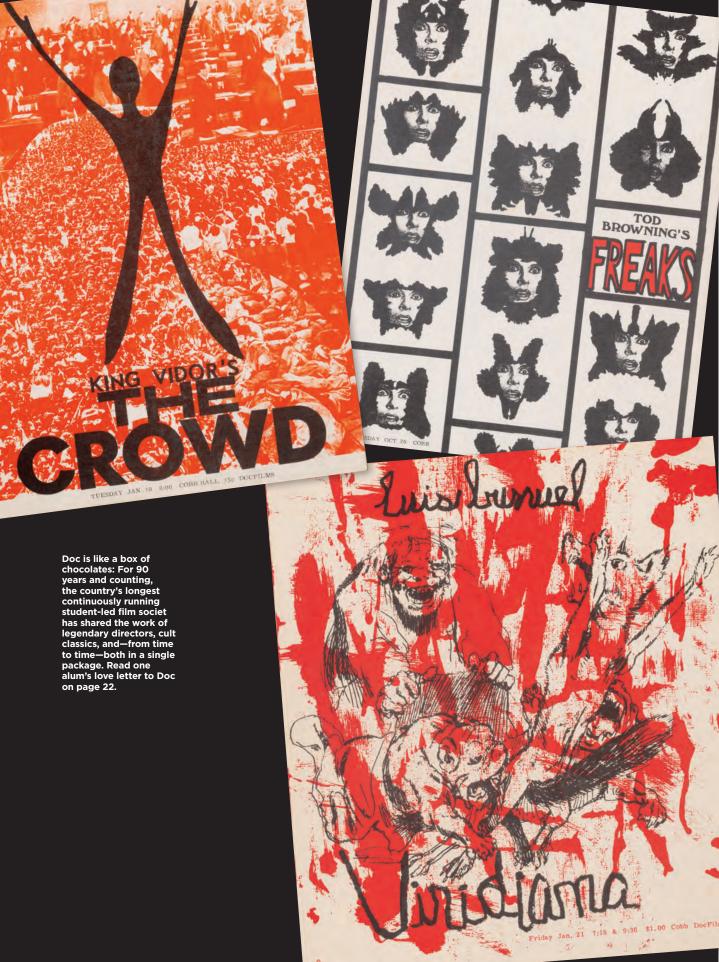
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THE COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Winter 2023 Supplement to The University of Chicago Magazine

JOSEPH MANKENICI'S

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INSIDE

SHORT

Top 10: Majors and minors ■ *Updates:* What's new in the College ■ *Alumni memories:* Summer jobs with Nixon and Fermi

......

2

MEDIUM

Art and science: Is there a book inside that concrete block? Sports: A championship-winning tennis team shares its secret rituals More sports: Soccer coach Julianne Sitch wins a title her fir t year in charge

4

- Yet more sports: A quick lap with race car driver Andre Castro, AB'22
- Philosophy: Agnes Callard, AB'97, associate professor of philosophy, questions how we should spend our time Hyde Park history: The wreck of the Silver Spray

LONG

DEAN BOYER: A HISTORY

A lighthearted look at the College's longest-serving dean.

14

ONCE UPON A TIME AT DOC

Doc Films turns 90. An alum hits middle age (and then some). The shared memories are timeless.

22

MAKING AN EXAMPLE

A new public art project, *Exemplary*, asks who we honor at UChicago and why.

......

ET CETERA

Recipe: Tie-dye dorayaki by **Hadley Sui**, AB'15 **UChicago** creature: What cheer, Whatcheeria? **Poem**: "Ode to Love" translated by **Gabriela Garcia**, Class of 2023 **Comic**: Strange Planet by Nathan W. Pyle

34

Front cover and inner front cover: Documentary Film Group Records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library; photography by Nathan Keay. See story on page 22. **Back cover:** Copyright 2023, The *Chicago Maroon*. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

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From the editor

UNWATCHABLE

"Images now appear in any size and on a variety of surfaces," Susan Sontag, AB'51, lamented in her 1996 essay "The Decay of Cinema," even "on disco walls and on megascreens hanging above sports arenas."

What would Sontag have made of YouTube? Would she have despised it—yet another assault on her beloved cinema? Or perhaps grudgingly appreciated that viewers in 2023 could watch her 1969 appearance, along with filmma er Agnès Varda, on the cultural TV program Camera Three?

The episode is an unintentional comedy of manners. First the interviewer, Jack Kroll of Newsweek, talks at Varda about her film. Lions Love (... and Lies), while Sontag smokes. Then he talks at Sontag about her debut film, Duet for Cannibals, while Varda smokes. In 25 minutes, Kroll asks them just a few questions each, while making such observations as "You're intellectuals. That's a bad word. You're women. That's a good word." Sontag and Varda sit mostly in silence, exuding 1960s glamour and oozing contempt.

It's unwatchable and unbearable—and so pleasurable. Stop. Rewind. Rewatch Varda glancing over at Sontag in dismay, while Sontag smirks to hold in a laugh. "I am strongly drawn to Camp," Sontag wrote in her famous essay on the topic, "and almost as strongly offended by it."

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

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As of Autumn Quarter 2022, these are the most popular College majors and minors. Students can declare more than one of each.

MAJORS

1. Economics: 1,277

2. Computer science: 465

3. Mathematics: 311

4. Biological sciences: 266

5. Political science: 216

6. Psychology: 207

7. Public policy studies: 197

8. History: 148

9. Neuroscience: 133

10. Physics: 127

MINORS

- 1. Romance languages and literatures: 56
- 2. English and creative writing: 50
- 3. Computer science: 43
- 4. Health and society: 38
- 5. History: 32
- 6. Data science: 30
- 7. Statistics: 26
- 8. Chemistry: 24
- 9. Visual arts: 24
- 10. Human rights: 23

Updates

WHAT'S NEW IN THE COLLEGE

New AB/MBA program for veterans

The Accelerated Booth Scholars Program, funded by an anonymous \$24 million gift, will allow qualified eterans to earn a dual degree in fi e years. As well as scholarship support, students receive guidance on academics, internships, and networking. Three student veterans are in the fir t cohort, the Class of 2024: **Colin Augustson**, former sergeant in the Marines; **Nick Golin**, former corporal in the Marines; and **Robert Zamora**, former sergeant in the Army.

Preprofessional program for climate and energy

The Office of Career
Advancement has launched
UChicago Climate and Energy
Careers, a preprofessional
program preparing undergrads
for careers in renewable energy,
climate policy, and more. Four
students in the program traveled
to Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in
November to attend COP27, the
United Nations climate change
conference. More than 90 heads
of state, including President Joe
Biden, also attended.



Elizabeth Zazycki, '23; Adera Craig, '25; Zoë Saldinger, '23; and Raghav Pardasani, '25, attended COP27 in Egypt.

Ricky Holder, Class of 2023, awarded Marshall Scholarship

Navy veteran **Ricky Holder**, a fourth-year public policy major, has received a Marshall Scholarship to pursue an MPhil in comparative social policy at the University of Oxford. At age nine, Holder entered the foster care system and was raised apart from his four brothers. He hopes to bring about reform. "No family should suffer the same fate as mine," he wrote in his application, "and no society should subsidize separation when its cost is so unconscionable."

Undergraduate research demystified

The College Center for Research and Fellowships and the UChicago Library are launching a zero-credit course, Undergraduate Research: What, Why, and How, on the basics of faculty-mentored research. Course topics include navigating the library's vast resources; working with archives and special collections; managing, analyzing, and sharing data; conducting ethical research; writing proposals; and sharing research. "Together," the course description promises, "we will demystify the world of research."

SUMMER JOBS WITH NIXON AND FERMI

In the Q&A section of the College Review, the Core's email newsletter, we asked alumni to tell us about a memorable summer job.

Stupefying

During the summer of 1974, I worked with a group of folks coding applications to the College. There were four of us. and as we worked in a small room at a big table, we listened to the House impeachment hearings on the radio. The hearings were fascinating and stupefying. We persevered and on August 8, 1974, Nixon resigned. My summer experience fed into my graduate studies at Syracuse University. The title of my dissertation was "Richard Nixon: Representative Religious American."

-Jill P. Strachan, AB'71, AM'72

Vending

I spent one summer delivering Crain's Chicago Business into vending boxes all around Chicagoland. Customers would deposit a dollar in coins, open the box, and pull out the magazine. On Friday afternoon, I picked up the company van on Rush Street and drove to Crystal Lake to get the latest issue. I proceeded to put on a couple



President Richard Nixon, shown here delivering the State of the Union address in early 1974, also left his job at the end of the summer.

hundred miles filling the ending boxes, returning to Hyde Park around eight Saturday morning and promptly falling asleep. I kept the company van over the weekend because this process started all over again on Monday morning around fi e, at which point I covered the portion of the Chicago area I had not done. I learned every inch of the region's roads, and pulled many more all-nighters than during the academic year.

-Steven Goodman, AB'82

Seeing

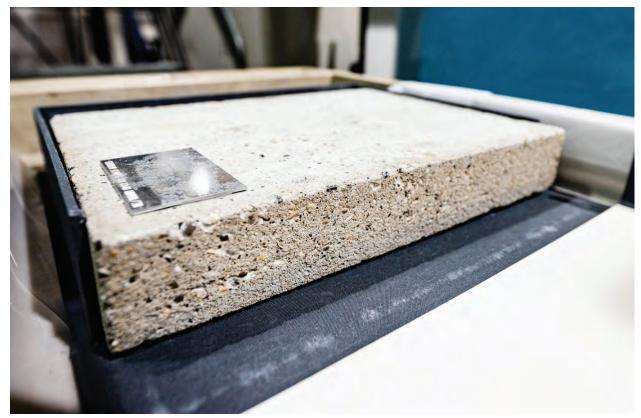
The summer after my fir t year, I completed a Metcalf

Internship at International House. My job was to organize the applications of former residents from the 1930s to the present. I remember seeing Enrico Fermi's application; under awards, he had written "Nobel Prize in Physics, 1938." The most memorable application was that of my great-uncle, Chang-Yun "Charlie" Fan, PhD'52, who lived in I-House when he was a grad student in physics. There was also a photo of him. I made a copy of his application and sent it to his children. Years later I found his dissertation in the stacks of Crerar.

-Lisa L. Fan, AB'12, JD'18, MBA'18

3

Next question: What was your most memorable experience at Doc Films? Did you see a film the tochanged your life? Work as a projectionist or a pösternaut? Have a firet date with your eventual spouse? Send your shot-by-shot description to collegereview@uchicago.edu.



The mysterious Betonbuch, or Concrete Book, by Fluxus artist Wolf Vostell. Ist ein Buch drin? Oder nicht?

Art and science

LIGHT READING

Is there a book inside that concrete block—or a half-century-old joke?

Patti Gibbons, AB'94, head of collection management in the Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, was working on a library exhibition in 2016 when she fir t became fascinated by a concrete slab. No ordinary slab, this was a work of art—Concrete Book #83, by the 20th-century German artist Wolf Vostell. When Gibbons heard that it was supposed to contain an actual book, she started to wonder: What if there isn't anything inside? Or what if there is?

Vostell was associated with the Fluxus art movement of the 1960s and '70s, which emphasized the artistic process over the finished p oduct. Gibbons fir t became acquainted with his work

the way many a UChicago student did, via Concrete Traffic—a 1957 Cadillac encased in, yes, concrete—that was long displayed outside Midway Studios at 60th Street and Ingleside Avenue. (Gibbons lived nearby in Burton-Judson as a College student.) Its 2016 installation in the Campus North Parking Garage inspired the exhibit for which Concrete Book #83 was purchased.

Concrete Book #83 is one of 100 slabs created by Vostell, each ostensibly containing a copy of his booklet Betonierungen (in English, "Concretific tions"). This copy is thought to be the only one owned by a library—and the only one classified as book in WorldCat, the global catalog of library materials.

In 2020 Gibbons got her chance to peek inside. **Christine Mehring**, the Mary L. Block Professor of Art History, had put out a call for ideas for class projects on art conservation; Gibbons proposed examining *Concrete Book #83*. Mehring and Maria Kokkori, an expert in conservation science who was then a visiting lecturer at the art history department (and is now at Northwestern) embraced the project enthusiastically.

The team found help in the lab of **Heinrich Jaeger**, the Sewell Avery Distinguished Service Professor in the physics department. Their fir t attempt was a simple X-ray scan, but those results were indeterminate; all that could be clearly seen in the image were wires, possibly used to hold the book in place. Next, they tried an ultrasound scan, but the sound waves were unable to penetrate the thick concrete block.

That's when they brought out the big guns, applying for time on the Advanced Photon Source (APS) at Argonne National Laboratory. The APS, a massive ring 3,600 feet in circumference, uses a series of particle accelerators to push electrons to 99.99999 percent of the speed of light. The synchrotron radiation emitted by the electron beam generates extremely powerful X-rays, which researchers aim at their experiment stations.

Gibbons and Kokkori were granted precious time at the APS in April 2022.

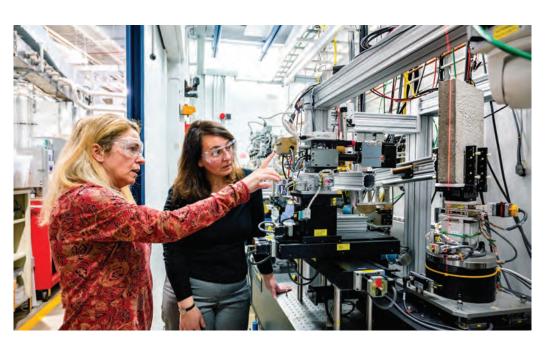
With Argonne scientists, they fir t analyzed another copy of Vostell's book *Betonierungen* to understand the exact chemical composition they would expect to detect inside the artwork. The team compared that with the composition determined using the APS's X-rays. The results: still inconclusive. "We weren't able to tell if what we saw was aggregate from the cement, or if maybe the book had pulped out," Gibbons laments.

Baffled, Gibbons eached out to Vostell's son to see if he knew more. He related that he had asked his father that same question, to which the elder Vostell replied that the mystery of Concrete Book #83 was part of the concept. UChicago's copy might enclose an entire book, or just a few pages, or perhaps nothing at all.

Gibbons hasn't given up on findin a definiti e answer—she's considering taking *Concrete Book #83* to a place with still more powerful technology: the Neutron Imaging Facility at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. But she remains philosophical about the quest: "The book is teaching us to live with mystery and to question things."

-Benjamin Recchie, AB'03

Maria Kokkori (left) and Patti Gibbons, AB'94, at Argonne National Laboratory, where the Advanced Photon Source was used to scan Concrete Book #83 (at far right, with red beam).



THE RITE STUFF

Hard work plus talent plus ... elaborate handshakes?

In May 2022, the Maroon men's tennis team finished a 22 1 season by beating Case Western Reserve University's Spartans 5-2 in the national title match in Orlando, Florida. It was the fir t NCAA Division III championship team sports win—in any sport—in UChicago history.

Winning a championship takes hard work, dedication, talent, and healthy habits. But does it also come down to music and wardrobe choices? Coach **Jay Tee** and the players share some secret rituals from their record-setting season.

-Jeanie Chung

Everyone was really superstitious about their pre-match warm-up partners. Doubles partners always warmed up together on the same court.

-MAREK MICHULKA, CLASS OF 2023

During tournaments we made sure to have a full and healthy breakfast every morning. We found a breakfast place before the tournament began and ordered breakfast from there every day during the tournament.

-BAILEY FORGUS, CLASS OF 2023

Before matches the team would always have the same Jimmy John's sandwiches. However, postmatch meals consisted of either Chipotle or [coach] Jay [Tee]'s personal favorite, a Chinese buffet.

> -BIREN REDDY, CLASS OF 2023

My personal superstition occurred on changeovers. I would always sip Gatorade first, then water. I'd wipe my face with a towel, then go back to Gatorade, then water. I'd set the towel to the right of me and water on the ground in a specific place, much like Rafael Nadal.

-DEREK HSIEH, CLASS OF 2024

Every time we played doubles, we did an elaborate handshake—and if there were any mistakes in the handshake, we would continue to do it until it was perfect. It helped us get in the right mindset for the match.

-JACOB LOWEN, CLASS OF 2025

Whenever traveling to and from the match, everyone would make sure to sit in the same seats in the van.

-SHRAMAY DHAWAN, AB'22



Men's tennis has been on the rise since 2015, when the team made it to the NCAA semifinals or the fir t time. Since then, the Maroons have reached the semifinals thee times in four years—but the 2022 season proved to be the breakthrough.

Photos courtesy UChicago Athletics and Recreation

Connecting with our location on the South Side, we would exclusively listen to old-school Kanye [West] before every match in the spring, focusing on [albums] Graduation and The College Dropout. I was always in charge of the music.

-ALEX GUZHVA. AB'22

I don't like the word "superstition" because it unnecessarily increases fear of the unknown and reliance on luck. "Routine" is a better word. My favorite routine was our prematch team chant [which remains classified] because we drastically improved it for that season.

-CHRISTIAN ALSHON, CLASS OF 2023

We had very specific uniform combinations that we thought were lucky. When we were playing tournaments, we carefully planned out our uniforms for the week. We would also do a lot of laundry on trips so that we could re-wear our favorite uniforms match after match, even if we had other clean uniforms.

-ARJUN ASOKUMAR, LAB'20, CLASS OF 2024

We would have a brief team meeting at the hotel the night before every match, sitting in the same spot each time. It helped us get in the zone and visualize what we wanted to accomplish the next day.

-SACHIN DAS, CLASS OF 2023

My superstition was telling the guys that their superstitions had nothing to do with us winning or losing. I also wore the same shirt for the entire week at NCAAs because it was good luck.

-HEAD COACH JAY TEE





Sports

GOOOOAAAALLLL!

A former Maroon assistant wins a title her first year in charge.

In December **Julianne Sitch** finished her fit season as head coach of the men's soccer program. Before working with the Chicago Red Stars in the National Women's Soccer League, she was an assistant to longtime UChicago women's coach Amy Reifert. A star midfielde /forward at DePaul University, Sitch switched to defense during her professional playing career in the United States and abroad.

When the Maroons won the NCAA championship, ending the season 22-0-1, was she expecting the international news coverage that focused on her as a woman coach? "Not at all," says Sitch. "I am excited, but I wish the media were all for the guys. They've been phenomenal. They've worked extremely hard. They've been in the Final Four several times in the last few years, and I am very, very proud of them."—Jeanie Chung

Read an interview with Sitch at mag.uchicago.edu/sitch2022.

THE FAST AND THE STUDIOUS

A quick lap with race car driver Andre Castro, AB'22.



HIGH-SPEED FACTS

GOAL

"To be in the Indy 500 and maybe win it someday."

CAREER HIGHLIGHT

Third place in the 2021 Formula Ford Festival

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

2021 Team USA Scholarship, which sends promising drivers to compete in England

How does it feel to drive an open-wheel race car?¹

The fir t time, I remember thinking how low I was to the ground—you can barely see the tops of the front tires. Once you get used to it, the car is very light and does whatever you want it to do.

How does racing compare with normal street driving?

It's more dangerous to be on the road than to be in a race car, to be honest. You're not out there with trained professionals. I'm from New York City. I'm glad I can take the train.

What are your strengths?

I've won some poles,² so I'm able to put in a quick lap. But my biggest strength is to adapt. I've been jumping in and out of a lot of different cars and never had the budget to do a full season. Usually with one or two sessions in a car, I can get pretty close to the pace.

What's your training regimen?

I had a wake-up call a couple of years ago when I was getting back into open-wheel racing. Those cars don't have power steering, and it was a struggle to be strong enough to drive. I got a trainer that I worked with for about a year. I used to hate the gym.

In terms of simulator racing, I use a platform called iRacing, where the competition is very intense. The barrier to entry is much lower, so you have a lot of guys who don't have the budget for real-life racing, but they're extremely fast on the sim. And guys you compete against in real life come on too.

You don't feel the car underneath you like in real life, but you get all the mental aspects—keeping focused, being resilient, hitting your marks every lap. I've learned so much from online racing.

What do people think about a UChicago alum being a race car driver?

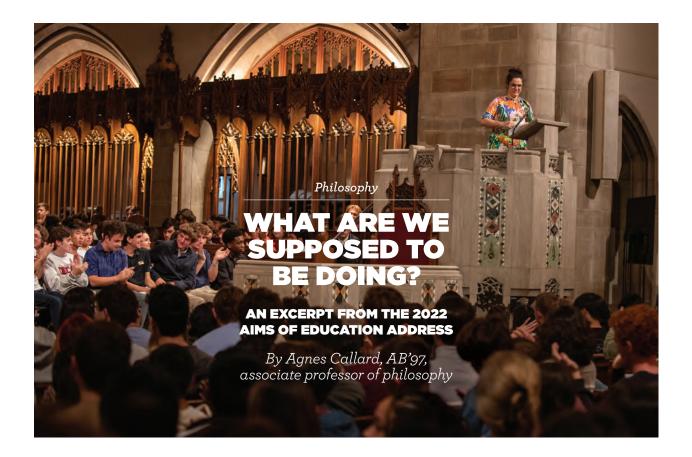
I'm surprised how much UChicago people enjoy hearing about it. In racing, a lot of people don't know UChicago, but if they do, they think it's pretty cool.

UChicago people don't know much about racing and racing people don't know much about UChicago. It's just two sides of myself.—Susie Allen, AB'09



This interview has been edited and condensed.

- ¹ A type of race car with wheels that sit outside the body, used in IndyCar and Formula 1 races.
- ² Short for "pole position," the spot at the front of the starting line given to the fir t-place qualifie.



Agnes Callard, AB'97, associate professor of philosophy, delivers the Aims of Education address in Rockefeller Chapel the week before Autumn Quarter began. f you've met any babies, you've noticed this fundamental fact about them: they haven't got a clue what they're supposed to be doing. Babies are completely lost. Their only guides are bodily sensation—hunger, cold, pleasure, pain—and, eventually, their ability to copy what the adults around them are doing.

Adults are not that different. We pay a little less attention to our bodily sensations, and a little more to what other people are doing. We talk like the people around us, dress like the people around us. We pursue what they pursue. People tend to criticize being a "conformist" as though there were some clear alternative. When they say "Don't conform," they often mean "Conform to what I want you to conform to, instead of what those people I don't like want you to conform to."

The teenage years are often when a person starts to wake up to all this: Wait a minute, does anyone out there actually know what they're doing ...? But we comfort ourselves with the thought that

we'll figu e it out when we're a bit older, a bit more independent.

This is all very abstract, so let me make it concrete using two examples: one small and personal, the other big and political.

My small, personal example is the extra hour. Suppose you have an extra hour—because you arrived early, because it's daylight saving time, because you got the time of a Zoom wrong, because you missed an appointment, because it's an hour till the cafeteria opens. What do you do with your hour?

You could read a book, mess around on your phone, call your mom, wander around your dorm and strike up a random conversation, play a video game, lean back in your chair and rest your eyes. Whichever one you choose, do you have a sense that you made the right choice? At the end of that hour, will you think, "I spent it well"?

If your answer is no, consider that your entire life is just one hour after another. You get to choose how you spend each one. Sometimes people will put pressure on you to do a certain thing during your hour. For example, there was a lot of pressure to spend this hour here, listening to me.

But other times there's not. Those are our "free hours," but really, it's all up to you. Even how much pressure people put on you to spend the hour one way rather than another—that is somewhat up to you.



I'm going to confess that a lot of the time, I sit in my office in Stuart Hall and I say to myself, I could read some Aristotle, I could answer emails, I could listen to music, I could go on Twitter, I could think about whatever problem I'm working on, I could buy those plane tickets for my next talk or set up my kid's dentist appointment or start randomly doodling in my notebook—and I don't know which one I should do.

Sometimes I look around at my colleagues, who all seem to know that they should be doing a specific thin at a specific tim. I'm amazed until I remember they probably don't know either. We're all just pretending we know how to spend our time, guessing at it, hoping for the best.

My second example is Twitter. I'm picking Twitter because that's the part of social media I know, but substitute your favorite online experience. The online world is new, and that gives it a Wild West character. Social norms have not yet been established. We don't know how much time to spend online, and when we're there, we don't know how to behave.

When I joined Twitter a few years ago, I was shocked. I thought, Whoa, why do they think it's okay to talk to each other like that? Two sentiments that are very common on Twitter are mockery

and outrage: Can you believe so-and-so did such-and-such? People are amazed that other people don't know how to act. So it's both that we don't know how to behave on Twitter and that we use Twitter to observe, more generally, that we don't know how to behave.

Most of us are lost much of the time. We're lost about what to do and how to treat each other. Just about everyone I know, including me, spends a lot of time in denial about this, because how else are you going to live?

But there was one person who didn't. I'm going to end this talk by telling you about him, because he's my hero.

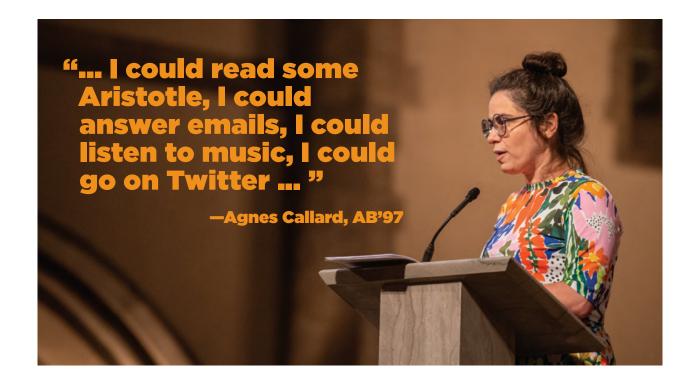
Twenty-nine years ago I sat where you sit, an intended physics major. Not too long after, I went to my fir t class. It was the humanities Core, and the teacher handed out a photocopied page with an excerpt from a speech.

Somewhere in the middle of the page was the following question: "Who has knowledge of that kind of excellence, that of a human being and a citizen?"

That question contains a bunch of questions. First, what properties make a person a *good* person? Second, what properties make a person a *good* member of their community? Third, are those different properties? And finall, fourth: Who knows the answer to those questions? "Who has knowledge of that kind of excellence, that of a human being and a citizen?" As much as I wanted to raise my hand and say "Me me me!"—yes, I was *that kid*—I was weighed down by the awareness of my own ignorance.

Those questions were Socrates's questions. The text was Plato's Apology, which presents Socrates's speech at the trial which ended in his being put to death by the city of Athens. Socrates did not persuade the jury to vote in his favor. But before he died, he did a lot of persuading.

Something people often fail to appreciate about Socrates is, yes, he was killed for doing philosophy, but before that happened, he spent a long Watch the video of Callard's talk, which received a standing ovation, at mag.uchicago.edu/ aims2022.



time doing philosophy and *not* getting killed. He would walk up to people—often the most powerful and influentia people in his society—and find a ay to ask them: Do you actually know what you are doing?

Hey Euthyphro, I know you're a priest, but do you actually know anything about what the gods want? Hey Laches and Nicias, I know you guys are generals, but can you explain courage? Hey Alcibiades, I know you want to rule the world, but are you sure you wouldn't be better off ensl ved to someone wiser than yourself? Hey Gorgias, I know you're supposed to be a professional orator, but are you even able to tell me what oratory is? Or what, cat got your tongue, Gorgias? Are you unable to talk about talking?

It goes on and on like this, dialogue after dialogue. Sometimes it's hard to avoid the impression that Socrates was trolling Athens. He calls himself a gadfly; he gets called a tinging fish. I 's tempting to compare him to an animal because there never was and never has been another human quite like him.

He was an incredibly persuasive person—so persuasive that many

Athenians let him take a battle-ax to their lives. The result was more questions than answers. The result was the entire discipline of philosophy.

I said I was an intended physics major, but that intention didn't outlast my freshman year. Before too long, my heart belonged to Socrates. Somehow I ended up inheriting Socrates's questions, especially the one about "that kind of excellence, that of a human being and a citizen." I'll try to hand them down to you, in my humanities Core class, along with Aristotle's and Sophocles's and Hume's and Descartes's and Shakespeare's questions.

I'll be competing with your physics teachers and your history teachers and your language teachers. Oh, did you think we weren't competing over you? Every teacher, in her heart of hearts, loves her subject the most, and wants you to love it as much as she does. It's a healthy competition. It brings out the best in us.

I want you to know that the big ideas—the really big ones—are out there. It's your job to find them. And e, your teachers, are here to help.

Welcome to the University of Chicago.



The Silver Spray in its heyday docks in Harbor Point, Michigan, around the turn of the century.

n a clear, calm day near 49th Street Beach, you might spy what looks like an angular rock just breaking Lake Michigan's surface about 600 feet from shore. That's the iron boiler of the Silver Spray, a double-decker wooden steamship that sank more than a hundred years ago—its sparse wreckage (mostly the boiler and propeller) a popular swim and dive spot for Chicagoans in the know. Of the estimated 6,000 shipwrecks that litter the Great Lakes, this unassuming iron debris is the city's closest.

The Silver Spray, née Bloomer Girl, was built in 1894 and serviced Milwaukee before moving its home port to Chicago. On July 15, 1914, the 109-foot excursion vessel set out to pick up 200 University of Chicago students for a tour of the Gary,

Indiana, steel mills. On its approach to dock, the ship ran aground on Morgan Shoal, a kind of rocky outcrop rarely found in Lake Michigan (as the lakebed is mostly sand and mud).

The captain and six crew members were on board: an Irish stew was stewing. The captain instructed his crew to "man the lifeboats" and strike for shore but said he would stay with the ship. "There was a note of hunger in his voice," reported the Chicago Examiner the day after the grounding. "Not a man moved save the cook, who stirred some spice into the stew." But someone had to notify the students that there would be no tour that day, so one of the ship's owners and a rower abandoned ship.

News spread that the *Silver Spray* was sinking, but the ship was merely stranded; Morgan

Shoal is under about 20 feet of water at its deepest. For the time being, the salivating sailors were in no danger. An aviator who led dirigible balloon tours from nearby White City Amusement Park fl w a load of passengers over the ship, offering to throw down a rope. Without a bucket to ride up, the crew declined but offered a bit of stew if the tourists wanted to come down. The blimp continued its tour of the South Side.

Later the Silver Spray's twin ship, the Mineral City, arrived, attempting and failing to tow it off the shoal. An unusual og cloaked the lake as the stuck ship slipped into the fir t of several nights, crewed and stranded just offsho e.

THE WRECK of the Silver Spray began not on that mid-July day but at least 420 million years earlier, during the Silurian period of the Paleozoic era, when Illinois was under a shallow tropical ocean near the equator. Morgan Shoal was once a coral reef.

According to a Field Museum survey, the 32-acre shoal is made of Silurian dolomite, a type of rock containing the calcium carbonate of ancient corals, sponges, and seashells. "It's probably very similar to the limestone blocks that rim Promontory Point." says geophysical sciences assistant professor Clara Blättler, who studies dolomite from all over the world, including samples more than two billion years old. Limestone is calcium carbonate. while dolomite (also called dolostone, which was named Illinois's state rock this past summer) is calcium magnesium carbonate, explains Blättler.

The fossil-rich bedrock of northeastern Illinois is dolomite, which was covered by clay and silt carried from glaciers during the last ice age 20,000 years ago. The ice melted into Lake Michigan between 14,000 and 12,000 years ago. But in a few places, the bedrock was exposed, like Morgan Shoal and Stony Island, a rocky elevation located around Stony Island Avenue and East 92nd Street—the site of a former nineteenth-century dolomite quarry.

Today the shoal's crevices, shallow waters, and shipwrecked remains offer a complex habitat that supports a diverse ecosystem, including insects, mollusks, crustaceans, and at least 15 species of fish. And bo ts continue to run aground there.

AFTER THREE DAYS, the captain and crew finally ag eed to be ferried back early in the afternoon by "life savers" from the Jackson Park Station—part of the United States Life-Saving Service, established in 1871 to rescue shipwrecked sailors. (In 1915, the service became the US Coast Guard.) Soon after 4 p.m. on July 18, 1914, the Silver Spray finally sank. Shortly af er running aground, 14 tons of coal had been removed from the boat, lightening its load but making the ship more vulnerable to Lake Michigan's whims. The waves took their toll, dashing the boat to pieces against the rocky shoal.

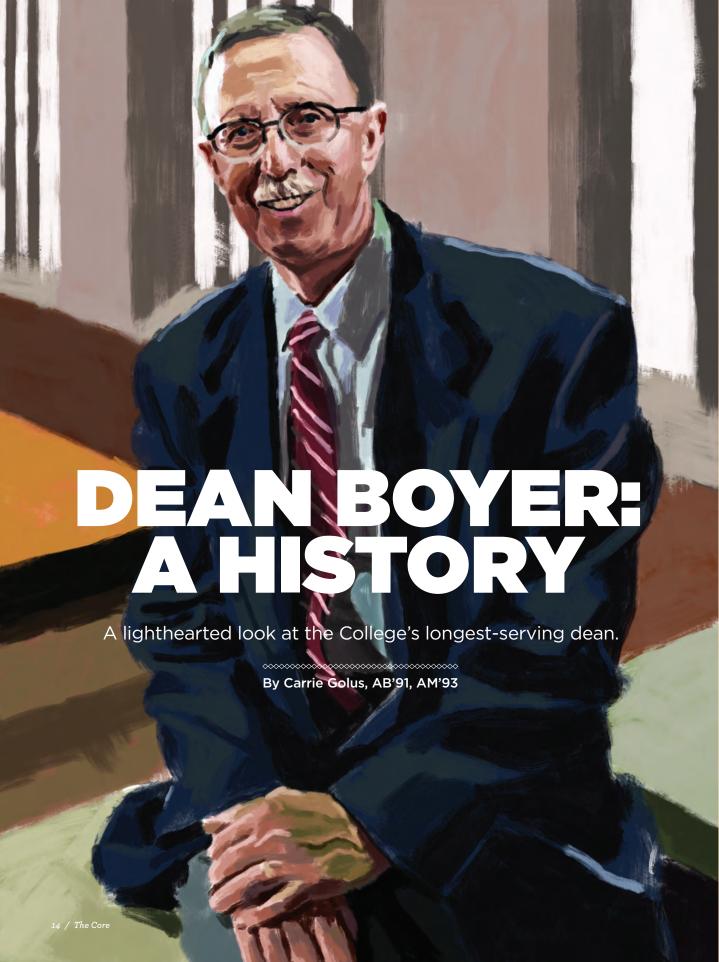
"With greedy eyes and twitching fingers the 'buzza ds of the beach' gathered from far and near to wait the wreckage," reported the *Chicago Examiner*. Wreck-revelers collected the timbers washing ashore and built bonfi es on the beach, dispatching the *Silver Spray* one last time in a piecemeal pyre.

-Maureen Searcy

Dolomite is a very unusual rock, says Clara Blättler, an assistant professor in geophysical sciences. It's very common in the distant geological record, she says, but much less so in the past 100 million years, give or take. It's a long-running geological mystery called *the dolomite problem*: "Why we see it in all these ancient deposits," says Blättler, "and why it's not very abundant in analogous environments today."

Dolomite likely begins as limestone that chemically reacts with some source of magnesium, but the process isn't well understood. "This is a question geologists have been asking for decades," says Blättler. Maybe it happens gradually over time; maybe water flowing through it accelerates the process. But why does it matter?

Carbonate rocks—limestones and dolomites—"are the ultimate place that CO2 goes after it comes out of volcanoes." Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere contributes to global warming, but eventually, over long geological cycles, it reacts with calcium and magnesium and forms these carbonate minerals. "We're trying to use those rocks to understand what was going on in the ancient carbon cycle," says Blättler, and how this natural process evolved over time and shaped changes in climates. The chemistry of dolomite formation is an important, yet still mysterious, part of that story.—Maureen Searcy



n 1992: Bill Clinton was elected president. The Chicago Bulls, led by Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen, won their second NBA championship. CDs outsold cassette tapes for the first time. And **John W. Boyer**, AM'69, PhD'75, the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor of History, was appointed dean of the College.

Boyer has transformed the College in his unprecedented six terms. During his tenure, the College updated the Core curriculum, more than doubled enrollment, established the Odyssey Scholarship Program, developed UChicago's unique Civilization Abroad programs, and more.

Beginning next academic year, Boyer will serve as senior adviser to President **Paul Alivisatos**, AB'81, focusing on international development, global education, public discourse, academic freedom, and the history of higher

education. He will continue to teach in the College, including in the popular European civilization in Vienna program.

In 2007—halfway through his 31-year tenure—Boyer founded the *Core*, the College's alumni magazine. Over the years Boyer has graciously agreed to be interviewed for a number of lighthearted articles: about his bicycle, his errorridden Wikipedia page, his marionette of the Emperor Franz Joseph I, his thoughts on Sturm und Drang, and career lessons we might take from the Habsburgs. Read (or reread) on.





Left: Boyer leads a South Side history tour every year. Right: A 2018 Admissions video featured a Lego version of the dean riding around campus.

SEEN & HEARD: DEAN BOYER

ne of the sights most familiar to denizens of the quads is Dean John W.
Boyer riding his bicycle.
Late last fall, Boyer retired his 12-year-old model, replacing it with a new green-and-black 26-inch Schwinn (pictured opposite page). The Core caught up with him and asked a few questions about his life on wheels.

Are there any weather conditions you won't ride your bike in?

Packed ice. But if you ride behind CTA buses, it's OK. Wherever CTA buses can go, bicycles can go.

How long does it take to get to work?

From my front door to my desk, about four minutes. Five if it's a particularly windy day.

Do you have a car?

I do. It has very few miles on it. I

mainly drive it to the Toyota dealer to have it serviced.

What do you think of cyclists who ride on the sidewalk?

It's a very bad habit. There are some occasions—street repairs and so forth—when it's unavoidable.

Ever been in a crash?

I've been knocked down twice. Both times, happily, there was no damage to me. There was damage to the bike.

Why don't you wear a helmet?

I wear it for longer trips, when I go into the city. It's too awkward and cumbersome for the four-minute trip to campus.

What do you think about novelty bikes, such as fixed-gear bikes with no brakes?

Whoever rides such a bike, I hope they have a good orthopedist.

Photography by Dan Dry; photography by Avi Schwab, SB'03

FACT-CHECKING WIKIPEDIA

In 2011 we noticed that Boyer's Wikipedia entry contained some interesting "alternative facts," which have since been removed.—Ed.

Wikipedia: "Boyer holds a Chicago record of dubious distinction: the most times almost run over by College students on his tiny bicycle, with 1,378 near misses."



Boyer: "I've never been hit by a car, luckily. It could happen. I do have to say, my bicycle is not tiny. It's actually a tall man's bike. I'm 6'4". Most bikes are sized for people who are shorter."



Wikipedia: Dean of the College; Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor of History; Corresponding Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences



Wikipedia: Born October 17, 1946, in Chicago



Wikipedia: "In 2009 John Boyer participated in the World Beard and Moustache Championships. His participation ... made 2009 one of the Championship's most successful seasons."



Boyer: "The funny thing about having any kind of moustache or beard is it grows on you—in two ways. I mean, it grows on you. It also becomes part of your identity. I've had it for 40 years. I don't think I would recognize the person in the mirror without it."



PUPPET GOVERNMENT

The longest-serving Dean of the College reflects on the longest-serving Habsburg Emperor.



Boyer's marionette of his favorite Habsburg, the Emperor Franz Joseph I.

What is one mistake Franz Joseph made that you would never make?

He was the emperor who declared war on Serbia, which led to World War I, which led to the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. In a way, he bears responsibility for the collapse of an empire that his family had ruled for 600 years.

I would hope that my deanship does not in any way contribute to the decline and fall of the University of Chicago—although some skeptics in the 1990s, as we began to plan the increase of the size of the College, were accusing me of just that.

What did he do right?

The Empire was a multinational empire held together by an extremely effective and relatively honest civil service and local government. It was a very decentralized empire, and it had to be, because of the multiple ethnic groups that constituted it.

The College is similar. To make it work, you need coherent, responsible local government—really effective department chairs, Collegiate masters, chairs of Core courses. Much of the heroic day-to-day work is done by these local leaders. Whatever larger plans one has about moving the institution in one direction or another, you have to have

their buy-in and support. Otherwise your reforms are likely to be short-lived, perhaps even disastrous.

I could give you more particularistic examples, but only the students who have taken my graduate-level course on the Habsburg Empire would understand.

I'm told that the Emperor sometimes makes an appearance during dinner parties.

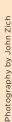
Yes. When I have students over for dinner, it's usually a buffet. We have a large apartment, but we can't seat everybody.

Now, if you were invited to dine at the Hofburg or the Schönbrunn, you were seated at large formal tables, and the emperor was always served first. He was a light, quick eater, but the protocol was that when the emperor put down his fork, everybody did. Many of the guests, especially those seated at the end of the table, got nothing to eat. People knew that, so they would make reservations at a restaurant for later in the evening.

I always tell the students, in contrast, there's no protocol, and there's seconds for anyone who wants them, so have at it. You don't have to go to a restaurant after coming to my house.

How did the Emperor come into your life?

He was given to me by a graduate student who bought him at a flea market in Vienna 20 years ago. He's served me well. He probably needs to be drycleaned, but it would destroy his uniform. He's aged with me and my deanship. He's become my pal. I admire him and he's still going strong, so I am too.





ast week John W. Boyer, AM'69, PhD'75, dean of the College, completed a three-event book tour without going north of 57th Street.

On Wednesday he spoke at the Divinity School's community lunch in Swift Hall. On Friday he did back-toback readings at the Seminary Co-op; the store had to schedule a second reading to meet demand.

The page-turner in question is The University of Chicago: A History (University of Chicago Press, 2015). The book builds on the 17 monographs he's published since 1996.

At the Div School lecture, Boyer spoke about the history behind his history. Here are five things that might surprise you.

1. There are notable similarities between Boyer and Richard Rosengarten, AM'88, PhD'94.

Rosengarten, the interim dean of the Divinity School, introduced Boyer at the community lunch. Boyer and Rosengarten are the only two deans who are University alumni. They are the tallest deans. And they both like to ride their bicycles to and from campus. "He's a little faster than I am," Rosengarten admitted.

2. Thucydides and World War II helped inspire the book.

When Boyer was a graduate student, one of his mentors was Leonard Krieger, a distinguished scholar of German history and the first University Professor at UChicago.

During World War II Krieger served in the research and analysis branch of the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to the CIA. His boss was William Langer, a historian on leave from Harvard.

After Pearl Harbor was bombed, Krieger and his colleagues went to talk to Langer in despair. Langer's advice, according to Boyer, was not to become disheartened: "You're historians. You've already read Thucydides."

What did that have to do with Germany's victories over Belgium and France? "The way wars start is often very different from the way wars end," Boyer said. In other

words, "Historians often have unique insight into the subject of human agency and contingent events. Outcomes are not predetermined. That may be helpful in guiding and making wiser choices."

So in the late 1990s, when the University was considering making controversial changes to the size of the College, "I remembered this story about Langer and Krieger and Thucydides," Boyer said. He started digging through the University's archives "instead of working on the history [Austria, 1867–1985] that Oxford was expecting." The result was his first monograph on the historical role of the College in the University—financially, demographically, and culturally.

3. Boyer never intended to write a University history.

He didn't even intend to write a second monograph. But the following year brought a fresh controversy over the Core curriculum. Older faculty loved the Core; younger faculty wanted to reduce its size significantly. At some universities they go to war over the football coach, Boyer noted dryly. "At this institution, we go to war over curricula."

So he went back into the archives. He discovered there had been seven or eight different Cores since it was first invented in the 1930s. Another monograph was born. And then, "People began to say, 'That's nice. What's the next one going to be on?"

4. In Boyer's view, the most fascinating chapter is the one on Robert Maynard Hutchins.

"It had to be Hutchins. He's such a totemic figure. Extraordinarily loved by his supporters, extraordinarily disliked by his detractors."

5. Boyer, a five-term College dean, doesn't mind a little drama in his University politics.

"Sturm und Drang is good. It's good for the soul."



WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE HABSBURGS

Summarized by John W. Boyer, AM'69, PhD'75, dean of the College

f you're looking for career or life advice, the internet has no shortage: Make a big impact immediately. Take risks. Work harder than anyone else. Never eat lunch alone.

The internet has been around for less than 50 years. The Habsburg Empire, on the other hand, lasted 600. And its lessons are very different, says John W. Boyer, AM'69, PhD'75, dean of the College and the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor of History. Rather than encouraging you to be an "arriviste scrambler," Boyer says, here's what the Habsburgs might suggest.

Be loyal to your friends and family.

When the Holy Roman emperor Francis II (1768–1835) was told that a certain courtier was a patriot, he said, "Yes, but is he a patriot for me?" To the Habsburgs, loyalty was paramount. "They had a whole system of honors, carefully crafted to reward their friends," says Boyer, "and—by the

absence of rewards—to punish their enemies."

It's not all about you.

"The people who served the emperor and the empire were working, in their mind, on behalf of a larger cause," says Boyer. "The Habsburg Empire was a world of honor, of loyalty, of service." Find something more significant than worldly success to care about—social change, religion, friendship—to give your life meaning.

Don't suck up to superiors.

"There was a sense in the imperial bureaucracy that you should do your job, rather than save your job," says Boyer. When you start a new job, you might think the best way to advance is to curry favor and always say yes, even if you should say no. "But that's not how an institution functions well."

If you find a job you like, keep it.

Franz Joseph (1830–1916) became emperor at age 18 and served until he died. "The longer he did the job, the better he got at it," says Boyer, and his constant presence brought stability to the empire. Similarly, "you don't have to think of your career as a bricolage of little way stations. If you like your job and you're good at it, why not stick around for a while?"

But don't make impetuous decisions.

Although Franz Joseph managed his empire "rather well," says Boyer, "at the end he made the verv unfortunate decision to start World War I." The emperor knew that Russia, France, Germany, and other countries would be drawn in. But he was furious about the assassination of his successor, archduke Franz Ferdinand, "whom he didn't like anyway," says Boyer. "Why avenge someone vou don't even like?"

World War I destroyed the Habsburg Empire and set the stage for World War II. "Without getting into counterfactualism," says Boyer, "it would have been better to have taken a little more time and not allowed emotion to govern his decision."



mick jagger CAMMEL and ROEG'S PERFORMANCE

Sat. Jan. 29 Cobb \$1 DocFilms 7:15 & 9:30

ONCE UPON A TIME AT DOC

Doc Films turns 90. An alum hits middle age (and then some). The shared memories are timeless.

By Sean Carr, AB'90

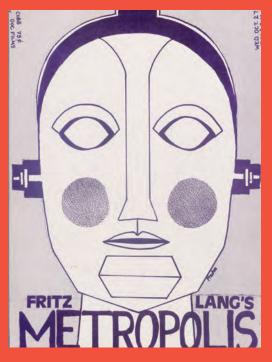
hat was your first movie at Doc? I can't remember mine. It would be great to say I dove right into the international and auteurist fare that has been the Documentary Film Group's signature for 90 years. The offerings during my first quarter in the College (Autumn 1985, if you want to check your old calendar) included "Wim Wenders and His Influences" on Wednesdays, alternating Thursdays of John Cassavetes and Robert Altman, and a Raoul Walsh night. But given my intense homesickness those first ten weeks in Hyde Park, I'm sure I stuck with the comfort cinema screened each weekend: The Breakfast Club and Star Trek III: The Search for Spock leap to mind. Watching them again, even if it was on 16mm in the echoing linoleum cavern of Cobb Hall's Quantrell Auditorium, I could imagine I was back in Minneapolis at the Skyway or the Uptown.

Fridays and Saturdays ruled in winter, as I curled up with Ghostbusters and Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome, but I also dipped my toes into weeknights via a Brian De Palma series, catching Obsession and Dressed to Kill (I'm 18 now, baby!). The big event of the quarter was the triple feature of Star Wars (no "Episode IV" nonsense for the Doc calendar), The Empire Strikes

Back, and Return of the Jedi. Half our house went, and all of us had seen the movies countless times; but watching them again with an older, wiser, nerdier cohort was worth the permanent spinal damage inflicted by seven hours in Quantrell's unyielding seats.

By Spring Quarter, I was often at Doc several times a week. A group of us went to see Werner Herzog's Nosferatu the Vampyre. A friend dragged me to Jules et Jim, which he'd fallen for in high school. Richard Rush's The Stunt Man, with Peter O'Toole's crane-riding director swooping in and out of the frame, was like nothing I'd ever seen. (It would be a few more years before I caught up with Federico Fellini's 8 1/2.)

Weekend movies that quarter screened under the series banner "Last Tango at Cobb," a nod to the Bertolucci movie on the schedule and the bittersweet fact that it was Doc's last full quarter on Cobb Hall's second floor. The following October, the Max Palevsky Cinema in Ida Noyes opened with a premiere of Jonathan Demme's Something Wild. The god of cool after working with Talking Heads on Stop Making Sense, Demme was at the early gala-ish screening with then-president Hanna Holborn Gray and Palevsky, PhB'48, SB'48 (who, after helping bankroll Intel, had produced several





Seen and not heard: Doc has screened plenty of silent films over the years, including this pair from 1927 Not surprisingly, Fritz Lang's visionary sci-fi epic has been shown 16 times compared to fi e Doc appearances by the lesserknown Seventh Heaven.

Hollywood Films starting in the 1970s). On a whim, some friends and I cut short a Tuesday night at the Reg to attend the later showing—not a bad way to stumble onto what remains my favorite movie. (Miscusi, Don Corleone.)

The 35mm projectors and improved sound in Palevsky made it the ideal place to revisit Aliens, Platoon, and Die Hard. (Where else is Alan Rickman's "Benefits of a classical education" line going to get the biggest response of the night?) The new home also reinvigorated the weekend wordplay on Doc's calendars, which could now run with "Gorillas in the Max," "Dances with Maxes," and "The Last Temptation of Max." But nothing can top the epic name for Winter 1990. Someone saw "Doc the Right Thing" just sitting there, but they went for the brass ring

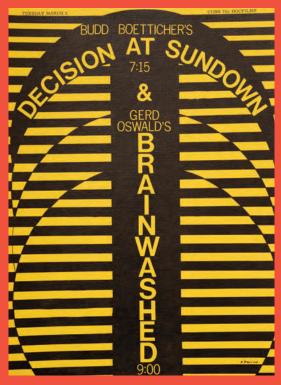
instead: "It's the Coldest Night of the Weekend, You Can Do Nothing, You Can Do Something, or You Can Do the Doc Thing!"

No weekend at Doc was complete, however, without the next-day rehashes at our house table in Burton-Judson. Teasing out the Kafka references in Scorsese's After Hours. How did a friend's strategic mistake of a first date at Blue Velvet go? (Better than expected: 35 years later, they're still married.) The stunned, sheepish, that's-not-my-Playboy averted glances the morning after many of us saw 9 1/2 Weeks. The first-year sitting down to breakfast with no eyebrows, as if answering the prompt *Tell us you just saw* Pink Floyd: The Wall without saying a word. Mercilessly razzing our RA when he told us, "You guys don't get St. Elmo's Fire because

Over the decades, how many post-Doc conversations at the Pub or the Med did cinemachanging directors like John **Cassavetes and** Michelangelo Antonioni inspire? Doc has also spotlighted the work of craftsmen like **Budd Boetticher** and Gerd Oswald, who were equally comfortable in movies and television.







you're not about to graduate and leave all this behind."

Today, much of my DVD and Bluray collection is a catalog of movies I first saw at Doc: Quadrophenia. Klute. Paris, Texas. My Beautiful Laundrette. Kurosawa's Ran. True Stories. Bill Duke's Deep Cover. Kieślowski's Three Colors trilogy. Way too much Jim Jarmusch and Mike Leigh. Call it mildly pretentious in a Eurocentric way if you want (you'll also find Animal House, plenty of Schwarzenegger, and a near-complete set of Tony Scott's work mixed in there); it's half-art, halfnostalgia for me.

I can't remember the first movie I saw at Doc. I do remember the last thing I saw there, because I wouldn't be in a movie theater again for more than two years. On February 22, 2020, I drove down to Hyde Park from the North Side to see Jane Campion's *An Angel at My Table*. I'd meant to see it for years, and Doc showing a nifty new print seemed the perfect opportunity.

Doc has survived the ongoing pandemic and the onslaught of streaming. (Who's going to say it's more fun to watch Dazed and Confused on a laptop in their dorm room than to sink into Aerosmith's "Sweet Emotion" and Matthew McConaughey's drawl with 300 fellow moviegoers?) All the other theaters I trekked to from Hvde Park back in the day—the Fine Arts on South Michigan Avenue; the United Artists in the Loop; the Esquire, Water Tower Place, McClurg Court, and Chestnut Station north of the river; the Biograph in Lincoln Park—are gone. The Doc abides. 🏶

Rerenstan Library Parsusp Professmal The Reg पंस्थ पास व social mission MAKING Coffee (My space occupied Intellect The Reg A new public art project, whole et UChicago and why at UChicago and why. Chicago Ilhomo By Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93 The backgi Sulptures Pursuit of academia for mur fa the love of it In-terstellar ntracted Workers Acres de la constante de la co Cooks, estadian, mechanics, Dedizative themsolve desk attendants, etc Curios want to runsue. Torlyo unpopular luntasm Free-form controversia ? researc's Intendisciplinarity Gatul

Photography by John Zic

n Monday mornings at 8
a.m., the Logan Center for
the Arts is almost entirely
deserted. But for the five
overscheduled student
interns working on the public art project

interns working on the public art project *Exemplary*, 8 a.m. Monday was the only free slot on all their schedules.

"Kinda hard core, right?" Laura
Steward, UChicago's curator of public art, observes. For this particular project, designed to celebrate an exemplary UChicagoan, it seems appropriate. The group meets in a classroom on the sixth floor. With its white tables, whiteboards, and wall of east-facing windows, the room is like a blank slate.

It's October 24, the interns' second meeting. Steward, who came up with the idea for *Exemplary* and is overseeing the yearlong project, is out of town. So the five paid interns—**Juan Cardenas**, **William Hu**, **Suttyn Simon**, **Xueqi Sun**, and **Miki Yang**, all second-years—have gathered without her. Their first task, focused on audience, is to finalize a survey to gather students' opinions.

"What are the qualities of a UChicagoan?" the questionnaire asks. "Please choose three to five." The options:

Intellectual Inquisitive Quirky Curious Diverse Passionate "Life of the Grind" Inspirational Worth imitating Lifelong scholarship Free speech Eloquent Maroon pride (against Northwestern/Harvard?) Where fun goes to "hype" Econ bro

("Econ bro," named in honor of the many business-economics majors at UChicago, is a drink sold at student-run café Ex Libris, Xueqi explains later.)

The survey includes a blank to write in a current professor "who embodies qualities of a UChicagoan," as well as objects that "remind you of a UChicagoan," such as coffee or a dollar milkshake.

There's also a list of 20 exemplary alumni and faculty, past and present—mostly usual suspects, with a few not-so-usual mixed in. Again, respondents are asked to choose three to five.

The alumni include danceranthropologist Katherine Dunham, PhB'36; composer **Philip Glass**, AB'56; baseball general manager **Kim Ng**, AB'90; astronomer Carl Sagan, AB'54, SB'55, SM'56, PhD'60; Vermont senator **Bernie Sanders**, AB'64; and writer Susan Sontag, AB'51.

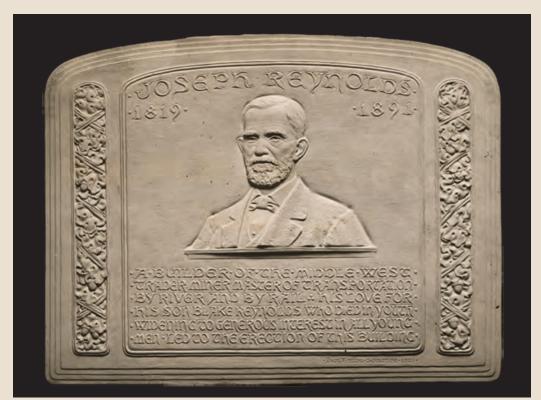
The faculty choices skew toward the famous and the past: philosopher Hannah Arendt, physicist Enrico Fermi, meteorologist Tetsuya ("Ted") Fujita, former president Barack Obama. Two of the options—economist Milton Friedman, AM'33, and former UChicago president Edward Levi, LAB'28, PhB'32, JD'35—fall into both categories. There's also a space to write someone in.

"Can we agree on one exemplary person?" Xueqi asks the group.

"No. I don't think we're lining up on it," William says.

"A long way to go," Xueqi says, laughing.

Winter 2023 / 27



Plaques in the Reynolds Club honor the building's donor, Joseph Reynolds (left) and University president Harry Pratt Judson (at right). A bust of Georgiana Simpson, AB 1911, AM 1920, PhD 1921, the fir t Black woman to earn a PhD in the United States, was installed opposite Judson in 2021.

EXEMPLARY is the College's first full-scale public art project, with a budget of \$40,000. Last academic year Steward ran a pilot project, 100 Views of Lake Michigan, also with a small team of interns. Inspired by Hiroshige's series of woodblock prints Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, the project collected crowdsourced photographs of the lake and displayed them around campus. (See the Summer/22 issue of the Core.)

The idea for Exemplary grew out of a public art seminar Steward taught in 2021. Steward, who came to UChicago in 2017, had discovered there was a bronze relief in the Reynolds Club honoring Senator Stephen A. Douglas, a slaveholder who donated land to the first University of Chicago (1856–86), which went bankrupt. The Class of 1901 donated the plaque as part of the new University's tenth anniversary celebration.

In a 2018 article in *The Journal* of *African-American History*, **Caine Jordan**, AM'17; **Guy Emerson Mount**, AM'18, PhD'18; and **Kai Perry Parker**, AM'16, PhD'19, explain how an elected representative from a free state could

also own a slave plantation. In 1847 Douglas, then a US representative, married Martha Martin, whose father owned a Mississippi plantation with 150 enslaved people. Martin's father died soon after, leaving the estate to the Douglases in his will—under her name. According to a contemporary description, "Mr. Douglas's slaves in the South were the subjects of inhuman and disgraceful treatment ... they were spoken of in the neighborhood where they are held as a disgrace to all slave-holders and the system they support."

In 2020 Steward, who oversees the art and other objects displayed in University buildings, worked with the president's office to have the Douglas plaque removed to the Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center. In her seminar, she assigned students to consider what might hang in its place: "In theory that leaves a blank space on the wall in Reynolds. What should we put there?"

She particularly liked one student's proposal: a bronze plaque with a



quotation from Sontag. Steward had anticipated that *Exemplary* might focus on Sontag or another graduate of the College.

But at the first meeting, she discovered the interns had little interest in alumni from the College specifically. Instead the discussion focused on the Core curriculum, UChicago people more generally, and people who were still alive—not Sontag or other exemplary alumni of the past. Dean John W. Boyer, AM'69, PhD'75, was suggested. Juan surprised the group with his idea to honor the workers at UChicago as a collective, rather than focus on one exemplary individual.

"They've already moved quite far from where I thought we were going," Steward said in an interview after the group's third meeting. "So that's a little heartbreaking for me, because I did have ideas of my own. But it's much more important to surface theirs." Unlike a typical curatorial internship, the students are driving the project with Steward's support, rather than the other way around.

EXEMPLARY INTERNS

If you were in charge, the
Core asked the interns—and
had an unlimited budget—
what would your dream
Exemplary project be?

JUAN CARDENAS

Hometown: Waukegan, IL
Majors: Art history, sociology
Dream project: A monument
commemorating campus workers,
who are often "unseen and
unappreciated."

WILLIAM HU

Hometown: Princeton, NJ
Major: Sociology
Dream project: A festival featuring
many exemplary people with
activities and food inspired by them.

SUTTYN SIMON

Hometown: Hollywood, FL
Majors: Art history, political science
Dream project: "The best part of this
project is it incorporates all of our
voices. I can't really fathom one that
doesn't include all of us."

XUEQI SUN

Hometown: Beijing

Major: Fundamentals: Issues and Texts Dream project: More communal spaces on campus for "the collision of ideas to happen."

MIKI YANG

Hometown: Chengdu, China Majors: Art history, economics Dream project: More women's portraits on the walls of Hutchinson Commons.



Five votes for the Regenstein Library. But how you do make a monument for something that "is already a big fat monument to itself"?

BY THE NOVEMBER 7 MEETING.

several of the students have interviewed various department and program chairs to get their thoughts on what exemplary at UChicago might mean. William talked with Andreas Glaeser in sociology, Suttyn with Peter Littlewood in physics, and Xueqi with Malynne Sternstein, AB'87, AM'90, PhD'96, in Fundamentals: Issues and Texts. "I didn't even have to ask her questions," Xueqi says. "She just started pulling up all her memories."

In Sternstein's view, the fundamentals program "is the real UChicago," Xueqi tells the group. "UChicago people are constantly asking questions. They are always curious about the world." And while the College has grown since Sternstein was an undergrad, "that is something that hasn't changed since the 1980s."

The discussion circles back to a topic picked over in previous meetings: whether today's College students have the luxury of pursuing learning for its own sake, or if there's too much pressure to lay the groundwork for a career. And if so, should the project respond to that?

Along the way, there are numerous digressions into topics inspired by Xueqi's interview with Sternstein: the Lascivious Costume Ball, Botany Pond (unavailable as a project site, Steward notes, since it's closed for renovation), the "secret pathway" that allows you to walk between Harper and Cobb without going outside. Steward wonders if the project is becoming too driven by nostalgia: is it backward-looking to focus on the University's past, rather than look to its future?

"I think it's important to limit the scope," William says. "Right now the project feels very discombobulated."

"It's at its maximum aperture,"

Steward agrees.

"We started with the idea to showcase a person," William says. "I think it'd be beneficial to figure out the function of the project itself."

"Can we do that in 30 minutes?"

Juan wonders.

"Unfortunately, I have one more thing," Suttyn says: the University itself has not always been entirely exemplary. "Professor Littlewood talked about the concept, specifically in the physics department, of original nuclear sin. He said everyone in the physics department always keeps this in mind."

Meanwhile, Juan has been perusing the student survey results on his laptop. In the space for write-in candidates, "Someone put Miki's name," he says.

"As an exemplary person?" Steward asks. "That's awesome."

"Awww," Suttyn says.

"I think it's from Patrick," Xueqi says.

"He's my friend," says Miki, "so

disregard that answer."

"Okay," Steward says, "the date is November 7." With just over four weeks left in Autumn Quarter—the quarter devoted to researching and planning the project—Steward proposes a straw poll to try to find something everyone can agree on, "be it the Reg or Bernie Sanders," she says. "Does anyone have any paper?" Two of the five students do. They share it around. "Write down five things—people, places, objects." There's the sound of paper tearing.

"Do these ideas have to be realizable?" Suttyn asks. "Or can it be a

little more conceptual?"

"At some point it will have a physical form in the world," says Steward. "If we can't come up with the right form for it, then we'll have to leave it aside."

Steward puts on some music for the students to think to. The students struggle to distill their wide-ranging ideas down to five concrete suggestions: "I need two more," Juan says when Steward asks if anyone is done.

"I need one," says Miki.

Finally the votes are in. Steward spreads the scraps of paper out on the table, then shuffles them, searching for patterns. "I'm confused," she says. "This is a mess." The students laugh.

"Can I see?" Miki asks.

"Hold on," Steward says, still shuffling.
"This is an election," Juan says. "A
democratic process." Coincidentally, the
music Steward is playing ("Cornfield
Chase," from the 2014 Interstellar
soundtrack, at Miki's request) surges
to an emotional climax, for an oddly
movie-trailer-like effect: "Do we value
democracy at UChicago?"

"We have five for the Reg," Steward says. The students burst into cheers

and applause.

"We have three people," she continues. "**Steve Levitt** [the William B. Ogden Distinguished Service Professor in Economics], Bernie Sanders, and

Tetsuya Fujita."

"We have," she says, looking over the other scraps, "the Core, intellectual pursuit, intellectual curiosity, pursuit of academia for the love of it, pursuing professional life with a social mission." Other suggestions are harder to categorize: Sculpture or statue. Contracted workers. Coffee. The background music for *Interstellar*.

"So this is your job for this week,"
Steward says. "How would you make a
temporary monument to the Reg? It's a
hard problem, because the Reg is already

a big fat monument to itself."

"I hate going to the Reg," Juan observes.

"What?" says Steward.

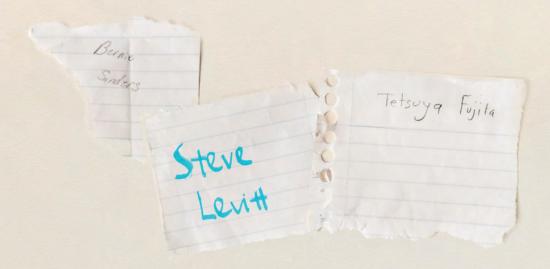
"Me too," say Suttyn and William, almost in unison.

It's the Brutalist architecture, Suttyn explains: "There's a whole beautiful campus, and then you're walking into this giant concrete monolith."

"That is the most beautiful building on campus, by far," Steward states firmly.

"The Reg."

"Yeah?" Suttyn says. The students, despite their unanimous vote, look unconvinced.



Out of 25 votes, just three were for people: Bernie Sanders, AB'64; Steve Levitt (current faculty); and Tetsuya Fujita (former faculty).

ON THE MONDAY after Thanksgiving, only three students—Miki, Suttyn, and William—are at the regular 8 a.m. meeting. Juan and Xueqi are out sick.

The project has circled back to exemplary people. Hoping to get some consensus, William sent out a poll over the break. The results: Susan Sontag and Carl Sagan are in the lead, with four votes each. Ted Fujita, Enrico Fermi, Philip Glass, and John Dewey each received two.

"What happened to Katherine Dunham?" says Steward.

Suttyn, a former professional ballet dancer and Dunham's biggest advocate, forgot to add her to the ballot. "I'm still going to plug Katherine Dunham if you guys want to look her up," she says. Both William and Miki seem open to the idea.

"If it were Sontag, Dunham, Sagan, Fujita, and one more ... " Steward says thoughtfully. "Five is an arbitrary number, but a good number. And we still have the Reg, which you were interested in, and also the workers." But those are difficult questions. No one has any immediate suggestions for how to integrate a building, or an acknowledgment of UChicago's workers as a group, into a project focused on elevating individuals for their achievements.

The idea of doing a project on Sontag "has been kicking around in my brain for a while," Steward says, "so that's probably why it's more developed." She suggests sharing excerpts from Sontag's writings—perhaps by reading them aloud, or by displaying her words.

The discussion shifts to potential spaces. "Reynolds is a good space to work in because it's controlled by the College," Steward says, and in addition, "there are already plaques honoring UChicagoans there. To insert her into that space would be cool."

A sound installation somewhere on campus is another possibility. "I've done an installation in Cobb Gate before. It's a good place to do sound, because there's power," she says. "Another good spot is Wieboldt passage. We could put speakers and have 24/7 Against Interpretation"—Sontag's 1966 essay collection.

Brilliant, almost blinding light is streaming in from the east today, but the energy in the room is atypically low. Even with the return to Steward's original conception of the project, there's still so much to choose and decide—and finals are looming.

"It's 9:30," Steward says. "I think we should move on this plan." She proposes a quick trip to the Reynolds Club, to imagine how a Sontag installation might fit in.

It's a picture-perfect late fall day. Steward pauses in the arch between Classics and Wieboldt. Would it work for an installation on Exemplary finali ts, left to right: Susan Sontag, AB'51; Carl Sagan, AB'54, SB'55, SM'56, PhD'60; Katherine Dunham, PhB'36.







Sagan—perhaps a video installation of his television series *Cosmos*? It's a strange space: beautiful, but somewhere that people pass quickly through, without lingering.

In the Reynolds Club, the group walks through a similarly liminal area outside Mandel Hall. "This is such an empty space," Miki says. In fact the walls are crowded with plaques that are mostly ignored by passersby. There's a stone tablet for Martin Antoine Ryerson, acknowledging his 30 years as president of the board of trustees. A bronze tablet to Harry Pratt Judson, with a bas relief of him in profile, "to commemorate his eminent services." A large bronze plague memorializing steamboat entrepreneur Joseph "Diamond Jo" Reynolds, for whom the Revnolds Club is named.

Until recently, the Stephen Douglas plaque was among them.

Steward leads the group into Hutchinson Commons. In the golden autumnal light, the dining room looks about as glorious as it is possible to look. The sun streaming through the southern windows makes rectangular patches on the northern wall, overlapping the portraits.

"A lot of white men," Miki says.
"A lot of white men," Steward says.
On the southern wall, a portrait of
Marion Talbot, dean of women in the
early University, hangs above the table

closest to the door. Steward draws an

imaginary square on the wood-paneled wall underneath it. "What if there were a flat screen here?" she says.

"At lunch and dinner, it would be too loud," Miki says. At the next table over, a man sitting by himself is speaking loudly in Spanish, as if to underscore her point.

Steward's other suggestion is to display Sontag quotations on vinyl banners on the walls or tables. "I'll have to reach out to the provost to see if we can work in here," she says. "Should all the projects be in this room?"

"Sontag and Dunham would work in here," Suttyn says. "I don't know how much Sagan would."

The students look with fresh eyes at the familiar hall. Every surface is dense with decoration: wood paneling, portraits, leaded windows, wooden beams, chandeliers, patterned carpet. Nothing is blank enough to lend itself to an appreciation of outer space. "I do like Sagan in Wieboldt," Suttyn says.

It's nearly ten o'clock. Steward reviews everyone's assignments for the coming week.

"How do you feel?" she asks the group. Everyone is nodding—they're still a little underpowered, but they seem optimistic. After weeks of discussions, digressions, and frustrating dead ends, the project is finally beginning to take shape.

Read part two of "Making an Example" in the Summer/23 *Core*.

Photography by Emily Hawkes, © 2022 Insight Editions

LOOKS TASTY!!

hen **Hadley Sui**, AB'15, arrived in Japan in 2010, she had studied Japanese for one semester. She knew the hiragana and katakana alphabets, and that was about it.

Two weeks later she started classes at a Japanese high school. Luckily Sui, a Rotary Club exchange student, had already graduated from high school in Urbana, Illinois, "so the pressure was off," she says. Her strongest subject was gym, but even that was demanding: the students were training to run a half marathon.

During her year abroad, Sui fell in love with Japan, "where I feel most inspired," she writes in her debut cookbook, *Oishisou!! The Ultimate Anime Dessert Cookbook* (Insight Editions, 2022). She returned to Japan in 2013 as a junior at UChicago, spending a

year at Doshisha University in Kyoto. In a class on Japanese artisans, Sui visited workshops that had existed for generations, and for her final p oject wrote about *wagashi*, Japanese sweets eaten during tea ceremonies.

Wagashi "are usually no more than a few bites," she says. "The ephemeral nature pulled me in. So much work and effort put into preparing these beautiful things that are destroyed in two seconds." Back in Chicago, she won a Festival of the Arts grant, which she used to create wagashi inspired by Botany Pond, the Reynolds Club seal, and the cherry blossom trees behind the Museum of Science and Industry.

An international studies major, Sui held internships at the Japanese consulate and the Japan America Society of Chicago. But by the time she graduated, she was feeling burned out on academics and had realized "my future did not lie in diplomacy," she says. Instead she enrolled at the French Pastry School in downtown Chicago.

Sui is now a freelance food stylist, recipe developer, and owner of Hadley Go Lucky, a "bespoke pastry company" based in Brooklyn, New York. Sui did all the food styling for *Oishisou!!*—pronounced "OH-ee-sheso," which means "that looks tasty."

The 60-plus recipes are organized by the locations where you would buy or eat the pastries, Sui writes: matsuri (festivals), konbini (convenience stores), panya (bakeries), dagashiya (candy

stores), *ie ni* (at home), *issho ni* (to share). Each recipe lists examples of anime where you can see the pastry being consumed.

For example, *dorayaki* (shown here), which are "typically composed of two fluffy and mo t pancakes sandwiching red bean paste, chestnuts, or cream," Sui writes. They can be seen in *Shōwa Genroku Rakugo Shinjū*, *Nisekoi*, and *High School Fleet*. Sui's favorite anime focus on "slice-of-life high school experiences," she says, "so that's the genre I really focus on."

-Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

Read Sui's recipe for tie-dye dorayaki at mag.uchicago.edu/dorayaki.





A Whatcheeria skull in the Field Museum's collections, which include all Whatcheeria specimens unearthed thus far. Its fossils were discovered in a limestone quarry near What Cheer, Iowa.

UChicago creature

THE *T. REX* OF ITS TIME

Whatcheeria—a prehistoric superpredator that lived several hundred million years before SUE the *T. rex*—was a six-foot-long lake-dwelling creature. "In life, it would probably look like a big crocodile-shaped salamander, with a

narrow head and lots of teeth," says UChicago and Field Museum doctoral student **Ben Otoo**, SM'19, coauthor of a new study in *Communications Biology*. "If it really curled up, probably to an uncomfortable extent, it could fit in our bathtub, but neither you nor it would want it to be there."

Otoo is part of a team studying the primitive tetrapod (fourlimbed creature). Because the Field Museum has so many specimensabout 350—the team can study the animal at different life stages. Many modern reptiles and amphibians grow slowly and steadily from birth to death, but *Whatcheeria* was different. New research shows that it grew rapidly in youth and leveled off in adulthood, li e most mammals and birds. This surprising revelation can help researchers better understand how tetrapods—including humans—evolved.

-Maureen Searcy

Poem

ODE TO LOVE

from Sophocles's Antigone

Translated by Gabriela Garcia, Class of 2023

"Ερως ἀνίκατε μάχαν,
"Έρως, ὃς ἐν κτήμασι πίπτεις,
ὂς ἐν μαλακαῖς παρειαῖς
νεάνιδος ἐννυχεύεις,
φοιτᾶς δ' ὑπερπόντιος ἔν τ'
ἀγρονόμοις αὐλαῖς·
καί σ' οὔτ' ἀθανάτων φύξιμος οὐδεὶς
οὔθ' ἁμερίων σέ γ' ἀνθρώπων. ὁ δ' ἔχων μέμηνεν.

σὺ καὶ δικαίων ἀδίκους φρένας παρασπᾶς ἐπὶ λώβα, σὺ καὶ τόδε νεῖκος ἀνδρῶν ξύναιμον ἔχεις ταράξας· νικᾶ δ' ἐναργὴς βλεφάρων ἵμερος εὐλέκτρου νύμφας, τῶν μεγάλων πάρεδρος ἐν ἀρχαῖς θεσμῶν. ἄμαχος γὰρ ἐμ-παίζει θεὸς Ἀφροδίτα.



Eros, unbeatable in battle,
Eros, you who destroy possessions,
you who stand sentry by
young girls' gentle cheeks
and roam overseas to
pastoral courts:
nobody, neither immortals
nor mortals that live for but a day
can escape you:
he that has you is driven mad.

And you lead just minds
astray to injustice on top of ruin;
and you have stirred up
this strife between kinsmen;
and palpable longing in the eyes
of a happily-bedded bride
prevails: it is an accomplice of great laws,
for the unconquerable god
Aphrodite toys with her living pawns.

Read Garcia's translator's note at mag.uchicago.edu/antigone.

Sophocles, *Antigone* (London, New York: W. Heinemann, The Macmillan Co., 1912), Perseus Digital Library. https://scaife.perseus.org/reader/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0011.tlg002.perseus-grc2:781-800/(accessed December 6, 2022).

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Strange Planet

By Nathan W. Pyle



THE REYNOLDS CLUB FILMING OF CHAIN REACTION, 1996



If cinephilia is dead, then movies are dead too... no matter how many movies, even very good ones, go on being made. If cinema can be resurrected, it will only be through the birth of a new kind of cine-love.

—Susan Sontag, AB'51, "The Decay of Cinema" (1996)