



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO MAGAZINE



Either she was playing it coy, stalling me around, or she had no idea there was a man sitting at the other end of the room. It was hard to tell. I was so sure of her and I didn't have any evidence.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

COVER STORIES

BY LAURA DEMANSKI, AM'94

At one of the first professional conferences I attended for alumni magazine types, a designer from the alternate universe of consumer magazines gave a presentation on covers. It turned out to be a long, juicy show-and-tell of classic covers from the likes of the *National Lampoon*, *Esquire*, and *Texas Monthly*; problematic and lackluster covers from publications better left unnamed; and examples from our own world of university and college publications.

A great luxury of magazines like ours, the presenter said, is that they don't have to compete on crowded newsstands and thus live free from the tyranny of attention-grabbing cover lines—the print equivalent of clickbait.

This particular magazine declared itself free from that particular tyranny with its wholesale redesign in 2011. While many aspects of our book's look have been refreshed in the decade-plus since, the cover design is (for now) untouchable, a visual invitation into a publication that, frankly, spends its words a bit prodigally on the inside.

We like to find a cover image that asks a question. In the Fall/21 issue we spelled out that question in "On the Cover," page 2. Who was that golf club-toting Burton-Judson resident? Several readers wrote with their speculations and memories (read some in Letters, page 4). It wasn't until this note was well underway that an intrepid reader emailed with the answer. He had found it (gulp) ... in our own archives.

"I was recently perusing some of the archives of the *University of Chicago Magazine* for fun online—as one does," wrote **Jacob Reynolds**, AM'20, "and I stumbled across the picture." Indeed, the November/54 issue identifies the shadowed sportsman as the late Neil Weiner, EX'58.

We're grateful to Reynolds for providing Weiner's name, right there under our noses the whole time. And, since the pleasures to be found in *Magazine* back issues are many (visit campub.lib.uchicago.edu), I also like his implication that perusing them is par for the course.

This issue's cover comes with its own mysteries. Who is "the man sitting at the other end of the room"? Where did he get that Underwood typewriter? For clues, see "Interior Monologue," page 46.

Paper chase

The *Magazine* is not exempt from pandemic-related supply chain trouble, and with the previous issue our luck ran out: for many of you, Fall/21 arrived up to a month after we hoped it would. Paper, in particular, is in short supply (eagle-eyed readers may perceive a slight difference in what was used for this issue). Further delays may dog us through this year, but we'll do our best to keep the issues coming in a timely way. Thank you for your patience and for being our readers. ♦

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Above

Fanfare, in every sense: The inauguration of President **Paul Alivisatos**, AB'81, was accompanied by the joyful noise of strings, carillon, trumpets, and bagpipes. For more on the celebration, see "Opening Words," page 28.

On the Cover

Man of mystery: Richard Himmel, EX'42, lived a double life as an interior decorator and a writer of pulp fiction. Learn more about his two careers in "Interior Monologue," page 46. Illustration by Thomas Ehretsmann.

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One hundred years of global aid *By Susie Allen, AB'09*

A course tackles the history of efforts to do good abroad.

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Comic relief *By Susie Allen, AB'09*

With *Work in Progress*, **Abby McEnany**, AB'92, created an unconventional sitcom for anyone who feels different.

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Interior monologue *By Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93*

Decorator and pulp writer Richard Himmel, EX'42 (1920–2000), had a private eye for design.



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LETTERS

The *University of Chicago Magazine* welcomes letters about its contents or about the life of the University. Letters for publication must be signed and may be edited for space, clarity, and civility. To provide a range of views and voices, we encourage letter writers to limit themselves to 300 words or fewer. Write: **Editor, The University of Chicago Magazine, 5235 South Harper Court, Chicago, IL 60615.** Or email: uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.

Recovered memories

I was delighted to see the cover of the Fall/21 issue of the *University of Chicago Magazine*. I cannot help with your request to identify the student and date of the photo. It is evident that it is before 1956, when I arrived at Burton-Judson as a first-year student. I believe the picture is of the east (Burton) side of B-J. On the left is Mathews House (merged in 2010 with Linn House), where I lived for two years on the top (fourth) floor. I was in a two-room suite with two roommates. Our suite looked over the area to the east, occupied then by deserted, flimsy, temporary housing for the veterans who swarmed onto campus after World War II. A few months after we arrived, the land was cleared and construction was begun on the new Law School.



The picture shows the student entering the Burton gate. I do not remember that gate ever being open; perhaps earlier it was. We all entered the complex at the west (Judson) entrance, as I believe is the case today. At the end of the walkway in the photo is the entrance to the Burton dining hall. Examining the photos in the library archive suggests that when B-J was built in 1931 there was no direct entrance to the dining hall as there is in the picture and now; rather, one

I spent too many hours working at the station, neglecting my studies, as was easy to do in those days since nobody had to go to class.

entered the dining hall from the lounge area to the left. So I conclude the picture is from some years after 1931.

In the basement of the dining hall was the tiny studio of WUCB, the student radio station, broadcasting then only to the campus. I spent too many hours working at the station, neglecting my studies, as was easy to do in those days since nobody had to go to class. I became station manager and helped move the station to Mitchell Tower, where the call letters became WHPK and the station eventually broadcast broadly to the South Side.

John Schuerman, SB'60,

AM'63, PhD'70

**Professor Emeritus in the Crown
Family School of Social Work, Policy,
and Practice**

KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

I do not know who the student is walking into Burton-Judson Courts, but it brought back memories.

I lived in Burton-Judson Courts from the fall of 1963 until the spring of 1965 as an MBA student. I haven't been back since then, and I always wondered if Burton-Judson Courts was still there. It has probably been remodeled or rebuilt a couple of times since I was there.

Thanks for bringing back some memories for me!

John Szwest, MBA'65

CAMP HILL, PENNSYLVANIA

I have no idea who this is in the photo or when it was taken but can say that it could be any one of the hundreds of lost souls I met in 1964 as an entering freshman. I lived, if you can call it that, in Salisbury House in B-J for some of the oddest two years of my life. In retrospect it seemed to go on forever and was always somewhat of a madhouse. But I survived.

David Tepper, AB'69

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

We appreciate readers' efforts to identify the student in and date of our Fall/21 cover image. For the answer to the mystery, see this issue's Editor's Notes, "Cover Stories," on page 1.—Ed.



Pleased to oblige

Thanks much for the profile of the new president ("Magnifying Vision," Fall/21). Much appreciated.

George T. Karnezis, AM'66

PORTLAND, OREGON

Video revolution

Reading about the media archives of Chicago video pioneers ("History on Tape," Fall/21) reminded me of David Affelder, AB'72, who was among the first to recognize the possibilities of portable video at the University of Chicago. Affelder was a student govern-

From left: UChicago Photographic Archive, ap14-02463; Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library; photography by Rob Hart

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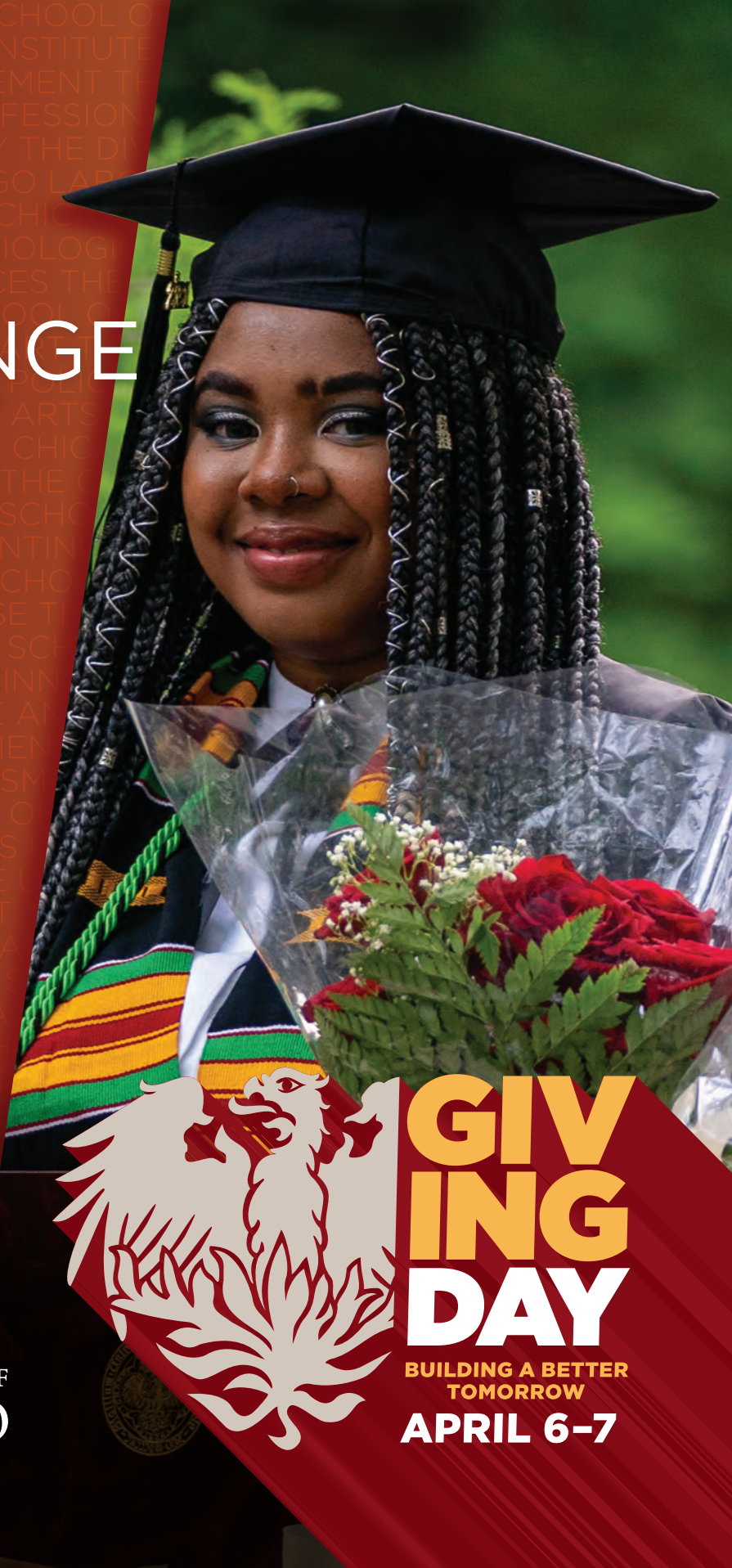
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GIVING DAY

**BUILDING A BETTER
TOMORROW**

APRIL 6-7



LETTERS

ment president with a wicked sense of humor, a leader (if leaders were allowed) of the Students for Violent Nonaction, who sometimes used student government funds to buy and distribute joints during campus events.

He established an office in Cobb Hall, I believe, where he found money to buy a couple of Sony Portapak systems that were lent out to students (including me) with even a half-baked idea about how they might be used. I created a project to videotape rehearsals for the musical *Oh, What a Lovely War!*

Affelder died at age 26 in 1977 on a wilderness expedition in Alaska, according to a couple of online sources.

Steve Mencher, AB'73
BALTIMORE



**He came, he saw,
he ate his food**

One of my strongest memories of going to school at the U of C was going to dinner at Valois four to five times a week for two years ("Feast Your Eyes," Alumni News, Fall/21). I had a good

**He'd generally stop
at my table and
say, "Johnny boy,
don't drink so many
of the Nehis, your
mom wouldn't
like that!"**

appetite after growing up on a small farm in the Sacramento Valley. I hadn't ventured far from home—the farm, the American River, and four years at the state college across the railroad tracks.

The food at Hutchinson Commons and International House couldn't nourish me like the "working man's dinner" at Valois. And to keep my equilibrium at school, I played basketball and squash at Stagg gym at about four o'clock most afternoons. On my way back to the dorm at 55th and Blackstone at about five, I'd circle around to 53rd and get fed like a working man—meat (usually nice tender roast beef au jus), potatoes, and a vegetable with plenty to drink.

I don't remember many students eating there at that time of day, but such a rich set of customers: Polish mothers with two or three kids, old men retirees, the tradesmen with their soiled clothes and dead-tired looks on their faces, and the talkative servers behind the glass-plated display of food. A lot of Polish was spoken, and we talked to one another at the square tables in the small dining space. The 60ish manager would take a break from serving and make the rounds of the 10 to 12 tables. He'd generally stop at my table and say, "Johnny boy, don't drink so many of the Nehis, your mom wouldn't like that!"

Didn't stop me since I'd lost three to five pounds on the courts that day. While drinking, I'd be thinking back to the basketball game, where sometimes Sihugo Green, the great guard-forward from Duquesne University then on Chicago's NBA team, the Chicago Packers, would be practicing at Stagg before the season started or during the season when the team had a day off. Joy at Stagg and in Valois's dining room for a country boy who came to the big town.

John M. Lewis, SM'63
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Love among the volumes

I loved the picture in the Fall/21 *Magazine* captioned "Where the Life of the Mind Goes for Company" (Alumni News), and indeed it brings back fond memories of "study dates" in 1965–66 with my then-girlfriend Leah Elizabeth Webb Schroeder, AM'68. I was able to attend Chicago thanks to a Woodrow Wil-

son Fellowship, as was Leah. But once we started studying together at the long tables in the great reading room, I suddenly discovered a hitherto-undiagnosed attention deficit disorder that made it impossible for me to sit still for longer than 10 minutes, while Leah could literally sit and study for hours on end.



Maybe Leah, a poli-sci student, simply found Hans Morgenthau more intimidating than I, a history student, found the kindly William McNeill, LAB'34, AB'38, AM'39. In large measure because of Leah's devotion and McNeill's patience, the two of them united to get me through my PhD in 1975, Leah taking time off from her Washington, DC, duties as chief of staff to a Louisiana congressman to type the dissertation chapters that McNeill quickly reviewed and returned.

I'm still periodically afflicted with an inability to sit still, but dear Leah stuck with me for 52 years of marriage until her untimely death from pancreatic cancer in 2019. And after a decidedly un-academic career in the CIA, which the *Magazine* profiled in 2004 under the overly dramatic title "Spy Guy," I found to my surprise that I had managed to concentrate long enough to earn a medallion from Georgetown University for 20 years of service as an adjunct professor in the School of Foreign Service. How about that?

Richard Schroeder, AM'65, PhD'75
WASHINGTON, DC

Stacks of memories

I had a library happy place, but the library was Regenstein ("Where the Life of the Mind Goes for Company,"

From left: Photography by Alma Limprecht, AB'98. Copyright 2022. *The Chicago Maroon*. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. UChicago Photographic Archive, apf4-01940, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.



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with

President Paul Alivisatos, AB'81



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Alumni News, Fall/21). My friend Sarah Kagan, AB'84, introduced me to the location in the stacks where the library kept bound copies of old issues of *Vogue* magazine. We would sit on the floor and pore over them, chatting away and comparing fashions through the years. I cherish the memory.

My memory of O-Week centers on what was for me a momentous occasion, the Aims of Education Address ("Rolling Admission," Alumni News, Fall/21). After having said goodbye to my parents outside of Rockefeller Chapel, as all incoming students were doing, and walking inside, I was all of a sudden aware of how much attending college was going to change my life. I settled in to listen to Joseph Cropsey, distinguished service professor emeritus of political science, speak, and something he said impressed itself on my brain: he stated that we should be skeptical but not cynical. I thought that this was a very important point he was making—and I still do.

Rosemary Caruk, AB'83
BERWYN, ILLINOIS



A gentle man and a scholar

I was saddened to read of the passing of Michael Murrin (Deaths, Fall/21), a wonderful scholar-teacher and a model of deep yet humble knowledge, clear critical thought, constant intellectual adventure, and gracefully demanding instruction. I was fortunate to take his intro to critical theory during my first quarter in the Committee on General Studies in the Humanities, and later to take his seminar at the Newberry Library on Renaissance allegorical epic.

Michael lectured from well-ordered notes on five-by-seven notecards, and as I recall, he would start each class meeting as if he were composing an essay, with a brief introduction in which he would say, "Today's discussion will go one of two ways" (or three, depending on the day). And inevitably, without my having any sense of manipulation or whiff of deliberate guidance, that was precisely how the discussion went. He knew his material so well; had read, thought, and prepared so thoroughly; and was so familiar with centuries of tradition of discussion and debate.

On the rare occasion when a student posed a question to which Michael had no ready answer, he never faked or flubbed.

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On the rare occasion when a student posed a question to which Michael had no ready answer, he never faked or flubbed. Rather, he would pause to consider, and then say with a small smile, “I will get back to you on that.” And he always did, starting the next class with a well-researched response to the student’s query, drawn, I’m sure, from sources in the immense and carefully curated collection of books in his office. I have no doubt that Michael regarded every such question as a delightful opportunity to enhance and expand his own understanding of the complex set of scholarly topics that he loved to explore, and to share his newfound insights with his students.

I recall Michael explaining his writing process to me in the following way: he would never commit pen to paper until he had done his research, both primary and secondary, and had spent a great deal of time thinking and constructing and reconstructing the edifice of ideas and words. Only then would he write, having already done the bulk of the drafting and revision in silent thought. What a remarkable, careful mind! What a giving and gracious teacher!

Seth Katz, AM’85, PhD’91
PEORIA, ILLINOIS

When I read about the death of Professor Michael Murrin in the Fall/21 *Magazine*, I was stunned. I felt a profound loss.

For 10 years, between 1968 and 1978, Michael Murrin was my professor, my adviser, my mentor, and my friend. He was seven years older than I, but he was clearly my elder—in knowledge, wisdom, and kindness. I was fortunate to have had him, along with William

**For 10 years,
between 1968
and 1978, Michael
Murrin was my
professor, my
adviser, my mentor,
and my friend.**

Ringler and David Bevington, guide me as a graduate student through the complexities and wonders of the English Renaissance.

During his half century of teaching at the U of C, I’m sure hundreds of Murrin’s graduate and undergraduate students, as well as his colleagues, had a similar appreciation of him.

Michael Murrin’s death has reminded me of the lasting impact the University of Chicago and its professors have had on me, professors who demonstrated an equal measure of brilliance and kindness.

John Spevak, AM’68, PhD’78
LOS BANOS, CALIFORNIA

Admirer from afar

This has happened thousands (or tens or hundreds of thousands) of times in the history of the University. (Genders do not matter; all combinations may be substituted for the nouns and pronouns used.)

Early in his first year at the University, a young man noticed a young woman. Well, much more than noticed her. He thought she was beautiful; he knew she was smart (a U of C undergrad); and he sensed she was kind. When he mentioned her name to others who knew her to varying degrees, they all agreed with his opinions of her. And he learned he was not the only young man who admired her.

Of course, he was busy with his studies, part-time work, friends, and social life with several wonderful Chicago women. Yet any day that he saw her—though they were few—was ipso facto a good day. But she and he shared no class, dining hall, activity, or friends; he could think of no way to approach her; and a rejection—however gentle—would have been devastating. She did not know his name, much less anything about him. So their lives never really met.

Still, to this day, when he remembers his years in Hyde Park, she often appears. Grateful for the good feelings she brought him, he always hoped she found much happiness, perhaps with a loving family, advanced education, a rewarding career, close friends, interesting travel, and a long, memorable

Early in his first year at the University, a young man noticed a young woman.

life. He checked each arrival of the *University of Chicago Magazine* for any mention of her. In the Summer/21 issue he was relieved not to find her name on the Deaths pages, so he went to the Alumni News.

I wish to thank Laurie Buehler, AB’73, for summarizing her post-Chicago life, class correspondent Lyn Ragan, AB’72 (Class of 1973), for including Laurie’s note, and the *University of Chicago Magazine* editors for publishing it.

Tom Grassey, AM’71, PhD’83
SAN DIEGO



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*This message was sent December 10, 2021,
to members of the University community.
To learn more, see “Grief and Resolve,” page 16.*

A MESSAGE ON SAFETY

BY PAUL ALIVISATOS, AB’81, PRESIDENT,
AND KA YEE C. LEE, PROVOST

We are writing to provide an update on the University’s ongoing work to improve public safety and help strengthen communities in areas on and around our campus and in Chicago more broadly. We have already announced a number of short- and longer-term initiatives to increase security (see “Grief and Resolve,” page 16), with input from our campus, the local community, and the city of Chicago, and we will continue to adopt additional measures in the coming months. We also know that law enforcement actions are not enough, and we must do more to support the social and economic health of the communities surrounding the University to address the root causes of violence.

Organizations and individuals throughout the South Side are leading economic development activities and innovative approaches with the specific goal of reducing and preventing violence. To date, the University has made extensive investments, in partnership with community members and leaders, in areas such as social service delivery, trauma care and recovery, nursery through 12th-grade education, workforce development, local leadership training, and small



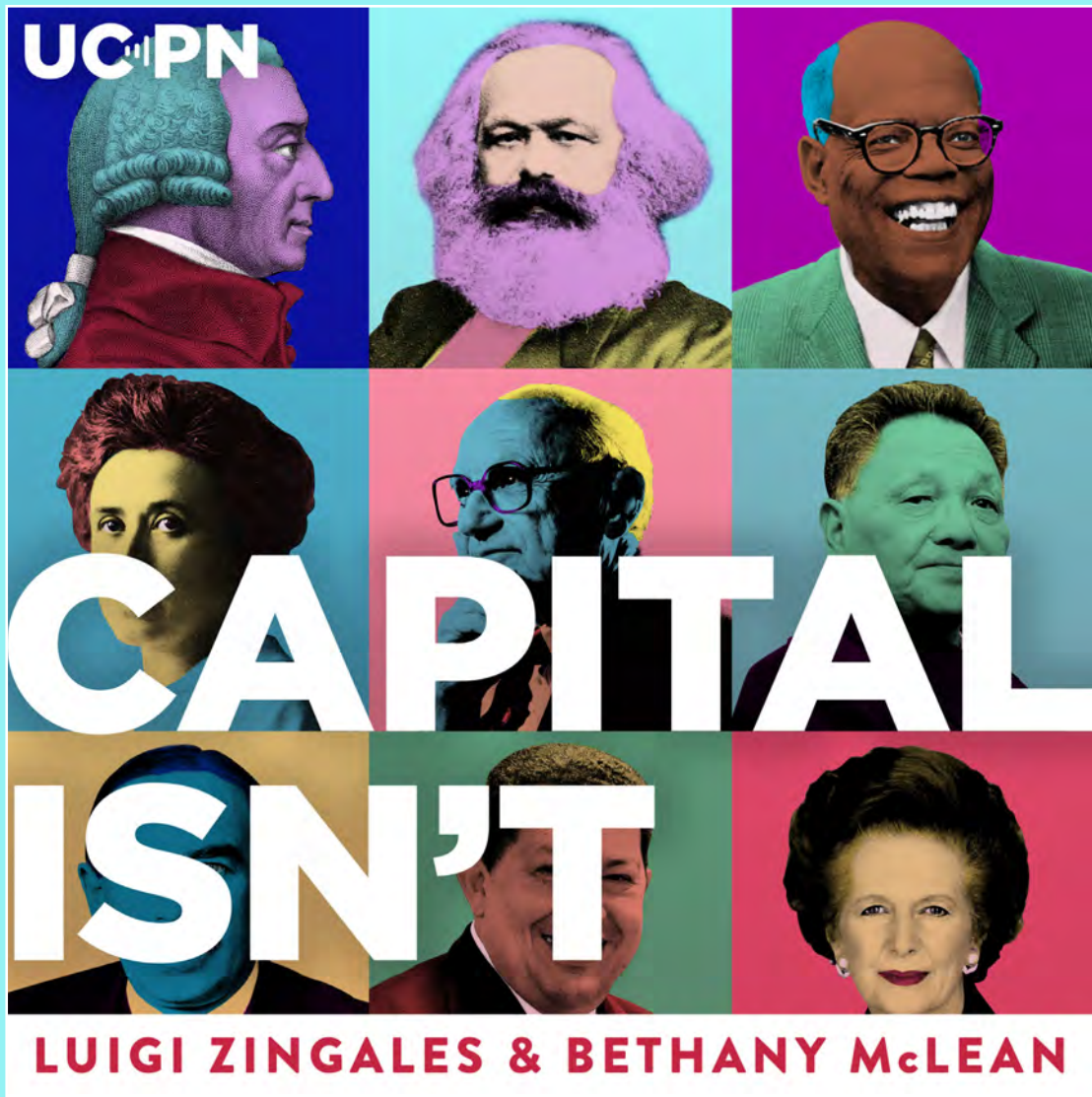
business development, as well as in other programs to help address some of the challenges of urban life. Many of these activities are bolstered by University scholars doing groundbreaking research and programmatic work to strengthen communities.

While these efforts are significant, we know we must do more, and are committed to investing additional resources and working with city, philanthropic, and corporate leaders to develop an ambitious approach that is commensurate with the pressing challenges.

Informed by ongoing discussions with city and community leaders, University faculty members, students and staff, civic organizations, and the University’s Office of Civic Engagement, we will be expanding investments in research and community-led initiatives to advance strategies for violence reduction. Crucially, we will develop ways for our faculty members and community partners to drive the directions that this work will take.

We are committed to supporting progress on these complex issues, which will require the combined energy and ideas of the University community and our neighbors on the South Side, and we look forward to announcing a number of specific initiatives.

The loss of incredibly promising lives to violence, in the University community and in neighborhoods across our city, is a toll we cannot accept. Our collective commitment must honor their memory and help secure a safer future. ♦



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RESEARCH AND NEWS IN BRIEF

VIEW FROM THE TOP

The latest addition to the Midway skyline, the 10-story David Rubenstein Forum, opened in September 2020 and was abuzz with activity this past fall.

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Using Gemini South, a telescope in the Chilean Andes, researchers including UChicago's Jacob Bean were able to measure water and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere of a planet 340 light-years away.

ASTRONOMY

All the life we cannot see

A new technique unlocks the mysteries of distant exoplanets.

BY LOUISE LERNER

Some 340 light-years away sits a planet called WASP-77Ab, thought to be similar to Jupiter but roughly 20 times hotter. Until recently scientists

knew relatively little about this distant neighbor, discovered in 2012—just the basics, such as its approximate age, mass, and temperature. Now an international team of researchers, including UChicago's **Jacob Bean**, has found a way to measure the water and carbon monoxide in its atmosphere.

This is the first time scientists have been able to measure the relative abundances of molecules in the atmosphere of such a distant planet, and they hope the technique will be a significant leap forward for our understanding of planets in other solar systems—including how they form and where to look for signs of life.

"This opens up a whole new win-

dow into planetary atmospheres," says Bean, a professor of astronomy and astrophysics. "Previously we could tell whether there were certain molecules, but not how many, and that makes a huge difference. It's like being able to see the entire iceberg, not just what's above water."

The team, led by Michael Line of Arizona State University, published its findings in the journal *Nature* last fall.

To date scientists have discovered thousands of planets outside our solar system. These so-called exoplanets are tricky to spot because they're incredibly far away and hard to see next to the blinding light of their stars. It's only thanks to better telescopes and

International Gemini Observatory/NOIRLab/NSF/AURA/B. Taffesh

PHYSICS

Tiny transit

Living cells are delicate machines, engineered to take in molecules, like glucose, and expel waste using energy to overcome nature's tendency toward equilibrium. This process is called "active transport." Scientists have found it difficult to create synthetic systems capable of such self-powered processes, but a September *Nature* paper coauthored by UChicago physicist **William Irvine** describes how the team succeeded in designing inorganic, microscopic, mechanical capsules able to collect, carry, and release cargo on demand. The red blood cell-sized capsule has a thin, hardened oil shell that mimics a cell membrane, with a tiny hole for molecule transit. Inside sits a chemical reaction-driven pump that vacuums or expels a payload when exposed to light or a pH change. Potential applications of these synthetic transporters include targeted drug delivery, robotic designs, and pollution remediation.—M. S. ♦

techniques in the past two decades that we've been able to find them at all, and the exoplanet field is still evolving rapidly.

Scientists have limited ways to tease out clues about what these planets actually look like because they're so faint. One is to check for what molecules exist in their atmospheres. That can hint at what might be on the planet's surface, how the planet formed, and even what might live there.

For example, alien astronomers would probably be able to detect life on Earth by the amount of oxygen in our atmosphere, which you wouldn't expect to see based on the planet's geologic makeup—because the oxygen was put there by plants.

Previously scientists could use instruments like the Hubble Space Telescope to get a preliminary sense of a planet's atmosphere and whether or not it contains elements like oxygen or carbon, but they didn't know the abundance of these elements. Without that information, it's hard to know how the planet formed or what it looks like now.

So the team decided to find out if they could use recent advances in data analysis techniques to determine the abundances of the primary molecules that contain carbon or oxygen atoms.

They selected WASP-77Ab, a "hot Jupiter" whose size and mass make it a useful laboratory for measuring atmospheric gases and testing planet formation theories.

Early in the project, the research team made an unusual choice: they used a ground-based telescope instead of a space-based telescope such as Hubble. There are many more ground-based telescopes, but until now it's been hard to use them for measuring atmospheric properties on other planets because Earth's own atmosphere gets in the way and scrambles the readings. The team hoped to use recent breakthroughs in signal processing to pick out what they needed.

They turned to Gemini South, an 8.1-meter-diameter telescope in the Chilean Andes, operated by the Na-

tional Science Foundation's National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory. At the telescope, using an instrument called the Immersion Grating Infrared Spectrometer, the team observed the thermal glow of the exoplanet as it orbited its host star.

From the resulting data, they were able to get clear measurements of both water and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere of WASP-77Ab based on the wavelengths of light they observed from the planet. The readings were close to what they expected based on simulations and models, but with some subtle differences that will take time to analyze, the scientists say.

They plan to confirm the readings by comparing them against data from the James Webb Space Telescope, the powerful new successor to the Hubble Space Telescope that NASA launched on Christmas Day 2021.

If their findings are confirmed, the team hopes the new method used in this study will help them going forward, offering complementary information that would be difficult for even more powerful telescopes like Webb to get.

For example, they may be able to measure the abundances of isotopes in exoplanet atmospheres, "which is a very powerful source of information," Bean says. "Different processes and conditions in planetary systems will leave fingerprints in the isotopes—it could tell us a lot about how exoplanets form and evolve."

Next, Line and the team will repeat this analysis and build up a library of atmospheric measurements from at least 15 more planets. Study coauthor **Megan Mansfield**, SM'18, PhD'21, now with the University of Arizona, is working on a larger survey of planets with the same technique.

"If we can do this with today's technology, think about what we will be able to do with the up-and-coming telescopes like the Giant Magellan Telescope," says Line. "It is a real possibility that we can use this same method by the end of this decade to sniff out potential signatures of life." ♦

Grief and resolve

A devastating crime spurs new measures to improve neighborhood security.

Following a fatal shooting near campus in November, the University announced several immediate steps to enhance safety on campus and in Hyde Park and surrounding neighborhoods while it works with the city and the community to identify longer-term measures.

Shaoxiong “Dennis” Zheng, SM’21, who graduated this past summer with a master’s in statistics, was shot and killed during a robbery November 9 near his apartment building on East 54th Place at Ingleside Avenue. (See “A Scholar Remembered,” opposite.) A suspect arrested by Chicago Police three days later has been charged.

In the weeks following Zheng’s death, the University hosted several events to address the sorrow and concern of a shaken community. At a November 17 discussion open to the public and broadcast online, leaders from the University and the Chicago Police Department reaffirmed their commitment to public safety, outlined new steps to enhance campus safety, and answered questions from the audience.

President **Paul Alivisatos**, AB’81, acknowledged the collective grief felt for Zheng’s loss and the grief felt “throughout our neighboring communities across the South Side, where too many have been victims of violence.” He said he “would like to state unequivocally that safety is my top priority. We are diligently working to make it safer on and around our campus.”

Also speaking at the event was **Eric Heath**, associate vice president for safety and security at UChicago, who outlined the steps that the University

of Chicago Police Department (UCPD) has taken in response to the tragedy (“Safety Measures,” opposite). Chicago Police Department (CPD) superintendent David Brown discussed the work that led to the arrest of the suspect for Zheng’s murder.

Public events addressing safety continue. At a roundtable convened by Chicago mayor **Lori Lightfoot**, JD’89, on November 20, University and city officials discussed longer-term public safety strategies, emphasizing the need for partnerships and for collaborative approaches beyond policing to address violence and its root causes.

Another roundtable, held January 25, brought together city, state, community, and University leaders to

share ideas on violence prevention. At the event, Alivisatos announced the University’s intent to work with the broader South Side community to design and launch a new multiyear fund aimed at reducing violence by supporting and encouraging partnerships between the University and community-based organizations. The University plans to engage stakeholders throughout the next two months, announce details of the fund in the spring, and issue the fund’s first grants by summer, Alivisatos said.

For more about the University’s ongoing work to improve public safety, address violence, and strengthen communities, see “A Message on Safety” (On the Agenda, page 11). ♦



Photography by Soaring Badger Productions

SAFETY MEASURES

During a November 17 campus safety and security discussion, President Paul Alivisatos, AB'81; UChicago associate vice president for safety and security Eric Heath; and Chicago Police Department superintendent David Brown highlighted new strategies to enhance public safety, including the following:

- ◆ Increased foot and vehicular police patrols on and near campus, including joint patrols between the University of Chicago Police Department (UCPD) and the Chicago Police Department (CPD) focused on robbery reduction
- ◆ A new 24-hour strategic operations center that will allow UCPD to make real-time, proactive adjustments to police and security deployments while also improving emergency communications
- ◆ Increased use of security cameras and license plate readers in the vicinity of campus
- ◆ Additional transportation options for the University community, including the expansion of a program that provides free Lyft rides for students
- ◆ A new UCPD unit aimed at providing advocacy and support for victims of serious crimes
- ◆ Expanded coordination between UCPD and CPD, including walking beats that will increase the visibility of officers near campus
- ◆ The permanent assignment of more CPD officers to the district that includes the Hyde Park area

A scholar remembered



Shaoxiong “Dennis” Zheng, SM’21, always lit up a room with his smile. He was generous and kind, inspiring both faculty and fellow students. And he was a proud graduate of the University of Chicago, a community that gathered by the hundreds on November 18 to honor his memory.

Speaking at the beginning of the ceremony in Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, President Paul Alivisatos, AB’81, directed part of his comments to

Zheng’s family who had flown in from China. “Dennis was a member of our family, and by extension, that means that you are a member of our family too,” Alivisatos said.

Born in Sichuan Province, China, Zheng arrived at UChicago in the fall of 2019, joining the master’s program in statistics. His research focused on using machine learning techniques to analyze gene information.

Professor Dan Nicolae, PhD’99, who chairs the Department of Statistics and collaborated with Zheng on his research thesis, spoke of Zheng’s drive, his dedication to learning, and his intellectual curiosity. Zheng dug deeply into every question before him, Nicolae said, and loved to debate statistical methods.

“We knew from the very beginning that his aspiration, his ambition, was to solve important problems facing our society using the tools of statistics and data science,” Nicolae said. “This spirit of inquiry, creativity, and independence showed me his great promise for scholarly work, and I was convinced that he would be successful in anything he decided to pursue.”

Many described Zheng’s generosity of spirit, always willing to lend his time to support others or to explain a difficult concept to a student. As a teaching assistant at the Booth School of Business and the Harris School of Public Policy, Zheng stood out for his willingness to go above and beyond.

Delivering her remarks in both Chinese and English, Provost Ka Yee C. Lee extended her condolences to Zheng’s family and friends. Although she never met Zheng, Lee shared what she had heard about him in recent days. Those who knew him best, she said, remembered how Zheng “truly embraced and enjoyed his life,” as well as the “extraordinary impact” he made on others.

Near the end of the memorial, Zheng’s mother, Rong Li, stepped up to the lectern. Traveling outside China for the first time in her life, she recalled the moment Zheng left home two years ago—the look on his face, the way he talked about his dreams for their future.

Two days before her son’s death, Li received a birthday present from him: a bottle of perfume. She wore the perfume to Rockefeller Chapel, she said in Chinese, hoping he would somehow recognize the scent: “Let’s go home, my son.”

—Jack Wang

Cash out

Digital money is here to stay, says Eswar Prasad, PhD'92.

BY MARY ABOWD

If you like the feel of a crisp \$20 bill or the jingle of some change in your pocket, **Eswar Prasad**, PhD'92, has a bit of bad news. "Cash is on its way out," he writes in his new book, *The Future of Money: How the Digital Revolution Is Transforming Currencies and Finance* (Harvard University Press, 2021). The way we pay for things is undergoing

a transformation, and soon taps on a smartphone or swipes of a card will permanently replace money that literally changes hands.

The end of cash has been years in the making. Most of us are already accustomed to banking from our laptops or paying the babysitter via Venmo. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its emphasis on contactless payment, further accelerated the shift. And now, it seems, our physical wallets are about to go in a drawer.

The disappearance of cash reflects a larger digital revolution that's transforming finance on a global scale, writes Prasad, a professor of trade policy at Cornell University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. He points to the emergence of the cryptocurrency

Bitcoin during the global financial crisis of 2009 as a key event. With its decentralized blockchain technology, Bitcoin introduced a radical new way to carry out financial transactions without the intervention of intermediaries such as governments and banks. The private virtual currency appeared at the very same moment when trust in these existing institutions hit a low point.

Bitcoin fit in with "the zeitgeist of the time," Prasad says, but its huge swings in value have made it a poor medium of exchange. It nonetheless still dominates the cryptocurrency space—roughly a \$2 trillion market in early 2022—and has sparked numerous imitators like Dogecoin and Ethereum. Where this will lead is an open question as giants like Facebook and Ama-



Will the United States let cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin dominate? Or will it follow the lead of other countries by issuing its own digital currency? For Eswar Prasad, PhD'92, the benefits of a digital dollar outweigh the costs.

istock/maxkabakov

zon issue their own cryptocurrencies. Backed by their enormous financial reserves, these alternatives to Bitcoin could one day compete with traditional currencies, posing a challenge to governments' monetary sovereignty.

In a bid to stay relevant, many governments are experimenting with the creation of their own government-backed digital currencies. Like Bitcoin and its cousins, these currencies exist in electronic form, but unlike crypto they are issued and backed by the state. In early January, the Chinese government released pilot versions of a digital yuan wallet app, a move that builds upon the already widespread use of the digital payment platforms Alipay and WeChat Pay. (Prasad saw this one coming. He recalls a 2019 trip to Beijing where his Chinese friends looked on "with befuddlement" as he counted out his paper money. "I felt like I was literally the only person trying to use yuan notes for anything," he says.)

Similar movement is afoot in Sweden and Japan, whose central banks are experimenting with digital versions of their national currencies. The Bank of England and the European Central Bank are preparing trials with the pound and the euro. Prasad predicts that these emerging central bank digital currencies will initially exist alongside physical money, then broaden in circulation as cash eventually disappears.

The digitization of money has upsides such as security and convenience, Prasad says, and the United States, which trails behind in establishing its own digital currency, should get with the program. A digital dollar, he argues, would thwart illegal activities like drug dealing that thrive on anonymous cash transactions. It would eliminate cash-based "off the books" payments, increasing tax revenues. And a national digital currency holds out hope for greater financial inclusion. Prasad envisions "unbanked" individuals and families (constituting 5 percent of US households) and low-income households accessing a digital payment system and a portal for basic banking



services that would provide a fee-free, non-interest-bearing account with the Federal Reserve, linked to a smartphone app. (This vision was precisely the impetus for the Bahamas, which rolled out the world's first central bank digital currency in October 2020.)

While digitization offers tremendous possibility, it also comes with potential pitfalls, such as vulnerability to hacking and lack of privacy. "There is a real risk that if we don't have guardrails in place we'll tip over into a somewhat more dystopian society where governments and major corporations become much more intrusive into our economic and financial lives," Prasad says.

And as cash goes away something inevitably will be lost. Physical currency comes through in a pinch when the electricity goes out. During natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina, for example, cash became the only viable medium of exchange. Human bonds may suffer too. "I still try to tip my Uber drivers and coffee baristas in cash because I think it creates a personal connection," Prasad says.

The biggest hurdle he sees in digitization is the loss of anonymity in financial transactions. "Everything digital ultimately is going to leave a trace," Prasad says. "One might argue that there are ways to protect privacy, but the reality is that once we move to digital payments, everything will be traceable. So, whether we want to live in a world where I couldn't buy you a cup of coffee without either a private payment provider or a government agency knowing about it—these are questions that I think we really will need to deal with." ♦

W. R. HARPER'S INDEX

NO PEOPLE LIKE SNOW PEOPLE

UChicago Facilities Services staff members assigned to snow removal each winter

25

Miles of sidewalk Facilities Services is responsible for clearing of snow and ice

20

Start time (a.m.) of earliest snow removal shift during a heavy storm

1

Tons of bulk salt used to deice sidewalks, docks, and parking lots each year

225–275

Bags of beet-treated ice melt used on sidewalks and building entrances annually

4,320

Days new Facilities Services managers spend at a snow and ice management seminar

3

University-owned plow trucks

2

Assigned snow removal routes on the Hyde Park campus

18

MUSIC

Orchestrating change

Jeri Lynne Johnson, AM'05, joins art and activism in her Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra.

BY MAUREEN SEARCY

Jeri Lynne Johnson, AM'05, a pianist and conductor who studied music history and theory at UChicago, is no stranger to rejection—that's just the life of a musician. But it's rare to receive feedback on why you were passed over, so when Johnson was offered an assessment of her audition for an orchestra conductor position, she welcomed the opportunity. "The gentleman was quite complimentary about my work," says Johnson, but told her that, as a young African American woman, she wasn't what the audience expected. "He said I didn't look like the maestro."

Johnson had mixed feelings: shock to hear those words, gratitude for the honesty, and "simmering rage at the system." Two years later, in 2008, she founded the Philadelphia-based Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra—"a group of highly trained people of different ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, and races"—as a way to temper that anger. She wanted to address real and perceived barriers to the performance and enjoyment of classical music while creating a model for 21st-century orchestras that play classical music by and for everyone.

The orchestra's name refers to the precious gem and how it's made—by a living organism protecting itself. A grain of sand inside an oyster gets coated in layers of mother-of-pearl, easing discomfort for the mollusk while creating something beautiful. "The orchestra," says Johnson, "is a vehicle for transforming grit into grace."



Jeri Lynne Johnson, AM'05, has spent her career trying to increase the diversity of classical music ensembles and audiences.

To achieve her vision for Black Pearl, Johnson needed an ensemble that was exceptionally skilled and intentionally diverse. Fortunately, she had four indispensable resources nearby: Juilliard, the Manhattan School of Music, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. By recruiting an inclusive group of musicians from top institutions, she sought to combat one of the most pernicious biases in clas-

sical music—"the perception of the inverse relationship between diversity and artistic quality." The orchestra has developed a reputation for artistic excellence, earning multiple National Endowment for the Arts grants.

Johnson has earned her own accolades: in 2005 she became the first African American woman to win an international conducting prize when she was awarded the Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship, founded by Marin

Photography by Bill Acuff

Alsop, the first woman to lead a major American orchestra. Johnson now collaborates with orchestras and operas around the world, often as the first African American woman on the podium for the ensemble. (Her upcoming guest conducting engagements include, among many, the National Symphony Orchestra, Florida Grand Opera, São Paulo Municipal Symphony, and the Santa Fe Opera.)

Black Pearl's mission reaches beyond performing concerts. From the beginning, part of its work has been community outreach—or, to use Johnson's preferred term, "inreach." The notion of the orchestra reaching out into the community assumes an insider-outsider relationship, but she wanted a reciprocal partnership. Black Pearl's programs offer hands-on opportunities to interact with the music, with the goal of converting the orchestra from "a gatekeeper of an artistic product into a facilitator of the creative process."

For instance, the popular event iConduct! gives Philadelphians a chance to get a conducting lesson from Johnson and lead the orchestra themselves. The idea traces back to when Johnson was told she didn't look the part of an orchestra conductor. "I'm going to make everyone into a conductor!" she resolved. During the event's first iteration, audience members tried their hands at leading a performance of Beethoven's Symphony no. 5.

Black Pearl has also held an orchestra fantasy camp, where talented amateurs rehearsed side by side with professionals, culminating in a performance of Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 with Opera Philadelphia, who had similarly paired amateurs with seasoned singers. "The goal is not perfection of the art," says Johnson. "The perfection of the art is in service of creating community." These engagement programs have made Black Pearl the only US organization to earn three Knight Foundation Arts Challenge grants.

In 2016 Johnson established DEI Arts Consulting. The firm is separate from Black Pearl, but its mission is related. Early on the diversity, equity, and inclusion consulting firm focused on classical music audience development: how to attract younger and more racially and ethnically diverse listeners.

Then in the spring of 2020, the murder of George Floyd launched a "reckoning with systemic racial injustice in America," says Johnson, and many more institutions started interrogating their own cultures and practices. With public performances canceled during the pandemic, Johnson was able to devote more time to her firm and branch out beyond music to other arts, cultural, and educational organizations intent on making themselves more inclusive and equitable.

When Johnson engages with a new client, the first step is to help them un-

derstand who benefits and who loses in systems of exclusion, "without any moral judgment." Then each organization can begin to challenge its assumptions and consider how to change. "Where we excel as consultants and advisers is not as subject matter experts necessarily," says Johnson, but in "our ability to be comfortable with discomfort."

Yet as a working artist in a field that continues to grapple with DEI issues, Johnson is a subject matter expert. And Black Pearl gives her a "working lab for all of my ideas around diversity and innovation and engagement." Over the past 12 years, Johnson has collected data from the orchestra to support her work as a consultant.

Johnson's activism—via the orchestra and consulting—is in service to her vision of classical music's potential: to reflect and embrace "the diversity of the communities we seek to serve." On one level, "we're just an orchestra, performing music"—Mozart or Stravinsky or more contemporary composers like William Grant Still or Jessie Montgomery. But when patrons attend a Black Pearl performance, some may see themselves represented for the first time.

Johnson takes inspiration from a quote by composer Gustav Mahler: "A symphony must be like the world. It must contain everything." For her, Black Pearl must contain everyone. It is "not just a musical ensemble. It's a worldview." ♦

QUICK STUDY

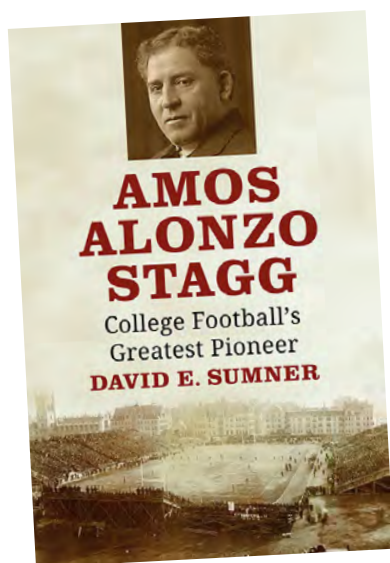
MOLECULAR ENGINEERING

How to spike COVID-19

The strength and weakness of SARS-CoV-2 is its spike: it's what binds to cells, what vaccines train your body to recognize, and what pharmaceuticals are designed to attack. UChicago professor of molecular engineering **Juan de Pablo** has found another way to destabilize the COVID-19 virus, published in the September *Molecular Systems Design and Engineering*, using a previously unknown binding site. De Pablo's research team has been running advanced computational simulations throughout the pandemic to analyze different proteins that help the virus replicate or infect cells—proteins that drugs could potentially target. This study examined how compounds might bind to those proteins in ways that compromise the whole virus. They discovered that luteolin—a natural compound found in some herbs, fruits, and vegetables—affects the virus in this manner, potentially leading to new treatments for COVID-19.—*M. S.* ♦

“He’s a grand old Stagg ...”

Think you know all there is to know about Amos Alonzo Stagg? A new biography might surprise you.



There is no shortage of books on legendary UChicago athletics director Amos Alonzo Stagg (1862–1965)—starting with a 1927 autobiography that earned a favorable review in the *New York Times* from Bertrand Russell. But with *Amos Alonzo Stagg: College Football's Greatest Pioneer* (McFarland, 2021), David E. Sumner, former head of the magazine journalism program at Ball State University, has written one for the Stagg completist. You might know that Stagg invented the huddle, numbers on jerseys, and the Statue of Liberty play. Here are a few things you might not.—C. G.

Stagg, Harper, and Hebrew

Stagg turned down offers from six professional baseball teams to study for the ministry at Yale's divinity school. Many of his classes were with William Rainey Harper, who taught biblical literature and Hebrew. Stagg detested Hebrew—"the dearest and most uninteresting language which developed out of the tower of Babel"—but found Harper an inspirational teacher. Stagg struggled with public speaking and realized he would never make a good preacher. Instead, he became the first baseball and football coach at the International Young Men's Christian Association Training School. Soon afterward Harper offered Stagg the job as UChicago athletics director.

Brawn food

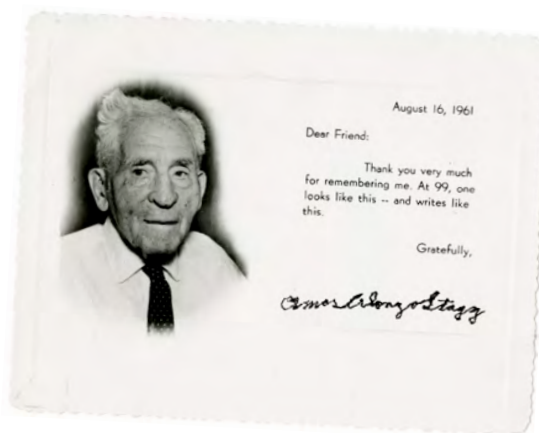
In *A Scientific and Practical Treatise on American Football for Schools and Colleges* (Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1893), Stagg included a long list of banned food and drink: "Pies, cakes, salads, all forms of pork, veal, rich dressing, fried food, ice-cream, confectionery, soda water, so called soft drinks (and it is needless to say drinks of a stronger nature), tea, coffee, and chocolate should be cheerfully and absolutely given up." Drinking water during football games was "exceedingly bad and never should be permitted."

A family of coaches

Both of Stagg's sons, Amos Alonzo Stagg Jr., SB 1923, AM'25, and Paul Stagg, LAB'28, SB'32, played quarterback for UChicago, served as assistant coaches at the University, and later became head coaches elsewhere. Beginning in the late 1930s, after the children were grown, Stagg's wife, Stella, became his unofficial assistant coach. She charted plays, kept stats, and scouted the opposition—in addition to mending the team's uniforms. Once a player asked why she had been sitting on the sidelines taking careful notes all week. "Young man," she told him, "I'm just deciding whether you start Saturday or not."

Strong opinions

Stagg opposed fraternities, which he considered elitist. He disapproved of professional athletics; he considered professional football "purely a parasitical growth on intercollegiate football." He once nailed a poster on the door of Bartlett Gymnasium, informing students of a standard uniform (costing \$4) for their required gym classes. Students responded by nicknaming him "Luther."



Young at heart

Stagg retired at age 98, after coaching for 70 years. That year one of his birthday presents was a power mower. Stagg sent it back. He preferred to use a push mower to keep in condition. When Stagg died in 1965 at age 102, he was the last surviving member of UChicago's original 1892 faculty.

GO GO GADGET



The ability to fashion custom contraptions is an essential part of any applied scientist's tool kit. This fall 16 UChicago students got to sharpen that skill in Creative Machines and Innovative Instrumentation, a first-of-its-kind College course that faculty members in physics and astronomy had been planning for years. "Making an instrument is both incredibly rewarding and incredibly frustrating at times, and this gives students a way to experience both firsthand," coteacher Scott Wakely, AB'93, a professor of physics, told UChicago News.

Lectures covered the basics of topics including computer-aided design, programming, prototyping, and circuitry; laboratory sessions let students unleash what they'd learned. During the first week of the quarter, they designed, 3D-printed, and raced rubber band-powered cars (shown above)—then souped them up, adding motors and sensors that allowed the vehicles to avoid walls and other obstacles. For their final project, students had to design and fabricate their own scientific instruments. Many enrollees found Creative Machines a welcome departure from the norm: "In a lot of other UChicago courses, you're learning theory," second-year Todd Tan told UChicago News, "but then in this class, we make it real."—S. A. ♦

Photography by Nancy Wong

QUICK STUDY

CLIMATE

Hunger forecast

Malnutrition in childhood can cause lifelong damage, in particular by stunting growth, and a major source of child hunger is El Niño events. The resulting shifts in weather patterns can decrease agricultural output, disrupt social stability, and spread infectious diseases. An October *Nature Communications* study coauthored by environmental and development economist **Amir Jina** found that one severe El Niño event can leave nearly six million children underfed. Using data spanning four decades, the team determined that warmer, drier El Niño conditions increase child hunger across most of the tropics, where 20 percent of children are already undernourished. During an intense 2015 event, the number of children at or under the World Health Organization's threshold for severely underweight jumped by almost 6 percent. El Niño cycles can be forecast up to half a year in advance, and metrics on child malnutrition may help organizations fighting world hunger plan accordingly.—M. S. ♦

For the record

ADAPTING TO OMICRON

On December 23 University provost **Ka Yee C. Lee** and executive vice president **Katie Callow-Wright** announced new safety measures in response to the spread of the omicron coronavirus variant. The start of Winter Quarter was delayed until January 10 for most schools and divisions, and the University moved to a remote-only instructional format for the first two weeks of the quarter. In-person instruction resumed on January 24. In addition, the University announced a COVID-19 vaccine booster requirement for students, faculty, and staff.

LIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE



A November 9 groundbreaking ceremony launched the expansion of the University's Center in Paris, which will serve as a convening point for ambitious education, research, and collaboration across

Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The new facility, designed by Chicago architectural firm Studio Gang, will be nearly triple the size of the current center to accommodate increased demand to study, conduct research, and convene in Paris. Scheduled to open in January 2024, the new center will be located at 39–45 Rue des Grands Moulins in Paris Rive Gauche, a district near the French National Library that is considered a destination for research and higher education. The current center, which is located two blocks from the expansion project site, will close after the new building is completed.

EX LIBRIS

Torsten Reimer, head of content and research services at the British Library, has been named University librarian and dean of the University of Chicago Library. At the British Library, Reimer ensures that contemporary collections



and research services meet the needs of in-person and online international users of one of the world's largest research libraries. Previously Reimer served as scholarly communications officer at Imperial College London, overseeing the development of open access and research data services. At UChicago Reimer will focus on developing and implementing a comprehensive strategic vision for the University Library and elevating its global prominence. His appointment begins March 15, 2022.

PAST AND FUTURE

On December 17 UChicago announced the launch of a council that will examine the relationship between the University and its surrounding neighborhoods and identify ways in which the University and community can strengthen future partnerships. The Council on UChicago/Community Relations: Historical, Contemporary, and Future will engage with the public to investigate the University's relationship to the South Side of Chicago—from the University's inception to the present day. The council, the first of its kind at the University, will consist of an equal number of University and South Side community members, including UChicago faculty, students, and staff.

NEW PHD FOR PME

The Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering is launching a PhD program in quantum science and engineering that will begin in Autumn 2022. PME has made graduate training a cornerstone of its educational offerings since the introduction of its molecular engineering doctoral program in 2013. The quantum science and engineering degree builds on that foundation, providing students with the skills needed to create, manipulate, and apply quantum phenomena toward developing radical new technologies.

TRANSITIONS

Kenneth Polonsky will step down in September 2022 as dean of the Biological Sciences Division and Pritzker School of Medicine and executive vice president for

biology and medicine and president of the University of Chicago Health System. He will then become senior adviser to the president and remain a tenured member of the faculty. Polonsky, a prominent diabetes researcher, came to UChicago as dean and executive vice president for medical affairs in 2010 and oversaw enhancements to research in the Biological Sciences Division and major expansions at UChicago Medicine.

BOOKISH PRIZE

The University of Chicago Press has awarded the 2021 Gordon J. Laing Award—its top honor—to associate professor of history **Michael Rossi** for *The Republic of Color: Science, Perception, and the Making of Modern America* (2019), which examines the origins of color science and its impact on the United States at the turn of the century. President **Paul Alivisatos**, AB'81, presented the award during a November 10 reception at the David Rubenstein Forum. The event also honored **Eve L. Ewing**, AB'08, assistant professor in the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, who won the 2020 Laing Award for *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side* (2018).

FIRST IN CLASS



Anthony Alvarez, a senior at Chicago's Lane Tech College Prep, became the first member of UChicago's Class of 2026 on October 22. Alvarez, who will be the first person in his family to attend college, learned of his admission and full-ride

scholarship during a surprise ceremony at his high school. An aspiring pediatrician, Alvarez has been a member of the Future Doctors of Lane club and the Medicina Academy Apprentice Program, which prepares high-achieving Latino students for medical careers. He applied early decision as part of UChicago's MOVE UP (Moving Online, Virtually Empowered, Unlimited Potential) initiative, which offers virtual college application and admissions support as well as financial aid advising to Chicago Public Schools students.

From left: rendering courtesy Studio Gang; UChicago News; photography by Eddie Quinones



INTERVIEW

Aural traditions

Neil Verma, AM'04, PhD'08, is tuned in to the golden age of radio.

BY MAUREEN SEARCY

Neil Verma, AM'04, PhD'08, an assistant professor of sound studies in radio/TV/film at Northwestern University, focuses on the intersection of audio and narrative. Studying more than 6,000 radio plays while writing *Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama* (University of Chicago Press, 2012) gave Verma a sound foundation for understanding the connection between the golden age of radio and modern audio. The latter is the focus of his forthcoming book, tentatively titled *Radio and Doubt: Podcasting in the Age of Obsession* (University of Michigan Press). Verma's comments have been edited and condensed.

What is “theater of the mind”?

It's an expression used to describe radio drama, first applied in the 1930s when dramatists thought about radio in relationship to the stage. Early on, radio plays were designed to create elaborate settings in your mind; they zoom across the country really quickly, or they take place in complicated mazes or mansions. Then in the

1940s there's a shift when plays become smaller: fewer characters, fewer settings, more interiorized.

I also think that we use the term “theater of the mind” as an excuse to ignore the artifice of radio making. There's a joke: radio is better because the pictures are better, because listeners get to create their own vision of the story. But that's true in all kinds of fiction. If we believe the listeners are inventing the story, that gives us an excuse to not pay attention to the craft of dramatists who actually gave us a lot of information in the broadcast itself.

What can radio accomplish that other forms of media can't?

Dramatists learned that radio has this incredible advantage in that it can express things that are only semipresent. In plays or films, something is either on the stage or not, on the screen or not. It's like a Banquo's ghost situation. But in radio something can be partly in existence and partly imagined. A lot of the monsters in blood-and-thunder radio exist in that realm. This is how other media can be considered improv-

erished relative to radio and not the other way around.

Why do so few narrative podcasts use sound effects like in the golden age of radio?

Think about a medium like lyric poetry or portraiture. Lyric poets tend to know every lyric poem that's ever been written. Same with portraiture—you must know the history of portraiture inside and out to be good at that art form. Radio drama is the exact opposite—many of the people who make it don't know the history of the medium, partly because the historical archive is lacking, and partly because there's been an overabundance of audio drama since the advent of the mp3.

Why is the early archive so spotty?

In the '30s and '40s, live radio shows were recorded on transcription discs made for the advertising sponsor and for time-shifted broadcasts on affiliate stations or overseas. These recordings weren't stable—they were made to be played a dozen times and then thrown out. Magnetic tape became available in 1948, which is when the archive becomes more complete.

Why has Orson Welles been remembered when other radio figures have been forgotten?

Mostly “War of the Worlds.” That's the short answer—it exists in cultural memory. The panic that supposedly happened never really happened, but the legend of it did. No one died. There were no mass suicides. In terms of evidence, all we really know is that one woman ran down a hallway and broke her arm. There were a lot of phone calls to the police. But the metaphor of it taps into the capacity of media for world making. ♦



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COURSE WORK

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF GLOBAL AID

A course tackles the history of efforts to do good abroad.

BY SUSIE ALLEN, AB'09

Not so very long ago, microfinance was going to save the world.

In his lecture accepting the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, Muhammad Yunus—the founder of Grameen Bank, which provides very small loans to Bangladesh's rural poor—fore-saw a world where social enterprises like his had ended poverty once and for all. “I firmly believe that we can create a poverty-free world if we collectively believe in it,” Yunus said.

But it wasn't that simple, **Elizabeth Chatterjee** tells the roughly 40 students in her Autumn Quarter class on the history of international development, held in-person and masked in a Harper Memorial Library classroom. In the 15 years since Yunus received the Nobel Prize, microfinance has attracted criticism for trapping borrowers in never-ending cycles of debt. Banks like Grameen are still around, but some of the shine has come off, Chatterjee says: “Microfinance has peaked and begun to fall.”

Stories like this abound in Chatterjee's course, the eye-catchingly titled *How (Not) to Save the World: The History of International Development*. The class, according to its syllabus, “introduces students to the theories, actors,

and practices that have shaped international development”—and shows how, in many cases, those theories, actors, and practices have faltered.

For Chatterjee, an assistant professor of history whose PhD is in development studies, the course fills an important gap. “One thing that international development has often lacked is this sense of its own history,” she explains in an interview a few days after class. A century's worth of interven-

tions have sought to end poverty and improve health, and students can learn from those successes and failures.

So far—it's week eight of 10—the course has “succeeded beyond my wildest dreams,” Chatterjee says. In their discussions of topics including imperialism, population control, and global hunger, students have found what she views as “a sweet spot”: healthy skepticism paired with transnational empathy.

Both empathy and skepticism are on full display throughout today's session, which focuses on philanthrocapitalism—the melding of philanthropy and big business. The day's readings and discussions cover the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; social enterprises (companies that seek to “do well by doing good,” as the popular axiom goes); and microlenders.

After a mini lecture on the origins of philanthrocapitalism, Chatterjee starts with a broad question to get the class talking: Do they see more similarities or differences between the Rockefeller Foundation at its founding and the Gates Foundation today? The discussion ping-pongs back and forth.

Similarities: in the views of both John D. Rockefeller and Bill Gates, one student notes, business experience is



Elizabeth Chatterjee

Gooding/UG / Universal Images Group/Newscom; Illustration by Daniel Hertzberg

A Grameen Bank borrower presents her loan repayment. Microlenders like Grameen were once seen as a global poverty panacea, but, as Elizabeth Chatterjee's course reveals, it wasn't so simple.

interchangeable with other kinds of expertise. Differences: the early 20th-century Rockefeller Foundation, another observes, was more intertwined with governments and international bodies than the Gates Foundation is today.

"You're totally right," Chatterjee responds. "The Rockefeller Foundation is so old that it has a symbiotic relationship with international organizations and state bodies that Birn" (Anne-Emanuelle Birn, the author of one of the day's readings) "suggests kind of grow up around it." The Gates Foundation, by contrast, "is coming into a much, much more crowded field."

But, Chatterjee says, shifting back into lecture mode, there's more to philanthrocapitalism than large foundations: "There's also a version ... that is much more grassroots." Think of companies offering water purification powders and solar lanterns—solutions that are cheap to manufacture and easy to implement. "You don't need big investments in infrastructure and things like electricity or clean water," Chatterjee says. "It's kind of an end run around that."

The downside is that when companies introduce quick-fix solutions that don't require infrastructural improvements, they may prevent those improvements from happening at all. In other cases, companies simply overpromise: one theory behind solar lanterns is that people will use their

newfound access to nighttime light for study or work, thereby lifting themselves out of poverty. In practice, it rarely plays out so tidily.

Muhammad Yunus and advocates of microfinance made similarly bold promises. In his Nobel Prize lecture—one of the day's assigned readings—Yunus outlined how even extremely small loans would allow borrowers to start businesses and generate new income to put toward educating their children, allowing the family to break the cycle of poverty.

At Yunus's Grameen Bank and many other microfinance institutions, breaking the cycle of poverty is viewed as women's work: women receive almost all of the loans and hold important leadership positions at the bank. This practice, Chatterjee tells the class, has its origins in feminist economics, which popularized the idea that women are more responsible budgeters than men.

So, Chatterjee asks the class, what did they make of Yunus's hopeful vision?

"I find it a very interesting model, because microfinance was one of the first financial models that came from the Global South rather than the Global North," one student observes.

"I thought it was more, I guess, refreshing than a lot of the other stuff we've referenced," a fellow optimist offers—in contrast to other capacity-building measures they've studied in

class, he notes, Grameen Bank is owned and run by the population it serves.

"Right, it's almost like a cooperative," Chatterjee echoes. Banks like Grameen are "not an externally imposed institution, but something that they will take ownership of and will be genuinely internal within the community."

Yunus's lecture offers "a lovely fuzzy version" of microfinance, Chatterjee says. Another assigned reading, a 2013 report from the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, offers a more complicated perspective. The report features interviews with and actual budgets of low-income Bangladeshi households.

According to the interviews, one student observes, households feel pressure from microfinance institutions to take out new loans. The objective of the bank is "to get people to borrow more and more and more," she says, "but it's not aligned to the objective of the household." In fact, many households end up taking out new microloans to pay off older ones.

There's also little evidence that households are using microloans as they were originally envisioned: to generate income. In reality, "they're going toward consumption smoothing," Chatterjee says—covering unexpected expenses for families who have no ability to save.

As the class enters its final minutes, Chatterjee asks students to share their overall perspective on philanthrocapitalism. Amid a crowd of skeptics, a few defenders emerge: "Although there's a lot of issues with philanthrocapitalism, this is the way major philanthropy is currently functioning, so maybe the best thing to do is remain critical and find ways to work through it," one argues. ("Very realist," Chatterjee responds.)

Besides, a classmate offers, governments don't have a perfect track record with development either. He pauses, and delivers what could be the motto of the day's session: "I don't think we've found a single not-mixed bag in this course." ♦

SYLLABUS

How (Not) to Save the World—an undergraduate course cross-listed in history, global studies, and human rights—met twice a week. Readings covered a range of topics in 20th and 21st century international development and included scholarly works, case studies, and reflections from development practitioners.

Course sessions combined lectures, discussions, and small-group activities. (For example, students sampled "a quite disgusting aid food ration and discussed this as an embodied experience," Chatterjee says.)

For their final paper—and 50 percent of their grade—students were tasked with imagining a

Critical Museum of Development aimed at sharing insights from the course with the public, and writing about an object they would include in it. The essay, stated the syllabus, should reveal what the selected object "tells us about historical transformations (or continuities) in the idea or practice of development."—S. A.



MILESTONES

OPENING WORDS

*Scenes and voices from the inauguration of
President Paul Alivisatos, AB'81.*

BY SEAN CARR, AB'90





Yes, a celebration in a half full Rockefeller Memorial Chapel amid a pandemic can feel joyful. That was undeniably the case on October 29, when **Paul Alivisatos**, AB'81, was inaugurated as the University of Chicago's 14th president.

It helped, especially on a drizzly morning, to have faculty in a kaleidoscope of academic regalia gathered outside the chapel as bagpipers played at full squall. Inside Rockefeller, a

socially distanced assembly stood facing the main doors, eager for the arrival of the presidential party.

As the 10 a.m. hour approached, trumpets blared, the organ (percolating all morning) swelled, and the procession flowed into the chapel, down the center aisle, and up to the transept, where University marshal **Victoria E. Prince**, professor of organismal biology and anatomy, awaited to "declare open the 535th Convocation of the University of Chicago."

It was also Prince's duty to introduce the day's speakers, beginning with the representatives of the faculty,

students, staff, alumni, and South Side community who had been invited to welcome Alivisatos back to UChicago and into his new role.

Eve L. Ewing, AB'08, assistant professor in the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, spoke for the faculty. She urged Alivisatos to view UChicago's intellectual rigor from a different angle. "When we use our aptitude for critical questioning to face inward and demand better of ourselves and one another," Ewing said, "the University of Chicago—not the abstract institution, but the people who comprise it—we are

Previous pages: photography by Jean Lechat;
this page: photography by Jason Smith

In addition to the faculty, student, staff, alumni, and community representatives who welcomed Paul Alivisatos, AB'81, as president, the audience at his inauguration ceremony heard from two of his Berkeley colleagues and from poet and faculty member Srikanth Reddy, who read from his serial prose poem *Underworld Lit*.



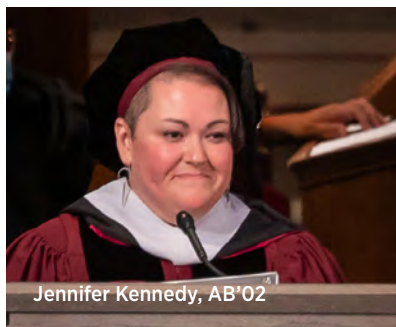
Victoria E. Prince



Eve L. Ewing, AB'08



Vishruth Venkataraman



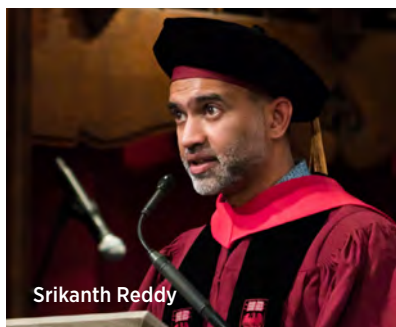
Jennifer Kennedy, AB'02



Margaret M. Mueller, AM'97



Julian DeShazier, MDiv'10



Srikanth Reddy



Carol T. Christ



Steven Chu

capable of tremendous collective good.”

Integrative biology graduate student **Vishruth Venkataraman** likened the University to a symphony “composed of thousands of voices—some harmonious, some dissonant,” with Alivisatos as their listener. He quoted Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar, who wrote that the greatest wealth is that obtained by listening. “And for your wisdom, insight, and the wealth of listening that you bring, President Alivisatos, we bid you welcome.”

Speaking for staff, **Jennifer Kennedy**, AB'02, director of Student Centers, recalled her time in the College and the

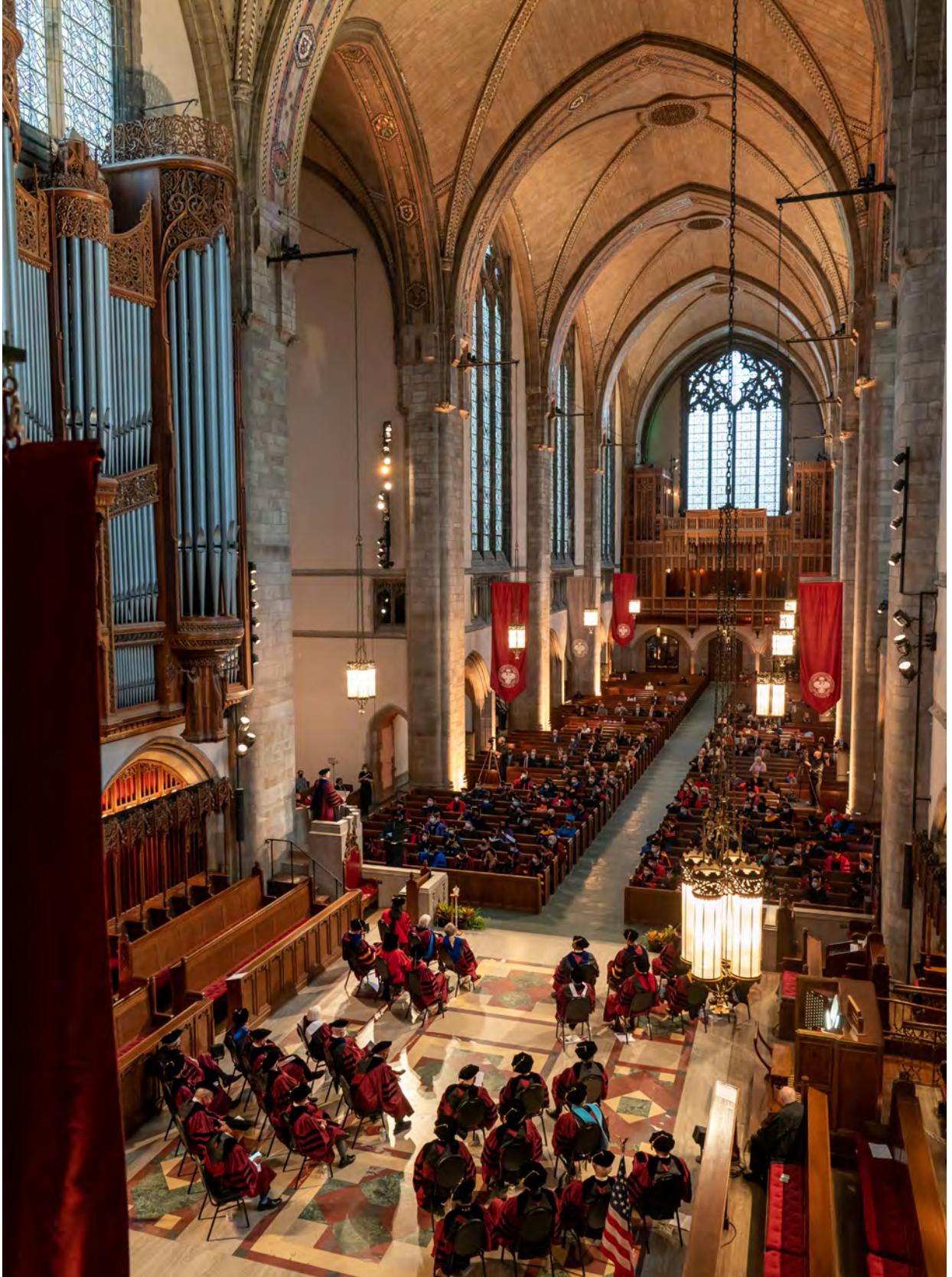
employees who helped her see “that there was a place for me at the University of Chicago.” Today’s staff, she told Alivisatos, is “poised to work with you to realize the full potential of this University.”

Alumni Board president **Margaret M. Mueller**, AM'97, echoed the sentiment on behalf of UChicago’s almost 200,000 alumni: “I call on you to consider the role alumni play in moving us forward. And we will be ready for your call.”

Community representative Rev. **Julian DeShazier**, MDiv'10, senior pastor of the University Church of Chicago, said, “A relationship only buds

when those involved view each other as equals, which means not only will the University change and make life better for Woodlawn and South Shore ... but the University must be willing to be transformed by the South Side.”

After the welcomes, two of the new president’s past mentors spoke: University of California, Berkeley, chancellor Carol T. Christ, who appointed Alivisatos as the school’s provost in 2017, and Steven Chu, former US Secretary of Energy, Nobel laureate in physics, and Alivisatos’s onetime boss at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.



The ceremony, the University's 535th Convocation, began with "Crescat Scientia; Vita Excolatur," an original composition for carillon by University Professor Augusta Read Thomas. Opposite page, top, from left: a gray sky didn't dim the morning's jubilation; performing the induction of President Alvisatos was chair of the Board of Trustees Joseph Neubauer, MBA'65, whose remarks stressed the importance of "a leader skilled at looking beyond the immediate and obvious."

Photography by Jason Smith



The ceremony culminated with the formal induction of Alivisatos as president, performed by chair of the Board of Trustees **Joseph Neubauer**, MBA'65, and the inaugural address. The address revealed that not only had Alivisatos been listening; he had heard.

The University's distinctive culture and set of core values, Alivisatos said, constitute its capital and unify "some of the world's best thinkers, scholars, researchers, educators, analysts, ad-

vocates, artists, entrepreneurs, and creators." He called on all listening to engage that capital and "connect it to the world at large."

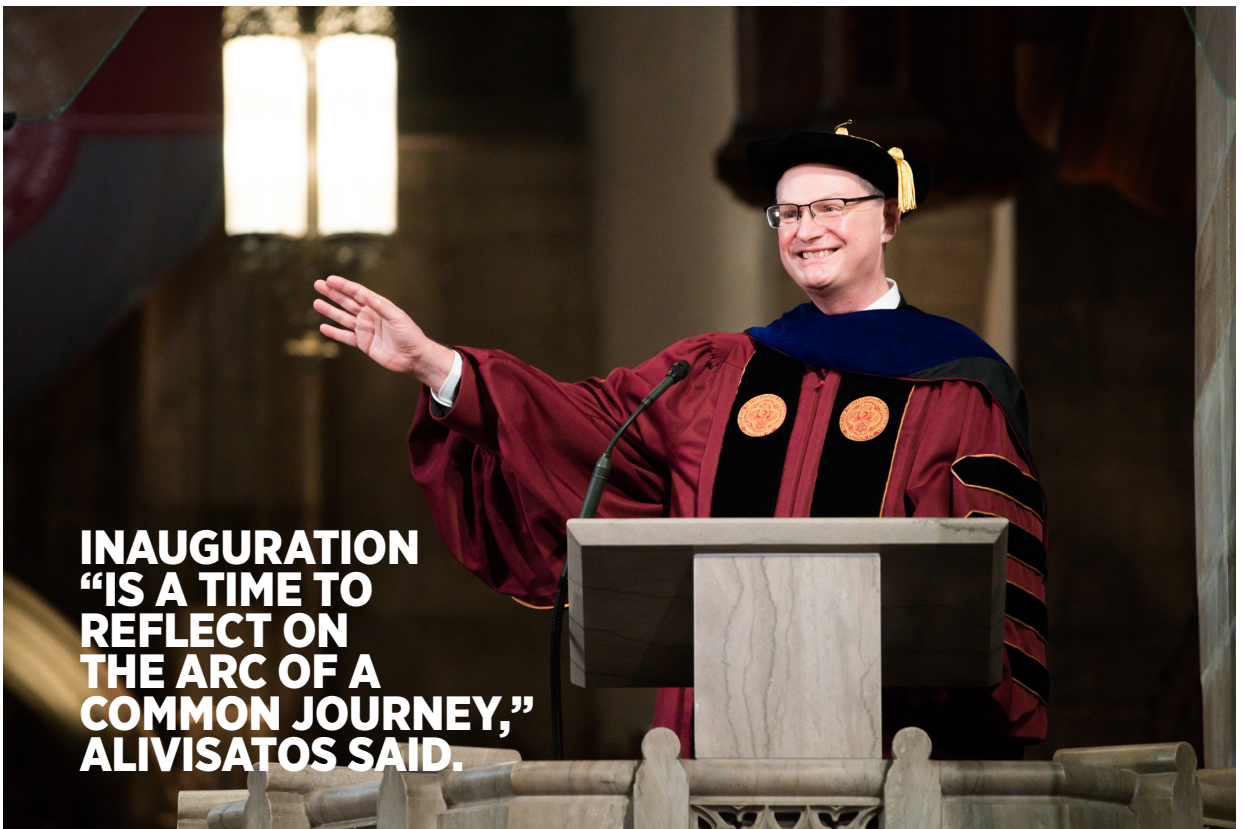
The great challenges and opportunities of the moment make it imperative, he said, to now embark on this "journey of reconnection" with the community, the city, and the wider world. Only by doing so can the University community "reach higher levels of achievement than ever before,

and we will bring entirely new benefits to humanity."

Outside Rockefeller following the ceremony, the crowd dispersed in the rain—to cars, lunch, offices, and class. Alivisatos, however, remained behind, beaming as he accepted handshakes, fist bumps, even a hug. ♦



**READ PRESIDENT ALIVISATOS'S
ENTIRE ADDRESS AT INAUGURATION
.[UCHICAGO.EDU](https://www.uchicago.edu).**



**INAUGURATION
"IS A TIME TO
REFLECT ON
THE ARC OF A
COMMON JOURNEY,"
ALIVISATOS SAID.**

A photograph of a man with short, graying hair and sunglasses, looking upwards and to the right. The background is a bright, hazy sky at sunset or sunrise, with some blurred buildings visible in the distance. The man is wearing a dark, vertically striped shirt.

ARTS

COMIC RELIEF

*With Work in Progress, Abby McEnany, AB'92,
created an unconventional sitcom for anyone who feels different.*

BY SUSIE ALLEN, AB'09

For **Abby McEnany**, timing is a funny thing. In certain ways, she's always been precocious: she had her first panic attack at age five and was in therapy by eighth grade. In other ways she's more of a late bloomer: she finished college at 24 and her professional comedy career began in earnest at 40, when she joined the touring company of Chicago's Second City theater. She was 51 when Showtime greenlit her autobiographical TV series *Work in Progress*.

McEnany, who still lives in Chicago, knows hers is different from most show business stories,

many a "wait, are they?" Google search. (They are not married in real life.)

The series takes big swings, freely mixing pathos, hopefulness, and pratfalls to create a singularly oddball tone. Abby is both the show's protagonist and its punching bag, a figure whose often-in-error-never-in-doubt pomposity sits alongside her vulnerability and kindness. In one of many positive reviews, Emily Nussbaum of the *New Yorker* praised the show's "distinctive, salty vibe, driven by McEnany's simultaneously self-loathing and self-aggrandizing swagger."

Talking to McEnany, it's easy to see how her particular brain produced something at once so

NOT LONG AGO MCENANY WAS OUT WITH FRIENDS WHEN A STRANGER CAME UP TO HER AND ANNOUNCED, "I'M AN IMPERFECT QUEER TOO!"

and that's OK with her—she's always felt a little bit different. If she'd gotten *Work in Progress* any sooner, "it wouldn't have been the right time," she says. "When I say I take a long time to get stuff, I'm not putting myself down. It's just how my brain goes and how I need to get there."

In *Work in Progress*, McEnany, AB'92, stars as: Abby McEnany. The first season follows Abby—the character—a self-described "fat queer dyke" living in Chicago, through a mental health crisis and a new relationship with a trans man two decades her junior. The second season, which aired this past fall, finds Abby weathering the COVID-19 pandemic, grappling with racism and white supremacy after the murder of George Floyd, and trying, inch by inch, to grow.

Despite all of the above, *Work in Progress* is very much a comedy, if an atypical one. There are jokes: "I look like Mitt Romney junior," middle-aged Abby laments at an ultracool queer nightclub. "Junior?" her love interest teases. There are classic sitcom premises: Can Abby and her friend survive multiple family gatherings in one day? There are cameos: "Weird Al" Yankovic appears as the sangria-loving husband of *Saturday Night Live* alum Julia Sweeney, playing herself, prompting

tender and so bonkers. She is thoughtful, warm, and effusive, prone to self-deprecating asides and long tangents punctuated by big, throaty laughs. Mid-tirade on the horrors of social media, which she does not use, she catches herself: "Autonomy and anonymity—those two things are so beautiful. I don't understand this culture that we live in! [Pause.] Wow, is she ranting about social media again? Yaassssss! Damn. Anyway."

By writing a show about someone who feels different and flawed, McEnany discovered how many other people feel different and flawed too. Not long ago McEnany was out with friends when a stranger came up to her and announced, "I'm an imperfect queer too!" Another time she was recognized on the street while openly weeping. "I was like, 'Hey, I'm so sorry I'm crying, I just had therapy,' and they were like, 'So did I!'"

When McEnany was attending high school in San Francisco, her father would page through a book listing the nation's top colleges ("they probably don't even have 'em anymore") and flag the ones he thought would be best for her. And so it was that McEnany



found herself at UChicago—her last choice of the five schools she’d applied to, she admits, but in the end, “out of the five, it was definitely the best suited for me.”

Her first quarter was a rush. “I was really having a ball,” McEnany remembers, showing up at 8 a.m. for her chemistry classes, meeting new people, hanging out in the dorms. She felt like she belonged. “People wanted to be there and learn. ... You didn’t have to put on airs.”

And then, “like the flip of the switch,” she was very suddenly very not OK. She’d dealt with symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder for years, but not like this: “I was having massive anxiety. I couldn’t touch things. I was counting steps. It was so intrusive in my life.” McEnany went to the counseling center, expecting an intake session and a week’s wait for an appointment. She was sent to a psychiatrist the next day for immediate care.

She tried to return as a full-time student the following year. “And that was—you know,” she says. “I took a lot of incompletes.” But she was determined to continue: “I just knew I had to finish then or I would never finish. Like, I have to graduate and I cannot go home for a year.”

So for the next four years, she slowly chipped away at her history degree, taking classes part-time. “It was a struggle,” she says. “Life is really hard and it hits people at different times.”

On occasion McEnany has treated her slower-than-expected path to graduation as a punchline. In an appearance on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, she punctuated an anecdote about the pile

of unread Noam Chomsky books she owns by saying, “You guys! It took me six years to finish college!” But in quieter moments, she acknowledges she approached her education in the right and only way for her at the time. “It really saved me,” she says. “It really saved me that I was able to do it the way I did.”

Perhaps the biggest difference between *Work in Progress* Abby McEnany and real-life Abby McEnany is that real-life Abby found improv comedy. Her dad was a comedy fan and she’d always liked making people laugh (“fat kids learn all these defenses so you don’t get bullied, and I’m sure that was part of it”), but the classes she took at Second City in her 20s were the first time she’d seriously pursued being funny.

The art form clicked immediately for McEnany. With no lines to learn or blocking to remember, she felt liberated from anxiety. “For me it was really intuitive. ... You’re creating this thing together and it’s based on working together as a group,” she says. “Sometimes it sucks! And sometimes it’s beautiful and hilarious and perfect.”

For the next 15 years, McEnany worked her way up the Chicago comedy ladder, performing at theaters across the city and working day jobs in customer service and as a technical writer. When she got offered a position with Second City’s touring company, she took it, even though it meant walking away from a stable job with benefits in her 40s.

In a reality-bending scene from *Work in Progress* season two, Audie Cornish (then of NPR) appears in Abby's kitchen to read the news. Other unexpected cameos in the series include "Weird Al" Yankovic and *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* star Vincent D'Onofrio.

Choosing comedy over comfort—in middle age, no less—was terrifying and joyful at the same time. "It can be really scary," she says. But it always felt worth it. "I remember one time, I was 48, and I was driving in a station wagon to go to a show at a synagogue on a Friday night for 95 bucks," McEnany recalls. "And it was like, 'I can't believe I get to perform and I get to make \$95!'"

For Chicago comedians, commercial acting has long been a way to stay afloat while pursuing improv, an infamously low- (and frequently non) paying art form. But McEnany found that her fatness and visible queerness left her mostly shut out

the diversity of queer life in a major city, showing both Abby's older lesbian friend group and the younger, gender-fluid, and more racially diverse scene she encounters through her new boyfriend.

These scenes and characters are drawn from McEnany's real-life experiences dating a trans man, which shaped her decision to stop identifying as a lesbian—a word that had never felt quite right to her anyway. "If I was still referred to as a lesbian, I'd be totally negating his gender," she told the *Advocate*. Instead, she chose the term "queer dyke" for herself. As she told the *Cut*, she likes to say that her pronouns are

"she/her, currently. I think the idea of fluidity is so beautiful, and that's really helped me figure out that it's not just gay, lesbian, bisexual."

At the same time,

McEnany was eager for *Work in Progress* to not be pigeonholed as only a queer show. She was thrilled by how many viewers saw themselves not only in Abby's evolving queerness—but also in her efforts to live with mental illness, her journey toward accepting her body, and her well-intentioned screwups. Knowing she has helped other people feel seen "just means the world."

Three years and two seasons of *Work in Progress* later, McEnany still can't quite believe the show got made at all. "How did it happen? All these things came into place, which is so outrageously wild."

She isn't sure what comes next. (When we spoke, the future of *Work in Progress* was unknown, but McEnany said she'd be OK either way; shortly before the *Magazine* went to press, Showtime announced the series would not return.) She'd like to continue writing for television and has a few new ideas—maybe a little less personal next time, "because I couldn't get more personal than this."

This is the first break she's had in a while, and she's using it to tackle some small life problems of her own. "I'm trying to organize and declutter my apartment," she says. "And that is never going to happen. But the goal is to get it less cluttered." It's a start, anyway. For Abby McEnany, progress always beats perfection. ♦

KNOWING SHE HAS HELPED OTHER PEOPLE FEEL SEEN "JUST MEANS THE WORLD."

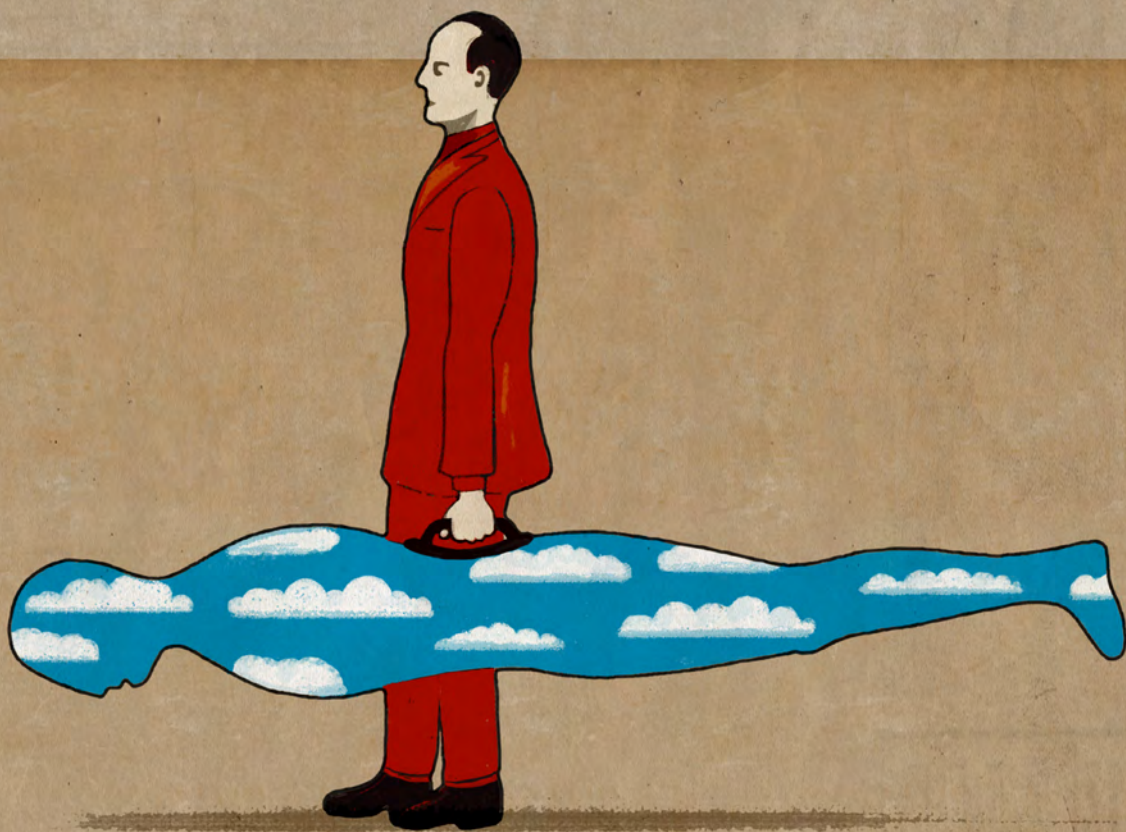
of that world. The process of auditioning for commercials was "hilarious," she told the *Cut* in 2020, "because they don't want a fat woman selling burgers." The continued exclusion had one useful aftereffect: McEnany realized if she wanted to appear on-screen she'd have to write for herself.

In 2016 she performed a one-woman show called *Work in Progress* at Chicago's iO Theater that she and fellow improviser Tim Mason decided to adapt for a TV pilot. They scraped together just under \$30,000 to film it on their own.

McEnany and Mason submitted the pilot to Sundance—but not before arguing about whether it was worth paying the \$80 entrance fee for the legendarily competitive film festival. (McEnany eventually agreed, she told the *Salt Lake Tribune*, on the condition that Mason paid: "You have \$80? All right, moneybags.")

Their scrappy, inexpensive pilot was accepted into the festival, where it caught the attention of Showtime's director of original programming. Within months, McEnany was the cocreator, writer, and star of a television show.

She used her new platform to cover topics not usually discussed on television—suicide, therapy, the anxiety of using a public bathroom as a gender nonconforming person—and cast people not usually seen on television. *Work in Progress* depicts



OPTIMAL QUITTING

*An economist's advice on when to fold your hand
in favor of the next opportunity.*

BY JOHN A. LIST

In a new book, *The Voltage Effect: How to Make Good Ideas Great and Great Ideas Scale* (Currency, 2022), UChicago economist John A. List explains what makes an idea scalable to a larger audience, size, and impact. Drawing on his experience advising organizations including Uber, Lyft, the Chicago White Sox, and the federal government, List identifies five key signatures of ideas with scaling potential and four secrets entrepreneurs can use to grow their ideas successfully, or, in the book's parlance, to increase their voltage. In this excerpt from chapter eight, "Quitting Is for Winners," List shows how opportunity costs and sunken costs sometimes make throwing in the towel a virtue.—L. D.

When I was growing up, all of the men in my family were truck drivers (my grandfather, August Sr., my father, August Jr., and my older brother, August III!), and I had been told that I would be one, too. Yet I dreamed of a different life, even if I didn't know exactly what that life might look like or where to find it. Golf, however, was a door that opened a whole new horizon of possibilities to me, since I very well might not have gone to college at all had it not been for the sport.

By attaining a four-year degree, I would hop up a rung on the socioeconomic ladder and gain access to opportunities withheld from my parents and grandparents. Golf had gotten me this far, so the best way I could imagine prospering was by making it my future career. If I stuck it out and gave the sport my all, was there a chance I could make it as a professional? I believed the answer was yes, though in retrospect I was a victim of my own confirmation bias, conveniently focusing on the tournaments I won while ignoring the empirical evidence of the ones I lost. I had no trouble remembering the good rounds—shooting 32 on the front nine of a prestigious tournament, for instance—but

conveniently blocked out the 41 on the back nine that cost me first place. As I packed up my belongings and left my childhood home for the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, playing on the PGA tour was the dream I clung to. And why shouldn't I? I believed I could scale my past successes as a golfer into future ones on the PGA tour.

But then something surprising happened during my very first year in college that changed the trajectory of my life. About midway through our fall golf season, I had an off weekend, so I returned home to visit my family. When I went out to Cherokee Country Club in Madison, Wisconsin, to hone my game that Friday morning, there

happened to be a bunch of college golfers at Cherokee, including some of the older players I used to compete against in high school—golfers like Steve Stricker from the University of Illinois and Jerry Kelly from the University of Hartford, both of whom have subsequently had long and successful PGA careers. I had not seen them for a few years, so I welcomed the chance to find out how my skills compared.

Back in high school, I'd managed to stay competitive, even though I was a few years younger than them. Now, however, something had dramatically changed. As we all worked on the practice range, something felt amiss. Incredibly, they had become Jack Nicklauses, while I was stuck as John List. Yet rather than accept the reality of this fact, I brushed off the initial episode. They were always better ball-strikers than me, I told myself, but I always got them back around the greens. Plus, I reminded



“There is no single quality that distinguishes ideas that have the potential to succeed at scale from those that don’t,” John A. List writes. “But there are five specific traits that scalable ideas must possess.”

myself, this is just practice. It's the score of the actual game that matters, so let's see how their scores match up against mine.

After they had all teed off, I followed by playing my round with a few friends. Same tees, same course, same weather conditions. The crushing outcome was that both Steve and Jerry scored in the high 60s, as did many of the dozen or so other golfers out with them (including a high schooler named Mario Tiziani, now also a professional golfer), and while I thought I played pretty well, I shot a 75. For those not familiar with golf scoring, at this level that difference was akin to an A+ versus a D.

That night, rather than sleep, I did what any data guy would do: I researched all of their golf scores for the past several years, comparing them to what I had scored on the same courses. I did the same all day Saturday and Sunday. This was not easy work; since there was no internet back then, it took two solid days in the library digging through old local newspapers for data. By the end of that weekend, as I drove back to Stevens Point, sleepless, I came to terms with the fact that no matter how much I cared about golf and practiced it—and no matter what it symbolized for me—I was never going to be good enough to make it onto the PGA Tour, or even come close. I was playing fine for a collegiate golfer, but fig-

Making this decision wasn't easy. It went against the values I had learned as a child growing up in small-town Wisconsin, the kingdom of the legendary Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi, who famously said, "Winners never quit and quitters never win." This was the local culture I was steeped in. I was a product of it, as were my supportive parents, who believed in my golf career and told me to stay resilient and never give up.

This wasn't a uniquely midwestern phenomenon. American culture as a whole tells us that if we refuse to quit, if we just hang on a little longer and give a little more, then all our dreams will come true. This is buttressed by the proliferation of success stories on social media that all seem to inevitably hit the same note: "Thankfully I didn't quit and persevered through all of the setbacks." This success should be applauded, but for every one of these feel-good stories, there are likely a hundred thousand people who toil away and never get to the finish line, never get to do the victory lap. Where are the tweets from these people? Who is talking about how they could have accomplished something really great if they'd quit something else twenty years ago and tried an entirely different path? How many lifesaving drugs, innovative new products, and bold policy

**AMERICAN CULTURE AS A WHOLE
TELLS US THAT IF WE REFUSE TO QUIT,
IF WE JUST HANG ON A LITTLE LONGER
AND GIVE A LITTLE MORE, THEN ALL
OUR DREAMS WILL COME TRUE.**

uring out how to shave those last several strokes off my score necessary to compete at the highest levels was unfathomable. Suddenly I was unable to delude myself further. Reality had intervened and revealed my pro-golfer aspirations for what they were: a false positive.

My talent had gotten me this far, but as a career, it just didn't scale. Pursuing it past this point would only lead to a crushing voltage drop and perhaps even more crushing disappointment. So I decided it was time to quit on my dream.

interventions has our society lost because people refused to quit pursuing unscalable dreams? These are tragic and unwritten stories—unwritten because they have not had the chance to play out in reality, since from birth we are told we shouldn't quit.

But what if I told you that achieving something great often means quitting—that is, giving up a dream, pursuit, or career path that is going nowhere, in exchange for one where you can make a greater contribution?

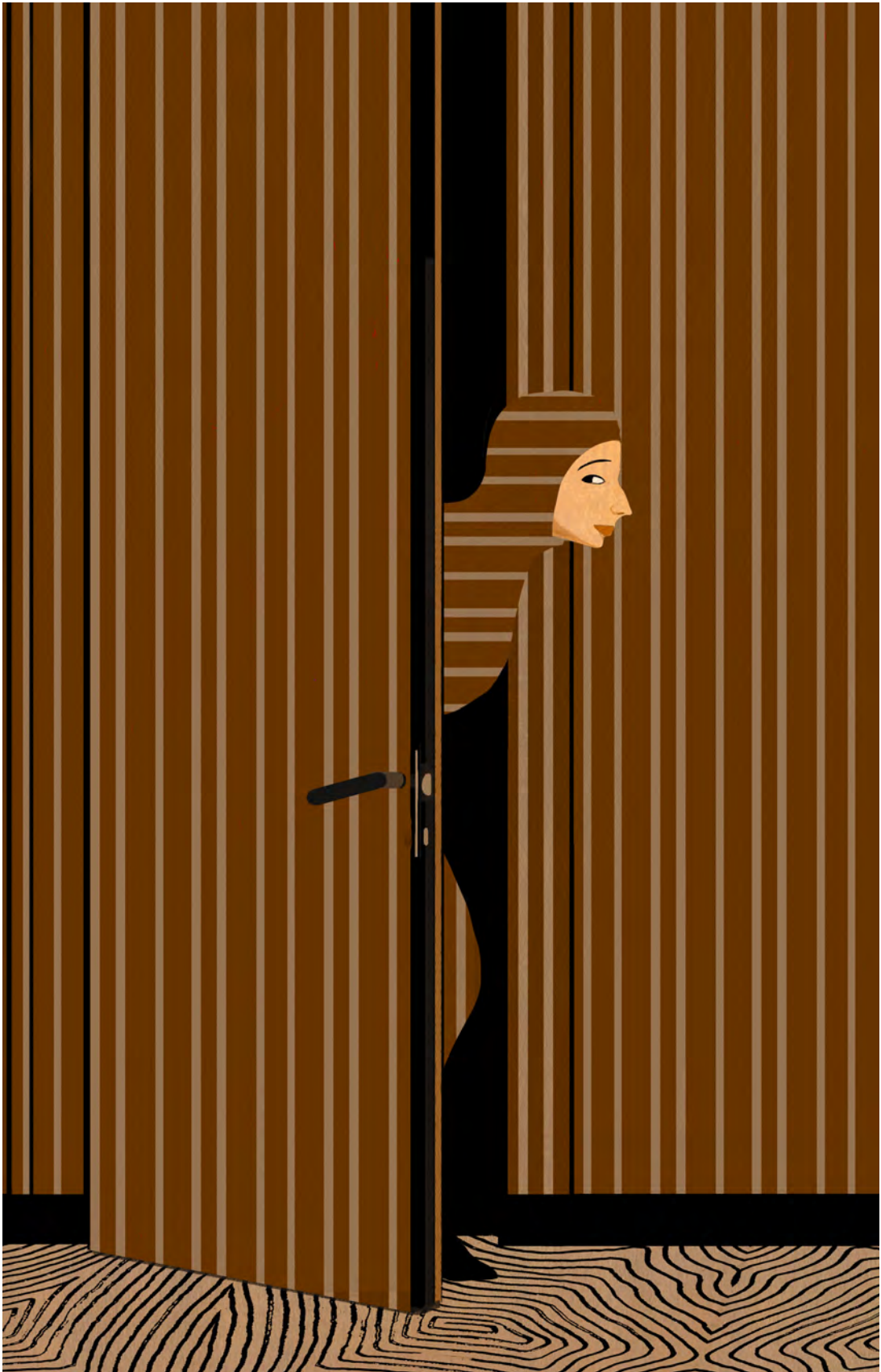


Illustration by Beppe Giacobbe

In my case, once I gave up my dream of professional golfing, I turned my attention to the one thing that I had come to believe I did have a true talent—and passion—for: economics. In 1992, I graduated with an economics degree from UW–Stevens Point and received my doctorate four years later from the University of Wyoming.

Put another way, my skills as an economist were more scalable than my skills as a golfer.

In cases like these, the best thing you can do is quit. It may be a wrenching decision, but I would argue that getting good at quitting is one of the secrets for scaling successfully. Indeed, I believe that not only do people, companies, and organizations

WE CAN THINK OF OPPORTUNITY COST AS AN ATTEMPT TO QUANTIFY THE PATH NOT TAKEN, WHICH OFTEN MEANS THE PATH WE WOULD HAVE TAKEN IF ONLY WE'D QUIT THE PATH WE WERE ON.

After completing my PhD, I applied for 150 tenure-track jobs. I got turned down by 149 of them, yet I wasn't shaken by this less than enthusiastic embrace from my chosen field. Because unlike golf, economics was an area where I knew I was good enough to make a mark. While I didn't have a fancy Ivy League degree, the response to my research suggested I had the right kind of mind. So this time I heeded Lombardi's advice and persisted. I threw myself into the fieldwork that has since defined my career at the one school that wanted me, the University of Central Florida.

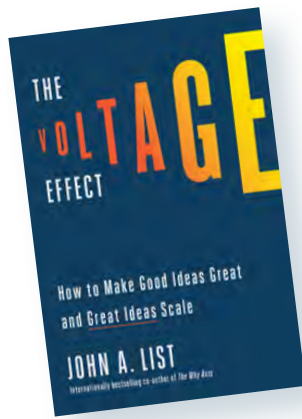
It paid off. In some alternate corner of the multiverse, John A. List is a golf "teaching pro" at a second-rate country club quoting Vince Lombardi to the clients he gives lessons to. Not the worst existence, but not the best, either. Thankfully, in this universe I'm me, constantly feeding my own curiosity with new field experiments and new science. I've done a few things I'm proud of, and maybe even helped some people. As a golfer, I simply wouldn't have made much of an impact—not because economists are inherently more valuable to society than golfers (lots of professional golfers inspire children and contribute to social causes, and club pros do wonderful things as well) but simply because I am better at economics than at golf, which made me more likely to successfully contribute things of social value.

not quit enough, they also don't quit soon enough.

Which raises an inescapable question: how do you know when to quit?

It's perhaps no coincidence that the field I turned to after giving up on my golf career was a discipline that could scientifically explain why I had made the right choice. That explanation can be found in one of the bedrock concepts of economics: opportunity cost, or the gains you miss out on when you choose one option over another. We can think of opportunity cost as an attempt to quantify the path not taken, which often means the path we would have taken if only we'd quit the path we were on. In my case, pursuing a golf career would have cost me the chance to teach economics to eager young minds, publish lots of scientific studies and books, and advise various leaders.

I saw a useful example of the dynamics of opportunity cost at work one day when my son Mason, then eight years old and a precociously competitive baseball player, was shopping for a new bat. Mason had saved up \$325 and wanted to buy a top-of-the-line baseball bat that he hoped would help him raise his batting average. (Yes, his data scientist dad tracked his stats from his very first at-bat as a five-year-old!) He quickly found two very good options—one for \$200, the other for \$325. He couldn't



WHEN WE MAKE DECISIONS WE TEND TO APPLY MENTAL SHORTCUTS, OR HEURISTICS, THAT ALLOW US TO THINK FAST, WHICH MEANS THERE IS NO TIME FOR CAREFUL OPPORTUNITY-COST THINKING.

decide between them, so I did what any economist father would do and said, “Mason, think about it like this. If you buy the \$200 bat, then that leaves you \$125 to also buy a good new Rawlings baseball glove.” He took this suggestion in. Within a minute we were at the cash register with the cheaper bat and a new Rawlings glove.

Mason had factored opportunity cost into his decision-making. Because he had a finite amount of money to spend, had he opted for the more expensive bat, not only would he have had to shell out \$325, but he also would have had to forgo buying the new glove as well.

Sometimes we do such calculations instinctively. But often we don’t stop to consider opportunity cost until both options come into our field of vision, a phenomenon demonstrated by a body of influential psychological research showing that our judgments and preferences tend to be based primarily on information that is explicitly presented. When we make decisions we tend to apply mental shortcuts, or heuristics, that allow us to think fast, which means there is no time for careful opportunity-cost thinking. Relatedly, research on affective forecasting—our ability to predict the emotions we will feel in the future—reveals that judgments about our future well-being are excessively sensitive to current mood, causing us to neglect other relevant factors. In other words, we magnify the importance of the emotions sitting in front of us, which can lead to more impulsive decision-making.

When I was a sports card dealer I saw this all

the time. Too many times to remember, a buyer would have a hard time choosing between two cards—buying, say, a \$250 Ken Griffey rookie card or a \$200 A-Rod card—so I would frame the choice as follows: “Would you rather have the Griffey, or the A-Rod card and five packs of Upper Deck cards?” Remarkably, the decision that had seemed so difficult just moments before was suddenly no longer difficult at all: A-Rod and the five packs.

Experimental research suggests that policymakers are also vulnerable to the same bias, known as opportunity cost neglect, when evaluating the best programs to fund, causing decision-makers to commit to one program without fully considering others. I have often heard “What benefits can \$10 million produce if invested in this policy?” But rarely have I heard “Alternatively, what benefits could the \$10 million reap if invested elsewhere?” The business world is subject to this phenomenon, too, though it has more built-in practices to guard against it, since understanding opportunity cost is crucial in a competitive environment. This takes us back to the concept of marginal thinking, which is inseparable from opportunity cost. When resources are limited, if you’re not getting the most out of every last dollar spent, the opportunity cost includes the additional impact your dollars could have had if allocated more effectively.

All of this is to say that evaluating opportunity costs requires consideration of alternative options that are not explicit components of a decision, like

the five packs of Upper Deck cards and Mason's new baseball glove. But the opportunity cost isn't always about what money can buy. When we ignore opportunity cost, we often squander that most precious limited resource of all: time.

In the same way that when we spend our money on one thing we can't spend it on another, when we spend our time on one thing we can't spend it on another. When a company focuses all of their resources on scaling one product, they can't scale another. When a government scales one public program, they don't scale another. To implement such endeavors means investing not just money but also thousands of hours of time by the people involved. In this manner, as an organization scales, opportunity costs grow—more money is spent, but so is more time. And time, economically speaking, is money.

Ever since Gary Becker [AM'53, PhD'55], the famous Chicago economist, began working on determining the actual value of time, economists have explored various ways to measure this slippery economic entity. At present, economists have managed to estimate the value of our time across different settings, places, and populations. For instance, what is the value of the time a transportation program will give back to citizens if, say, it funds a new rail line that will shorten riders' commutes? There are numerical estimates that can be made by looking at the value of the productive things people will do with the time they recoup. But the opportunity cost of time isn't just about money made or lost—it's about how we spend the tick-tocking of hours endowed to us during our limited time on earth.

We want to get the most out of our lives, which is why we don't like requesting Lyft rides whose wait times feel too long (and why we hate waiting more generally) and are always on the lookout for productivity hacks. We want to maximize what we accomplish with our time and minimize the opportunity costs of time wasted deleting spam emails or standing on a corner waiting for a Lyft to show up.

For people and organizations with big, bold ideas they hope to take to scale, opportunity costs are especially important to consider. The more an idea scales, the more time, money, and opportunity can be lost. Moreover, for most people who

dream of scaling something they are passionate about, there is also an emotional cost: the fear of disappointment and heartbreak that comes with investing their time—which is to say, their life—in something that doesn't work out. Think about the scientist who chooses one line of research in the hope of discovering a cure to a disease, or the start-up founder with an idea for a new technology that might revolutionize an industry. Pursuing such objectives requires tremendous sacrifices, the most significant of which is the opportunity costs of paths not taken. This is why it is so devastating when an idea you pour your heart and soul and time into fails to scale. It's not just voltage you lose. It's all the other promising opportunities you turned down in the process. The more time you sink into the wrong idea, the more you are mispending life's most precious resource. But if you quit at the right time (and ignore that sunk cost), then you can move on to scale something else—something with a better shot at success.

This is what I call optimal quitting.

Sometimes you have to leave behind that professional golf career you've been dreaming of—by which I mean that idea you dreamed of scaling and changing the world with but which just isn't performing how you want—in order to shift gears and find a better one. And the sooner you do this, the lower the opportunity cost you'll pay. Yet giving up at the right moment—before we sacrifice overmuch—doesn't come naturally to us for the same reason that accurately calculating opportunity cost doesn't come naturally to baseball card collectors or eight-year-old Little Leaguers. It requires an effort that runs counter to our deep-rooted heuristics and fast way of thinking. We have to battle our own default mental complacency. ♦

John A. List is the Kenneth C. Griffin Distinguished Service Professor in Economics and the College at the University of Chicago.

From the Book: *The Voltage Effect: How to Make Good Ideas Great and Great Ideas Scale* by John A. List. Copyright © 2022 by John A. List. Published by arrangement with Currency, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

*Decorator and pulp writer
Richard Himmel, EX'42 (1920–2000),
had a private eye for design.*

BY CARRIE GOLUS, AB'91, AM'93



I pointed to the piano. “You play?”

“A little,” she said.

“Would you play for me?”

“No. I don’t think I’ll ever play again.”

Oh, baby, I was thinking, you’re going to play a lot of things again. You’re going to play a lot of things you never played before.

—Richard Himmel, *I’ll Find You*

Johnny Maguire—the narrator of *I’ll Find You*—is right, of course. Shirley is not the demure young Kansas widow she pretends to be. After she fakes her own death, Maguire finds her in Florida, now reinvented as a nightclub singer. A complicated plot, with generous helpings of sex and violence, ensues.

I’ll Find You by Richard Himmel, EX’42, published in 1950, was one of the first paperback originals from Fawcett Gold Medal Books. Short, fast-paced, printed on cheap paper with lurid illustrated covers, Gold Medal paperbacks sold for 25 cents (about \$3.00 today) at newsstands, drugstores, and dime stores. *I’ll Find You* was reprinted five times, and more books featuring self-described “punk” lawyer Johnny Maguire quickly followed: *The Chinese Keyhole* and *I Have Gloria Kirby* in 1951, *Two Deaths Must Die* in 1954, and *The Rich and the Damned* in 1958.

The series is set in Chicago (though it’s never named), and occasionally Himmel borrows from his UChicago experience or makes in-jokes for the home crowd. In *I Have Gloria Kirby*, for example, Maguire checks his ex-

girlfriend—now a gangster’s moll addicted to heroin—into a hotel under the name “Marion Talbot.” The real Miss Marion Talbot, UChicago’s first dean of women, would have been scandalized. “My mother always said my typewriter should be washed out with soap,” Himmel once said.

But Himmel himself was leading “a double life,” as the headline for a 1951 *University of Chicago Magazine* article phrased it, hyperbolically. Writing “slick fiction that sells and sells” was just a side hustle. Himmel’s day job—aimed at a completely different set of consumers—was “a best-selling business in swank North Shore interiors.”

In the early 1970s, a *New York Times* article described Himmel as “Chicago’s most successful interior designer.” In 1985, when the Interior Design Hall of Fame was established, he was

Photography by John Reilly

Interior designer Richard Himmel, EX'42, was known for his ebullient personality, his flamboyant taste—which he did not impose on his clients—and his over-the-top book release parties.

among the first group of designers inducted. In addition to the residential work, he designed restaurants, nightclubs, country clubs, banks, and even corporate jets. Yet descriptions of interiors are almost entirely absent from his fiction, which is characterized by short sentences, world-weary observations, and, above all, action.

Born in Chicago in 1920, Himmel enrolled at the University in 1938. He studied with Mortimer Adler and Robert Maynard Hutchins, as well as novelist and playwright Thornton Wilder, a part-time faculty member at the time. Described by classmates as “social arbiter of the years ’39 to ’42,” Himmel wrote a gossip column for the *Maroon* and was its last editor as a daily paper. He was so fond of the typewriter he used as a freshman reporter at the *Maroon* (illustrated on this issue’s cover), he bought it and pecked out his potboilers on it, using two fingers.

After serving in the Army during World War II, Himmel returned to Chicago and, with his sister Muriel Lubliner, cofounded Lubliner and Himmel. The interior design company started as a furniture business, specializing in remaking antiques in unconventional ways: chairs reupholstered with bright modern fabric, musical instruments transformed into lamps or vases. “It’s the design of the piece, not the antiquity and tradition that I respect,” Himmel once told the *New York Times*. His first interior design project was a half bathroom in a Lake Shore Drive apartment; when he was finished, the client hired him to do the other 17 rooms.

Himmel married Elinor Bach in 1947. The couple had two children: a daughter, Ellen, and a son, John Maguire Himmel, named after his novels’ Irish protagonist.

In the evenings Himmel worked on his first manuscript, “Heart of the Wilderness.” The dark, brooding story

centers on a love triangle: after Jack is killed in the war, his widow, Kit, and his best friend, Rocky, try to make sense of their grief. Although homosexuality is condemned—in a scene in a Paris hotel room, when Jack confesses the true depth of his feelings, Rocky punches him out—their relationship is portrayed sensitively and sympathetically. Literary publishers rejected the manuscript, but it was released as a pulp novel, *Soul of Passion*, in 1950.

Himmel gave up moonlighting after the fifth Johnny Maguire book, *The Rich and the Damned*, appeared in

**IT’S THE DESIGN
OF THE PIECE,
NOT THE
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TRADITION THAT
I RESPECT.**

1958; he stopped publishing for almost 20 years as his design career flourished. Although he was discreet about his residential clients, he was known to have worked for Muhammad Ali, gossip columnist Irv Kupcinet, and Saul Bellow, EX’39. Himmel was successful, according to a 1971 *New York Times* article, because he did not impose his taste on his clients: “You tell me, baby, how you live and what you like,” he would say, “and I’ll deliver it.”

Himmel’s own living spaces were as unapologetically splashy as his fiction. His library in the 1970s, for example, had a mirrored skylight, floor-to-ceiling windows, a collection of Napoleonic figurines, a Mickey Mouse telephone, and all of the books—including the first editions—covered in plain white dust jackets. “Outrageous?” he told the *New York Times*. “Far from it, I call it serene.”

In the 1970s and ’80s Himmel returned to writing, publishing three hardcover spy thrillers: *The Twenty-Third Web* (Random House, 1977), *Lions at Night* (Delacorte Press, 1979), and *Echo Chambers* (Delacorte Press, 1982). (Himmel’s release parties were legendary: for *Lions at Night*, set in Cuba, he rented a parking lot on Michigan Avenue and brought in lions and men in guerrilla fatigues.) His final manuscript, “The Uncircumcised Jew,” never made it into print.

When Himmel died in 2000 at age 79, he was primarily known for his design work, while his writing—despite the millions of books sold—had fallen into obscurity. In 2019 publisher Cutting Edge Books began reissuing his novels as stand-alone paperbacks (sadly, with far less arresting covers) and in collections with other writers. *The Complete Works of Richard Himmel*, with all 12 of his published works, was released as an e-book in 2020.

Himmel’s novels were intended to shock, and they still do. He was unembarrassed by his subject matter, with one exception: “I am always afraid,” he told the *Magazine* in 1951, “that Norman Maclean [PhD’40] will pick up one of my books in an El station, and send it back to me, corrected like one of my old themes.”

In Himmel’s work, sex is celebrated, never punished or shamed—even in the books from the early ’50s. Women characters are not weak: when slapped (as happens not infrequently), their typical reaction is contemptuous laughter. Himmel’s books are transgressive in ways that are both disturbing and exhilarating. They’re also stylish, escapist, breezy, and almost impossible to put down. ♦



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JOHN MAGUIRE HIMMEL AT
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PEER REVIEW

WHAT ALUMNI ARE THINKING AND DOING

NAKED GENIUS

In 1941 Richard Philbrick, EX'43; John Stephens, SB'42; and Richard Himmel, EX'42, cozied up to Gypsy Rose Lee, author of *The G-String Murders* (Simon and Schuster). "A first-rate book," Himmel wrote in a *Daily Maroon* review. "A burlesque queen who talks about Proust and G-strings with equal facility is enough to capture any college boy's heart." For more on Himmel, see "Interior Monologue," page 46.

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NOTES

A SELECTION OF ALUMNI WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE NEWS

THE DOCTOR'S RECORDS

Rich Krueger, AB'82, PhD'88, MD'90, a neonatologist who moonlights as a recording artist, appeared on *CBS Sunday Morning* in August in a story titled "The Singing Doctor." The UChicago Medicine clinical associate in pediatrics was writing and performing music back in his days at the Pritzker School of Medicine, but it wasn't until 2018 that he independently released his first two albums as a solo singer-songwriter, *Life Ain't That Long* and *NOWThen*. In 2020 he followed up with a collection of early demos, *The Troth Sessions*. Krueger's releases have won accolades, as his CBS appearance highlighted. "He's one of the greatest songwriters ever to make long-playing records," said rock critic Robert Christgau during the segment. "I don't mean he's a Randy Newman or Lennon/McCartney or a Jagger/Richards. But just below that, yes; he is that good."

SOLDIERS AND SPICE

Social impact start-up Rumi Spice, co-founded by **Keith Alaniz**, MBA'18, topped *USA Today's* list of 10 veteran-owned businesses "to shop and support right now," published this past Veterans Day. Alaniz started the spice importing business in 2014 with two fellow US Army veterans who had also served in Afghanistan. The company began with a mission to connect Afghan farmers with international markets and continues to focus on the direct trade of ethically sourced spices, including its specialty, saffron. In 2019, two years after Alaniz and his cofounders pitched their business on *Shark Tank*, Rumi Spice's saffron became the first Afghan food product distributed nationally in the United States.

A STEADY HAND

In November **Bernard N. Grofman**, SB'66, AM'68, PhD'72, was appointed by the Virginia Supreme Court as one of two "special masters" responsible for redrawing the state's voting districts. Grofman, a political scientist at the University of California, Irvine, first helped Virginia redraw its congressional districts in 2015 after a federal court determined that the



SOUL MAN

Artifacts from the soul music collection of the late **Bob Abrahamian**, SB'99, form part of an exhibition at the Stax Museum of American Soul Music in Memphis, TN. *Solid Gold Soul: The Best of the Rest from the Stax Museum* features recent acquisitions and seldom-seen holdings from the museum's archives. Abrahamian's collection, which the museum acquired in April 2021, is among the largest of its kind in the world. Focused on Chicago musicians from the 1960s and '70s, it comprises more than 35,000 records, along with artist interviews and memorabilia including photographs and yearbooks. Abrahamian, who died in 2014, began documenting the history of Chicago soul music as host of the *Sitting in the Park* radio show for UChicago station WHPK. *Solid Gold Soul* runs until March 1.

state had discriminated against Black voters through gerrymandering. Last fall, after a bipartisan redistricting commission failed to reach agreement on new maps, the Democratic-nominated Grofman and his Republican-nominated counterpart were tasked with redrawing districts for Virginia's state offices and US congressional seats.

IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS

In December **David H. Albert**, AM'76, received the 2021 Jamnalal Bajaj International Award. Named for an early 20th-century Indian philanthropist and follower of Mahatma Gandhi, the honor recognizes work promoting Gandhian values outside India. After studying in the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought, Albert received training in nonviolence and other aspects of Gandhian philosophy from activist mentors in both the United States and India. Cofounder of the social service organization Friendly Water for the World, he works with impoverished communities in India and sub-Saharan

Africa to implement technologies that expand access to essential resources. In his acceptance speech, Albert gave thanks "to the marginalized, disempowered, and dispossessed of the world, who are likely our greatest teachers."

TENDING TO BUSINESS

Stephanie Wisner, MBA'20; **Wendy Z. Wang**, MBA'21; and Chicago Booth MBA student **Charu Sharma** made the *Forbes* magazine 30 Under 30 list. Wisner, named in the health care category, cofounded the biotechnology start-up Centivax, which develops medicines to treat COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Wang earned a spot in the food and drink category for leading business development at Umamicart, the online Asian grocery store she cofounded last year. Sharma, another health care honoree, is helping build an improved digital infrastructure for health care data at the Argentina-based Osana Salud, of which she is president.

—Andrew Peart, AM'16, PhD'18

Photo courtesy Stax Museum of American Soul Music

RELEASES

ALUMNI BOOKS, FILMS, AND RECORDINGS

DELIBERATELY DIVIDED: INSIDE THE CONTROVERSIAL STUDY OF TWINS AND TRIPLETS ADOPTED APART

By Nancy L. Segal, AM'74, PhD'82; Rowman & Littlefield, 2021

The documentary films *The Twinning Reaction* (2017) and *Three Identical Strangers* (2018) introduced many viewers to the stories of siblings who were unwitting subjects of the 1960s Louise Wise Services–Child Development Center study, which separated identical twins and triplets for adoption without revealing the facts about their birth histories to the adoptive parents. Offering the first in-depth look at the study's architects, psychologist and leading twin studies expert **Nancy L. Segal** tells the story of how a New York City adoption agency's psychiatric consultant and the director of the city's Child Development Center embarked on such an ethically fraught approach to tracking the developmental similarities and differences of twins and triplets reared apart.

CONQUERING THE PACIFIC: AN UNKNOWN MARINER AND THE FINAL GREAT VOYAGE OF THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

By Andrés Reséndez, AM'92, PhD'97; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2021

On a 1564–65 expedition organized by the Spanish crown, Afro-Portuguese mariner Lope Martín became the first navigator to sail from the Americas to Asia and back. In this account of the historic trade mission, University of California, Davis, historian **Andrés Reséndez** describes how Martín became part of King Philip II's international "dream team" of navigators, how the Black expedition leader ended up achieving the mission ahead of his White European counterparts, and how he withstood a cruel reversal of fortune after his return—only to suffer neglect by future historians. Reséndez aims to correct the record by restoring Martín to the pantheon of early modern explorers.



MIST-BOUND: HOW TO GLUE BACK GRANDPA

By Daryl Kho, AB'01; Penguin Random House SEA, 2021

Intergenerational family bonds are at the heart of this middle-grade fantasy novel by Singapore-based television industry professional **Daryl Kho**. To help her grandfather overcome a spell that has badly damaged his memories, Alexis must quest to a parallel world populated by creatures from the elderly man's folktales and find the magical ingredients needed to brew a cure known as memory glue. Kho, inspired to write the book by his father's struggle with dementia, crafts a story that helps young readers understand the illness and the importance of caring for elders.

MORE THAN MEAT AND RAIMENT

By Angela Jackson, AM'95; Northwestern University Press/TriQuarterly Books, 2022

With a title from the Sermon on the Mount, Illinois poet laureate **Angela Jackson**'s new collection draws on the power of memory and invocation to create lasting presence for people and places that no longer cling to the "meat and raiment" of this world. The book's opening section, "Hero-House: An African American Saga of Drylongso in the Great Migration," tells a story of everyday Black life through images of the Deep

South and Chicago's South Side. "I am the memory borrower, brothers and sisters," opens one of Jackson's poems. "I will keep you safe and sacred. I am a keeper."

STILL DOING LIFE: 22 LIFERS, 25 YEARS LATER

By Howard Zehr, AM'67, and Barb Toews; The New Press, 2022

What is it like to serve a life sentence? This is one question posed by restorative justice pioneer **Howard Zehr**'s coauthored book of photographs and interviews, which focuses mainly on the experiences of people incarcerated without the possibility of parole. In the early 1990s Zehr documented the images and stories of approximately 75 such men and women in Pennsylvania prisons. Permitted in 2017 to revisit about two dozen of those subjects, he worked with cowriter Barb Toews to assemble an updated portrait book juxtaposing the early and later photos and interviews. By revealing these prisoners' complex humanity, Zehr and Toews aim to promote dialogue about criminal justice policy.

WORLD CHRISTIANITY AND INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE: A GLOBAL HISTORY, 1500–2000

By David Lindenfeld, PhD'73; Cambridge University Press, 2021

Accounts of Christianity in world history tend to view Indigenous peoples as static groups that received a dynamic religious culture from Europeans, argues Louisiana State University historian **David Lindenfeld**. This view reinforces the missionary's perspective on Christianity's diffusion, says Lindenfeld, and it's one he aims to reverse. With examples from the early modern period to the present era in North America, sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, and elsewhere, he draws attention to how Indigenous actors experienced their encounters with Christian missionaries and what these actors did to shape one of the world's major religions.

—Andrew Peart, AM'16, PhD'18

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ALUMNI NEWS

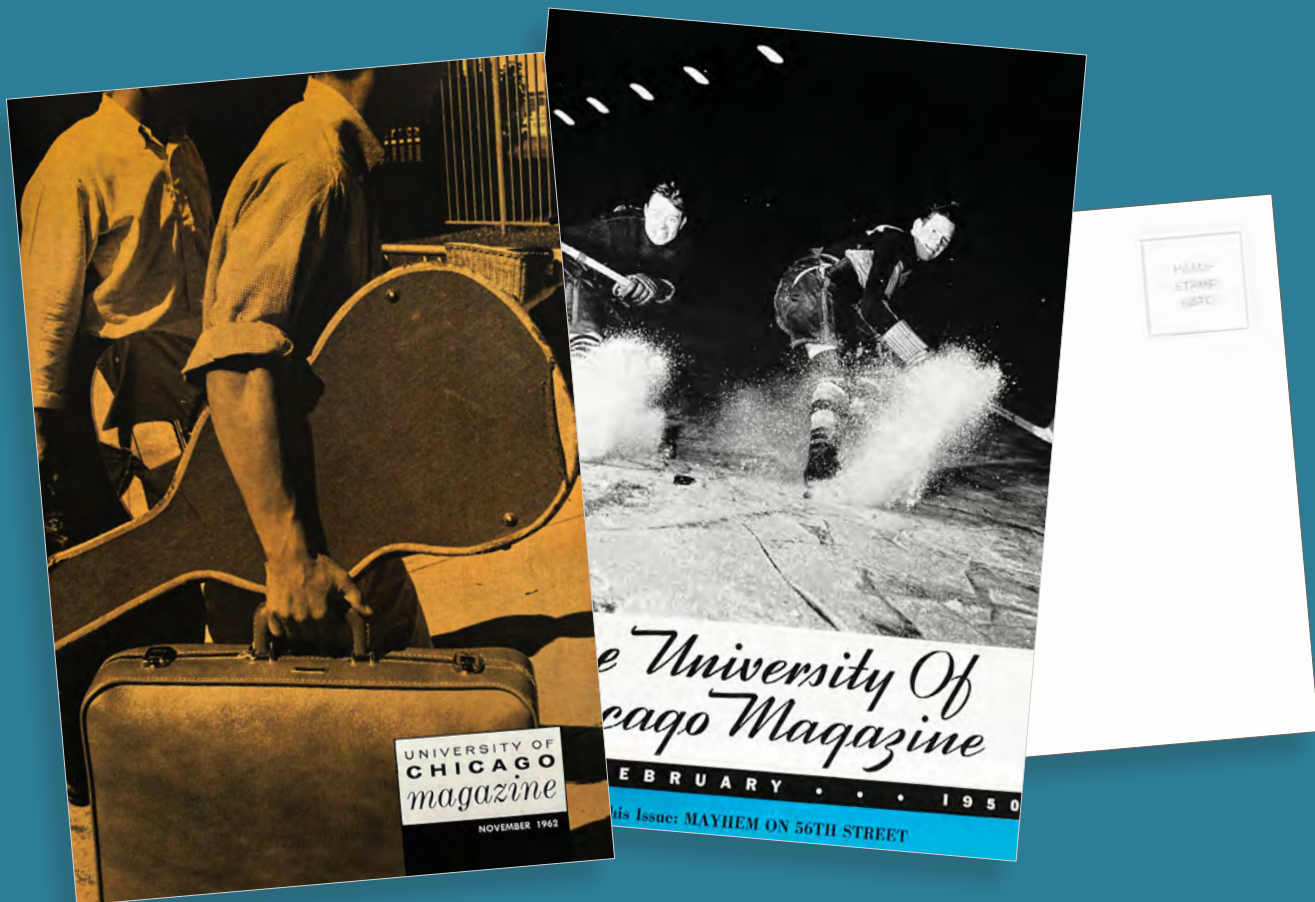
FROM THE CLASSES, SCHOOLS, AND DIVISIONS

To protect the privacy of our alumni, we have removed the class notes from this section. The remaining advertisements and photos have been consolidated to reduce the number of pages. If you are an alumnus of the University of Chicago and would like class notes from our archives, please email uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.

What's new? We are always eager to receive your news, care of the Alumni News Editor, *The University of Chicago Magazine*, 5235 South Harper Court, Chicago, IL 60615, or by email: uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. No engagements, please. Items may be edited for space. As news is published in the order in which it arrives, it may not appear immediately. We list news from all former undergraduates (including those with UChicago graduate degrees) by the year of their undergraduate affiliation. All former students who received only graduate degrees are listed in the advanced degrees section.



Under one tent: The ancestral Maroons in this 1931 photo line up to sign up for the fun at that June's University of Chicago alumni reunion. You can follow in their footsteps by returning to Hyde Park for Alumni Weekend, May 19–22. The 2022 celebration will include festivities like the beer garden on the main quad, along with lectures, tours, and more. And for the Class of 1972, Class of 2017, and all the twos and sevens in between, mark the milestone year by gathering for your College class reunions. To learn more about Alumni Weekend events, and to register, visit alumniweekend.uchicago.edu. Planning to attend—or hoping to reconnect with UChicago friends at a mini reunion of your own? The fun that ensues is sure to be news, so send an update to your class correspondent or c/o Alumni News editor at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.



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Under the lanterns in Hutchinson Court: The Interfraternity Sing, seen here in an undated photo, first raised a joyful noise more than a century ago and remains a hallmark of UChicago alumni reunions. The May–June 1963 issue of the *University of Chicago Magazine*, which put a snapshot of the 53rd annual event on its cover, called the Interfraternity Sing “long the climax of a June reunion,” noting the “tradition-breaking result” in that year’s competition: one fraternity, Phi Gamma Delta, won both the quality cup (for the best singing performance) and the quantity cup (for the most students and alumni on stage). Since 1986 the IF Sing has been a coed tradition. At the most recent competition, in June 2019, the sisters bested the brothers, with Pi Beta Phi winning one of two quality cups, Kappa Alpha Theta taking the quantity cup, and Delta Gamma garnering the spirit cup (for best exemplifying the ideals of the Sing and the University). At this year’s Alumni Weekend, make your way to Hutch Court on Saturday evening to help ring in the return of the IF Sing.

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Master hand: A pointer from an Oriental Institute tour guide helps alumni guests appreciate the museum's Assyrian winged bull during reunion 1967. The 40-ton, 16-foot-tall human-headed bull sculpture was unearthed in northern Iraq during the OI's Khorsabad excavations (1928–35). In the eighth century BCE, this protective deity stood guard at the throne room of Assyrian king Sargon II. To accommodate the sculpture's height, the OI gallery was finished in 1930 only after the bull was brought to campus and the rest of the building could be constructed around it; the gallery's floor was also reinforced to support the sculpture's weight. The bull's symbiosis with its building means that it will surely be there the next time you drop in to visit the OI.



Another stitch in time: Alumni Association president Julian J. Jackson, PhB'31, wore a funky caftan for the Honorable Alumni Parade in June 1975. This event was something of a throwback. Reports of the alumni parade tradition in the *University of Chicago Magazine* date back to 1910. In 1916 the *Daily Maroon* described the parade that June as a carnivalesque event. Marshals on horseback—one recent alumnus and several undergraduates—directed the procession from Bartlett Gymnasium south to the Midway and back to Stagg Field. Near the front of the line were University president Harry Pratt Judson and his wife, Rebecca, and closing out the seven-division march of alumni classes and current students were a number of circus floats. Thanks to the alumni reunion committees, reported the *Maroon*, the parade was awash in “several thousand distinguishing costumes”—a tradition clearly revived by at least some in the 1970s. If you have memories of the alumni parade in any era, send us a note at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. For another look at the Honorable Alumni Parade events of the '70s, see “The Party Hits Its Stride,” page 62.

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The party hits its stride: Maroons of different generations converge as the Honorable Alumni Parade turns the corner around Regenstein Library in 1976. The reunion event continued a venerable UChicago tradition (see “Another Stitch in Time,” page 60). The Class of 1951, celebrating their 25th reunion that year, had an important place in the procession. Other featured sections included the women’s crew club, established in 1975. The all-campus event gave paraders and onlookers alike the opportunity for serendipitous run-ins. If you have a story about a memorable chance encounter at reunion, write to us at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.



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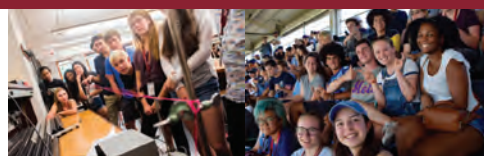
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While Al's guitar gently weeps: Ari Weinberger, AB'96 (left), and Mike Landrigan, AB'94 (right), study brain physiology in February 1994. Al Yegros, AB'95, accompanies them on guitar. Chicago winters bring much of campus life indoors and turn the dorms into scenes of disparate activities, as this cramming and jamming trio attests. What did you do to make dorm life fun in the winters? Write to us at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.



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Blast from the icy past: During the first week of Winter Quarter 2010, *UChicago Magazine* embedded a photographer to snap images of campus life when the going gets tougher. Our shuddering shutterbug captured students rushing across Harper quad through snowfall, as seen here, along with other feats of winter endurance: suiting up to bike across campus on a below freezing day, scraping ice off the windshield before a frosty drive, playing football on a snowy Midway. Tell us about your defining experience on a campus that does freeze over by writing to uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. When did you know you had just faced the Hawk in all its raw power?

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DEATHS

FACULTY AND STAFF

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, AB'60, PhD'65, professor emeritus of psychology and comparative human development, died October 20 in Claremont, CA. He was 87. A Hungarian-born exile in Europe after World War II, Csikszentmihalyi heard a lecture by Carl Jung in Switzerland and decided to study psychology in the United States. He worked nights to pay his way through the College, later earning his PhD in human development. Joining UChicago's faculty in 1970, he taught at the University for three decades. In 1975 he published a book that introduced his concept of autotelic experience, which he also dubbed *flow*. The idea that peak experiences come from immersive activities influenced both academic thought and popular culture. His 1990 book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* made the term a household word. A founder of the field known as positive psychology, he focused in his later research on motivation. His many honors include the Széchenyi Prize, Hungary's most prestigious science award. He is survived by his wife, Isabella; two sons, **Mark Csikszentmihalyi**, LAB'82, and **Christopher Csikszentmihalyi**, LAB'86; and six grandchildren.

1940s

Mark A. Bradley, PhB'47, died June 1 in Basalt, CO. He was 92. After serving in the US Army during the Korean War, Bradley worked for many years as an executive at Chicago's Regensteiner Press. He later moved to the Aspen, CO, area, where he enjoyed Aspen Institute programs and the Aspen Music Festival and School. A connoisseur of the arts, Bradley also remained a downhill and cross-country skier into his 70s.

Ed Asner, EX'48, died August 29 in Tarzana, CA. He was 91. As a member of the Chicago theater troupes *Tonight* at 8:30 and the Playwrights Theatre Club, Asner performed with future principals of the Second City. He moved to roles on and off Broadway before establishing his television and film career in Hollywood. Best known for playing gruff newsman Lou Grant on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and the eponymous spin-off drama series, he won five of his seven Emmy Awards for the role. His later career included acting or voice roles in such films as *Elf* (2003) and Pixar's *Up* (2009). A two-time president of the Screen Actors Guild, Asner was an outspoken advocate for labor issues and other social causes. He is survived by two daughters, two sons, and 10 grandchildren.

1950s

Edmond W. Freeman III, EX'51, died May 3 in Little Rock, AR. He was 94. While a gradu-

ate student in philosophy at UChicago, Freeman met and married **June Biber Freeman**, PhB'47, SB'49, EX'53. The couple moved back to his native Arkansas, where he became publisher of the *Pine Bluff Commercial*, which his great-grandfather founded in 1881. Under his guidance, the *Commercial's* editorial page editor received a 1969 Pulitzer Prize for a series on civil rights, and the paper's advocacy for conservation of the Buffalo River helped that waterway become the US National Park Service's first national river in 1972. In retirement the Freemans worked to support arts, education, and health care organizations. He is survived by his wife, a daughter, three sons, six grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

Franz A. Posey, SM'52, PhD'55, died April 15 in Nashville, TN. He was 91. With his master's and PhD in chemistry, Posey worked for three decades as a research chemist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Among many honors, he received an *Industrial Research* magazine I-R 100 Award (now *R&D Magazine's* R&D 100 Award) for codeveloping a highly efficient process to recover silver from photographic and photocopier waste liquids—thereby making the liquids clean enough to empty down the drain. He is survived by two daughters, a son, five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Richard L. Konizeski, SM'53, PhD'55, of Port Townsend, WA, died January 28, 2021. He was 103. With his doctorate in geology, Konizeski moved with his family to western Montana and went to work for the US Geological Survey's water resources division. He later became a professor of hydrology in the University of Montana's School of Forestry, retiring in 1980. He and his wife then traveled the West Coast by sailboat, settling in Cape George, WA. He was known in nearby Port Townsend as the man in the beaver coat for his recognizable winter garment. He is survived by two daughters, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Timuel D. Black Jr., AM'54, died October 13 in Chicago. He was 102. A teacher, civil rights leader, and oral historian, Black served in the US Army during World War II, fighting in both D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge, and studied sociology and history for his UChicago master's. He then began a teaching career that took him to high schools in Chicago and Gary, IN, as well as to the City Colleges of Chicago. In 1956 he brought Martin Luther King Jr. to speak at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. Seven years later he brought Chicagoans to King as an organizer of the freedom trains destined for the March on Washington. Black went on to march with King during his Chicago Freedom Movement. Instrumental in ending segregation in the Chicago Public Schools, Black also organized voters for Harold Washington's historic 1983 campaign for Chicago mayor, helped with **Carol Moseley**

Braun's (JD'72) barrier-breaking US Senate win, and mentored a young Barack Obama. In his 80s he published two volumes of oral history under the title *Bridges of Memory* that chronicled the Great Migration to Chicago. An icon of Black Chicago and the freedom struggle in America, Black received numerous honors, including UChicago's William Benton Medal for Distinguished Public Service. He is survived by his wife, Zenobia Johnson-Black, and a daughter.

Lucy Brundrett Jefferson, AB'54, AB'55, AM'57, died June 23 in Concord, NH. She was 86. With her UChicago master's degree in education, Jefferson worked in adult education and became politically active as a Democratic Party organizer in Michigan and New Jersey. After earning a second master's in Middle Eastern politics and then moving to Boston, she switched to a career in psychology, working as a family therapist for a decade and a half with her husband, Alfred Carter Jefferson, PhD'59. When the couple converted to Catholicism, they began providing marriage enrichment workshops through Boston's archdiocese. A member of the Ogunquit (ME) Art Association, she pursued passions for watercolor painting, photography, and paper crafts. Her husband died in 2015. She is survived by a daughter, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Carol Wendell Miller, AM'55, of Chicago, died January 29, 2021. She was 88. After teaching English at the City Colleges of Chicago's Wilbur Wright College, Miller worked in special education at the former Charles F. Read Zone Center and then as an activity director at a Niles, IL, nursing home. A cofounder of what became known as the *Peperomia* and *Exotic Plant Society*, she edited the group's newsletter, the *Peperomia Gazette*. She is survived by her daughter and her grandson.

D. Kent Morest, AB'55, died December 30, 2020, in Cambridge, MA. He was 86. With his MD from the Yale School of Medicine, Morest earned a reputation as "the father of modern neuroanatomy of the auditory system" and also helped pioneer the field of developmental neuroscience. After a stint on the UChicago faculty, he taught and conducted research at Harvard Medical School and the University of Connecticut Health Center, where he helped establish the neuroscience department and neuroscience doctoral program. He produced groundbreaking studies of the auditory brainstem that enabled early research on central auditory signal processing. His many honors include a UChicago Professional Achievement Award. He is survived by a daughter, **Lydia Morest**, AM'92; a son; and three grandchildren.

Philip K. Bock, AM'56, died June 16 in Albuquerque. He was 86. With his UChicago master's in anthropology, Bock wrote his

Harvard dissertation in the same field, on the Micmac people of eastern Canada. He spent the rest of his academic career at the University of New Mexico, rising to the rank of presidential professor of anthropology. An authority in the field of psychological anthropology, he wrote the textbooks *Modern Cultural Anthropology: An Introduction* (1969) and *Rethinking Psychological Anthropology: Continuity and Change in the Study of Human Action* (1988). Bock also served as editor in chief of the *Journal of Anthropological Research*. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; three daughters; and two grandsons.

Emil R. Johnson, AB'56, AM'58, died November 16, 2020, in Chicago. He was 86. Johnson taught political science at the City Colleges of Chicago. A longtime public director of the Illinois FAIR Plan Association, he also served on the board of the Illinois Mine Subsidence Insurance Fund. He is survived by his wife, Carol High Johnson.

Bruce E. Kaufman, JD'56, died January 9, 2021, in Tucson, AZ. He was 91. A US Marine Corps captain in the Korean War, Kaufman went on to serve as Illinois assistant attorney general. Moving to New Mexico in the 1970s, he took on roles as assistant and deputy district attorney in the state's first judicial district. At one time a legal adviser to the New Mexico State Police, he later became a first district judge. After relocating to Arizona, Kaufman was active in the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society. He is survived by a daughter, a son, seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Kenneth L. Currie, SM'58, PhD'59, of Nepean, Ontario, died April 19. He was 86. Earning his master's and doctorate in geography with a focus on theoretical geology, Currie, a varsity basketball player and swimming captain, also received UChicago's Amos Alonzo Stagg Medal in recognition of his athletics, scholarship, and character. He joined the Geological Survey of Canada in 1960 and created extensive geological maps for areas of British Columbia, the Maritimes, and the Canadian Shield. An expert on craters, he was appointed as a scientific investigator for NASA's Apollo 11 mission, gaining a rare opportunity to study moon rocks. He also arranged a Canadian-Soviet scientific exchange in the late 1970s. Active in church life, Currie served on the board of the Lutheran Church—Canada's east district for two decades. His wife, Edrith (Rohwer) Currie, AM'59, died in 2016. He is survived by three daughters, including **Ruth Ann Smith**, AM'88; two sons; and 10 grandchildren, including **River J. MacLeod**, AB'21.

James C. Hormel, JD'58, died August 13 in San Francisco. He was 88. A former UChicago administrator who became the first openly gay US ambassador, Hormel served as dean of students at the Law School from 1961 to 1967 and later established a loan forgiveness program there to encourage students to pursue public service. A life member of the Law School Council, he also helped establish several scholarships at the school. He cofounded the LGBTQ advocacy group the

Human Rights Campaign and, as a scion of the Hormel Foods family, chaired the company that manages the family's investments and philanthropy. His government service included two United Nations appointments during the Clinton administration. Hormel began his historic term as ambassador to Luxembourg in 1999 after a two-year battle with congressional opponents. He is survived by his husband, Michael P. N. A. Hormel; four daughters; a son; 14 grandchildren, including **Heather Hormel Miller**, JD'02; and seven great-grandchildren.

Richard J. Feldman, EX'59, of Stevens Point, WI, died May 16. He was 88. Feldman attended UChicago's Divinity School and served as a Baptist minister in Chicago; Bonesteel, SD; Garden City, KS; and Champaign, IL. Following a role as ecumenical campus minister at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, he switched careers and earned a PhD in philosophy and law. A member of the philosophy faculty for 25 years at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, he chaired his department and coordinated the school's honors program. In retirement he led efforts to create the central Wisconsin-based LIFE (Learning Is ForEver) lifelong learning program. He is survived by his wife, Lois; two daughters; a son; four grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

Thomas W. Pape, AB'59, MST'74, died February 26, 2021, in Chesterton, IN. He was 85. After studying education as an undergraduate, Pape taught in a one-room California schoolhouse and later at a Los Angeles-area high school. Returning to earn his master of science in teaching at UChicago, he went on to teach at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in northwest Indiana, retiring in 2005 as the head guidance counselor at Michigan City High School. Pape also served as an instructor in counselor education at what is now Purdue University Northwest. He is survived by his wife, Maura; a daughter; three sons; a sister; and six grandchildren.

1960s

James A. Serritella, AM'68, JD'71, died April 23 in Chicago. He was 78. A former Catholic seminarian, Serritella became an attorney and served for nearly 50 years as principal outside counsel and legal adviser to the Archdiocese of Chicago. Chair of the religious and not-for-profit group at the firm Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella, he became in the 1990s a chief architect of the archdiocese's approach to corrective action regarding clerical sex abuse of minors. He advocated for full disclosure and transparency on the part of the archdiocese and for compassionate care of survivors and their families, establishing a model for nationwide church policies. Serritella also represented the Catholic Church, other religious organizations, and secular nonprofits in courts including the Illinois and US Supreme Courts. He is survived by his son, **Anthony V. Serritella**, AB'06, and a sister.

James Dungan Smith, PhD'68, died May 2 in Longmont, CO. He was 81. With his doctorate in geophysical sciences, Smith worked at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts before joining the faculty of the University of Washington, where he chaired both the oceanography and geophysics departments. An internationally renowned specialist in fjord studies and sedimentary geology, he later worked for the US Geological Survey National Research Program in Boulder, CO. His many honors include the American Society of Civil Engineers' Hans Albert Einstein Award. He is survived by his wife, Mary Hill; two daughters; a son; and two grandchildren, including **Emma Smith**, Class of 2022.

Betty Lovell Deimel, AB'69, died May 21 in Canandaigua, NY. She was 72. After earning advanced degrees in library science and public administration, Deimel became a politically active feminist, marching for the Equal Rights Amendment and helping elect the first female mayor of Raleigh, NC. She held administrative positions with the National Association of Attorneys General and Allegheny College before joining Carnegie Mellon University's Software Engineering Institute, where she worked to improve the software development process. She later formed Gateway Associates and consulted worldwide on software process improvement. She is survived by her ex-husband, **Lionel E. Deimel**, AB'68, and a son.

Jeffrey T. Kuta, AB'69, JD'72, of Chicago, died July 12. He was 73. A sociology major in the College and an editor of the *Chicago Maroon*, Kuta later served as managing editor of the *University of Chicago Law Review*. As a real estate attorney, he worked extensively in affordable housing, chairing the American Bar Association's Forum on Affordable Housing and Community Development Law. Proud of his role in securing an easement for the Chicago Theatre to undertake interior repairs in its landmark building, Kuta provided pro bono legal services for such nonprofits as the Chicago dance company Ensemble Español. He is survived by his wife, **Diane L. Kuta**, MAT'71; two sons; two brothers; and two grandchildren.

Sadegh Malek Shahmirzadi, AM'69, died October 12, 2020, in Tehran, Iran. He was 80. A leading Iranian archaeologist, Shahmirzadi joined the University of Tehran's archaeology department in 1970 and served on the faculty for three decades. He supervised the excavations of many historical sites in the Iranian plateau, including Tepe Zagheh and Aq Tepe. He also launched the Sialk Reconsideration Project, renewing the excavation of one of the Middle East's most important sites. His many publications in Farsi and English include texts that have become university classroom standards in Iran.

1970s

Robert W. Finberg, AB'71, of Northborough, MA, died August 30. He was 71. A clinician, educator, and infectious disease researcher,

Finberg served as professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and chief of the infectious disease division at its teaching affiliate the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute before moving to the University of Massachusetts Medical School as Haidak Professor of Medicine and chair of the Department of Medicine. Emeritus since 2021, he was an internationally renowned physician-scientist with more than 300 publications. Finberg made major contributions to the understanding of antiviral immunity and the development of viral therapeutics and vaccines, focusing recently on the COVID-19 pandemic. He is survived by his wife, **Joyce Fingerroth**, AB'73; three daughters, including **Sara J. Fine**, AB'04; a sister; a brother, **James M. Finberg**, JD'83; and three grandchildren. **Linda Davis LaForge**, AB'74, died May 7 in Roselle Park, NJ. She was 69. A psychology major at UChicago, LaForge was a member of the campus group Students for Violent Non-Action and was proud of her role in convincing Valois to keep serving breakfast past morning. She worked in hospital administration and law office human resources before raising her family. A voracious reader, LaForge was also an enthusiast of classical music and avant-garde jazz. She is survived by her husband, James LaForge; two daughters; her mother; and a brother. **Steven D. Latterell**, EX'77, died May 17 in Oak Park, IL. He was 70. Latterell, who entered the College with the Class of 1973, also attended Chicago Booth later in the decade. A finance industry professional in Chicago, he worked for several banks and securities firms and at a brokerage. Outside of work, Latterell was an avid billiards player. He is survived by a daughter, a son, a brother, and seven grandchildren.

1980s

Joseph W. York, MBA'82, died April 17 in Lancaster, PA. He was 69. York, who held a public policy doctorate in addition to his business degree, spent his career in research and administrative leadership positions at several medical schools and other health care training institutions. After serving as director of the University of Washington School of Medicine's residency training program, he became the first national dean for health sciences at DeVry University and the first dean of graduate education at the Pennsylvania College of Health Sciences. He is survived by his wife, Mary Gibson; a son; and a brother.

Arlene Kirschenbaum Zide, PhD'82, died January 8, 2021, in Chicago. She was 80. Zide served for many years as professor of humanities and women's studies at the City Colleges of Chicago. With her PhD in linguistics and her expertise in Hindi and several Munda languages of India, she edited *In Their Own Voice: The Penguin Anthology of Contemporary Indian Women Poets* (1993). She also held a Fulbright Scholarship for translation work at the University of Delhi and a research associate position with the UChicago-based

Munda Language Project. A widely published poet, she edited the feminist literary journal *Primavera*. She is survived by her husband, **Norman H. Zide**, professor emeritus of South Asian languages and civilizations and linguistics; and sons **Gregory Zide**, LAB'83, and **William J. Zide**, LAB'83.

Thomas B. Levergood, AB'84, AM'89, of Chicago, died of cancer August 6. He was 58. Levergood earned his bachelor's in political science and his master's in the program then known as General Studies in the Humanities before returning to UChicago to pursue doctoral studies in theology, politics, and literature in the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought. He cofounded the Lumen Christi Institute, a center for Catholic thought, in Hyde Park in 1997, leaving his PhD unfinished to serve as its executive director. Levergood established a permanent home for Lumen Christi at Gavin House, adjacent to the Hyde Park campus; organized lectures and colloquia in collaboration with University faculty; and inspired similar institutes at other schools including Harvard University and Uppsala University. He is survived by a sister and a brother.

Andy Propst, AB'86, of Peachtree City, GA, died of cancer September 6. He was 56. An arts journalist and theater expert, Propst helped establish the Concrete Gothic Theatre Group at UChicago, later moving to New York City and becoming an assistant to Joseph Papp, founder of the Public Theater. In addition to creating AmericanTheater Web.com, an early online resource about nonprofit performing arts groups, he wrote theater criticism for the *Village Voice*, served as an editor for the website TheaterMania, and reported on-air for the satellite radio channel On Broadway. Propst also wrote a biography of songwriter and composer Cy Coleman, a study of the musical comedy duo Betty Comden and Adolph Green, and the book *The 100 Most Important People in Musical Theatre* (2019).

Snow Mitchell Jr., MBA'87, died April 17 in Woodstock, GA. He was 72. Mitchell began his career as a high school mathematics teacher. Transitioning to the banking industry, he earned his MBA while working for First Wisconsin National Bank. He went on to become president of North Milwaukee State Bank, the first Black-owned financial institution in Wisconsin. Moving to Georgia, he later served as southern regional vice president for Prison Fellowship Ministries. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen; two sons, including **Brian A. Mitchell**, MBA'01; and three grandchildren.

1990s

Andrew Kowalczyk, AB'95, died April 20 in Chicago. He was 47. A philosophy major and premed student in the College, Kowalczyk entered a postbaccalaureate research program at the Pritzker School of Medicine and later worked as a medical researcher, publishing articles in *Neurosurgery* and other journals. Passionate in his advocacy

for green technology and clean energy, he became a research engineer at the water heating technology company Intellihot. A world traveler who taught English and studied other languages abroad, he used his knowledge of French to translate articles for the website Global Voices. He is survived by his parents and a sister.

2000s

Courtney Hall, MBA'03, JD'03, of New York City, died April 29. He was 52. A National Football League center, Hall spent his eight-season career, from 1989 to 1996, with the then San Diego Chargers. For five of those seasons he was captain of the team, including for its lone Super Bowl appearance in 1995. He also represented the Chargers on the NFL Players Association. Retiring from the NFL, Hall earned a joint MBA and JD before launching a second career in finance. He worked in investment banking on Wall Street and later cofounded a venture capital firm. In 2014 Hall received the Gerald R. Ford Legends Award, an honor given to former collegiate or professional centers for contributions to football, business, or philanthropy. Survivors include his wife, LaShann Moutique DeArcy Hall; two daughters; two sons; and his mother.

2020s

Shaoxiong "Dennis" Zheng, SM'21, died November 9 in Chicago, the victim of a robbery and shooting. He was 24. Zheng studied statistics and finance as an undergraduate at the University of Hong Kong, where he earned a nickname meaning "young master" in Chinese for his mathematical talents. He continued his training in statistics at UChicago, receiving his master's degree this past summer. An aspiring data scientist, he conducted research using machine learning to infer gene regulatory networks. Remembered for his willingness to help others, Zheng also worked as a teaching assistant at Chicago Booth and the Harris School of Public Policy. Beyond his academic pursuits, his hobbies included table tennis, photography, and Chinese calligraphy. He is survived by his parents.

Samantha Burton, Class of 2022 in the Harris School of Public Policy, died of a sudden illness November 3 in Chicago. She was 23. After earning her bachelor's in political science from Hamline University, Burton worked there as a research assistant for a project assessing pedagogy and educational equity. A paper she cowrote on the subject appeared posthumously in the journal *Teaching in Higher Education*. At Harris, Burton was pursuing her master's in public policy and was a teaching assistant for courses on environmental and urban studies. A former legislative intern for a Minnesota nonprofit dedicated to reproductive rights, she studied that issue at Harris and advocated for a range of other progressive causes. She is survived by her parents and two sisters.



THE UCHICAGOAN

Richard H. Thaler

*Questions for
the Nobel Prize–winning
behavioral economist.*

What surprising job have you had in the past?

In college I had a part-time job delivering “books on vinyl” to housebound unsighted adults. Many lived alone, which I found unimaginable. A VW Beetle made that job possible.

What would you want to be doing if not your current profession?

I was hoping that my cameo in *The Big Short* would launch a movie career, but somehow that is not happening. Other “jobs” seem to require hard work and following orders. I am not good at either, so I was lucky to fall into teaching and research.

What person, alive or dead, would you want to write your life story?

Maybe John Maynard Keynes. He was a fantastic writer and a behavioral economist before such a thing existed. I’d love to get his take. If you can arrange that, please do.

What advice would you give to a brand-new Maroon?

You should not pick an occupation based on the subject you liked best in college. Think more about what a job is like day-to-day and whether you could imagine doing that for the rest of your life.

What UChicago classroom moment will you never forget, in three sentences or less?

The day I learned I had won the Nobel Prize in Economics, in a 5 a.m. phone call, I had a class scheduled for 6 p.m. Three hours! Fortunately I was coteaching the class and my partner had arranged champagne and a cake, and she told me to go home after an hour.



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Illustration by Graham Smith



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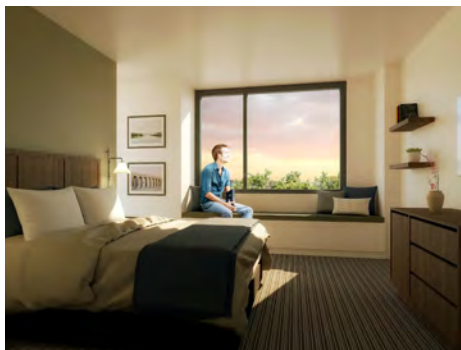
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