pleased me enormously to give you an F."

"I don't believe you, Professor Stine. I haven't persuaded you of anything."

"How do you know? In any case you can barely imagine how much I liked assigning that F."

Waters's anger now showed clearly, and he raised his voice. "I'll go to the college ombudsman and the dean, and then you'll be in real trouble."

"What will you tell them, Mr. Waters?"

"I'll show them the paper with your F on it, and they'll read the paper and see that it's worth much more than an F."

Now Max smiled for the first time. "What if I tell them that I've never seen the paper before, that it's not the paper you turned in?"

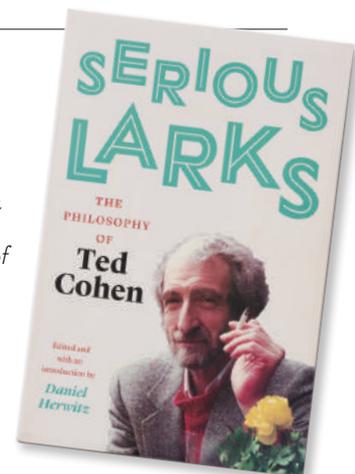
"You'd be lying."

"Yes. In class you gave a forceful and sarcastic rebuttal of Kant's argument against lying."

Waters trembled and he stood up. As he walked out of the office, he said, "We'll see."

"Yes," said Max, as he contemplated the magical logic he was practicing on Waters, and he thought, There is always something to see, even as you get older. Especially as you get older. ❁

*Excerpted from
Serious Larks: The
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by Daniel Herwitz,
PhD'84, University of
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Cohen, a professor
in philosophy
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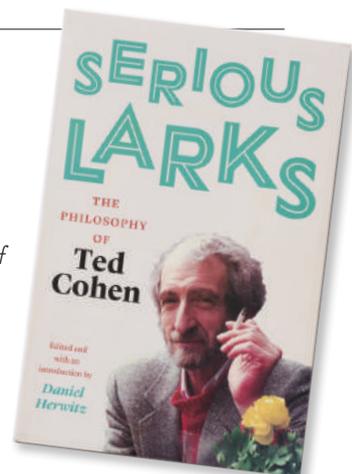
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Material culture

FAVORITE FREEBIES

At the start of fall quarter, representatives from hundreds of clubs and campus offices jammed into Henry Crown Field House for the Student Activities Fair. Most tables had some kind of freebie to lure students in. Here are our favorites.



Rubber duck, Active Minds

"Taking a bath is a good way to take care of your mental health," the group's representative improvised.



Malcolm X button

UChicago Socialists. The only non-free item. It cost a \$1 "donation."



Honey, Phoenix Farms

Technically a display item. Phoenix Farms manages three beehives on campus, including one on the roof of the building where the *Core* is published.



Keychain, Engineering Society

"Where fun comes to build things."



Button, UChicago Platypus

"A project for the self-criticism, self-education, and, ultimately, the practical reconstitution of a Marxian Left."



Reusable flatware, UChicago Dining





Fidget cube, Student Disability Services
Came in a box with instructions. "How to Use: This cube-shaped toy has buttons, switches, clickers, and more to serve all your fidgeting needs."



Labyrinth temporary tattoo, Brent House (Episcopal campus ministry)
The group organizes meditative labyrinth walks a few times a year.



Pen, Chinese Students and Scholars Association



Eraser, Neuro Club
(Neuroscience Education, University Research, and Outreach)



Magnetic clip, Uncommon Nights
A series of late-night, alcohol-free campus events.



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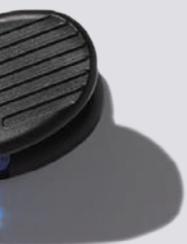
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Photography by Nathan Keay

Patric McCoy in his living room. The works throughout his apartment are arranged by theme; this is the music/dance section.



Seen and heard

ART ME UP

Over 50 years, Patric McCoy, AB'69, has collected 1,300 pieces of art and made them into a piece all his own.

Patric McCoy, AB'69, a retired environmental scientist, bought his first piece of art when he was an undergrad. In 1968 his roommate Scott Stapleton, BFA'68, came back from art class with a lithograph he called "The Seventh Angel of Revelation."

McCoy was fascinated. "It had an ominous look to it," he says. "Back in the '60s we were really thinking these were the last days." They negotiated over a price and settled on \$10 (about \$72 today). "It tickles me now to think about it. That really was a lot of money."

*McCoy estimates he has about 1,300 works—mostly, but not exclusively, by contemporary artists from the African diaspora—in his three-bedroom North Kenwood apartment. Among them is work by Theaster Gates and the AfriCOBRA collective; he also still displays Stapleton's lithograph. In 2003 McCoy cofounded *Diasporal Rhythms*, an organization that encourages art collecting.*

In an article about your collection, the *New York Times* described you as a "fully committed zealot." Is that accurate?

Yes, 100 percent. When I was in the EPA, I was in it to win it. When I was teaching, I was doing that. The concept of promoting art collecting is something I feel very, very strongly about.

We as a society are suffering because we keep perpetuating these myths about what a collector is—elitist, unusual, super wealthy, crazy in their concern about privacy and security, academic beyond belief, and possessed with an interest in investment. That's not real. That's not healthy.

How long were you buying art before you called yourself a collector?

About 30 years. That's why I know these myths and misconceptions are real. I had them myself.

The article also claimed you wouldn't allow the pieces by Theaster Gates to be photographed.

I've got a lot of Theaster Gates because I've known him for a long time. They got excited and wanted me to take his work and set it out in a different arrangement so they could photograph it.

This is curated. This is mine. You're asking me to change my collection, just for a photograph? I'm not doing that.

Was Gates famous when you started buying his work?

No, no. In fact he said I was the first person that bought anything from him.

I bought some pieces in 2000, right after I met him. I went over to the West Side, he showed me some pieces, and I bought three right then. Clay masks.

One broke 10 years ago—it fell off the wall. I put one in an auction for *Diasporal Rhythms* this past Sunday. And one I really like, so I keep it in my living room. I enjoy it.

Your focus is on art that's contemporary to you.

That's correct. You cannot affect a dead artist's career. When I engage with the artists, through my acquisition or going to their shows, I'm encouraging them to keep doing it. How many blues, jazz, gospel, R&B, rap artists would continue to do what they do if they had no audience? This is what we're doing with our visual arts.

I go to a lot of shows, and a lot of times I don't like most of it. I take the time to talk to the artist about why I don't like it.

How does that go over?

Ninety percent of the time they love it. One of the things I critique immediately are these artist's statements on the wall. I tell them, I went to the University of Chicago, and we had to read some very complex things. So I'm comfortable with complex thought, but I can't make sense of what you're saying. When I try to diagram that, that's not even a sentence.

Did you ever have to eat ramen because you spent all your money on art?

Not eat ramen, but I have spent all my money. It's lucky I was working for the EPA and was

so aggressive and committed. I rose up in the ranks to the point where I was getting paid very well. During that period I was able to buy a lot of work.

Most people don't recognize that Chicago is one of the cheapest art markets for African American art. It is more expensive in the South, East, and West. I don't know if it's a well-kept secret or people are just ignorant.

You're originally from Chicago?

I was born at 63rd and Champlain in a little two-room apartment right next to the L. I was the valedictorian from Englewood High School.

During Orientation, the University of Chicago representative said the area was dangerous. They recommended that you not go past 61st Street, not go across Cottage Grove. I'm thinking, you're telling me I can't go back home? Now I see students walking across Washington Park like they own it.

So when you come home with a new piece, now what?

I shuffle things around. One of the things I learned at U of C—there's a math field called topology. You can have a particular orientation of things and it looks like it's full, and all of a sudden, boom: you've got all this space.

I like the smaller pieces. I find that there is the same if not more work done in a small piece than in a big piece. You're really seeing the expertise of the artist in a small piece.

Do you ever have buyer's remorse?

There's always going to be something that you rethink. It's not so much that you have buyer's remorse. It's that you grow out of it.

You have some artwork on the floor.

Most certainly.

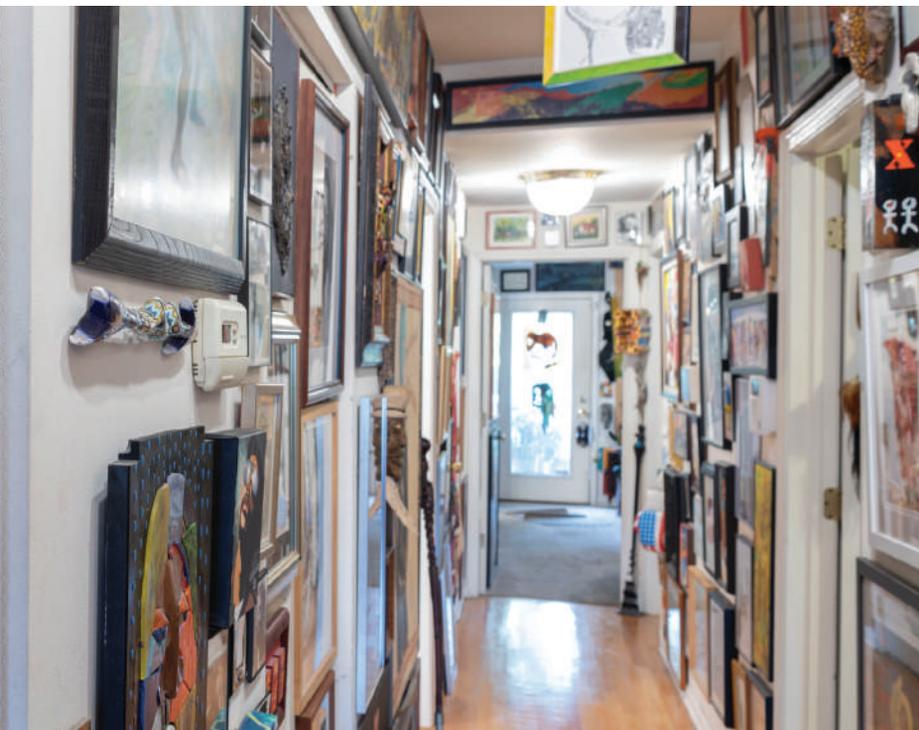
And you're starting in on the ceiling.

I have already freed myself from a lot of the constrictions of the American art world—that it's got to have so much breathing room and this color shouldn't go with that. I'm past that.

When you look at your walls, does your gaze go to certain things over and over again? Or do you look at different things?



Photography by Nathan Keay



A small selection of the artwork in McCoy's 1,500-square-foot apartment. McCoy has set up a trust to keep the collection on display together.

Different things. Sometimes you start seeing relationships that you hadn't paid any attention to before. It depends on the time of day, different lighting, how you feel. It changes.

Any advice for aspiring collectors?

Get what you like. You see something you like, get it. Ask if it's for sale and what the price is. If you can do that price, you should get it. It's as simple as that.

You start out with stuff that you might grow out of: I thought this was great, but now it's not. If you're in the Chicago market, where it's not that expensive, then it's not a problem. Get something else.

If you see something you like and you will regret not getting it, then you really do need to get it. If it speaks to you, you need to get that. Those pieces—I've been collecting now for 50-some years—that I have seen and I did not get, I still remember them.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

Excerpt

Flush-In: It's not just political. It's hydrological.

As a second-year in 1968–69, Wendy (Glockner) Kates, AB'71 (political science), AM'77, PhD'83 (comparative human development), wrote thoughtful, compelling stories about the 1969 sit-in at the Administration building for the Chicago Maroon. She also contributed this satirical piece about a national-level protest. Now Professor Emeritus at the State University of New York Upstate Medical University, Kates notes by email, "Most of my writing activities during the past 30 years have been limited to NIH research grant proposals and scientific papers."

"Students Welcome New President with Flush-In"

The Chicago Maroon, January 17, 1969, p. 2

By Wendy Glockner

January 20, 1969. A bleak, cold, snowy day. Thousands of people stand shivering in front of the capitol in Washington D.C. as a glowing and self-confident Richard Nixon recites his inaugural oath. As he stutters his last words through chattering teeth, "...preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, so help me God," the crowd lets go with wild cheers.

But people are not cheering in Chicago. The city's plumbing system has just exploded. Lake Michigan is draining quickly. Mayor Daley is drowned in a flood at city hall.

"Flush for Freedom," the devious scheme by which every possible toilet in the country will be flushed as Nixon delivers the last word of his oath, is a success.

The idea for this "massive demonstration in protest of the existence of the new administration" comes from the Students for Violent Non-Action (SVNA). "As we see it, the northeast and southwest will break off, and a huge wave will whip across this country and over the mountains," asserted Frank Malbranche, national co-ordinator of SVNA. "The San Andreas Fault will be demolished. The tidal wave will result in a huge inland sea in the great plains area. Chicago is sure to get wiped out." ...

"People are prevented from expressing their own opinions at election time; votes are stolen," Malbranche said. "We want everyone to vote no—to press the no lever in the privacy of their own home. While a vote can be stolen, a broken water main cannot be denied." ...

The Art of Living

By Grant Snider
from *The Shape of Ideas* (Abrams, 2017)

WHEN I WAS
YOUNG, I WAS
AN IDEALIST.



I FOUND BEAUTY, WONDER, AND MEANING
EVERYWHERE I LOOKED.



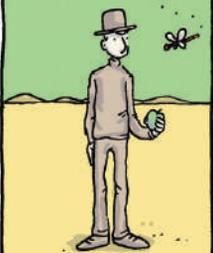
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OLDER, I BECAME
A REALIST.



I SAW A WORLD OF ROUGH EDGES AND
DIFFICULT TRUTHS.



THIS GREW
TIRESOME. I
DECIDED TO BE
A SURREALIST.

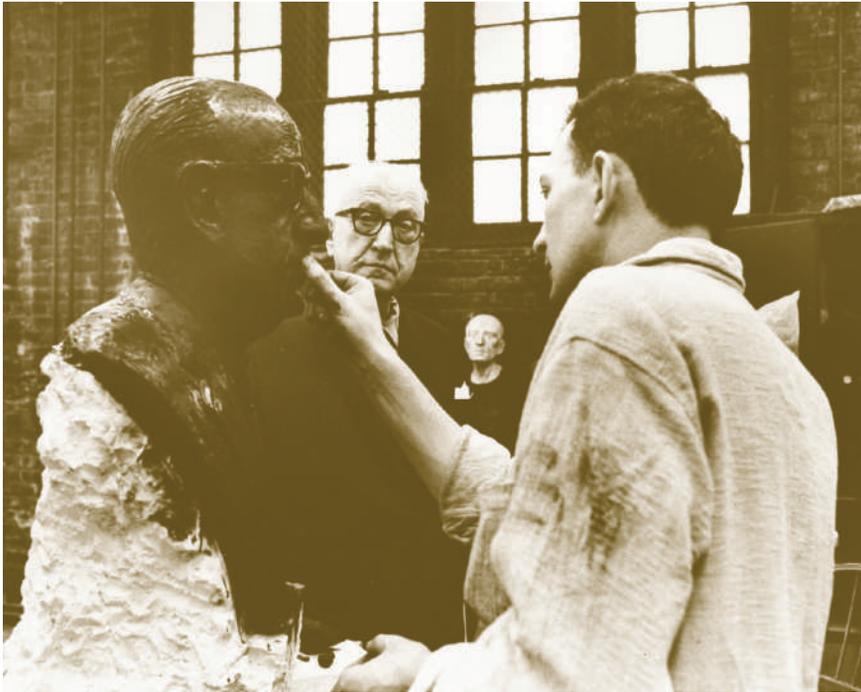


THINGS GOT PRETTY WEIRD AFTER THAT.



Ibidem

**MIDWAY STUDIOS, 1967
PSYCHIATRIST KARL MENNINGER
WITH SCULPTOR VIRGINIO FERRARI**



The artist is always the first beholder of a work of art, watching it develop from chiseled stone or emerge on a wall or panel. He is part of the history of its reception even as its maker.

—UChicago art historian Michael Camille (1958–2002),
Gothic Art: Glorious Visions (1996)