Rochester Review

University of Rochester
Spring 2026

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Birds of a Feather

Cognitive biologist Dora Biro releases a homing pigeon near the on-campus coop where she and her team study how birds navigate and make decisions in groups. Using data collected from GPS trackers, Biro studies the pigeons in flight to better understand how individual experiences and social interactions shape collective behavior. Her work offers insight into the ways groups think, move, and adapt—shedding light on the evolutionary roots of cognition and what animal minds can teach us about ourselves. Learn more at rochester.edu/news/biro.
—Lindsey Valich

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. ADAM FENSTER

High Dive

Julia Sides '27 gets ready for takeoff at the Speegle-Wilbraham Aquatics Center during the filming of the University of Rochester's new brand anthem video. Titled *Wonderful Combinations*, the video captures URochester's boundary-crossing spirit, "where art meets analytics, science meets soul, and curiosity leads to unexpected outcomes." Its original score was composed by the Eastman School of Music's Mark Watters and performed live by the Eastman School Symphony Orchestra. Watch the full video at rochester.edu/wonder.
—Tama Miyake Lung

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. ADAM FENSTER


NIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
YELLOWJACKETS
SWIMMING & DIVING
E S T E R
S T

Rise and Shine

Before most of campus is awake, student members of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) are already working out at Fauver Stadium. The twice-weekly training sessions are just one part of battalion life at URochester, which in 1945 was among the first 25 colleges selected by the US government to host a permanent NROTC unit. In the eight decades since, thousands of officers have gone on to serve the country—including Jonathan Hopkins '01, who in September took command of America's largest overseas naval base. —*Jim Mandelaro*

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. ADAM FENSTER


KAVY

for
EVER BETTER

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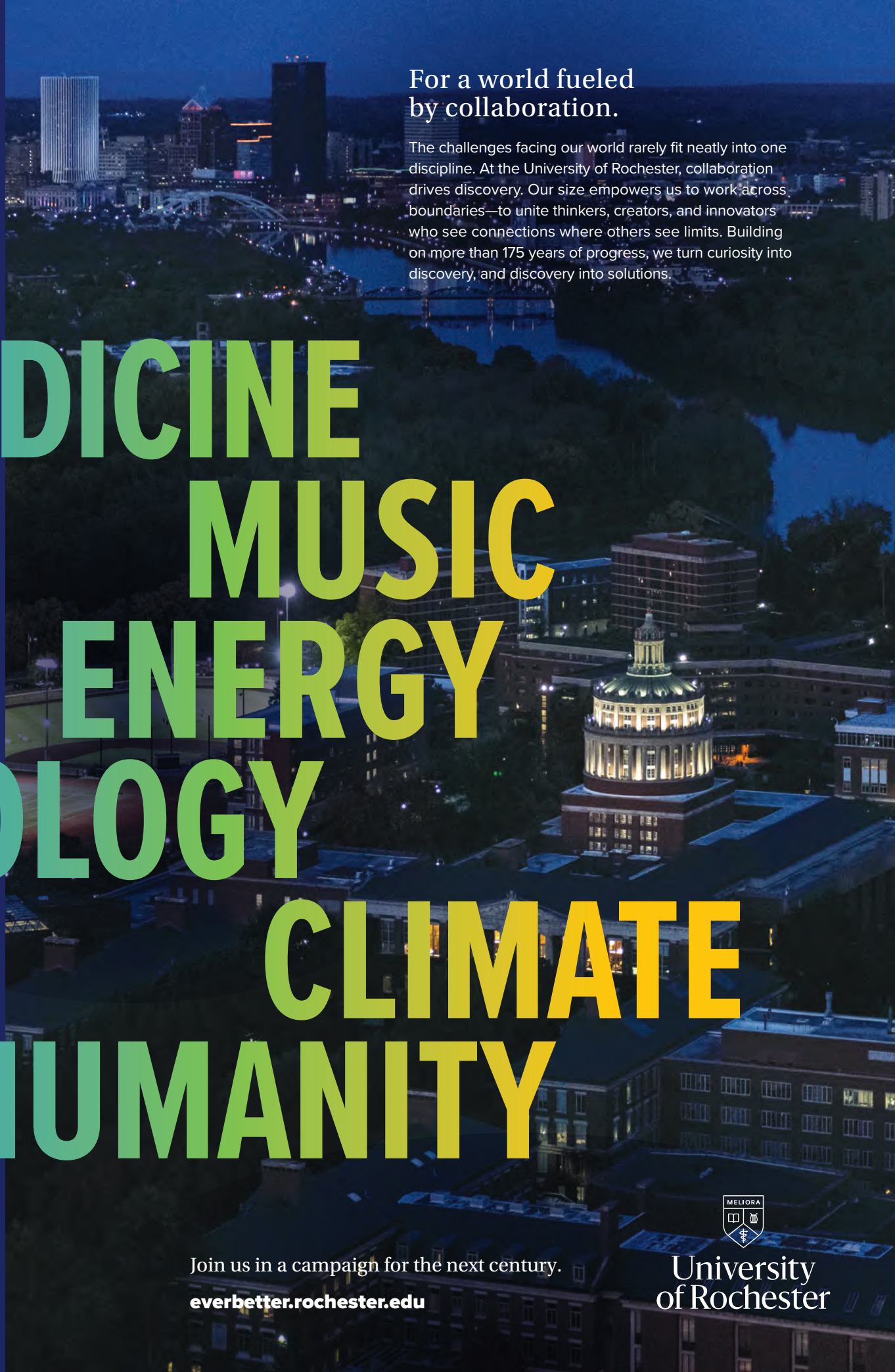
OF ROCHESTER



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MELIORA

University of Rochester

The Power of Perseverance

We are an institution that succeeds through our commitment to our mission and our support for one another.

BY SARAH C. MANGELSDORF

On a beautiful afternoon last September, I joined other Yellowjacket fans to watch our field hockey team take on Hamilton College. The game was tense and spirited, and scoreless throughout regulation, two overtime sessions, and a traditional shoot-out.

Finally, after *nine* rounds of sudden-victory shoot-outs, Hamilton emerged the winner, 1–0.

While the loss was disappointing, I admired the perseverance of the Yellowjackets and, in particular, the efforts of senior goalie Kara Houston, senior defender Abigal Mateer, and sophomore midfielder Sophia Cuneo. Together, they stopped 31 shots on goal, one of the most impressive performances I have seen as a lifelong field hockey fan and former player.

When I wrote to Kara after the game to share how impressed I was by the performance, she was quick to acknowledge her teammates: "It was a tough loss, but I'm really proud of how we came together," Kara wrote. "Our defense played their hearts out that game; I wouldn't be able to do what I do if it weren't for them!"

I have been thinking a lot about the importance of teamwork during the past several months. The perseverance and resilience of the Yellowjackets could be seen as a metaphor for the situation facing our University—and higher education and academic medicine, generally.

Over the past two years, we have seen unprecedented challenges come our way, including historic numbers of executive orders and federal policy changes affecting our research, international enrollment, clinical care, and campus culture. We also face demographic shifts among traditional college-age students, an evolving technological landscape, and changing public sentiment regarding higher education. So, like the Yellowjackets, we must work as a team to face our challenges, support one another, and remain true to our values.

"Like the Yellowjackets, we must work as a team to face our challenges, support one another, and remain true to our values."

MATT WITTMEYER

I am proud to report that we are persevering in our missions with the engagement and compassion for which we're known. Over the past 18 months, we have accomplished historic milestones, including National Cancer Institute designation for the Wilmot Cancer Institute, the creation of four new transdisciplinary research centers to leverage our innovative research and educational pathways, a revamped student life organization to better enhance the success of our students, and the public launch of the *For Ever Better* campaign.

Across our enterprises, we are reevaluating our programs to be leaders in a rapidly changing world. Our 2030 strategic plan, *Boundless Possibility*, has proved to be prescient in helping guide us, and the campaign will accelerate our movement toward our goals.

Despite the many challenges, we have seen successes that highlight our position as a leading research university. For example, in recent months, our Laboratory for Laser Energetics received record funding in the federal budget cycle; a team led by pioneering biologist Vera Gorbunova was awarded up to $22 million through a relatively new federal agency, Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, to explore ways to slow aging; and we're building partnerships with New York State to leverage our research prowess in AI and quantum science.

In addition, we earned reaccreditation as a community-engaged institution from the Carnegie Foundation. The national recognition affirms our deep and broad commitment to be the University *of* Rochester.

I'm grateful to be part of an incredible team across the University as we demonstrate our ability to adjust quickly and remain flexible. Our faculty members, students, staff, and academic, clinical, and operations leaders are committed to the success of our mission and the success of one another.

At Commencement this spring, we celebrated the Class of 2026 and members of our University community, as well as the families and friends who supported them in their journeys.

The ceremonies remind us that we each are part of a larger community that plays a role in our success. Through our perseverance and teamwork, we will make the world ever better well into the future.

Contact President Mangelsdorf:
thepresidentsoffice@rochester.edu

Connect with her on LinkedIn:
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"I was there!"

↑
Our fall 2025 issue debuted our first redesign in 15 years while celebrating the University's 175th anniversary.

Sky's the limit

I very much enjoyed your cover story, "175 Ways URochester Makes the World Ever Better," and shared many segments with my physics and astronomy high school students (still at it half-time and loving it!).

The images on the cover and page 13, however, are bittersweet to me. Just a decade ago, I could cross-country ski over the East Branch Pecatonica River bottoms here in southwestern Wisconsin on a moonless night by the light of the stars of the Winter Hexagon constellations and a planet or two. Suburban sprawl west of Madison and inappropriate high Kelvin and excessive outdoor lighting everywhere make that just a memory now. In 2026, how about commissioning a "176th way" that explores the many reasons all life on Earth, humans included, needs dark skies to live well? It's a terrific, interdisciplinary topic.

Mark Sturnick '77
Hollandale, Wisconsin

In the picture

The fall 2025 issue of *Rochester Review* had a picture [on page 59] of the 1960 International Conference on High Energy Physics, which brought back memories... I was there! My first published paper was presented by my coauthor, Professor E.C.G. Sudarshan, who was an editor of the conference proceedings. Many of the attendees were either recipients or future recipients of the Nobel Prize in Physics. Twenty-nine well-known Russian physicists in the field of elementary particle research were among the invited guests. The University of Rochester physics graduate students had full access to all the sessions, after-hours receptions, and other activities.

Coincidentally, the conference was held shortly after the U-2 spy plane incident. I was puzzled when several of the Russians were unwilling to respond to my attempts to use my few words of Russian. Later, when I mentioned this to Professor [Robert] Marshak, the conference organizer, he revealed there were KGB keeping an eye on the Russian physicists! In fact, my wife and I were amused when we were asked to ride on the bus with the Russian physicists for our visit to Niagara Falls and told to watch that none of them "strayed across the border" to Canada!

Several of the graduate students' wives were asked to help out during the day and at the evening cocktail parties. One of the directions was to ensure that none of the reporters approached [J. Robert] Oppenheimer or took pictures of him. Unlike most of the attendees, who were staying on campus, Oppenheimer was staying at a nearby hotel.

My wife was able to take many photographs of other attendees, however, including Werner Heisenberg and T.D. Lee, who had already received the Nobel Prize in Physics, and future Nobel winners Richard Feynman (1965), Murray Gell-Mann (1969), and Steven Weinberg (1979).

I still have vivid memories of this exciting experience and want to thank *Rochester Review* for bringing this important event to everyone's attention.

Gabriel Pinski '64 (PhD)
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

/KevinCarr

"I needed a pick-me-up, and the University of Rochester came through. As a proud alumnus, I'm beyond excited the university offered to highlight my debut novel in their official magazine. I've been writing my whole life, but about 10 years ago, UR helped take my craft to a new level thanks to their supportive culture and inspiring faculty. Fun fact: my obsession with Beowulf started with a semester-long class at UR, which led to the inspiration of this novel."

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Letters may be edited for accuracy, length, and clarity and must include the sender's full name and city and state/country of residence.
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Rochester Review
Spring 2026
Volume 88, No. 2

Published two times a year for alumni, parents, and friends of the University, *Rochester Review* is produced by University Marketing and Communications.

ISSN: 0035-7421

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University of Rochester

COVER: BRYCE WYMER

Student voices
I must take exception to item No. 130 in your "175 Ways" feature, which praises former U of R president W. Allen Wallis and others for serving on President Nixon's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force near the end of the Vietnam conflict. The item stated that they "focused less on the unpopularity of the draft and more on labor economics," but clearly the military draft was not ended for economic reasons but because of sustained resistance and activism by those who opposed the war. I know little of Mr. Wallis or the others, but I don't remember any of them ever engaging with the students or commenting on the morality or legality of America's military interventions in Southeast Asia—merely the most important issue of the day.

By contrast, at exactly the same time, the overwhelming anti-war sentiment on the U of R campus expressed itself in a powerful and nonviolent way that deserves at least as much recognition. Thanks to the efforts of some U of R faculty members and many student volunteers, the National Petition Committee was founded and run out of Fauver Stadium. At a time when schools around the country were experiencing violent reactions to the US invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State shootings, we at Rochester gave our feelings voice by collecting petitions, raising funds, and canvassing Rochester communities.

This was a significant, peaceful movement to protest a foreign policy that resulted in the deaths of thousands of young men our age. It was a genuine grassroots effort to advocate for peace and deserves to be recognized as a sincere attempt to "make the world ever better."

Richard Yannetti '72
Tarrytown, New York

Editor's response: *Thank you for sharing this valuable history. To clarify, the item was not meant to imply why the draft ended but rather to highlight the commission's role in transitioning away from it.*

@Nancy Curtis **So surprised and pleased to receive this great prize package from the University of Rochester as a winner of the *Rochester Review* "Life of a Demisemiseptcentennial" alumni crossword contest! Thanks again, #rochesterreview!**

↑
Congratulations to Martha McRoberts Bartlett '68, Budd Basinski '97S (MBA), Nancy Elliott Curtis '85E (MM), Ayla Martinelli '21, and Charles Stancampiano '71 (MS), '76 (PhD), who received special URochester prize packages for successfully completing and sending in their crossword puzzles from the fall 2025 issue!

A river runs through it
I particularly enjoyed the Ask the Archivist column on "The Genesee." I've been looking into the story of the river for my creative writing group in our senior residence. As it happens, I grew up in Wellsville and my high school was also on the banks of the Genesee. It was quite a job to retrieve from memory the words learned with the class of '57, '58N, as it was designated then. The singers included in the online article brought me to tears as I sang along.

Marian Jacobs Brook '57, '58N
Springfield, Massachusetts

Copy that!
I am enjoying the fall 2025 issue of *Rochester Review* and the many impressive accomplishments listed. However, I must point out two inaccuracies in the sidebar story about Xerox. While Chester Carlson did invent the xerographic process, stating that "Carlson created the Xerox 914" is incorrect. Carlson had virtually nothing to do with the creation of the copier itself, beyond inventing the underlying imaging process.

Additionally, the image used in the column is unrelated to xerography; that fax machine was not a plain-paper xerographic device. This is not meant to diminish the importance of Carlson and Xerox to the University, or my own 30 years of employment there.

John Linn '81W (MS)
Ponte Vedra, Florida

Editor's response: *You're right, John, and we've made the corrections online. Thank you—30 years at the company certainly makes you the expert here.*

Winds of change
When I was in high school in Chautauqua, New York, I had the opportunity to play bass clarinet in a high school wind ensemble under the baton of Frederick Fennell (creator of the wind ensemble, No. 57 in "175 Ways URochester Makes the World Ever Better") at SUNY Fredonia, in 1954 or '55.

I thought the whole idea was wonderful with clarinets taking the place of the violin section in an orchestra and alto and bass clarinets featuring as cellos and string basses. But I was embarrassed to be chastised for using a "slap tongue" by Conductor Fennell.

I later earned a BA at the U of R in 1959 but never played bass clarinet again because the instrument belonged to my high school.

Nancy Bates Carlman '59
Vancouver, Canada

Does not compute
Kudos for the fall 2025 issue! Although I do take exception to No. 156 in your "175 Ways URochester Makes the World Ever Better." I took Professor Riker's poli sci class in my freshman year, and that was the main reason I switched my major to history. I never saw the worth in reducing something as complex as the US political system to a mathematical model.

I have spent the last 50 years as a journalist—still working—and I can't say anyone has a clear handle on how the game is played in this country. If our political system was rational and predictable, as Riker maintained, I doubt it would be as broken as it is right now—and has been for the last 20 or 30 years.

Mel Hyman '71
Montclair, New Jersey

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING

FRONTIERS

The University of Rochester's researchers and clinicians are helping us understand why we sleep, what happens when we don't, and how it might be one of the most consequential forces in human health.

BY ERIN PETERSON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRYCE WYMER

The scientific establishment wasn't ready.

It was the early 2010s, and Maiken Nedergaard knew she was on the cusp of answering one of the most fundamental questions in biology: *Why do we sleep?*

The neuroscientist and codirector of University of Rochester Medicine's Center for Translational Neuromedicine had discovered what she and her husband and codirector Steven Goldman would dub the glymphatic system, a biological "dishwasher" that scrubs the brain of waste during sleep. It was a finding so important that *Science* magazine would list it among its 10 breakthroughs of the year in 2013.

You wouldn't have guessed its importance if you'd attended her prepublication talks at sleep conferences and meetings. She enthused to her colleagues about the idea of brain clearance, but they regarded her with open skepticism. "They were like, 'What is she talking about?'" Nedergaard recalls. "People looked at me like I was crazy."

Yet the science was clear. Using sophisticated microscopy techniques to peer inside the brain, her work revealed a cellular cleaning cycle that flushes out toxic proteins primarily during sleep.

A decade and a half after those inauspicious meetings, Nedergaard's discovery has become an engine for research worldwide, generating nearly 2,000 scientific papers. About half of them, she notes with pride, are clinical papers that address the glymphatic system's role in diseases and conditions ranging from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's to strokes and migraines.

On this early March afternoon, Nedergaard, who last year became URochester's 11th fellow of the National Academy of Inventors, is busy preparing for the Oxford Glymphatic & Brain Clearance Symposium. The event, built on her foundational research, has attracted 250 registrants and a 50-person waiting list. Nedergaard is the keynote speaker.

Nedergaard's discovery is perhaps the most dramatic chapter in a story about sleep that has been building for a generation at URochester. But it is far from the only one. In labs, clinics, classrooms, and beyond, the University has built a formidable concentration of expertise in sleep.

And it is a story that is growing ever more relevant at a moment when people have moved from bragging about how little sleep they need to giving sleep its proper due as one of the essential pillars of health.

THE WHYS OF ZZZZS

Scientists had long wondered how the brain, which gobbles up about 20 percent of our body's energy, maintained itself. In the rest of the body, the lymphatic system works alongside the bloodstream to clear away waste. But the blood-brain barrier blocks that system entirely, leaving the brain without an obvious mechanism for cleaning itself.

One long-held theory was that the brain had its own version of a lymphatic system that used cerebrospinal fluid. But the methods scientists had typically used to understand the process—studying brain sections of dead animals—had left plenty of unanswered questions.

Nedergaard's work used an advanced two-photon microscope to reveal the process in an entirely new way. "We could look into a [live] brain, and we could visualize, in real time, that this fluid was actually flowing in and flowing

QUIET TIME
As spouses and academic colleagues, Maiken Nedergaard and Steven Goldman love to talk shop. But Nedergaard's respect for sleep's power has led her to institute some firm nighttime rules. The first: Conversations stop an hour before Nedergaard's bedtime so she can wind down. "It drives [him] crazy," she admits. "But I emphasize sleep a lot."

out," she says. What they saw was a pumping system: cerebrospinal fluid coursing through channels alongside blood vessels, collecting toxic waste and carrying it away.

It was essential foundational work. A follow-up paper went further, showing how channels between neurons widen during sleep, allowing cerebrospinal fluid to flood in and flush out accumulated waste far faster than when we are awake. The findings hit like a thunderclap, recalls Wilfred Pigeon, director of the University's Sleep and Neurophysiology Research Lab. "The sleep world was like, '*Who is this person?*'" he says. "Her work's a game changer."

While Nedergaard, who operates a second lab at the University of Copenhagen, has gone on to collaborate with researchers at Harvard and Penn to further scientists' understanding of these processes—a cross-institutional approach that is common in such research—she has also leaned on the expertise of her URochester colleagues.

One of them is Douglas Kelley, a mechanical engineering professor and an expert in fluid dynamics. Kelley first remembers being wowed by Nedergaard's work when he read about it in the University's daily morning email more than a decade ago. A few years later, when Nedergaard was working on a grant proposal she hoped would help her understand these cerebrospinal fluid flows more clearly, she partnered with Kelley; John "Jack" Thomas, professor emeritus of mechanical and aerospace sciences; and Jessica Shang, associate professor of mechanical engineering.

Up until then, the cerebrospinal fluid flows captured on video had been tracked painstakingly by hand, particle by particle. Kelley's expertise brought a new level of computational muscle to the work. "We could use code we'd already written to track 10,000 particles [at a time]," he says, offering a more detailed understanding of the flow.

The work has since grown far beyond particle tracking. Kelley is now combining MRI data with fluid dynamics equations fed into machine learning models—a method that can reconstruct pressures and flow velocities that

no microscope can directly measure. Because MRI can be used on humans, the research is inching toward something remarkable: "We're one step closer to noninvasive clinical measurement of flow in the brain," Kelley says, "which could be used to diagnose all kinds of diseases [including Alzheimer's] much earlier than is possible now."

LOSING SLEEP

The spotlight Nedergaard's discovery trained on URochester didn't just put her own lab on the map; it also helped illuminate how much exceptional sleep research and clinical work was already underway across the University.

One standout is the Sleep and Neurophysiology Research Lab, where Pigeon and his colleagues have spent years studying the causes, effects, and treatments of the most common—and most commonly misunderstood—sleep disorder: insomnia.

More than just a night or two of rough sleep, insomnia disorder is defined as three or more nights of disrupted sleep per week for three or more months. At any given time, about 10 percent of the population meets that threshold.

The problem isn't just that we feel crummy after a lengthy period of poor sleep. Pigeon's research has found that it has cascading health effects. "[We know] that if you don't treat insomnia, it won't resolve on its own. And in the meantime, it'll make anything else you have—depression, chronic pain, and many other conditions—worse and more difficult to manage."

Insomnia is also a major culprit behind truly catastrophic outcomes. Research by Todd Bishop, an assistant professor of psychiatry, has found that insomnia is associated with increased suicide risk. And it's true even at the smallest timescales: "[We've found that] if you had a poor night of sleep the night prior, you're more likely to endorse suicidal thought the next day," he says.

The relationship between insomnia and other conditions is similarly counterintuitive. Most people assume depression drives poor sleep, but Bishop and Pigeon's research points the other way. "Insomnia can arise as a result of depression," says Pigeon, "but it is more common for insomnia to *cause* an episode of depression."

And yet, for a condition this widespread and this consequential, the most common treatment is wildly off the mark.

The vast majority of people who seek help for sleep issues in the United States are prescribed sleep medication. It's a troubling disconnect, in part because these medications rarely address underlying problems with sleep.

URochester research, in line with clinical guidelines, has found that the most effective first-line treatment is a structured psychological intervention called cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia, or CBT-I. The four- to eight-session intervention is effective up to 80 percent of the time.

Few know this as well as Leisha Cuddihy, who, as director of the Behavioral Sleep Medicine Clinic, spends close to 80 percent of her clinic time working with patients who need CBT-I. As one of just a few hundred experts in the nation who is board-certified in behavioral sleep medicine, she has a packed calendar and a yearlong waiting list.

While culturally some still consider sleep deprivation a badge of honor, Cuddihy sees the flip side: "Some people have struggled for so long, they don't even remember what it's like to feel rested," she says.

For many, getting relief through CBT-I can feel like putting down a heavy weight that they didn't even know they were carrying. "At least once a week, a patient will tell me, 'You're the first person who's understood what this is like, and who has given me something that was helpful,'" she says.

DREAM TEAM

If there is a common thread across URochester's sleep work in foundational science, clinical research, and patient care, it may be this: It both knits together, and benefits from, the institution's expertise across disciplines. "Sleep is a 'glue specialty,'" explains Jonathan Marcus, a neurologist and the division chief of URochester's sleep medicine program.

After all, the symptoms and consequences of sleep disorders refuse to stay in a single lane. They show up in the cardiologist's office (somewhere between 50 and 80 percent of patients with resistant hypertension also

DON'T TAKE TWO OF THESE...

With more than 11 million prescriptions written per year, zolpidem (sold under the brand name Ambien, among others) is the most frequently prescribed medication for insomnia. And while it can effectively induce sleep, Maiken Nedergaard and her team have found that it also suppresses the glymphatic system in mice. This might hinder the brain's natural waste-clearing processes, setting the stage for neurological disorders—findings that raise concerns about zolpidem's long-term use and highlight the need to preserve natural sleep architecture for optimal brain function.

Lesson 1: Go to bed on time, every time.

"At the outset of cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), I harp on consistency of bedtimes and wake-up times. There are several components to CBT-I, but I find [a consistent routine] to be of great value. I tell my patients that if they hear nothing else I say during the session, they should try to go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning."

—Todd Bishop

have sleep apnea), in the psychiatrist's office, and in the neurologist's office. It's a personal issue, but it's also a public health issue.

Because of sleep's sprawling tentacles, both science and patients benefit when researchers and clinicians can find each other and make progress together. It's an interdisciplinary fluency that URochester has long cultivated.

For example, experts from neurology, sleep medicine, and otolaryngology team up to support patients who have obstructive sleep apnea but can't tolerate the standard treatment—a CPAP machine that delivers continuous pressurized air.

While patients who fit this profile have typically had limited options, URochester has become one of the world's leading centers for surgically implanting hypoglossal nerve stimulators, devices that keep the airway open during sleep. It's a delicate procedure that requires experts to work in concert, and URochester has become world-class at the process. "We've implanted these devices in over 400 patients," says Marcus.

That volume matters. Where a peer program might see a handful of patients a year for the procedure, URochester can see 50 or more—a difference that translates into hard-won expertise in patient selection, device calibration, and troubleshooting. URochester has recently been recognized as a national center of excellence for this work.

The University's strength in bringing together researchers and clinicians across departments also allows it to think even bigger about the field's future. Marcus, for instance, points to increasing evidence that the data collected during a polysomnogram—an overnight sleep study that records brain wave activity, heart rhythms, breathing patterns, and body movements—might function not just as a diagnostic tool, but as a predictive one: a kind of physiological portrait that could flag risk for cardiovascular disease, dementia, and dozens of other conditions before they develop.

It's a vision of sleep medicine not as a niche specialty, but as a broader window into long-term health.

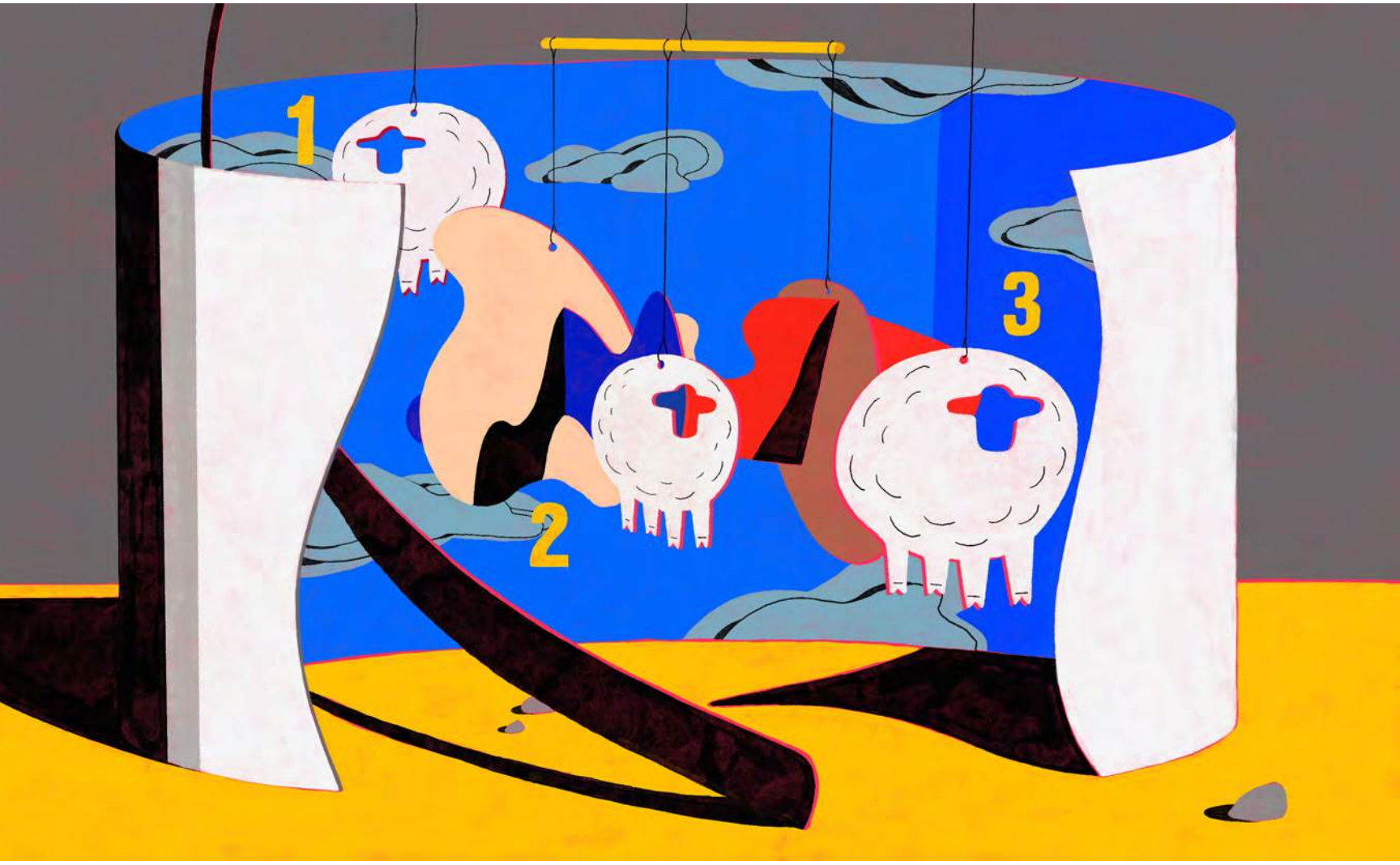
THE WEE HOURS

Adults, of course, aren't the only ones who experience sleep challenges. Children face an array of sleep issues, including sleep apnea, nocturnal enuresis (bedwetting), and insomnia.

The consequences of these conditions can feel very different from those experienced by adults, says Heidi Connolly, chief of pediatric sleep medicine. Sleep problems in children can show up as learning difficulties, behavioral problems, and emotional volatility. Bedwetting, meanwhile, might prevent a child from going to sleepovers, and can dramatically affect a family's overall well-being as parents spend their own sleepless nights calming their child and doing laundry.

Successful treatment can feel transformative. "When you can solve these things—when it means a kid can go to summer camp and overnights? Families are ecstatic," she says.

Connolly—who began seeing pediatric patients in the adult sleep lab in 2000 and launched a dedicated pediatric sleep lab in



In case you forgot: Sleep is not a luxury.

"I have cared for patients whose untreated sleep apnea was contributing to atrial fibrillation, hypertension, cognitive decline, and profound daytime impairment. When you see someone's blood pressure improve or arrhythmias stabilize, or hear a patient say, 'I didn't realize how tired I was until I wasn't,' it underscores that sleep is not a luxury. It is infrastructure for the brain and cardiovascular system."

—Jonathan Marcus

2005—has built a regional powerhouse in pediatric sleep.

Her six-bed lab is open at least six nights a week, with 1,500 sleep studies and close to 8,000 patient visits annually. A team of psychologists, behavioral analysts, nurse practitioners, pediatric neurologists, and pediatric pulmonologists supports the work.

In her own research, Connolly focuses on sleep apnea in children with cleft palates and those with single ventricle congenital heart disease. She's also working on a project with hematology experts exploring the link between iron deficiency and a sleep condition known as periodic limb movement disorder.

That kind of all-embracing approach shapes everything about how the lab operates. It's what brings in clinicians like Emily Cromwell, an assistant professor with appointments spanning psychiatry, child and adolescent services, and pediatrics.

And it's a philosophy Cromwell's young patients get to experience firsthand. "When I'm working with kids who have nightmares, I'll often have them do tracking and diaries," she says. "And I can say to them, 'You're a scientist, too—let's look at your data.' We can see how things are getting better and better over time."

The best solutions, in Cromwell's opinion, come from collaborative efforts. "Everybody has their own lens," she says, "and they all have something to bring to the table."

DEVELOPMENTAL SLEEP FACT

We don't fully consolidate adult sleep and circadian rhythms until roughly age 25. After that, the amount of sleep we *need* remains relatively stable across adulthood, even into older age. What changes with aging is sleep continuity and depth, not the amount of time that is needed.

WAKE-UP CALLS

The expertise URochester has built is deep, but the gap between what sleep science knows and what most people can access remains enormous. That's why the University's experts carry that knowledge beyond their labs and exam rooms into classrooms, communities, and even the phones in our pockets.

Jennifer Marsella, assistant professor of neurology and medicine, teaches a Neurobiology of Sleep undergraduate course that is among a rare few nationwide—Stanford's among them—to examine sleep from the level of cellular functioning all the way up to its effects on society.

The course, which fills up in a matter of days and consistently has a waiting list, includes guest lectures from sleep researchers and projects to help students think about how to improve sleep at a community level. "Students say that it's helped them improve their sleep. They also talk about how they've helped friends and family," she says. "Some of them become interested in going into neurology or sleep medicine, which many of them didn't understand was an option before."

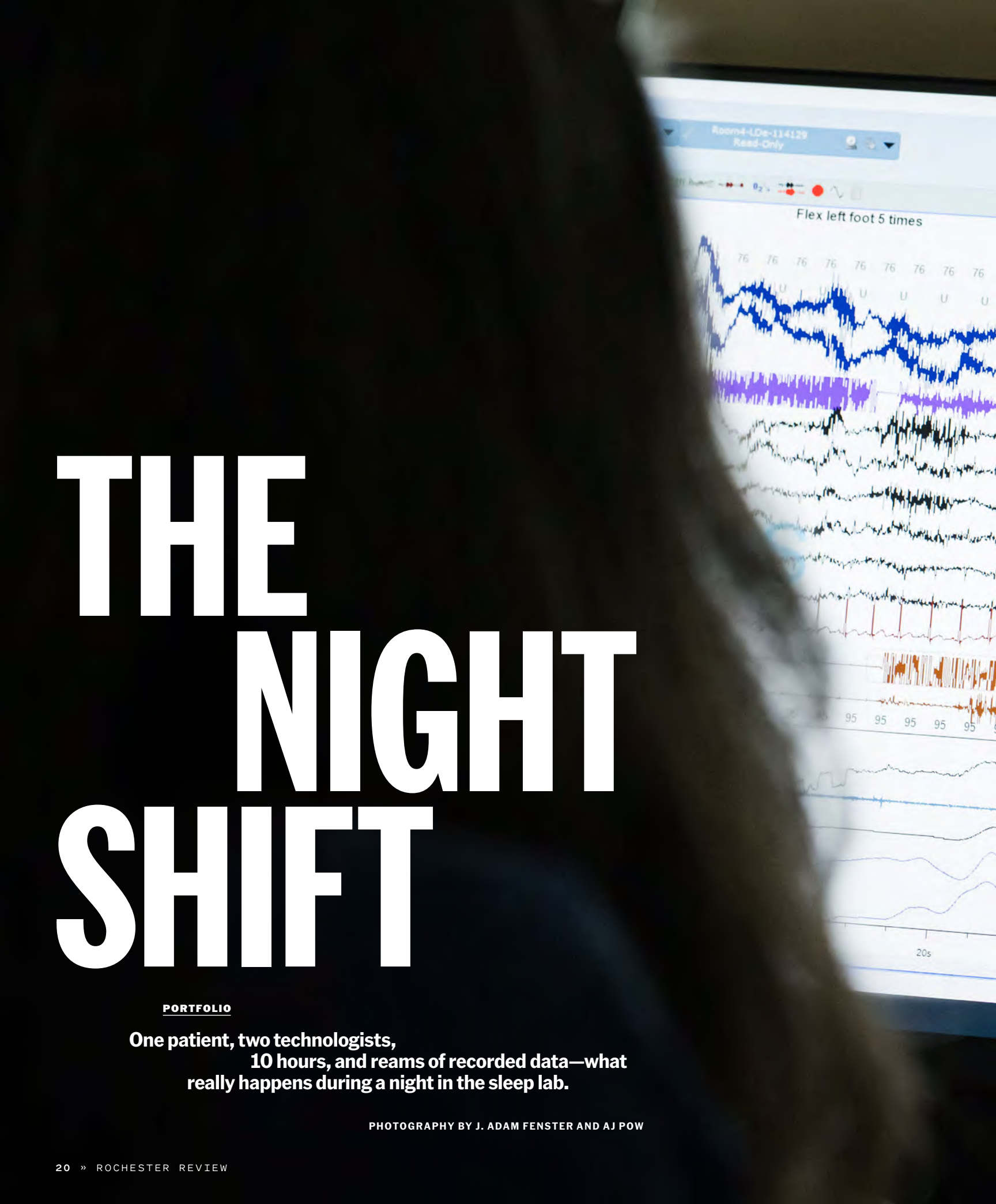
Beyond the classroom, Cuddihy is working to expand access to sleep support at a systems level. As the president-elect of the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine, she is helping build the infrastructure to train and certify a new generation of CBT-I providers. The society recently announced an accreditation pathway for CBT-I training programs that prepare clinicians to sit for the CBT-I certification examination. It's an effort to move CBT-I from a treatment that most patients can't easily access to one that's more integrated into standard care. Pigeon and his team, meanwhile, are studying and supporting the development of CBT-I apps that can benefit anyone struggling with insomnia, no clinician's waiting list required.

At the public health level, Connolly and Cromwell have both been longtime advocates for adolescent sleep health. Circadian shifts in adolescence mean teens are biologically primed to sleep and wake later—and research suggests 70 percent still aren't getting enough sleep. Last year, Cromwell talked to congressional staffers as a representative of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, urging them to consider policy changes, including later high school start times to support adolescent sleep and health.

As Nedergaard continues the global conversation she started more than a decade ago about why sleep matters, her URochester colleagues carry on their own work to understand sleep's impact, treat its related disorders, and make sure all of us are getting what we need from it. Their discoveries are reshaping the field, and their advocacy is making sure those discoveries don't stay locked inside it.

That should make all of us rest a little easier. ✻

To learn more from Maiken Nedergaard and to find out why lullabies aren't as innocent as they seem, go to rochester.edu/news/sleep.

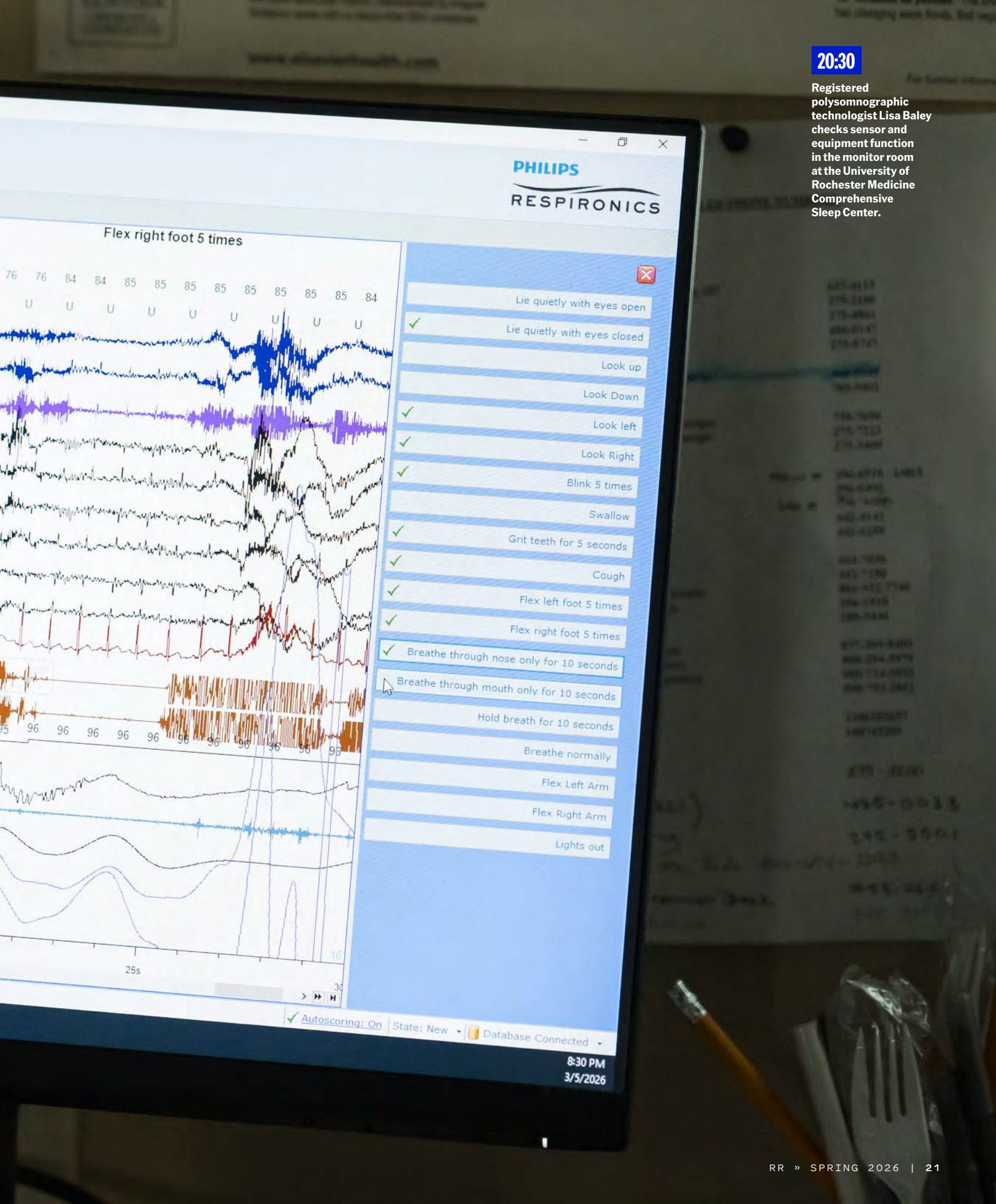


THE NIGHT SHIFT

PORTFOLIO

One patient, two technologists, 10 hours, and reams of recorded data—what really happens during a night in the sleep lab.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. ADAM FENSTER AND AJ POW



20:30

Registered polysomnographic technologist Lisa Baley checks sensor and equipment function in the monitor room at the University of Rochester Medicine Comprehensive Sleep Center.

20:03

Registered polysomnographic technologist Steve LeGrett goes through a pre-study questionnaire with Sleep Center patient Dominique Smith.

20:20

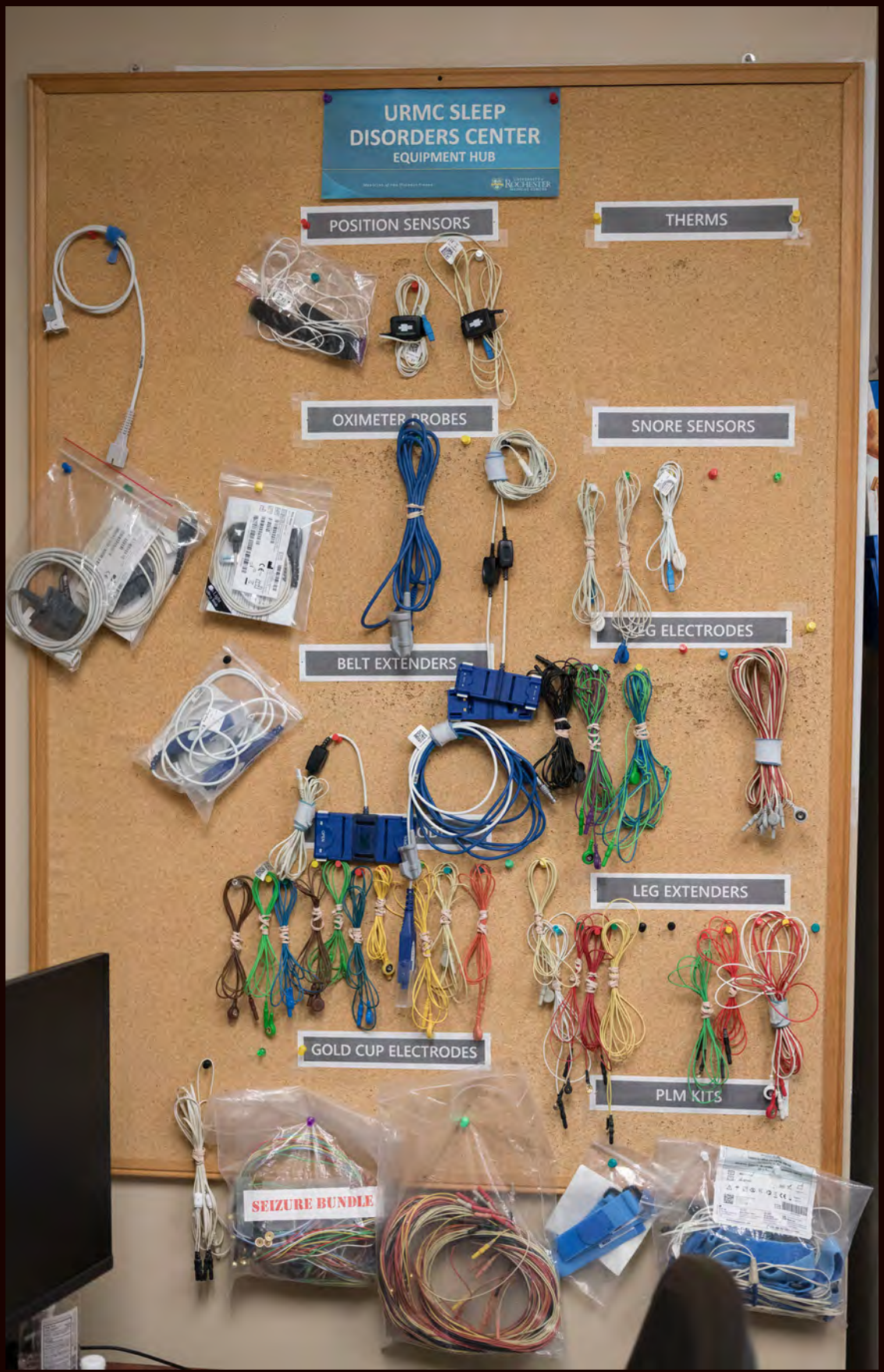
Baley measures Smith's head before attaching electrodes and sensors that will track her brain waves, eye movement, breathing. snoring, and more.

20:27

Baley connects more than a dozen electrodes and sensors to a device that will transmit the recorded data to a computer in the monitor room.

21:26

Smith waits as Baley secures a tube that will sit under her nose and measure breathing patterns throughout the night.



21:10

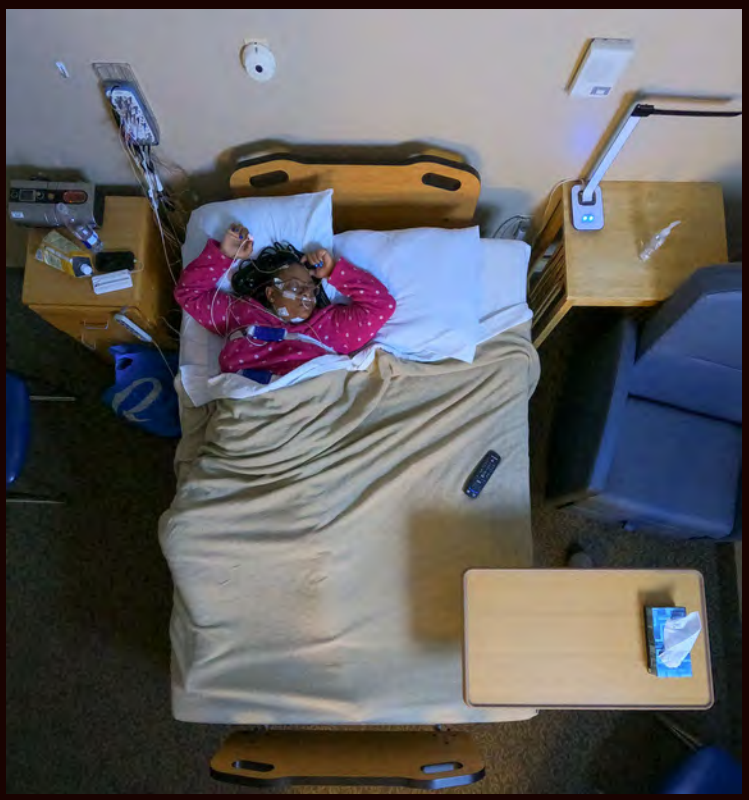
The Sleep Center's collection of probes, sensors, electrodes, and cords are organized on a bulletin board for easy access.

23:20

LeGrett sits at his computer in the monitor room, where he will spend most of the night observing Smith's physiologic patterns of sleep.

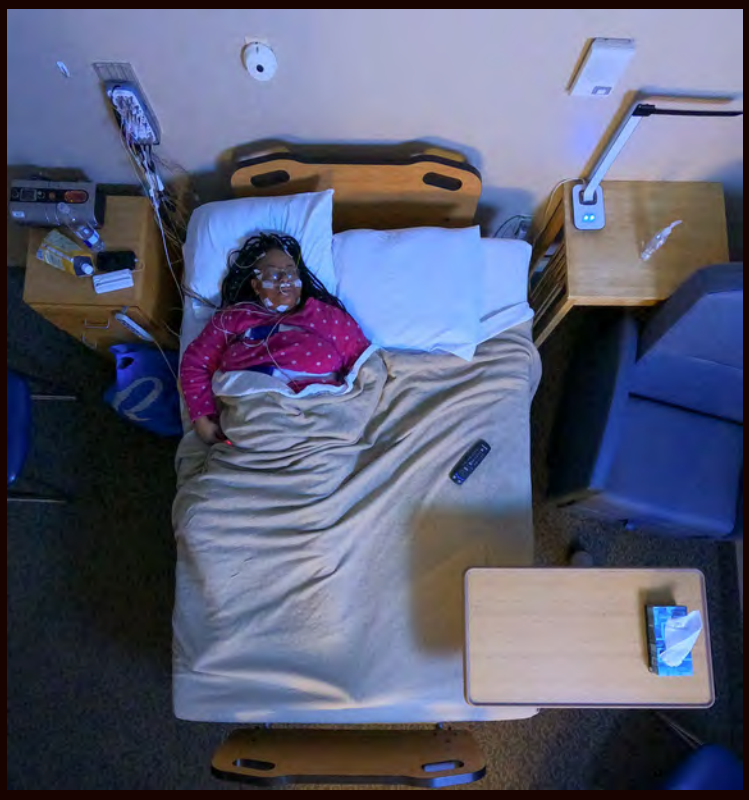
21:43

Smith falls asleep with the television still on and casting a subtle glow on the room—the last thing marking the boundary between wakefulness and sleep.



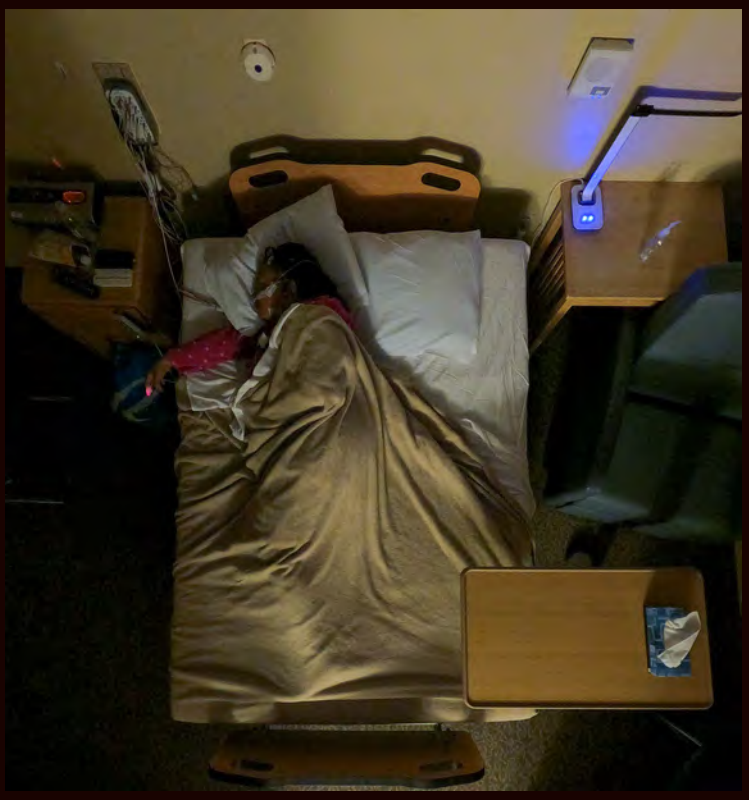
22:32

An hour into the study, Smith settles into the early stages of sleep. Her body is still but her brain is telling a different story in the data streaming to the monitor room.



00:52

Deeper into the night, Smith sleeps on as LeGrett watches the rhythms of her breathing, brain waves, and oxygen levels scroll across his screen.



02:38

Smith shifts position in the unconscious choreography of a night's sleep. Each movement is logged and time-stamped by sensors that never rest.

EVER BETTER

Michelle Carr had her first lucid dream as an undergraduate at the University of Rochester. She's been unraveling the science of the sleeping mind ever since.

BY TAMA MIYAKE LUNG

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEX TRAN

THE DREAM


ENGINEER

Michelle Carr '10, '22 (Flw) had experienced her share of vivid—often terrifying—dreams throughout childhood and into early adulthood. What happened at the end of a mid-morning nap during her sophomore year at URochester was different. No one was chasing her. Nothing was wrong. She was just there.

"I was in my dorm room in Rochester, and I sat up in bed," Carr recalls over Zoom from her office at the University of Montreal. "I realized I was dreaming, and I looked down and could see my sleeping body lying in bed. I stood up and walked over to the wall and to the desk. I was just looking at the dream because I was so shocked at how my mind was doing this. I thought, 'It looks *so real*.' It was like that scene in *Inception* where [Saito] looks at the carpet very closely. That was the whole dream. I just looked at the wall and the desk, and I was like, *'This is possible.'*"

What Carr was experiencing had a name—lucid dreaming, the state in which a person becomes aware, mid-dream, that they are dreaming—though she didn't know it yet. Or that deciphering experiences like the one she'd just had would become her life's work.

Today, Carr is one of a small global cohort of researchers who call themselves dream engineers—scientists who apply techniques and technologies to influence, record, and manipulate the content of dreams to benefit memory, creativity, or well-being. She helped coin the term, organized the first Dream Engineering Workshop, and late last year released the first book to bring dream engineering to a mainstream audience. The field was galvanized by that first lucid dream but its roots, in fact, run much deeper.

EYES WIDE SHUT

Carr grew up in Corning, New York, a small city about 100 miles south of Rochester, with two brothers and parents who highly valued education—her mother taught special education in the local school district and her father rose to vice president at Corning Community College. At around age three, she was diagnosed with moderate hearing loss—a difficulty hearing higher frequencies, and consonants in particular, that requires her to wear hearing aids in order to understand speech—and the family began making regular trips to Rochester, a hub for audiology care and home to one of the largest per capita Deaf and hard-of-hearing populations in the country.

Equipped with what she describes as a "very, very vivid" imagination, Carr was drawn to both science and the arts. She was captivated by biology and harbored ambitions of becoming a writer. Dreams were a defining presence in her childhood, too—some pleasant, others so troubling that she would lie awake for hours to avoid sleep. Her first science project, predictably enough, tackled the subject head-on.

"It was the first time the teacher was like, 'You have to find your sources in the library and give a poster presentation to the class.' So I guess I was always interested in dreams because that was the topic that I chose," Carr recalls, laughing. "I just remember every single person in the class asked me a question afterward. Mostly, it was the typical, 'I have this dream; what does it mean?' Which is still what everybody does when they find out what I do."

Carr was 15 when she experienced the first of what would become frequent episodes of sleep paralysis—when the natural muscle paralysis that occurs during REM sleep seeps into a dream. "A shotgun fires my mind into a sudden awakening, but my body does not jolt from the recoil," she described one such episode for an undergraduate writing assignment. "*What was that?* It's pitch black but for a thin line of foggy light coming through the forced squint of my eyelids. *I can't move. Why can't I move?!* I must be tied down. I must be paralyzed, or dead. *My eyes . . . won't open!*"

More frightening than nightmares, Carr's sleep paralysis often involved a demon-like creature pressing so hard on her chest that it felt like it was squeezing the life right out of her. When she shared her experiences with a few friends, no one seemed to understand or recognize what was happening. (Even her professor would later tell her it sounded "too fictional" for a nonfiction writing assignment.) It was only when she went to [the early search engine] Ask Jeeves that she learned the term "sleep paralysis"—and that she was far from alone in suffering it. "The bad news

was that a select few unlucky people go on to experience sleep paralysis regularly throughout their lives, and there was no known cure or treatment," she wrote. "I was to become one of those people."

> **"I was just looking at the dream because I was so shocked at how my mind was doing this. I thought, 'It looks *so real*.'"**
>
> —Michelle Carr

ALTERNATE REALITIES

When Carr arrived at URochester as a first-year student in the fall of 2006, she planned to major in biology. But an Intro to Cognition class prompted her to switch immediately to brain and cognitive sciences. "There's the classic gorilla experiment where they show you what the attentional blink is. You're watching people play with a ball and then a gorilla walks through the scene—you don't even notice it because you're paying attention to the ball," she says. "I was just fascinated to learn that everyone's mind is doing this. Everything seems so concrete and so stable and solid, but it's really illusory—we're fabricating what we perceive in some way. And I think that ties into dreaming quite a bit."

Carr got her first taste of research as a sophomore intern in the Sleep and Neurophysiology Research Lab under psychiatry professor Wilfred Pigeon. She recalls participating in one overnight study—"just for fun"—but mostly cleaning data, reviewing scientific literature, and performing other entry-level tasks as needed. "She was one of these very motivated students who, I think, knew from early on that she was going to graduate school," says Pigeon. "She was the kind of person who would always ask, 'Is there anything else I can do?'"

Carr worked in three other labs as an undergraduate, studying everything from visual cognition to video games and infant-mother attachment, while satisfying her love of the arts through clusters in photography, creative writing, tai chi, and drum circles. "I think a huge strength of going to school there was just the amount of opportunities available," she says. "I also really liked that side of U of R, how much the arts and creativity and the humanities were valued in concert with science and psychology. That, to me, is dream science—it's something that's ephemeral and hard to describe, but we're also trying to study it very scientifically through the brain and understand what's happening. I really appreciate being able to straddle those two worlds."

Over the years, Carr also became something of an expert in lucid dreaming. After that first experience, she read everything on the topic she could find. She learned about ancient religions that used the practice to harness altered states of consciousness or prepare for death. She even conducted her own experiments, learning how to move around inside her dreams ("Flying is the first trick everyone learns, and once you do, that's your transport mode of choice—forever") or

GOING LUCID

THE SENSES-INITIATED LUCID DREAM TECHNIQUE IS ONE OF MICHELLE CARR'S FAVORITES. HERE'S HOW TO TRY IT AT HOME.

The goal is to train your mind to pay attention to visual, auditory, and bodily sensations in turn, while lying in bed prior to an early morning sleep period, in the following steps:

STEP 1
FOCUS ON SIGHT

Your eyes should be closed and relaxed and relatively still—simply pay attention to the darkness behind your closed eyelids.

STEP 2
FOCUS ON HEARING

Shift your attention to your ears and listen for any subtle sounds in your surroundings; if it is quiet, you might hear the sound of your breathing or heartbeat.

STEP 3
FOCUS ON BODILY SENSATION

Direct your attention to your body and notice any sensations such as tingling, heaviness, lightness, and so on. You might also feel the weight of the blanket or the temperature of the room.

Practice cycling through these senses quickly at first, spending a few seconds on sight, then sound, then body sensations, a handful of times. Once you get the hang of it, then slow down and focus for about 30 seconds on each step. Go through four slow cycles, which might take about five to 10 minutes in total to complete. As time goes on, you will probably start to feel relaxed and you might even witness some hypnagogic imagery sprouting up, such as seeing lights and images, hearing noises or music, or feeling sensations of falling or floating. This just means that you are starting to fall asleep. Continue to pay attention to each new image or sensation without trying to control them in any way. If you get distracted or your mind wanders, simply come back to begin a new cycle. After you have finished the four cycles, you can stop and fall asleep, more likely to have a lucid dream.

Michelle Carr at the Dream Engineering Lab, which she established at the University of Montreal's Center for Advanced Research in Sleep Medicine.

"Flying is the first trick everyone learns, and once you do, that's your transport mode of choice–forever."

—Michelle Carr

practice skills, like tai chi, that she was studying in her waking life. Perhaps most significantly, she discovered she could use lucid dreaming to confront, and even transform, her most distressing nightmares and fears.

But finding a graduate program where she could study dreams—not just sleep, not just neuroscience, but dreams—turned out to be harder than she expected. Unwilling to compromise, she cold emailed a dozen researchers she found through the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD). "Is there anywhere I can actually study dreams?" Several people told her no, but four or five pointed her to the same place: the Dream and Nightmare Laboratory at the University of Montreal, run by a researcher named Tore Nielsen. She applied—very late, as it turned out—and was accepted into the graduate program.

"It's funny. I found the email I wrote to [Nielsen] before I even started, with a long list of the topics I was interested in at the time. I could have written it today," Carr says. "I'm interested in how dreaming is related to mental health and well-being—how we can interact with our dreams, gain insight from them, and try to make them more positive. But also the more functional mechanisms of sleep: How is dreaming related to memory consolidation during sleep? How is it related to what's happening in the body?"

INTO THE LAB

Carr spent five years in Montreal, impressing Nielsen with her calm demeanor and inquisitive mind. "Unlike me, she was quite confident in lucid dreaming being accepted by other, non-dream-oriented researchers as a legitimate area of science," he says. "Coming from a background heavily steeped in behaviorism, I never had this kind of confidence. At the same time, I came to appreciate that Michelle had very good ideas about the possible functions of dreams and nightmares."

Some of those ideas were published in a joint paper with Nielsen on sensory processing sensitivity and nightmare sufferers. Others reached a different audience entirely through a *Psychology Today* blog Carr maintained for several years, translating dream science research for general readers—an early sign that her interests extended beyond the lab.

The next stop after Montreal was Swansea, Wales, where Carr spent three years as a postdoctoral researcher in the sleep lab of British research psychologist Mark Blagrove. It was there that she began running her first polysomnography (sleep study) experiments using light and sound cues to induce lucid dreams. "Getting people to give eye signals in response to our cues while they were sleeping was really exciting," she says. "That was fun." Blagrove also introduced her to dreamwork—the practice of sharing dreams for both personal insight and empathy—which Carr continues to study for its potential to enhance social connection.

It was while at Swansea that Carr's ambitions for dream engineering as a field—not just a set of techniques scattered across different labs—crystallized into something concrete. In January 2019, she organized and led the first Dream Engineering Workshop at the MIT Media Lab, bringing together more than 50 scientists to brainstorm new technologies for studying, recording, and influencing dreams.

Later that fall, Carr returned to URochester—and to Pigeon's lab—this time as a postdoctoral associate supported by the Rochester Partnership for Research and Academic Career Training of Deaf Postdoctoral Scholars. The fellowship enabled her to study sleep in Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, drawing on her own experience with hearing loss and that of Rochester's large Deaf community. Around the same time, Carr was rising through the ranks of the IASD—first as vice president, then as president beginning in 2021.

"She is, at first blush, not someone you would think of as especially outgoing—and yet she has a very vast and nice network of folks that she's built over time," Pigeon says. "Some people who may have been working relatively independently in their labs are now a community, talking about [dream engineering] and developing it as a subfield. And it was wild that before she was even a faculty member, she became president of an international organization. It's unheard of."

LIVING THE DREAM

Carr now directs the Dream Engineering Lab—DxE Lab—at the University of Montreal's Center for Advanced Research in Sleep Medicine, where she oversees six to eight graduate students and postdoctoral researchers working across several concurrent studies. The projects reflect Carr's wide-ranging interests, from lucid dreaming and the memory sources of dreams to a unique partnership with a film studies team exploring targeted dream incubation—a technique in which subjects are shown a movie just prior to sleep, then hear clips of its soundtrack at different sleep stages.

But what excites her most—and what she expounds on in her new book, *Nightmare Obscura: A Dream Engineer's Guide Through the Sleeping Mind*—is collaborating with clinicians to help those suffering from serious conditions such as addiction and chronic pain. "I see a lot of other clinical researchers becoming interested in dreams and nightmares and how prevalent they are in their patients, and starting to question whether there's an avenue for treatment there that's so far been neglected," she says. "I feel like an energy is starting to spread to other domains. Other research fields are saying, 'OK, there's something we could do with this.'"

Looking ahead, Carr sees sleep—and the dreams that animate it—becoming as vital to understanding our physical and mental health as anything that happens during our waking lives. "I think we're really beginning to uncover this," she says. "There are specific patterns in how dreaming changes in different health conditions. It's something we can use as information, but also something we can treat. That would change the quality of our sleep, but also the quality of our lives."

Nearly two decades since she first awoke inside a dream, Carr has reached a point where she can choose whether to enter "that dark basement corner of our unconscious mind" or simply bask in the sensation of becoming lucid. Most nights she sleeps nine hours and wakes without an alarm. "I usually spend some time remembering my dreams, but I don't often write them down unless they're really striking. I just kind of rehearse them a little bit," she says. "If I had a bad dream, I'll think about it and maybe reframe it. But that's really it."

Then she gets up and looks around. She might glance back at the bed. There's nothing—and no one—there. ✱


AMERICA'S
GREATEST HITS

The lights drop. Seventy thousand people fall silent. Then a beat pulses through Levi's Stadium, thick and insistent, as sugarcane stalks rise from the field. Dancers spill forward in waves. And at the center of it all, Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio—better known as Bad Bunny—moves with absolute command, rapping in Spanish to an audience of millions around the world.

For a moment, Super Bowl LX feels less like a football game than a declaration. Since July 4, 1776—and long before—American music has done more than entertain. It has documented the country's ideals, exposed its contradictions, and given voice to the people shaping it. Music has never been just a reflection of the nation; it has been one of the ways the United States defines itself.

At the University of Rochester, students and scholars, musicologists and cultural critics, composers, archivists, technologists, and performers have all sought to understand the sometimes chaotic, sometimes beautiful nature of American identity. Each perspective reveals another layer of the American musical story.

At 250, the nation is still grappling with one of its oldest questions: Who gets to be American? The music, as always, is trying to answer. There may be no better place to begin than on that stage with Bad Bunny.

THE BIGGEST STAGE

A transcendent cultural phenomenon, the Super Bowl is an unofficial national holiday that merges elite athleticism with entertainment. This year's contest did not disappoint—at least, not musically. For months ahead of the game, the halftime show dominated conversation: What would Bad Bunny do? What would he say? And who would be there to listen?

The answer was electric—a collision of sound, imagery, and identity. Paired with traditional American standards from the opening ceremony, the pageantry on the field created a vivid portrait of American music in 2026: multilingual, multiracial, multigenerational.

Before kickoff, singer-songwriter Charlie Puth performed "The Star-Spangled Banner" in a refined, piano-driven rendition marked by flawless vocal delivery and understated confidence that felt both intimate and celebratory. Adopted as the national anthem in 1931 and performed at public events since World War I, the song stirs a swelling sense of national pride. But it also invites reinterpretation. Each artist—whether Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock or Whitney Houston at Super Bowl XXV—reshapes the anthem in their own voice, ensuring that it remains not a relic but a living expression of the nation.

Brandi Carlile followed with a heartfelt interpretation of "America the Beautiful," bringing her folk-rock sensibility to the hymn. The original poem was written by Katharine Lee Bates and paired with music composed by church organist and choirmaster Samuel Augustus Ward at the turn of the 20th century. Accompanying Carlile were violinist Chauntee Ross and cellist Monique Ross of SistaStrings, adding warmth and resonance to the performance.

Completing the trio of opening songs, Coco Jones delivered a stirring rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

SEPIA TIMES/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP (FIDDLE), JOHN SPRINGER COLLECTION (ELVIS), BETTMANN (LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND BOB DYLAN), GEORGE ROSE (WHITNEY HOUSTON), MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES (FLAVOR FLAV AND CHUCK D), ROY ROCHLIN (STATUE OF LIBERTY), NBCU PHOTO BANK/NBCUNIVERSAL (DOLLY PARTON), SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY (BOOMBOX), PHIL PENMAN (JUKEBOX), NATIONAL MOTOR MUSEUM/HERITAGE IMAGES (CADILLAC); ALL GETTY IMAGES

alongside an eight-member string ensemble. Often referred to as the Black national anthem, the powerful hymn of hope, faith, and resilience was written by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson in 1900 and set to music by his brother, John Rosamond Johnson. It debuted in Jacksonville, Florida, performed by a choir of 500 schoolchildren celebrating President Abraham Lincoln's birthday—a moment of collective affirmation that continues to echo more than a century later.

And then there was Bad Bunny. Celebrating real people and everyday life, his halftime show became both a love letter to his Puerto Rican heritage and a cultural statement about what it means to be American. Jeffrey McCune—an award-winning scholar whose work examines race, gender, and identity—heard something larger at work. "Hip-hop music has always been a temperature taker of American society," says the founding chair of URochester's Department of Black Studies. "Part of what I think Bad Bunny's performance brought to life was a reading of where we are now as a country. He's responding to the questions of this American experiment and where we stand 250 years later."

McCune adds: "The national anthem speaks promises. The Black national anthem reminds us that the promises have not been kept. When you put Bad Bunny's performance next to them both, we can start to have a conversation. It may be a tense one, but it's a conversation that we as the American public need to have."

In many ways, this is the conversation American musicians have been having for 250 years. The notes may change, the instruments may evolve, but the impulse remains the same: to celebrate the nation's possibilities while holding it accountable to its ideals.

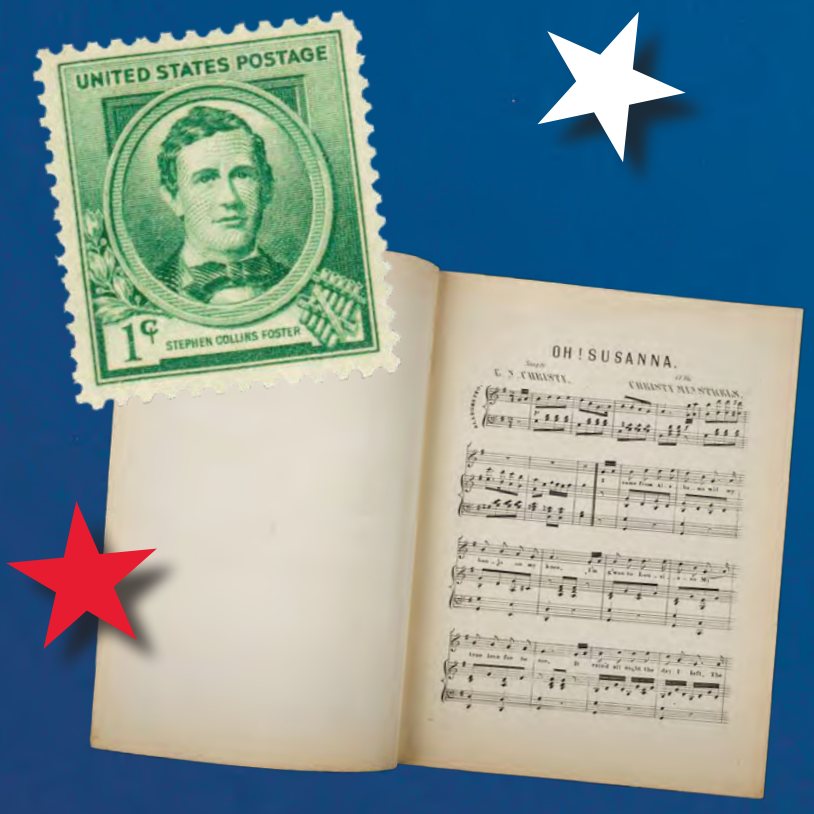
MUSIC IN THE NEW WORLD

When the Pilgrims arrived on the Mayflower in 1620 to establish some of the earliest English colonies in Plymouth, Massachusetts, they brought very little music with them. Settlers favored psalms and religious songs, while instrumentation was rare and plain—typically limited to flute or violin, though even this was often forbidden.

What they found wasn't just a wilderness of rugged coastlines, towering trees, and resources to be exploited. They also encountered Indigenous communities that had been singing, drumming, and passing down musical traditions through generations. Timothy Long '92E (MM), the Eastman School of Music's artistic and music director of opera, emphasizes the extraordinary diversity of those traditions. The pianist, conductor, and composer—a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation from the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town who is Choctaw on his mother's side—notes there are 574 federally recognized tribes in the United States, each with its own language, culture, history, and musical customs.

Through initiatives such as the North American Indigenous Songbook—Long's ambitious project championing Native composers and performers—he and other artists are helping bring these voices to wider audiences while preserving their legacy. Powwow music, for example, was a vibrant, communal expression of Native American life that served as the heartbeat of their culture, aiding moments of celebration and war. Long describes it as the original version of minimalism. "People think minimalism started with La Monte

Long before Stephen Foster became one of the first truly national songwriters with hits like "Oh! Susanna," Indigenous communities passed down musical traditions through generations.



Young, and in a way, it did in the white field," he says, referring to the 20th-century American composer. "But if you go to powwow music, it's drumming that is looping and repetitive. Usually eight men sitting around a giant drum, singing in really high pitches, doing vocables almost like singing in tongues. It puts audiences into a trance and brings them all into the same emotional energy."

As the colonists gradually turned away from England and the Crown, their own musical life began to flourish. Tavern songs, sea shanties, and military marches became the norm, but music struggled to break free from its mobilizing intent to become something to be enjoyed on its own terms. Only when patriotic songs such as "The Liberty Song," which helped unify colonists around a common cause, and instruments like the fiddle and harpsichord became more prominent did musical life grow more expansive and the search for a distinctly national sound begin.

At the same time, enslaved Africans clung to their own rich musical histories as they sought solace and strength through song even under the most brutal conditions. These traditions would eventually become the backbone of American music. "The fundamental techniques of Black music begin in the spirituals," explains Cory Hunter '06E, the James P. Wilmot Distinguished Assistant Professor of Music, whose teaching and research span gospel, protest music, and Black musical traditions in America. "Call and response, improvisation, participation, the use of the body. Those elements later show up in gospel, blues, jazz, and even hip-hop."

These musical characteristics rippled outward through American culture. Gospel singers brought the emotional power of church music into popular performance—think of Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, and Chaka Khan—while blues musicians like B.B. King turned personal hardship into lyrical storytelling.

CREATING THE FIRST NATIONAL SOUND

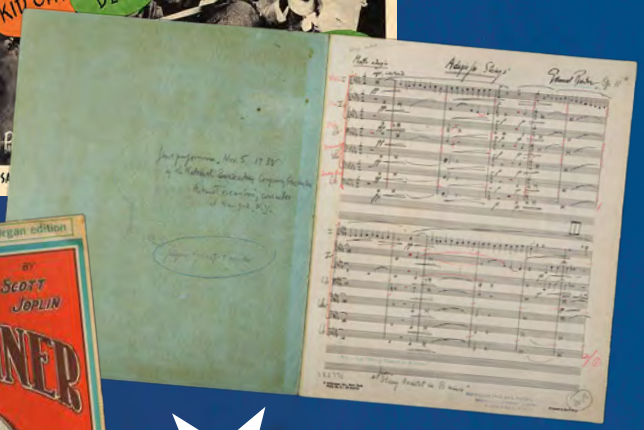
In the 19th century, Stephen Foster emerged as one of the first truly national songwriters. Born in 1826, he wrote melodies that traveled far beyond parlors and concert halls through sheet music, touring performers, and minstrel troupes. Songs such as "Oh! Susanna" and "Camptown Races" became some of the best-known tunes of the era, sung across regions and class lines. That reach explains why Foster is so often described as the "father of American music": He helped create a popular repertoire in a young nation still searching for common cultural reference points. His songs were memorable, portable, and unmistakably woven into everyday American life. But that influence came with deep complications.

"The Black spiritual really became the foundation of the American entertainment industry, through the use of blackface minstrelsy," says Hunter, whose work traces how Black musical practices move across sacred, popular, and political traditions. "Entertainment that mocked Black people and Black song became the first form of popular music entertainment in the country."

That paradox sits near the heart of American music history. Some of the nation's earliest mass entertainment drew heavily from Black musical traditions while simultaneously distorting and exploiting them. Even as Foster's songs helped define a national sound, the machinery that spread

Singers like Chaka Khan, left, and Aretha Franklin brought the emotional power of church music—first expressed by enslaved Africans in spirituals—into popular performance.

CHARLES VAN SCHAICK/WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY/GETTY IMAGES (POWWOW), J. ADAM FENSTER (OH! SUSANNA), ECHOES/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES (CHAKA KHAN), BILL WATERSON/ALAMY (ARETHA FRANKLIN)



From genres like jazz and ragtime to songs by Samuel Barber and George Gershwin, American music has been defined by a remarkable mix of cultural influences.

that sound was often entangled with minstrelsy's racist caricatures. From the beginning, American music carried both brilliance and contradiction.

American music rarely follows a single path, however. Instead, it continually absorbs influences from different communities and traditions. Ragtime, for example, emerged in the late 19th century as Black American musicians blended banjo traditions and syncopated rhythms with European piano music. Scott Joplin, later known as the "King of Ragtime," transformed the style into a sophisticated art form, bringing compositional rigor and emotional depth to works such as "Maple Leaf Rag" and "The Entertainer."

Then, a few years later, a new sound emerged out of New Orleans: jazz. Often described as America's first original art form, jazz grew from a remarkable mix of cultural influences—African musical traditions, European harmony, Creole and Caribbean rhythms, and the lived experiences of Black Americans navigating a segregated society. But it did not merely adapt or imitate inherited forms. It transformed a broad range of influences into something radically new. Jazz created a fresh musical language built on improvisation and individual expression within collective form. As a port city and cultural crossroads, New Orleans proved the ideal incubator.

Darren Mueller, an associate professor of musicology whose research explores how sound technologies shape musical performance and who trained in jazz history and research before earning a doctorate at Duke, notes that this blending of influences is central to understanding American music more broadly.

"There's a hybridity within a lot of these musical practices that is foundational to the country, as well as to the music itself," he says. "We see it in 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' but in other forms as well. Jazz was famously born in New Orleans, a city where many peoples and cultures were always circulating. Jelly Roll Morton, one of jazz's earliest great composers and pianists, named influences from outside the United States as the essential ingredient to what became known as jazz."

As the Great Migration reshaped American cities in the early 20th century, jazz traveled north with Black communities seeking jobs and opportunity. Chicago and New York became major destinations, and recordings by artists such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington introduced the music to national audiences. By the 1930s, the swing era had turned jazz into a cultural phenomenon as big bands filled dance halls across the country, offering audiences both excitement and escape during the hardships of the Great Depression. This sweeping move across the continent also echoed the spread of radio technology, marking the beginning of a new era in which music could travel directly into people's homes.

While jazz flourished in nightclubs and concert halls, another distinctly American tradition was taking shape on Broadway. In 1924, George Gershwin captured the merging of traditions in a single composition. With its famous opening clarinet glissando, "Rhapsody in Blue" felt unmistakably American and helped establish him as one of the defining composers of the Jazz Age. That same year, Gershwin visited the Eastman School of Music. Alongside a scribble of the opening bars of "Rhapsody in Blue," he signed Eastman's guestbook: "To the most Wonderful Music School in America. Long may its flag wave."

UNITED ARTISTS (NEW ORLEANS), J. ADAM FENSTER (THE ENTERTAINER, ADAGIO FOR STRINGS), COLAIMAGES/ALAMY (GEORGE GERSHWIN)

American popular song became one of the country's most influential cultural exports. Songwriters such as Gershwin and Irving Berlin created melodies that blended storytelling, jazz, and classical craft into what became known as the Great American Songbook. For Eastman historian Vincent Lenti '60E, '62E (MA), this represents one of the country's most significant contributions to world culture. "The American popular song and the American musical theater tradition became a huge influence internationally," he says.

The same hybridity that Mueller describes shaped the rise of other genres as well. Country music from Tennessee helped introduce Appalachian sounds to the wider world. Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* became one of the most emotionally powerful orchestral works ever written by an American composer. And Broadway musicals such as *Oklahoma!* by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II in 1943 merged theater with popular song and became a box-office hit.

Each of these milestones reflects a slightly different version of American identity. Sometimes that identity was hopeful and expansive. Woody Guthrie's folk anthem "This Land Is Your Land," written in 1940, imagined a country defined by shared belonging and would go on to influence generations of musicians, including Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen.

Other times, the music captured conflict and uncertainty. The folk revival of the 1960s tied music directly to social activism, with artists using songs to protest war and advocate for civil rights. Rock musicians pushed boundaries of sound and culture. Jazz continued to evolve, incorporating avant-garde experimentation and new global influences. And by the late 20th century, hip-hop became one of the most influential musical movements in the world.

ROCK, HIP-HOP, AND THE TECHNOLOGY OF SOUND

In the years after World War II, new technology and new audiences drove further change—and a defining generational shift. It was time for rock and roll.

Drawing from rhythm and blues and country traditions, rock introduced a sound that resonated especially with young listeners. "The growth of rock and roll isn't just about the music itself," says Satz Professor John Covach, whose dozens of publications on popular music include the influential textbook *What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock Music*. "It's about markets. Teenagers suddenly had expendable income and their own musical tastes."

Cheap 45-rpm records, jukeboxes, and radio broadcasts gave teenagers unprecedented influence over the direction of popular culture. Artists such as Elvis Presley brought blues-influenced music into the mainstream, while later bands—including the Beach Boys and Eagles—expanded rock into a more ambitious studio art form. Throughout these transformations, music continued to reflect the tensions and aspirations of American life.

Hip-hop emerged in the Bronx during the 1970s, when DJs began using turntables not just to play records but to manipulate them—looping beats, scratching vinyl, and creating entirely new sonic landscapes. This spirit of innovation was often driven by necessity.

Dennis DeSantis '05E (DMA)—an associate professor of music and technology at Eastman whose background includes leading music-learning initiatives at Ableton, a music

Bruce Springsteen, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Kate Smith, and teenagers with expendable income all contributed to the growth and diversity of American music.

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD/ALAMY (BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN), J. ADAM FENSTER (OKLAHOMA, KATE SMITH), CBS PHOTO ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (JUKEBOX)

software maker, and contributing to the development of its signature tools—notes that many musical breakthroughs occur when artists repurpose technology in unexpected ways. "Early techno, for example, was made with gear people bought at pawn shops," he explains. "They used technology in ways its designers never imagined." Techno originated in Detroit in the early 1980s with pioneering musicians like the Belleville Three, made up of Juan Atkins, Derrick May, and Kevin Saunderson. Living in one of the first post-industrial cities, they had limited means but abundant creativity, using what they could find to make sounds nobody expected. "That's a very American story," DeSantis says.

Hip-hop DJs transformed turntables into instruments. Electronic musicians in Detroit used inexpensive synthesizers to create techno. In both cases, artists took tools that had been overlooked or discarded and turned them into engines of creativity. That experimental spirit continues today as musicians explore new technologies, from digital production software to artificial intelligence. According to DeSantis, the most exciting developments will likely come not from the technology itself but from how artists choose to use it. "When people start forcing tools to do things their

From the streets of New York City to the Super Bowl halftime show, American music has chronicled a nation often questioning its own identity.

ALLAN TANNENBAUM/GETTY IMAGES (NEW YORK CITY), ASSOCIATED PRESS (BAD BUNNY)

creators never intended," he says, "that's when new genres appear. So, when we think about AI and music, it's exciting to think about how people might subversively repurpose it for creative uses we haven't thought of yet. Which is exactly what hip-hop did with turntables 50 years ago."

THIS IS AMERICA

Musicians have been writing about this country for centuries—and will continue to long after the semiquincentennial celebrations end. As long as America fuels an artist's imagination and ignites their conviction, musicians of every genre will chronicle it. American music is a story of invention and reinvention, and across generations, one pattern has emerged again and again: American musicians rarely stop trying to explain the country to itself. Sometimes they do it directly—with the word *America* in the title. From classical compositions like William Grant Still's *The American Scene* to Green Day's "American Idiot" (which the band included in a medley during this year's Super Bowl preshow), there is an impulse that has long been part of the nation's musical DNA.

Don McLean's "American Pie," released in 1971, is perhaps the most famous example. The nine-minute epic became a nostalgic meditation on the cultural upheaval of the 1960s, weaving references to rock and roll, political turmoil, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy into a sprawling musical allegory. McLean famously described it as a reflection on "the day the music died," but the song's deeper resonance lies in its sense of a country wrestling with its own identity.

Nearly 50 years later, actor, comedian, and musician Donald Glover—performing as Childish Gambino—offered a very different portrait. In 2018, "This Is America" juxtaposed joyful gospel-inspired music with stark visual imagery of violence and social tension. The song and its accompanying video won four Grammys, including Song of the Year and Best Music Video.

Despite the decades between them, the two songs share something striking. Both function as musical time capsules—expressing a moment when Americans paused to reflect on who they were and what their country had become.

For McCune, whose scholarship often explores how Black expressive culture reveals the pressures and possibilities of American life, the pairing is especially revealing. "When you put 'American Pie' next to 'This Is America,' you start to see how musicians are constantly trying to interpret the nation back to itself," he says. "They're responding to the same question across generations: What does it mean to be American right now?"

Which brings us back to Super Bowl LX. As Bad Bunny redefines what it means to be American, live in front of approximately 128 million viewers, we have an opportunity to explore the role American culture—and particularly its music—has played on the worldwide stage. In a single evening, each of the Super Bowl performances captured something essential about the nation's music: its ability to hold multiple histories at once. Because 250 years after its founding, the United States still has no single musical voice. Instead, it has something far more powerful: a chorus. ∗

Stream the songs that have defined America at rochester.edu/news/250.

ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES TAYLOR

STEVE JENNINGS/WIREIMAGE (BILLY JOE ARMSTRONG), JACK ROBINSON/HULTON ARCHIVE (NINA SIMONE), STEPHEN DEUTCH/CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM (WOODY GUTHRIE); ALL GETTY IMAGES

FRAME OF MIND

Love, Actually

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NISHANT CHOKSI

Psychologist Harry Reis explains what you can do to feel more love in your life—one conversation at a time. BY SOFIA TOKAR '20W (MS)

We are, on paper, more connected than ever—and also, increasingly, more alone. Call it the loneliness epidemic, or just the quiet drift of modern life. Either way, there is a particular kind of loneliness that comes when the connections that we have just aren't hitting the mark. It comes from being with others—talking, laughing, moving through the familiar choreography of conversation—and still, somehow, missing the deeper connection that most of us crave.

URochester psychologist Harry Reis has spent a lifetime studying human connection. His latest book, *How to Feel Loved: The Five Mindsets That Get You More of What Matters Most* (Harper, 2026), brings together decades of relationship research with coauthor Sonja Lyubomirsky's work on happiness.

Their conclusion is both comforting and slightly unsettling: Many of us are, in fact, loved. We just don't always feel it. Yet when people feel loved, Reis says, "they're happier and healthier. They're more productive. They're more successful in what they do."

For that feeling to take hold, three things must happen:

- **You reveal something real about yourself**—not a performance, but a glimpse of the real you.
- **The other person listens with genuine interest.**
- **And, most crucially, the other person cares**, responding in a way that makes what you've shared matter.

Miss any one of these, and love remains present but unfelt. So, how can you ensure the steps above happen?

To bridge theory and practice, Reis and his coauthor offer five mindsets, or ways of entering conversations with others (significant and otherwise), that make love more likely to land:

- **Start by listening to the other person.** Not to reply, but to understand. Put the phone away, make eye contact, ask open-ended questions, and paraphrase what you hear.
- **Be curious.** Follow what lights up the other person. Go deeper. Interest*ed*, it turns out, is interest*ing*.
- **Lead with an open heart.** Show the other person that you care about them, make room for difference, and let go of the need to be right.
- **See the whole person.** Complexity and contradictions exist in all of us—you, too. Recognize and accept them.
- **And then, when they reciprocate, share.** Offer something true, with care and discretion.

Taken together, these mindsets create a dynamic back-and-forth that promotes real connection: one person lifts, the other rises; what was hidden becomes known. And then they switch roles, taking turns lifting and being lifted.

Remember, you can't make yourself more lovable, and you can't make someone else love you more. But you can change the conversation. ⁎

Can AI make us feel loved? Watch Harry Reis explore love, attention, and the limits of technology at rochester.edu/news/love.

THE ART OF WHAT'S NEXT

WORK IN PROGRESS

At the Memorial Art Gallery, Timothy Peterson is building a collection that reflects today's complexity while helping shape the canon that endures.

BY MELISSA PHETERSON

Timothy Peterson in the Memorial Art Gallery's ground-floor Modern and Contemporary Art Gallery, where he removed 13 interior walls to open the space.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. ADAM FENSTER

TIMOTHY PETERSON spends much of his time in places most people never see: under freeway overpasses, inside warehouse studios, in half-finished spaces where artists are still working out ideas and responding in real time to the zeitgeist. He is looking for what isn't settled yet, for concepts still taking shape.

For the University of Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery (MAG), those instincts carry remarkable weight. As the inaugural Ann and Irving Norry Curator of Contemporary Art, Peterson isn't just selecting artworks to acquire; he's helping shape how the future will understand the present—building a collection that reflects today's bracing complexity while engaging with MAG's 5,000 years of holdings.

Upstairs, one finds Egyptian mummies, a Baroque organ, and Monet's soft washes of color. Descend into the Modern and Contemporary Art Gallery, though, and the aesthetic shift hits immediately. "I give a great deal of attention to sightlines," Peterson says. Dominating one wall is Erin Shirreff's *Paper Sculpture*, a large-scale shadow box composed of magnified scans from vintage photography. From afar, its dots and rosettes coalesce into what appears to be plaster, stone, wood, and metal; up close, the illusion dissolves into curving planes and fragments of printed matter.

"I love that after the long walk to *Paper Sculpture*, its shadow box format still provides further depth to consider up close," Peterson says. That layering lets the viewer observe both "three-dimensional forms in a culture mediated by still and moving images" and aspects of collage, sculpture, and dye-sublimation printing—all processes that figure in modern and contemporary art.

Peterson's other important sightline, leading from an entrance used by local school groups to Wayne Thiebaud's *River Pond*, shows how an artist famous for cakes and pies renders landscape with similar pastels and precision. Both works speak to Peterson's curatorial vision: conversation sparked and sustained through encounters with artists, materials, and ideas still cohering.

It is a vision that extends far beyond Rochester, notes Sarah Jesse, the Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director of MAG.

CURATING THE CANON

"Contemporary art is different from all the other categories of art in an encyclopedic museum because every artwork—baroque, impressionist, modernist—was once contemporary," Jesse says. "When a museum as important as MAG selects what enters its contemporary collection, it is helping determine what artists and artworks enter what we call 'the canon.' Think of how important that is."

Those high stakes animated the search that brought Peterson to Rochester in September 2024 as the museum's first contemporary art curator, a position endowed by local gallerist Deborah Ronnen in honor of her parents. "Timothy's position isn't just important to MAG, or to the arts in Rochester," Jesse says. "It will have an impact on the art world."

Peterson—who grew up in Minnesota and earned a bachelor's in art history at St. Olaf College followed by a master's in art history at Williams College—has curated more than 150 exhibitions and worked with artists ranging from emerging voices to internationally recognized figures. Over nearly four decades, he has held leadership roles at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art, the SCAD Museum of Art in Savannah, and Franklin Art Works in Minneapolis.

Yet what distinguishes Peterson is not only experience—it is orientation. Over an orange-flavored Celsius in the museum's pavilion, he speaks in a rhythm that mirrors his approach: connective, passionate, attentive. Even when discussing acquisitions or installations, he returns to the artists and their processes. "You're not just studying objects," he says. "You're trying to understand how something comes into being, and why it matters."

That inquiry often begins in the studio—many of which are in locations Peterson likens to "no man's land"—or at gallery openings, where he tracks emerging directions in contemporary practice. It requires a particular kind of judgment: the ability to recognize significance before it is widely acknowledged. On a trip to New York City, for example, he was eager to view the work of Carmen de Monteflores, the mother of artist Andrea Fraser, who has exhibited works in the Whitney Biennial. Though de Monteflores never received widespread recognition, she exemplifies the often-hidden talent Peterson seeks out.

"He's able to separate the signal from the noise," Jesse says, "which is arguably one of the most important skills a curator of contemporary art can have."

DIALOGUE ON DISPLAY

The sensibility Jesse describes is immediately visible in Peterson's reimagining of MAG's contemporary gallery. One of his first acts upon

"We're leaning into openness. The goal is to create an environment where works can speak to each other, and to visitors, without being confined by strict categories."

—Timothy Peterson

Hugo McCloud's *Blue Zone*, above left, makes a statement with plastic bags while Caroline Kent's *Timely movements match hidden motivations* invites interpretation.

arriving was to remove 13 interior walls, opening the space to natural light and continuous sightlines. Sculpture, photography, and painting now coexist in an environment that encourages visual and conceptual connections.

"We're leaning into openness," Peterson says. "The goal is to create an environment where works can speak to each other, and to visitors, without being confined by strict categories."

Within that environment, materials become a starting point for conversation. Hugo McCloud's *Blue Zone*, constructed from hand-cut and ironed single-use plastic bags, transforms a ubiquitous byproduct of global commerce into a monumental depiction of physical labor on a street in India. The work underscores both environmental degradation and the invisibility of manual work while posing a practical question for the museum: How will such materials endure?

"No material is off-limits now," Peterson says. "The question is how it survives." That tension between experimentation and preservation reflects a broader shift in contemporary art, where artists increasingly work with unconventional materials that challenge traditional museum practices.

Since his arrival in September 2024, Peterson has acquired works from a diverse range of artists in an effort to create "a wider world" within MAG's walls.

In Paul Mpagi Sepuya's *Darkroom Mirror*, two partially unclothed men share a camera, their faces obscured. "In many ways, photography offers visitors the most immediate opportunity to see themselves reflected in an artwork," Peterson says. "In this case, the artist and his friend offer queer visibility, and animate Sepuya's notion of the artist's studio as a social and cultural space for interaction and artmaking." MAG's collection of more than 12,000 objects includes over 250 works in photography, the majority dating from 1950 and later.

EXPANDING THE FRAME

"My goal is to expand the conversation," Peterson says. "To create new ways of thinking, new points of entry." That means, in part, acquiring more works by women, artists of color, and LGBTQ+ artists—ensuring, as he puts it, that "a wider world" exists within the gallery's walls.

In Caroline Kent's *Timely movements match hidden motivations*, abstract shapes and patterns glide across layered black backgrounds. Using cut-paper techniques, Kent treats abstraction as a form of visual language that resists fixed meaning while inviting viewers into the interpretive process. To extend Kent's sensibility beyond the canvas, Peterson will work with her to create a large-scale wall drawing in MAG's pavilion that he hopes will generate an immersive, chromatic energy.

Hanging across from Kent's piece and next to McCloud's *Blue Zone*, *Euphemism (Knot Stories)* gives sculptural form to tension and resilience. The black-glazed ceramic box by Paul S. Briggs is densely threaded with coiled, knotted tubes that push against and pierce its structure. Drawing on Black poetry and the realities of mass incarceration, the work transforms traditional ceramic techniques into a meditation on constraint and endurance—historical form pressed into urgent contemporary service.

A pink marble statue on a cedar plinth, Sanford Biggers's *The Cantor* similarly layers histories and visual traditions. By combining a female ancestor mask from the African Chokwe people with a classical Greek maiden, Biggers connects three of MAG's collection areas—classical sculpture, African art, and contemporary art—while prompting new conversations about identity, materiality, and cultural inheritance.

Louis Fratino's *The young father*, meanwhile, offers "an exceptionally rare image of fatherhood in the museum's collection, as well as a rare male nude sculpture—which were key points in acquiring it," Peterson says. The bronze figure expands the emotional and representational range of the collection, foregrounding intimacy, vulnerability, and care in ways that feel both timeless and newly visible.

Collecting contemporary art means making decisions before consensus has formed and before an artist's place in history is secure. "You're making a judgment about what will last," Peterson says. "And history shows us how unpredictable that can be—Vincent van Gogh only sold one painting in his lifetime."

AN ANCHOR FOR REGIONAL CULTURE

Peterson's endowed position places him within a longer institutional history shaped by visionary women.

"Uniquely among American museums, strong women have been instrumental at every point in MAG's history," Jesse says. "Emily Sibley Watson founded the institution; Hannah Durand Gould created the first acquisition fund; the Herdle sisters built MAG into a nationally important encyclopedic museum. And now Deborah Ronnen has given us our largest gift and established an endowment that will make us a significant player in contemporary art."

That foundation frees Peterson to do the work he considers essential: learning about the community, supporting other creative people, and nurturing vital relationships. Since his arrival, he has connected with institutions such as the George Eastman Museum and Visual Studies Workshop, a nonprofit organization dedicated to arts education. And he is conducting studio visits throughout the region, from Buffalo to the Finger Lakes, to build coalitions of regional artists.

Because the endowment exists in perpetuity, so does the mandate. "Our challenge is to show up not only for artists who have already proven themselves," Peterson says, "but for those whose work will resonate when we look back." ∗

A COLLECTOR'S EYE

DEBORAH RONNEN ON THE GIFT THAT KEEPS MAG LOOKING FORWARD.

For Deborah Ronnen, the decision to endow the Ann and Irving Norry Curator of Contemporary Art position at the Memorial Art Gallery grew from a simple conviction: Museums must stay connected to the present to maintain their energy.

"MAG's collection is extremely important as it is," says the founder of Rochester-based Ronnen Fine Art. "But it doesn't offer the community enough contact with the contemporary world. It became clear to me that the museum needed to look outward, not only inward. A museum without contemporary art risks becoming stuck in the past."

Ronnen's lifelong connection to art began at home. Her mother, who immigrated to the United States as a child, developed a passion for collecting contemporary art without formal training. "There was no art in her life when she arrived here," Ronnen says. "But she taught herself. She became a serious collector—not posters or reproductions, but real art. I watched her eye develop, and it turned out to be spectacular."

Her parents' travels in Europe, particularly France, deepened that interest. "That's where my mother fell in love with abstraction and nonobjective art," Ronnen says. "She was a huge influence on me."

Naming the endowment for her parents felt natural. "I knew I wouldn't name it for myself," she says. "My parents deserved that honor. If I hadn't grown up surrounded by contemporary art, my life path would have been very different."

Ronnen believes collectors play an essential role in shaping the future of museums. "The art market today is such that museums often can't afford to buy contemporary work outright," she explains. "They depend on donations from perceptive collectors. The museum has to cultivate those relationships."

For Timothy Peterson, that partnership is personal. "As my friend and colleague, Deborah enriches my dialogue and broadens my horizons with the world of contemporary art," he says. "I have tremendous respect for her acumen and am deeply grateful to her."

In the end, the investment is about the art itself. "These artists are living in our world," Ronnen says. "Contemporary art is a window onto today."

Deborah Ronnen grew up surrounded by contemporary art and credits her parents with placing her on the path to becoming a gallerist.

Our Man in China

For seven years, Dan Wang observed, documented, and analyzed a nation changing at breakneck speed. Now he's got world leaders hanging on his every word.

BY DAVID ANDREATTA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHILIP VUKELICH

Dan Wang '15 is, by any measure, having a moment. His book, *Breakneck: China's Quest to Engineer the Future* (W.W. Norton, 2025), about China's dizzying ascent on the international stage and what the United States can learn from it, has become a must-read among world leaders and policymakers since its publication last year.

It was spotted on the desk of Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. Aides to German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer reportedly read it on their recent trips to China. It made *The New York Times* bestseller list, was named one of *The New Yorker*'s Best Books of the Year, and was shortlisted for the *Financial Times* Business Book of the Year. *The Wall Street Journal* praised it for its clarity and urgency. And it landed Wang on some of the most influential news programs and podcasts in America.

Yet when Wang (pronounced "Wong") joins a video call with *Rochester Review* from outside the Hoover Institution—a public policy think tank at Stanford, where he is a research fellow in its History Lab—he seems amused by the notion that his work has had an impact.

"You never really know what happens when you write a book," Wang says. "One always hopes that people will pick it up and read it. I'm glad some people have."

Wang attributes some of the book's success to timing. It came out in a year of headlines about China, from the trade war to DeepSeek. It was also published a few months after *Abundance*, another bestseller by journalists Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson. That book has been called a guide for reforming government and overcoming socioeconomic problems in America—if progressives can stop blocking big dreams and good ideas with what the authors call "an endless catalog of rules and restraints."

Both primed readers for the idea that Americans are right to be frustrated by the state of their state. "The stars aligned," Wang says.

Breakneck examines why the United States struggles to build housing, high-speed rail, and energy infrastructure at speed and scale while China appears to erect towering bridges, superhighways and gleaming railways, and sprawling factories overnight. Wang's conclusion: The American elite is "made up of mostly lawyers, excelling at obstruction," whereas China is run by a "technocratic class, made up mostly of engineers, that excels at construction."

China, Wang writes, "is an engineering state building at breakneck speed, in contrast to the United States' lawyerly society, blocking everything it can, good and bad."

LEARNING FROM THE MASTERS

It may be tempting to view Wang as an overnight success. But *Breakneck* was seven years in the making, and Wang's ascent to his rarefied perch in the global conversation about power, technology, and economic development was anything but linear.

The foundation for his book is a series of annual letters he wrote to family, friends, and followers that chronicled his observations during the seven years he spent in China after graduating from the University of Rochester, a graduation that almost didn't happen.

He recalls his years at URochester with gratitude. He enrolled in large part, he says, because the University made going to college possible for him. Born in southwest China, Wang immigrated with his family at age seven to Canada, where he was raised mostly in Ottawa before his parents relocated to the Philadelphia suburbs when he was a teenager. As a Canadian citizen from a family he describes as being "not well off," Wang required "substantial financial aid" to attend college. URochester's generosity was the deciding factor.

"I was able to graduate from college debt-free," he says. "It has been a nice thing."

But he was, by his own admission, an unremarkable student, despite earning accolades. In 2013, he was recognized as the "Student Employee of the Year" for his work as a news assistant in the Office of Communications.

In nominating him, then–Associate Vice President of Communications Larry Arbeiter wrote that Wang had an uncanny knack for framing stories about the University that drew national media attention. "That kind of success is highly sought by experienced professionals," Arbeiter wrote, "and is basically unheard of by a student."

When he wasn't working in the office, Wang roamed the stacks in Rush Rhees or hunkered down in his "default study space" in the library's music section. "It was a tremendously pleasing experience to walk through so many books and be able to pull out books as one wishes," he says.

He devoured the works of Edith Wharton and Honoré de Balzac. In the music section, he browsed scores and once copied a Gustav Mahler symphony by hand, measure by measure. Wang did the same with prose, retyping articles in *The New Yorker* as something of a self-directed monastic apprenticeship aimed at absorbing the language, cadence, and rhythm of masters of their craft.

Before joining Stanford's Hoover Institution, Dan Wang was a fellow at Yale Law School's Paul Tsai China Center—and, long before that, a Royal Canadian Army Cadet serving his adopted homeland in Ottawa.

"I felt like I moved to China on the cusp of a technological flowering. I knew people were underestimating China, but living there was kind of like being on a very different branch of the technological tree that Silicon Valley wasn't going down."

—DAN WANG

"I think I did that three or four times, just rewrote the entire article by retyping it to see the choices a writer makes," Wang says. "And I did the same thing as a music student because I thought seeing the choices a composer makes was important."

Wang majored in philosophy, wrestling with logic and classical texts that helped him hone arguments. But it was an economics professor, Michael Rizzo, who had the biggest impact on him as a student.

Rizzo, he says, organized reading circles of the works of Austrian economist and philosopher Friedrich Hayek that left an impression on Wang and exposed him to great thinkers of the economics blogosphere like Tyler Cowen, who later became an intellectual influence. (Cowen's praise for *Breakneck* as "arguably the best book of the year flat out" is displayed prominently on its cover.)

"Dan was the kind of student who inspired me to want to learn more myself, and he had an extreme restlessness about him that resonated then and still does today," Rizzo says.

That restlessness became more apparent than ever when, after his junior year, Wang dropped out.

A DETOUR, THEN A DIPLOMA

Wang had landed a job in marketing and communications in Toronto at the cloud-based e-commerce platform Shopify when the company was in its infancy. He was making good money and enjoyed the work. "There was a point in my life when I thought I was going to be quite happy to be a dropout," he says.

But URochester officials persisted in trying to persuade him to return and finish his degree. He says he told them he preferred to stay at Shopify. "Then they asked, 'Is there anything you would like to do?'" Wang recalls. "I'm being a bit cheeky here, but I said, 'You know, I would like to spend my last semester drinking beer in Germany.'

"And, again, I'm being stylized and cheeky, but they said, 'We have a program for that!'" Wang finished his degree in Freiburg im Breisgau through the Institute for the International Education of Students, better known as IES Abroad.

He skipped commencement to take a content marketing job in Silicon Valley at the supply chain logistics company Flexport. There he stood at the corner of global trade and technology—an intersection that would become the backbone of *Breakneck*.

"Rochester mailed me my diploma," Wang says. "But I'm glad I had the patience to finish my degree."

In 2017, Wang moved to China. He joined an economic research firm as a technology analyst, writing about semiconductors and clean-tech manufacturing primarily for an audience of hedge fund clients around the world.

The country was, in many ways, familiar terrain. He had visited relatives there growing up and spoke fluent Mandarin thanks to his mother, a former television news anchor, who saw to that.

But living there as an adult, Wang observed distinct differences between the China he knew as a child and his homes in Canada and the United States. While Silicon Valley cast itself as the unquestioned center of technological innovation, he saw in China a country that was positioning itself to compete, often ferociously. There was a sense of optimism.

The country was churning out new cars, including varieties of electric vehicles, in a fraction of the time that American companies did. It leapfrogged from credit cards to mobile payments. Tech giants like Alibaba and ByteDance were going toe-to-toe with their peers in the West.

"I felt like I moved to China on the cusp of a technological flowering," Wang says. "The magnitude was not quite what I expected. I knew people were underestimating China, but living there was kind of like being on a very different branch of the technological tree that Silicon Valley wasn't going down."

He chronicled his observations and thoughts in his letters and eventually compiled them into a narrative in *Breakneck*, where he framed the differences between his native and adopted countries as the result of an "engineering mindset" in China that valued ideating, building, and scaling, and a "lawyerly" one in the United States that regulated, litigated, and protected.

To drive home his point, he details how in 2008 both countries began construction of roughly 800 miles of high-speed rail—in China between Beijing and Shanghai, and in the United States between San Francisco and Los Angeles. China opened its line three years later at a cost of $36 billion. California is still struggling to complete the first phase of its line, and authorities estimate it won't be operational until 2032 at a price tag of up to $128 billion.

Wang is not romantic about China. He fiercely criticizes its authoritarian reach in areas like its one-child policy, "zero Covid" lockdowns, censorship, and individual rights. He says he wishes the country were "50 percent more lawyerly." On the other hand, he wishes the United States were "20 percent more engineering."

"Building homes should not be that difficult," Wang says of America's housing shortage. "We know how to build homes."

Wang left China in 2023 to return to the United States. "I choose the West," he says. "That's unambiguous. I want the United States, with its values, to succeed."

Today, he splits his time between Ann Arbor, Michigan, where his wife is a professor at the University of Michigan, and Northern California, where he works at the Hoover Institution under another URochester alumnus, Stephen Kotkin '81.

But *Breakneck* has Wang hopscotching the globe for speaking engagements. He is, it seems, moving at breakneck speed and, like he did at the University of Rochester, engineering his own future. ✱

THEY GOT THE

COURTESY OF BROAD STREET STROKE

Five decades after laying down the groove together at Danforth, the members of Broad Street Stroke still show up for one another every weekend—and you can bet they're having a good time.

BY ROBIN L. FLANIGAN

CLINT CONLEY '77, BASS GUITAR

LOUIS GIOFFRE '76, PERCUSSION

BROAD STREET STROKE, SHOWN HERE AT ITS FIRST GIG AT DANFORTH DINING CENTER, DREW PRAISE FOR BRINGING DIFFERENT RACES TOGETHER.

JOHN ACCORDINO '76, LEAD GUITAR

REGGIE WASHINGTON, VOCALS

AFTER GETTING THE PARTY STARTED IN ROCHESTER, THE BAND PERFORMED ON A CRUISE SHIP BOUND FOR NASSAU, BAHAMAS.

In 2001, Mark Goldman '76 was watching CNN at home in Weston, Massachusetts, when Jeff Gardere '78, a board-certified clinical psychologist, appeared on the screen offering advice on talking to kids about terrorism. Goldman called out to his wife: "You won't believe this! I know him! He played in our band!"

That band, a highlight of Goldman's time at the University of Rochester, hadn't played together in three decades. And it had been just as long since Goldman, the band's keyboardist, had talked with Gardere, one of the singers.

Now the two catch up every weekend via Zoom, along with other members of Broad Street Stroke, whose repertoire included hits from Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Tower of Power, and the Average White Band.

After Gardere caught wind of the CNN sighting, the men reconnected and decided it would be good to get the band back together regularly, even if virtually and without instruments. Living in several states along the East Coast, they diligently show up on Saturday mornings to discuss all things past, present, and future—but mostly the state of the world.

"This is almost like therapy for us," says Gardere. "We have different political views and don't always agree, but we talk with one another in a respectful manner, and that really should be the blueprint for America."

On a recent weekend, four of the band's seven members—the regulars—toggle between being playful and serious. After mournfully acknowledging the passing of Grateful Dead rhythm guitarist Bob Weir, the men reminisce about the good ol' days, when Broad Street Stroke earned attention both for its sound and for bringing a diverse group of students together.

From a 1975 review in the *Campus Times*: "For those who love to dance the night away, the Stroke gives its audiences enough 'bumping' and 'hustling' type tunes to keep even the most talented New York City disco-goers satisfied."

"WE WERE JUST DOING OUR THING. IT WASN'T LIKE, 'WE NEED TO MAKE A STATEMENT.' WE WERE DOING THE MUSIC, AND THAT SPOKE FOR ITSELF."
— Mark Goldman

Another *Campus Times* article credited Broad Street Stroke with performing "a bit of magic" not on the stage but by bringing different races together. The piece compared the band's impact to "mixing salt and sugar—the individual grains will not change characteristics, but the mixture will have a new taste."

"The two singers were Black and the other musicians were white," says Gardere. "That was a phenomenon at the time on campus. Those '70s were a wonderful mix of entertainment, music, energy, positivity, and racial togetherness. We were brothers."

Goldman asks if the others can still picture the shock on the audience's faces during their first gig, dressed in hats and platform shoes, and entertaining with choreographed movements. "We were just doing our thing," he says. "It wasn't like, 'We need to make a statement.' We were doing the music, and that spoke for itself."

Their sound was impressive enough to land them a booking on a cruise ship bound for Nassau, Bahamas. The men swap stories about being naive kids back then, when a Genesee beer cost a mere 25 cents. "Our gigs were overflowing and there were a lot of romantic adventures for us on that ship—and I'll leave it at that," says Gardere.

JEFF GARDERE, MARK GOLDMAN, JOHN ACCORDINO, REGGIE WASHINGTON, AND LOUIS GIOFFRE CAUGHT UP OFFLINE IN 2023.

COURTESY OF BROAD STREET STROKE

Together for two years, Broad Street Stroke practiced at least twice a week in one of the University's residence towers, after getting official permission to line the walls of an extra room with acoustic tiles. Rehearsals lasted several hours—longer when the band was preparing for a show.

Nowadays musicians can type a song title into a search engine and find sheet music. That would've been helpful to the band's members, none of whom had perfect pitch. Instead, "we'd be standing around our chintzy little record player, putting that needle down repeatedly" and going back and forth about which chord was the correct one, remembers lead guitarist John Accordino '76. "And we would do that over and over until we got it right."

Bass guitarist Clint Conley '77, who had the best relative pitch in the band, also used the phone's dial tone as a reference point when tuning instruments to F and A. "We practiced like crazy, to the detriment of our studies," says Accordino. "But we were tight."

The band members have remained tight in other ways in recent years. Percussionist Louis Gioffre '76 lost his wife to lung cancer in 2023. Over the two years she was sick, the men offered support, as did other members of the band who pop in every now and then on Saturday mornings.

One of them is Reggie Washington, a Rochester local who sang in the group. After the Broad Street Stroke years, he became a professional gospel singer and contributed to the recording of two gospel albums. That led him to the ministry. Now a bishop, he called at times to pray with Gioffre's wife. (The group still gets a kick out of Washington's profession, given that he once was dubbed the "Don Juan" of the band.)

The other occasional drop-in is Conley, who went on to play bass in the post-punk band Mission of Burma—recognized as a major influence on alternative rock bands such as Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and R.E.M. (The Boston City Council decreed October 4 "Mission of Burma Day" in 2009.) Although he couldn't make this particular weekly meeting, Conley later says, "I have such affection for these dudes. Locking down a funk groove with these guys was absolutely exhilarating."

The men briefly mention seeing one another at the memorial service for Gioffre's wife—the first time since college that most of them had been together in person. (Goldman, Gioffre, and Conley are the only ones who've stayed in consistent touch since graduation.)

"It was a tough reunion," Gardere says.

"It meant a lot to me that you guys showed up," Gioffre responds.

"It was never in question," Goldman assures him.

They take a beat, then shift into a substantial digression about Smitty's Birdland, later known as Snuffy's Birdland—the popular barbecue and fried chicken restaurant they'd go to after each show, adrenaline pumping and needing to unwind.

After sharing memories of the dirty plastic water pitchers and "hot sauce that was basically disinfectant for your insides," Goldman brings up how much Gioffre adored Smitty's macaroni salad—and how Conley made up a short song about it.

"And how did that song go?" Gardere asks, egging on Goldman to sing.

Goldman grins, recollecting how Gioffre would "become enraged" by the ditty. "So, of course," he says, "that meant now I was going to sing it with Clint. Lou got the desired effect. He wanted us to sing it to him again, so we did."

"Oh, stop it," Gioffre says, smiling, as everyone else laughs. "It's never-ending needling."

Gardere points out that every Broad Street Stroke member—all "solid, honest, good people"—has had a successful career, which he credits in large part to their URochester education. He has also found it fascinating to watch how each one has remained roughly the same while evolving in his personality.

He paints Goldman, who transformed a family backpack and sports company into an international brand, as the past and present leader of the group. Goldman continues to play the piano "fairly frequently" and sometimes jams at a dinner club. "I would be a liar if I didn't say it's still a thrill to play in front of people," he confesses.

Gardere describes Gioffre, founder of a national service provider to petroleum and clean energy markets, as having "a very quiet strength and humility." Shortly after graduating college, Gioffre played in the New Wave band the Digits, which "recorded in England at famous studios with famous record producers," although nothing was released commercially. These days he rents studio space for his drums and recording gear.

Accordino, a university professor of urban and regional planning, is a "mellow, extremely intellectual person" with an "egalitarian perspective on all things," according to Gardere. Accordino played acoustic guitar regularly until a couple of years ago. Conley, who recently retired from broadcast journalism, "was quite aloof" but "always consistent and reliable." And Washington, serving his constituents in Tallahassee, Florida, "was always gregarious and generous."

Gardere doesn't leave himself out, admitting to "lots of imposter syndrome" both as a musician and across several careers, which required him to learn on the fly. "I was a showman then and I guess still a showman now," he says. Gardere juggles several professional roles, which include maintaining a private clinical practice and appearing as a therapist on *The Real Housewives of Atlanta* and other TV shows. He also sings with jazz bands.

(A testament to the group's good-natured banter: When Conley learned of Gardere's characterization of him, he wrote in an email, "Aloof? Aloof? Ha! I shall challenge the good doctor to a duel at dawn.")

These weekly gatherings, Gardere continues, are "a connection from the past to the present, a remembrance of what we were and who we became, and maybe more than anything else, a safe space to talk about how the world has lost its [bleep] mind." ⁎

Ready to get your groove on, Broad Street Stroke–style? Listen to a selection of the band's performances at rochester.edu/news/funk.

for

EVER BETTER

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

CAMPAIGN MOMENTUM

For Ever Better: The Campaign for the University of Rochester **is already making a real difference for our students, for our patients, and for our world. The historic campaign seeks to raise $1.75 billion by 2030 while expanding engagement with our alumni, parents, friends, and broad community.**

By Kristine Kappel Thompson

FOR BRILLIANT MINDS

TRANSFORMATIVE INVESTMENT IN ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE

Trustee Emeritus John Bruning ’24 (Honorary), an optics and engineering leader and entrepreneur, and Barbara Bruning, a business and community leader, have made a $10 million commitment to establish an endowed deanship for the Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences.

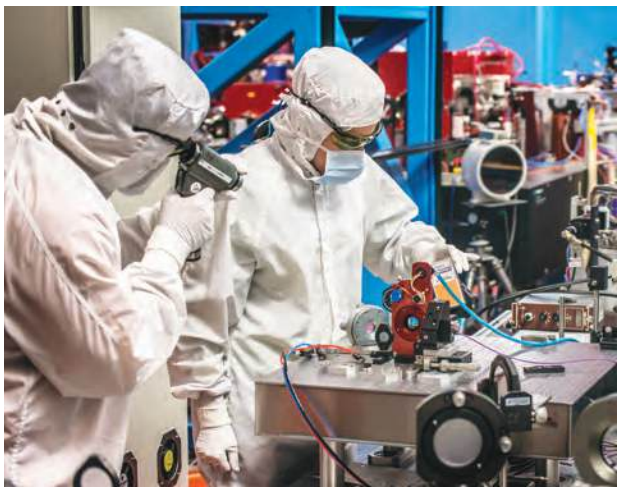
This landmark gift establishes permanent funding for the dean position, one of the most essential leadership roles in shaping an academic institution. For generations to come, the Brunings’ gift will provide stable, dedicated resources to strengthen the Hajim School’s ability to attract and retain distinguished leaders—those who will uphold academic quality, steward school resources, and sustain the institution’s mission and culture. Wendi Heinzelman has been named the inaugural John and Barbara Bruning Dean.

FOR BOUNDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

HIRE ROCHESTER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM OPENS NEW DOORS FOR UNDERGRADUATES

An exciting new program facilitated by the Gwen M. Greene Center for Career Education and Connections will offer paid internships exclusively to University undergraduates. **The Hire Rochester Internship Program offers students much-needed financial support, career coaching, and professional development opportunities, helping turn internships into career-launching experiences and post-graduation opportunities.**

The new program is made possible through a leadership gift from Trustee Judith Reinsdorf ’86, whose contribution will fund five students each year beginning in summer 2026. Building on the Reinsdorf gift, the University aims to support 50 paid internships annually by the end of the *For Ever Better* campaign. To reach its full potential, the program needs additional funding and more organizations and businesses willing to host URochester interns. Want to help? Contact Caroline Butler, executive director of student life advancement, caroline.butler@rochester.edu.



FOR NEXT-GENERATION SPACES

A HISTORIC HOSPITAL EXPANSION

The University is undertaking its largest capital project ever—the expansion of Strong Memorial Hospital—an investment in the future of healthcare for the Greater Rochester region. The project will add more than 650,000 square feet of new clinical space, anchored by a nine-story patient tower with more than 100 private inpatient rooms and new space for advanced treatments and future operating suites. It will also more than triple the size of Strong's Emergency Department, adding more than 200 examination, treatment, and observation stations, along with expanded psychiatric emergency services to better support patients and families across the region.

Generous support from alumni, grateful patients, and community partners—including some of the project's largest gifts from the Building Brighter Days Foundation, Peter J. Landers '83 (MS) and Kathleen E. Landers '82, Martin and Darcy Mucci, and Donald and Leslie Tomeny—continues to fuel this major building project.

FOR THRIVING COMMUNITIES

MEMORIAL ART GALLERY MOVES CLOSER TO ITS FREE ADMISSION GOAL

Thanks to leadership gifts from MAG and University Trustee Doug Bennett '06S (MBA), Abby Bennett, the Sands Family Foundation, and Mary Ellen Burris '68W (EdM), MAG is getting closer to making admission free for all visitors.

The Free for All Endowment reflects Emily Sibley Watson's founding vision when she gifted the museum to the community in 1913—as a place of education and enjoyment for all. For its first 56 years, MAG was free to everyone.

"Through the Free for All Endowment, we have the opportunity to fulfill—and return to—that promise in a lasting way," says Sarah Jesse, the Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director of the Memorial Art Gallery. "By eliminating our admission fee for everyone in perpetuity, generations of visitors will be able to enjoy MAG's extraordinary collection and benefit from a rich cultural education." Gifts of any size can help MAG reach its free admission goal.

CAMPAIGN NEWS

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Trustee **Jay S. Benet '76S (MBA)** and **Jeanne Benet** have established an endowed scholarship at the Simon Business School. The Jay S. and Jeanne Benet Endowed Scholarship is designed to provide permanent financial support to students pursuing graduate business degrees.

THE PHYSICS OF FOREVER

In honor of the late **Joseph Eberly**—a theoretical physicist whose life was devoted to teaching and discovery—**his family has established two endowed funds** in his name: a professorship and a related research fund in physics. Each gift reflects the family's shared values and strengthens the University's commitment to science and research.

DOING THE MATH

Eric T. Lincke '54, '57M (MD) has established the John F. Randolph Professorship in Mathematics within the School of Arts & Sciences. The endowed gift honors Randolph—Lincke's late mentor—and played a key role in recruiting Maria (Masha) Gordina as the inaugural holder of the professorship and chair of the mathematics department.

HUMANITY FORWARD

Arnold Lisio '56, '61M (MD) and **Anne Moore Lisio, MD**, have created an endowed visiting professor/postdoctoral scholar fund within the School of Arts & Sciences and the Humanities Center. This gift builds on the couple's longstanding support of the humanities, Italian studies, and modern languages and cultures at the University.

NOW AND FOREVER

Trustee **Ria Nova '98** has made a leadership gift to support scholarships and student success at the University. Her generosity will provide both immediate funding and lasting support for undergraduate students. Nova's gift also includes a new membership challenge inviting alumni and friends to join the George Eastman Circle (GEC), the University's leadership annual giving society.

EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE

Lainie Friedman Ross, MD, PhD, has been named the inaugural Mark & Lois Taubman Distinguished Professor of Health Humanities and Bioethics. This new professorship was established through the generosity of **Mark Taubman**, former CEO of University of Rochester Medicine and dean of the School of Medicine & Dentistry; **Lois Taubman, JD**; and **Rachel D. Kohler**, a social entrepreneur and investor.

A GAME-CHANGING GIFT

Trustee Tyler Zachem '88 and **Karen Zachem** have established the University's first endowment to support a coaching position. Their gift establishes the Michael & Connie Neer Family Head Men's Basketball Coach Fund and strengthens opportunities for meaningful student experiences beyond the classroom. Zachem played for URochester's men's basketball coach Mike Neer, who led the program for 34 seasons.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Generous donors have launched matching challenges to inspire support for University students while amplifying the impact of every gift. Initiatives include the **Piaker Family** Scholarship Challenge for Arts & Sciences and Hajim students, the **Juan C. Jones** Scholarship Challenge at Simon Business School, and the **Pramit Jhaveri** GEC Challenge for Simon.

A VISION FOR OPTICS

Govind P. Agrawal, the **Dr. James C. Wyant Professor of Optics** and a leader in optical communications, and **Anne Agrawal '93W (MS)** have created an early-career professorship at the University's Institute of Optics. Their gift establishes the Dr. Govind Agrawal and Anne Agrawal Professorship in Optics, boosted by additional funding from the Wyant Optics Challenge, a $12 million effort to expand the institute's faculty.

BUILT FOR STUDENTS

The **Joseph P. Mack Catholic Center**—an 8,000-square-foot building with a chapel and gathering spaces—is now open on the River Campus. Plans are also in development for a new facility to house the Greenbaum Center for Jewish Life. Similar to the Mack Center, the Greenbaum Center is being developed and operated exclusively through donor funds and will offset the space limitations at the Interfaith Chapel.

SPACE FOR MUSIC INNOVATION

Design planning has begun on the Beal Innovation Hub, made possible by the generosity of Trustee **Joan Beal '84E** and **Jeff Beal '85E**. It will house collaborative labs, studios, and SoundSpace, a new University transdisciplinary center.

ADVANCING DISCOVERY AND INNOVATION

Plans are underway to build and renovate learning spaces on the River Campus, including a new state-of-the-art facility for sciences and engineering.

SPONSORED BY THE OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT

Beside the Genesee

Mission to Mars

Sophie Black ’27 works on a process that uses bacteria to transform carbon dioxide into materials that could help sustain life on the Red Planet. The project earned a gold medal at the 2025 iGEM competition. >**P.73**

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. ADAM FENSTER

Learn

OFFICE HOURS

Pablo Sierra Silva

The historian and creator of the Black Mexico seminar and World History Through Soccer on hidden connections, the power of primary sources, and sport as a window onto society.

INTERVIEW BY MELISSA PHETERSON

As an undergraduate, I loved studying African history—Ethiopia, Senegal, Angola—and literature, film, and history from Latin America. Those two interests felt like separate tracks.

The turning point came in a lecture on Black conquistadores of Mexico. I remember sitting there thinking, "This has to be wrong," because I had never heard this history before—and I spent most of my childhood in Mexico. It completely floored me.

Suddenly it clicked: I could bring my two interests together, asking what it means to study Blackness in Mexico, a place so closely associated—visually and narratively—with Indigenous civilizations like the Maya and Mexica.

On an exploratory trip to Mexico, I reviewed a box of documents from the 1600s. Right away, I found dozens of references to enslaved Angolans and Congolese. I thought: If this random request yields so much history, what would a true, in-depth study produce?

That led to my first book, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531–1706* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). So much of my archival material never made it into the book, so when Covid hit and the archives closed, I wrote *Mexico, Slavery, Freedom: A Bilingual Documentary History, 1520–1829* (Hackett Publishing, 2024).

There's a will from Zacatecas, in northern Mexico, written by a man in the 1700s who owned something like a convenience store. He lists his stock—20 yards of ribbon and lace, four pounds of candles—and then itemizes what people pawned to buy things: a coral bracelet, a silver pendant. A student might read that and think, "My sister has a pendant like that." Suddenly, 1712 doesn't feel so distant.

Another document that has stayed with me is an investigation into a gay community in Mexico City. I was never taught that queer communities existed in the colonial period. The document is violent—these people are being persecuted by crown officials—but within it you find lists of homes where they dined, and their nicknames for each other: La Rosada, "the pink one," and La Coqueta, "the flirt."

Mapping those communities onto the past and then asking what we do with that knowledge has been powerful. A student raised in the 2000s or 2010s will see things in that document that I never would. That's what keeps me committed to primary sources: Each generation reads them anew.

← **The associate professor of history—and advisor for the new Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies initiative—in his office at Rush Rhees.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. ADAM FENSTER

My current research follows 1,463 people kidnapped in a pirate attack in Veracruz and dispersed to places like colonial Charleston, South Carolina, and Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti). What did it mean for those people, and for those left behind? What did it mean to land in a foreign port, not speaking the language, and, in some parts of Saint-Domingue, in a setting with very few women?

I've always been drawn to the footnote on the page that says, "We don't know what happened to this person." I'm obsessed with those gaps. Why don't we know? What connections are we missing?

For me, sport offers another way into these questions. I try to teach HIST 154: World History Through Soccer every World Cup cycle. It always strikes me how central sports are to everyday life in Latin America, the United States, and Europe—and yet when we open many standard histories, they're barely mentioned. How can that be, when on a given Sunday in some cities a huge share of the population is either at the stadium or listening on the radio?

In Buenos Aires alone there are 79 stadiums; that's a profound transformation of urban space that we rarely treat as historically significant.

I'm especially interested in the history of women's soccer. Archival photos of women playing in uniforms in Chile in the early 1900s raise questions about why those stories disappeared in the 1960s. If I ever move fully into researching the 20th or 21st century, it will likely be through this lens. We don't take sports seriously enough in academia.

Want Professor Sierra Silva's expert take on this summer's World Cup? Go to rochester.edu/news/silva for his must-see matches.

→ After a 90,000 sq. ft. expansion in 2023, The Strong is the centerpiece of Rochester's Neighborhood of Play.

COURTESY OF THE STRONG NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PLAY

Game On

URochester and The Strong National Museum of Play team up to advance research and innovation.

BY THERESA DANYLAK

Rochester's only R1 research university and the world's largest collector of historical materials related to play have solidified a partnership that will advance research, education, and community engagement focused on the study of play and games.

Through the collaboration, University of Rochester faculty, staff, and students will have opportunities to develop research initiatives, organize conferences, and otherwise examine the history and societal impact of play and games using The Strong National Museum of Play's world-renowned collections and expertise.

The two institutions—whose long history of collaboration extends to the University's departments of pediatrics and psychology and the Eastman School of Music—will also explore ways to promote Rochester and New York State as centers for play and game development, attracting scholars and industry leaders to the region while fostering innovation and economic growth.

The Warner School of Education & Human Development has a key role in this partnership through its Center for Professional Development and Education Reform, led by Michael Daley. Leveraging its expertise in education and learning, the center will ensure that initiatives are accessible and aligned with the broader mission of promoting learning through play.

"We are opening the door to new kinds of collaboration between educators, researchers, and museum professionals," Daley says. "Together, we can develop hands-on learning experiences that help students and community partners understand the many ways play shapes how we learn, connect, and imagine what's possible."

NEED TO KNOW

When the Going Gets Tough

A new trandisciplinary research center brings together faculty dedicated to studying resilience science.

BY SHEILA RAYAM

Stress is the body's natural reaction to a challenge. While our psychological, behavioral, and biological responses to stress can be beneficial, chronic stress can have serious negative health implications. At the new Resilience Research Center, faculty from across the University investigate why some people bounce back from stress, trauma, and adversity and others don't—and what can be done about it.

Elaine Hill, Dean's Professor, Department of Environmental Medicine and Public Health Sciences, and Professor, Departments of Economics and Obstetrics and Gynecology: "My research focuses on early-life exposures to neighborhood and community sources of stress and how those exposures affect health throughout the life course.

In looking at how the pandemic exacerbated the overdose crisis, we found that pre-pandemic community vulnerability and local economic conditions, as measured by high unemployment, explained most of the large increases in overdose mortality through 2022. We also found that access to substance-use treatment during pregnancy improved outcomes for mothers and infants, including reducing preterm birth and severe maternal morbidity. In terms of environmental exposures during pregnancy, our team has found adverse infant and maternal outcomes with exposures to traffic, shale gas development, low-quality public drinking water, hazardous waste management, construction projects, and extreme heat.

Elaine Hill

My research has led me to say environmental policy and economic policy are health policy. Policies that target improving community contexts and building community resilience are likely to have meaningful returns on investment, leading to improved health and well-being over the long term."

Jennie Noll

Jennie Noll, Professor, Department of Psychology, and Executive Director, Mt. Hope Family Center: "There are remarkable stories of resilience, of people who have come from amazingly difficult systems, families, experiences. For three decades I have studied how early adversity and trauma impact human development at various levels of functioning. The bulk of my research has focused on child sexual abuse, and my work has contributed to foundational knowledge that explains the vast mental and physical health disparities exhibited by survivors.

These disparities include difficulties in social relationships with peers, parents, romantic partners, and even with one's own children. Marked mental health difficulties, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and an overactive stress-response system can disrupt key stress-regulated physiological systems associated with health and longevity. These disruptions affect our ability to fight off disease and can set the stage for metabolic and behavioral problems.

I pay particular attention to variables, conditions, and contexts that help explain why some survivors emerge relatively unscathed in comparison to their peers, as these are clues to early intervention and prevention."

Kathi Heffner, Professor, School of Nursing and Departments of Psychiatry and Medicine, and Associate Chief of Research, Division of Geriatrics and Aging: "Stress is experienced across the lifespan. What changes are the challenges or stressors we face. Children absolutely feel stress, whether from school pressures, family circumstances, or social dynamics. Adolescents often experience stress around identity and belonging, while adults may juggle work and caregiving or financial strain. For older adults, stress combined with aging can increase the risk for poor health in later life.

My current focus is on finding ways to promote well-being and immune health in caregivers of a family member with dementia, as well as individuals at risk for dementia. We found that improving attention and the speed at which stressed caregivers processed information—using computerized cognitive training—also improved their memory performance under laboratory stress. Importantly, cognitive training also lessened their negative emotional responses to memory problems and challenging behaviors of their family member with dementia, suggesting that these brain games can build caregivers' cognitive and emotional resilience."

Kathi Heffner

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAM KERR

ASK THE ARCHIVIST

Q

A question for Melissa Mead, the John M. and Barbara Keil University Archivist and Rochester Collections Librarian:

Knowing my love for the University of Rochester, a family member recently surprised me with a unique gift for the holidays—a small leather rectangle stamped with the pre-1928 Rochester seal. They found it on eBay a while back but didn't have much information regarding its history. Do you know its origins and what it might have been used for?

—Jason Buitrago '07, '14W (MS)

A

Your gift was originally tucked inside a pack of cigarettes, issued circa 1910. Though made of leather, it belongs to a long history of cigarette, or trading, "cards."

As Maurice Rickards writes in his *Encyclopedia of Ephemera*, "Cigarette cards were among the first items of ephemera to be produced specifically for collecting. Originating in America as cardboard stiffeners for the paper packs in which cigarettes were then sold, it was shortly realized that the . . . blank cards might serve some promotional purpose."

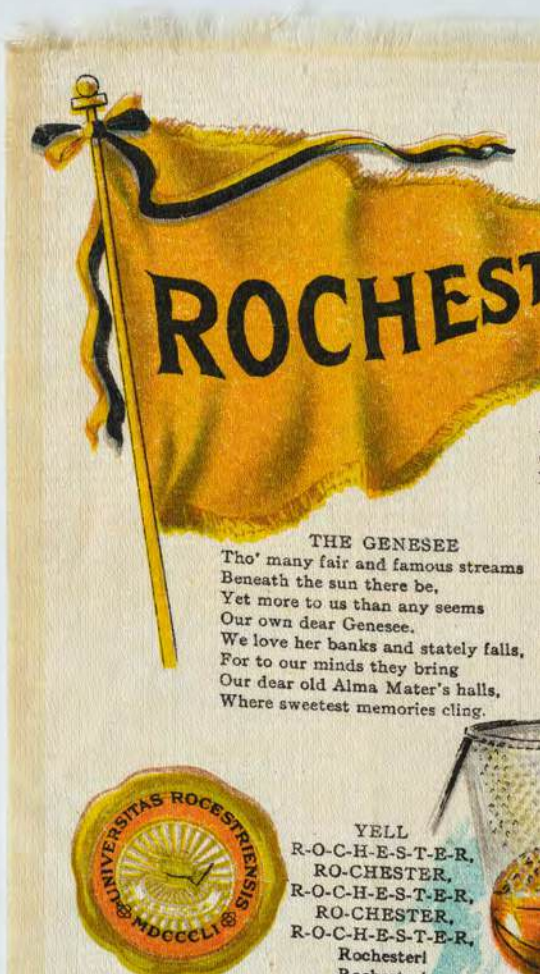
What better way to convince consumers to keep buying than to distribute cards in limited-run series on topics of interest to people of all ages? Beginning in the late 1870s, cigarette companies issued cards with themes ranging from historical figures and literary characters to flags, flowers, and, of course, athletes.

American colleges and universities entered the mix around 1910. Appearing alongside Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and many others, URochester made it into nearly every set. By then, protecting package contents had become largely secondary to marketing, and companies began producing sets in other materials such as leather, silk, and felt.

Leather rectangles and triangular pennants appeared in various colors, either "blind-stamped" like yours or with color accents. "Silks" came in two formats: small woven strips in solid colors featuring school names and seals, and more fragile printed four-by-five-inch silk panels tucked into cigar boxes. One such design included a basketball and net, the first verse of "The Genesee," the school yell, and the pre-1928 seal. Paper cards came in two sizes and depicted an energetic scene of students playing ice hockey—organized as a varsity sport in the fall of 1906.

There is no evidence of any objection to being included in these promotions, but the Archives holds no documents suggesting University administrators were consulted, either. And tobacco wasn't the only vehicle: Weber Bakery in Irvington, New Jersey, also distributed cards, perhaps licensing the image from a tobacco company. Text on the back promised a different card packed with each loaf of bread every day for two months, and posed the question: "Which college is your favorite?"

Fair warning, though: Acquiring URochester ephemera can be habit-forming. The Archives' holdings grew significantly recently, thanks to a gift from Mark Zaid '89 from his extensive collection. Look for the first installment—his postcards and tobacco ephemera—online soon.



→ **The University Archives holds examples of most of the known issues of URochester-themed cigarette cards, shown here at actual size.**

J. ADAM FENSTER

Have a question about University history? Email rochrev@rochester.edu with "Ask the Archivist" in the subject line. For more on cigarette cards and other ephemera, visit urexhibits.lib.rochester.edu/s/ata.

Discover

Compound Interests

Scientists identify a DNA repair protein in bowhead whales that could one day help humans live longer.

BY LINDSEY VALICH

As humans age, we become more vulnerable to cancer and other diseases. Bowhead whales, however, can live for up to 200 years while remaining remarkably resistant to many of the diseases that affect humans. In the icy waters of the Arctic, these massive mammals—among the longest-lived animals on Earth—age in ways scientists are only beginning to understand.

How does a creature that can weigh as much as 100 tons stay healthy for centuries? And could its biology hold clues to help people live longer, healthier lives?

New research from URochester biology professors Vera Gorbunova and Andrei Seluanov and their collaborators points to part of the answer: a protein called CIRBP. The protein plays a key role in repairing double-strand breaks in DNA, a type of genetic damage linked to disease and aging across many species, including humans.

As reported in a study published in *Nature*, the researchers found that bowhead whales have much higher levels of CIRBP than other mammals. The discovery offers new insight into how whales maintain their health over such long lifespans and suggests possible pathways for enhancing DNA repair, resisting cancer, and slowing the effects of aging in humans.

"This research shows it is possible to live longer than the typical human lifespan," says Gorbunova, the Doris Johns Cherry Professor.

For decades, scientists have understood that cancer typically develops through a gradual, multistage process. Cells accumulate genetic mutations—often called "hits"—over time until critical systems that regulate growth, division, and DNA repair begin to fail. In humans, most cancers arise after a cell accumulates five to seven such hits. A person's inherited genes, the tissue type involved, and environmental exposures can all influence this process.

By that logic, animals with more cells and longer lifespans should face a greater risk of cancer—more cells dividing over a longer period of time should create more opportunities for mutations to occur. But that is not what scientists observe.

Large, long-lived animals such as whales and elephants do not experience higher cancer rates than smaller species. This disconnect—known as Peto's Paradox—has puzzled researchers for decades and suggests that these species have evolved powerful mechanisms to prevent or repair cancer-causing damage.

To investigate, the URochester team tested how many mutations it takes for bowhead whale cells to become cancerous. Surprisingly, they require fewer hits than human cells, which might suggest greater vulnerability to cancer. But the opposite is true. The difference is not how many mutations are needed, but how rarely they occur in the first place.

"We found that whale cells are less likely to accumulate oncogenic hits," Gorbunova says. To understand why, the researchers combined genomic data with molecular biology experiments to analyze proteins involved in DNA repair—critical systems that help maintain the integrity of the genome over time.

DNA is constantly under assault from both internal processes and environmental factors. Double-strand breaks—where both strands of the DNA helix are severed—are especially dangerous. If not properly repaired, these breaks can lead to mutations, cell malfunction, or cell death.

While several DNA repair proteins were present in the bowhead whale cells, CIRBP caught the researchers' attention. "There were some other proteins that were expressed in bowhead whales at slightly higher levels," Gorbunova says, "but CIRBP stood out because it was present at 100-fold higher levels."

The team then tested CIRBP's effects in other systems. When the whale version of the protein was introduced into human cell cultures and fruit fly cells, DNA repair improved. In fruit flies, the protein even extended lifespan.

The findings suggest that CIRBP plays a central role in helping whales maintain genomic stability over decades, reducing the accumulation of damage that can lead to disease and age-related decline.

In collaboration with scientists in Alaska studying how animals adapt to cold environments, the researchers uncovered another intriguing feature of CIRBP: Its production increases at lower temperatures. "If we just lower the temperature a few degrees, cells make more CIRBP protein," Seluanov says.

For a species like the bowhead whale, which lives in frigid Arctic waters, this response may be part of a broader system that supports long-term health and resilience.

Researchers are now exploring whether the same pathway could be safely activated in people. "Both boosting the body's existing CIRBP activity or introducing more of the protein may work," Gorbunova says. "Lifestyle changes—things like taking cold

← **The production of CIRBP increases at lower temperatures, like those of the frigid Arctic waters where bowhead whales live.**

NOAA FISHERIES AND NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH TAKEN UNDER NOAA FISHERIES PERMIT #14245

showers—might contribute too and might be worth exploring."

For now, such possibilities remain speculative, but they point to new directions for future study, including further testing of CIRBP to determine whether this bowhead whale–inspired defense mechanism can be translated into strategies for extending human healthspan.

"There are different ways to improve genome maintenance," Gorbunova says. "Here we learn there is one unique way that evolved in bowhead whales where they dramatically increase the levels of this protein. Now we have to see if we can develop strategies to upregulate the same pathway in humans."

Targeting a hidden driver of aging

A collaboration led by Vera Gorbunova has received up to $22 million from the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) to investigate a hidden driver of aging: chronic inflammation triggered by "false viral alarms" inside cells. The team will test whether a drug originally developed for HIV can reduce this response and help preserve mobility, cognition, and overall health in older adults, with the goal of extending healthspan by targeting a fundamental biological process rather than individual diseases.

The team tested aluminum tubes of varying lengths and diameters and in a variety of simulated ocean conditions.

Hope Floats

URochester scientists develop a new process to make metal tubes unsinkable.

BY LUKE AUBURN

More than a century after the *Titanic* sank, engineers at the Institute of Optics have moved one step closer to making "unsinkable" ships a reality—starting with an ordinary metal tube. The process—described by Chunlei Guo, a professor of optics and of physics and a senior scientist at the Laboratory for Laser Energetics, and his team in the journal *Advanced Functional Materials*—enables them to create tubes that will stay afloat no matter how long they are forced into water or how heavily they are damaged.

By etching the interior of aluminum tubes, the researchers create micro- and nano-pits on the surface that turn it superhydrophobic, repelling water and staying dry. When a treated tube enters water, the surface traps a stable bubble of air inside the tube, which prevents it from getting waterlogged and sinking. The mechanism is similar to how diving bell spiders trap an air bubble to stay buoyant underwater or how fire ants form floating rafts with their hydrophobic bodies.

The design improves on superhydrophobic floating devices that Guo's lab first demonstrated in 2019. The disks that the researchers previously developed could lose their ability to float when turned at extreme angles, but the tubes are resilient against turbulent conditions like those found at sea.

"We tested them in some really rough environments for weeks at a time and found no degradation to their buoyancy," Guo says. "You can poke big holes in them, and we showed that even if you severely damage the tubes with as many holes as you can punch, they still float."

The technology can easily be scaled to larger sizes and even used to harvest water waves, offering a promising renewable energy application.

Roll Call

Since 2023, when Florida became the first state to ban student cellphone use during class time, 41 states have enacted laws or policies on K–12 classroom or school cellphone usage. But until now, little has been known about the impact of such efforts. An October 2025 study coauthored by David Figlio—the Gordon Fyfe Professor of Economics and Education, who was recognized in this year's Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings—examined detailed data from Florida. It found that after an initial adjustment period, bans led to significant gains in test scores and reductions in unexcused absences, with the strongest effects in middle and high schools.

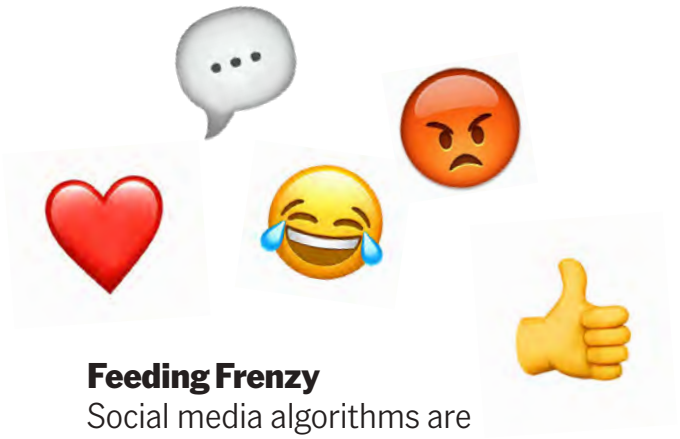
J. ADAM FENSTER

Abstracts

To more precisely measure quantum mechanics and gravity, URochester researchers engineered a new laser that uses phonons—individual particles of vibration or sound.

URochester scientists revealed that Earth's magnetic field may have funneled atmospheric particles to the moon over billions of years, creating resources that could support human life.

LLE scientist Antonino Di Piazza has joined a €14 million, six-year global effort to advance our understanding of how matter behaves under the most intense electromagnetic fields on Earth.



Feeding Frenzy

Social media algorithms are designed to show you content you already agree with, but new research suggests that simple changes could prevent them from creating echo chambers. An interdisciplinary team led by computer science professor Ehsan Hoque found that introducing randomness—defined as opinions and connections users did not explicitly choose—weakens the feedback loop that hardens beliefs and deepens polarization. The research arrives as governments and platforms grapple with misinformation, declining trust, and fractured responses to elections and public health guidance. Against that backdrop, PhD student and first author Adiba Mahbub Proma advises social media users to reflect on their own habits. "Seek out voices that challenge you," she says. "The most dangerous feeds are not the ones that upset us, but the ones that convince us we are always right."

A Tough Nut to Crack

Wild chimpanzees' changing use of tools offers clues to our evolutionary past.

BY LINDSEY VALICH

For decades, scientists assumed only humans experienced dementia. New field observations suggest that wild chimpanzees—our closest primate relatives—may also show signs of age-related cognitive decline.

In a study published in *eLife*, an international team including Dora Biro, the Beverly Petterson Bishop and Charles W. Bishop Professor of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, analyzed decades of video footage of chimpanzees in the Bossou forest in Guinea, West Africa. The researchers focused on nut cracking with stone tools, a culturally learned skill requiring planning, coordination, and problem-solving. Long-term observations show that while young chimpanzees gradually master the skill, some older individuals lose proficiency, misalign tools, and take longer to complete tasks.

Because few wild chimpanzees reach old age, these observations provide rare insight into how cognition changes across the lifespan and raise new questions about the evolutionary origins of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

JUNIORS BILDARCHIV GMBH/ALAMY

← Cognitive decline in chimpanzees suggests the origins of dementia may be deeper than previously thought.

Simon Business School researchers have found that irrigation incentives significantly reduce high water use, offering a more effective approach than broad conservation messaging.

Heal

Walk This Way

A safe and simple exercise prescription helps chemotherapy patients stay active—and mentally sharper.

BY LESLIE ORR

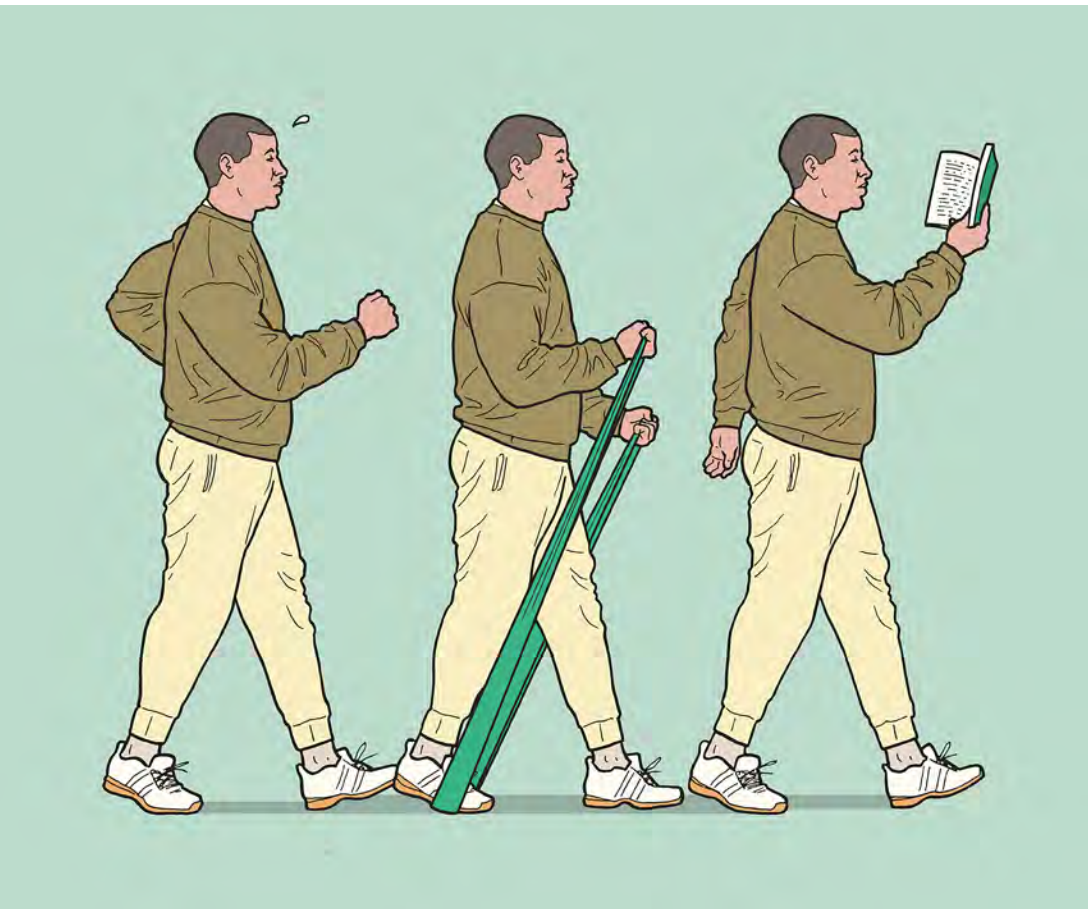
Up to 75 percent of cancer patients experience some form of cognitive difficulty during chemotherapy—trouble with memory, concentration, and mental fatigue, collectively known as "chemo brain." A new nationwide study led by Wilmot Cancer Institute researchers Karen Mustian and Po-Ju Lin offers some of the strongest evidence yet that structured exercise can help.

The phase 3 clinical trial enrolled nearly 700 patients at 20 community oncology clinics across the country, all receiving chemotherapy for the first time. Participants were randomized into two groups: standard care without exercise, or a six-week home-based exercise prescription called EXCAP, developed by Mustian in collaboration with American College of Sports Medicine professionals. The program was designed to be safe, low-cost, and personalized—combining progressive aerobic walking with resistance band exercises scaled to each patient's physical abilities.

Before chemotherapy, all participants averaged 4,000 to 4,500 steps a day. Those in the standard-care group reduced their daily steps by 53 percent once treatment began. Those who followed the exercise prescription largely maintained their baseline activity—and reported staying mentally sharper. "It was striking to find that without a structured exercise prescription, patients receiving chemotherapy reduce their daily walking by half and experience notable increases in problems with thinking, memory, and mental fatigue," says Lin.

The benefits were most pronounced among patients on two-week chemotherapy cycles; those on three- or four-week schedules showed less improvement, possibly because longer cycles involve greater toxicity and side effects that limit activity. The researchers say further study is needed to understand the distinction.

The findings reinforce a growing case for exercise as a standard part of cancer care. "This is a safe and simple exercise prescription that can be an important part of supportive care for anyone going through chemotherapy," says Mustian. It is also one of many low-cost "non-pharmacologic" interventions—which also include mindfulness and massage therapy—offered to all Wilmot patients.



← **The prescription developed by Wilmot researchers includes progressive aerobic walking and resistance band exercises.**

ILLUSTRATION BY KYLE ELLINGSON

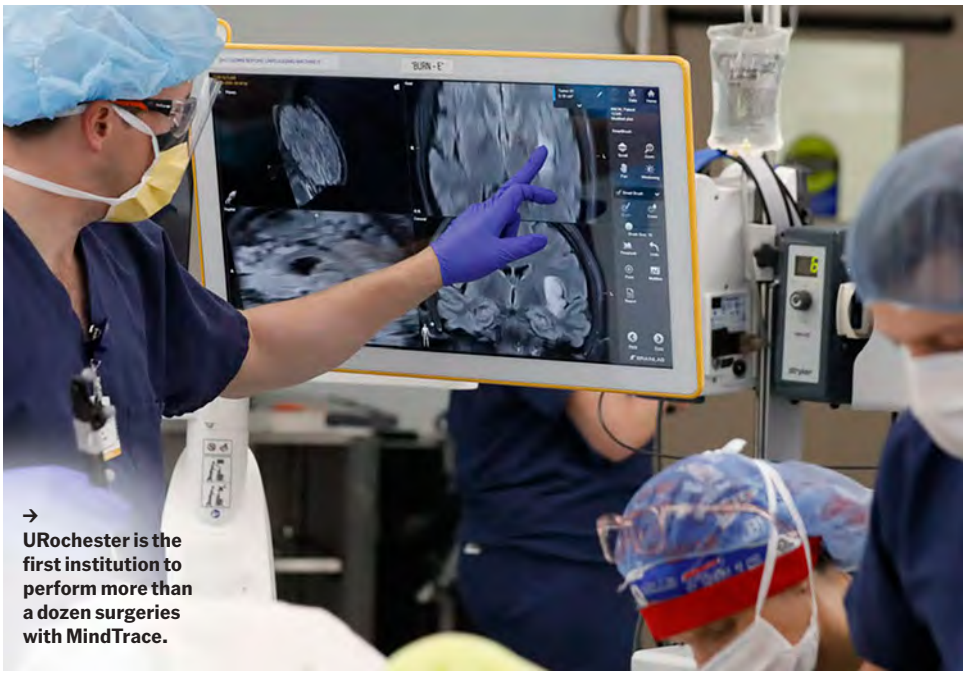
No Pain, All Gain

When endocrine surgeon Jacob Moalem set out to cut post-surgical opioid prescriptions by 20 percent, his team far exceeded the goal—achieving a 67 percent reduction with no increase in patient-reported pain. As reported in the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*, the study followed 6,619 patients across University of Rochester Medicine's Department of Surgery. The program combined staff education, electronic medical record modifications, and a prescribing dashboard to shift clinical culture. Seventy percent of patients were discharged with no opioids at all, and those who did receive a prescription got an average of eight fewer pills. Several other surgical departments have since adopted the interventions and are seeing positive results.

MATT WITTMEYER (MINDTRACE)

72%

URochester Medicine Primary Care's lung cancer screening rate as of June 2025—more than double its own rate in March 2022, and nearly five times the national average. Notably, nearly 78 percent of diagnosed lung cancers in 2023-24 were caught at an early, more treatable stage.



→ **URochester is the first institution to perform more than a dozen surgeries with MindTrace.**

Head Start

New technology provides surgeons with a smarter map for the brain.

BY MARK MICHAUD

A surgical support tool with URochester roots is now informing brain tumor operations at URochester Medicine—and at six other major medical centers nationwide. MindTrace, a decision-support platform that integrates functional MRI, brain stimulation mapping, and neuropsychological testing, helps surgeons visualize brain function and optimize care decisions in real time.

The technology grew out of a partnership between cognitive neuroscientist Brad Mahon and the Del Monte Distinguished Professor Webster Pilcher that resulted in the Del Monte Institute for Neuroscience's Translational Brain Mapping Program, now part of URochester Medicine's broad, multidisciplinary approach to brain tumor and epilepsy treatment. Early prototypes were developed in collaboration with Max Sims '15, '20S (MBA), then at Simon Business School and now MindTrace's CEO.

Beyond the operating room, MindTrace is changing how patients experience their care. By walking patients through what the data mean for their individual situation, surgeons can reduce fear and foster genuine partnership in decision-making—particularly important for awake surgeries in brain tumor patients, whose ability to collaborate in their own brain mapping represents a critical step for ensuring the best outcome from a very complex procedure.

"My priority is to make sure that whatever we pursue—whether it's clinical, academic, or research growth—we do it in the right way so the most people benefit."

—RICHARD SCHULICK, UROCHESTER MEDICINE'S INAUGURAL CHIEF CLINICAL OFFICER

Create

← Stephen Lim, left, and Walter McDonald hope OrbitPhone can help level the playing field for small businesses.

Answering the Call

Undergrads—and roommates—launch an AI-powered receptionist to help small businesses.

BY LUKE AUBURN

When Walter McDonald ’27 found himself stranded after his car broke down and his favorite mechanic didn’t pick up the phone, he didn’t just call a tow truck—he started a company.

McDonald, a data science and mathematics double major, recognized that small business owners are often too busy doing the work to answer calls. So he teamed up with roommate Stephen Lim ’27, a computer science and finance major, to build OrbitPhone, an AI-powered virtual receptionist platform designed for small businesses. The service provides a human-like assistant that can answer calls and book appointments, syncing to a client’s digital calendar and providing quick summaries of each transaction—with a setup that takes less than two minutes.

Since OrbitPhone launched in November, McDonald and Lim have been working to incorporate feedback from their customers to enhance the product. They are now doing full system integration, helping small businesses implement AI across their work to match their needs.

“It’s a whole learning process as we’re building this and figuring things out ourselves,” says Lim. “How can you not get excited to build something like this? It’s what I came to school for.”

J. ADAM FENSTER (ORBITPHONE), UNIVERSAL PICTURES (THE MUMMY)

Back to Life

Almost a century after its release in 1932, when most films lacked an original score, *The Mummy* has been resurrected with music by master’s students from Eastman’s Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media. Joel Hoo, Silvio Campanaro, Leya Li, Junyang Li, and Rita Veneziale composed the new score for the legendary Boris Karloff picture and conducted its premiere performance in sequence to the film before a live audience in January. Check out a clip at rochester.edu/news/mummy.

FACULTY WORKS

Words and Music

Six fresh works from URochester faculty—in print and in sound.

BY MELISSA PHETERSON

Multinational Order: US Firms and International Organization
Political science professor Randall Stone examines how American multinational corporations have shaped—and been shaped by—global governance structures, tracing how firms influence regulatory frameworks, economic policy, and transnational cooperation. He argues that corporations are not merely market actors but central participants in constructing and sustaining international order. (Cambridge University Press)

Self-Realization Nation: How Artists of the Creative Counterculture Made a New America
Eastman historian and musicologist John Kapusta offers a lively cultural history of postwar performers who redefined artistic and personal freedom. Through vivid portraits of musicians, dancers, and experimental artists, he charts how their embrace of self-realization transformed the arts, psychology, education, and wellness—establishing authenticity as an enduring American ideal. (University of California Press)

Soviet Rock on Screen: The Life, Death, and Resurrection of a Film Genre
Assistant Professor of Russian Rita Safariants documents the unlikely ascent of Soviet rock cinema, a genre born from Cold War tensions and underground music scenes. Safariants shows how the films reflected perestroika-era upheaval and continue to influence Russian cultural identity, even as shifting political forces reshape their meaning and legacy. (University of Wisconsin Press)

Glass: Itaipú
Professor of Conducting and Ensembles Brad Lubman leads the Munich Philharmonic in a sweeping performance of Philip Glass's *Itaipú*, a monumental choral-orchestral work inspired by a vast hydroelectric dam. Lubman's interpretation highlights both the meditative pull and dramatic scale of Glass's vision, capturing the work's immersive sonic landscape. (Münchner Philharmoniker)

Tyzik Joyride: The Music of Jeff Tyzik
The Eastman Wind Ensemble, under Mark Davis Scatterday, delivers a vibrant program celebrating the genre-crossing compositions of Jeff Tyzik '73E, '77E (MM). Blending classical precision with jazz vitality, the album showcases the ensemble's virtuosity and stylistic range. Performances by high-profile alumni artists enhance the technical brilliance and joyful energy that define Tyzik's music—and his abiding connection to Eastman. (Summit Records)

Missing
Professor of Opera Timothy Long '92E (MM) conducts this stirring contemporary opera confronting the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. With music by Brian Current and a libretto by Marie Clements, the recording follows a young woman transformed by a spiritual encounter. Fusing contemporary classical music with Indigenous language and traditions, this work functions as both elegy and call to action, demanding these lives not be forgotten. (Bright Shiny Things)

Compete

Jennelle Williams and fellow winners will perform for thousands at the YYPA Celebration in Indiana in June.

MATT WITTMEYER (YYPA), J. ADAM FENSTER (IGEM), ATHLETICS AND RECREATION (BASKETBALL)

Golden Notes

Eastman students take top honors at national competition.

BY LAUREN SAGEER

Three URochester students earned spots among the 13 winners of the 2026 Yamaha Young Performing Artists (YYPA) competition: Jennelle Williams '26E, French horn; Harrison Kim '26E, clarinet; and Chance Park '29E, percussion. Joshua So '26E, oboe, received an honorable mention.

Launched in 1988, the YYPA recognizes exceptional young musicians studying in the United States and excelling in classical, jazz, and contemporary music genres. Students skilled in brass, wind, string, percussion, and piano are invited to submit a video audition, which is then evaluated by an expert panel.

Williams, Kim, and Park will each receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the YYPA Celebration in June, where they will perform for an audience of thousands, receive national media coverage, and participate in workshops designed to launch a professional music career. "Winning the YYPA competition this year holds immense significance for me," says Kim. "Beyond the recognition, the opportunity to spend a weekend connecting and performing with other exceptional musicians is an invaluable experience."

This year's winners join a distinguished line of Eastman alumni recognized by the program—among them saxophonist Alexa Tarantino '14E, who has since joined Yamaha's roster of professional performing artists.

Holding Court

This February marked the 125th season of URochester men's basketball. Across more than 2,500 games and 1,400 wins, generations of student-athletes have built one of the University's most successful programs—and made lasting memories along the way. Here are some of the defining moments.

—Scott Sabocheck

January 24, 1902

URochester defeats Hobart 22–9 in its first varsity game.

1909–10

Samuel Harman, Class of 1909, earns the University's first All-America honor in any sport.

1941–42

Men's basketball achieves its first, and only, undefeated season, finishing 16–0.

May 12, 1966

Dave Deutsch '66 is drafted by the New York Knicks.

December 6, 1968

The team's home is officially renamed the Louis A. Alexander Palestra, honoring the University's legendary basketball coach, baseball coach, and athletic director.

February 15, 1985

URochester and Union College battle through five overtimes in what is, at the time, the longest basketball game in NCAA Division III history. The Yellowjackets come out on top, 99–98.

March 17, 1990

The Yellowjackets claim their only NCAA Division III Men's Basketball National Championship, defeating DePauw University 43–42 in Springfield, Ohio.

Mars Attacks

URochester's iGEM team vies for synthetic biology dominance.

BY LINDSEY VALICH

In the 2015 film *The Martian*, astronaut Mark Watney survives on Mars by engineering biology with limited resources. At URochester, undergraduates are turning that premise into a real-world possibility.

A 14-student team, dubbed "PHAntom," developed a system that uses engineered bacteria to convert carbon dioxide into biodegradable plastic and fertilizer—materials that could one day support human life on Mars. Their work earned a gold medal and four nominations at the 2025 International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) competition, making them the most-recognized US college team among 421 global competitors.

Their project tackles a fundamental challenge of space exploration: Transporting supplies millions of miles is costly and inefficient. Instead, the team focused on what's already abundant on Mars—carbon dioxide. Their engineered *E. coli* bacteria convert carbon dioxide into acetate, which supports plant growth, and PHBV, part of a family of eco-friendly plastics called polyhydroxyalkanoates, or "PHAs."

"Part of what makes PHBV so exciting is that it can return safely to nature," says team member Owen Oxley '27. The project includes a custom-built filament extruder that transforms the plastic into 3D-printable material, and a device that simulates microgravity to model how the bacteria might behave on Mars.

Like all iGEM teams, PHAntom is entirely student-led, with undergraduates overseeing everything from research design to fundraising. In just one year, the team moved from concept to working system. "Their amazing success is really a tribute to the team's innovative thinking, strong teamwork, and persistence," says faculty advisor Anne S. Meyer.

While designed with Mars in mind, the work also opens new possibilities for sustainable materials and biomanufacturing on Earth.

← **Jessica Wang '28, left, and Sophie Black '27 are among the 14 undergrads responsible for all aspects of the PHAntom project.**

March 14, 1992

Chris Fite '92 scores his 2,000th career point in the NCAA third round at the Palestra, becoming the first—and only—URochester player to reach that milestone.

March 21, 1992

URochester reaches the NCAA Division III Final for the second time in three seasons, falling to Calvin College in the title game, 62–49.

February 19, 1997

Men's basketball notches its 1,000th all-time victory, defeating Hobart 64–58.

March 19, 2005

After more than a century on the court, the Yellowjackets reach their third NCAA Division III Championship game, ending as national runner-up.

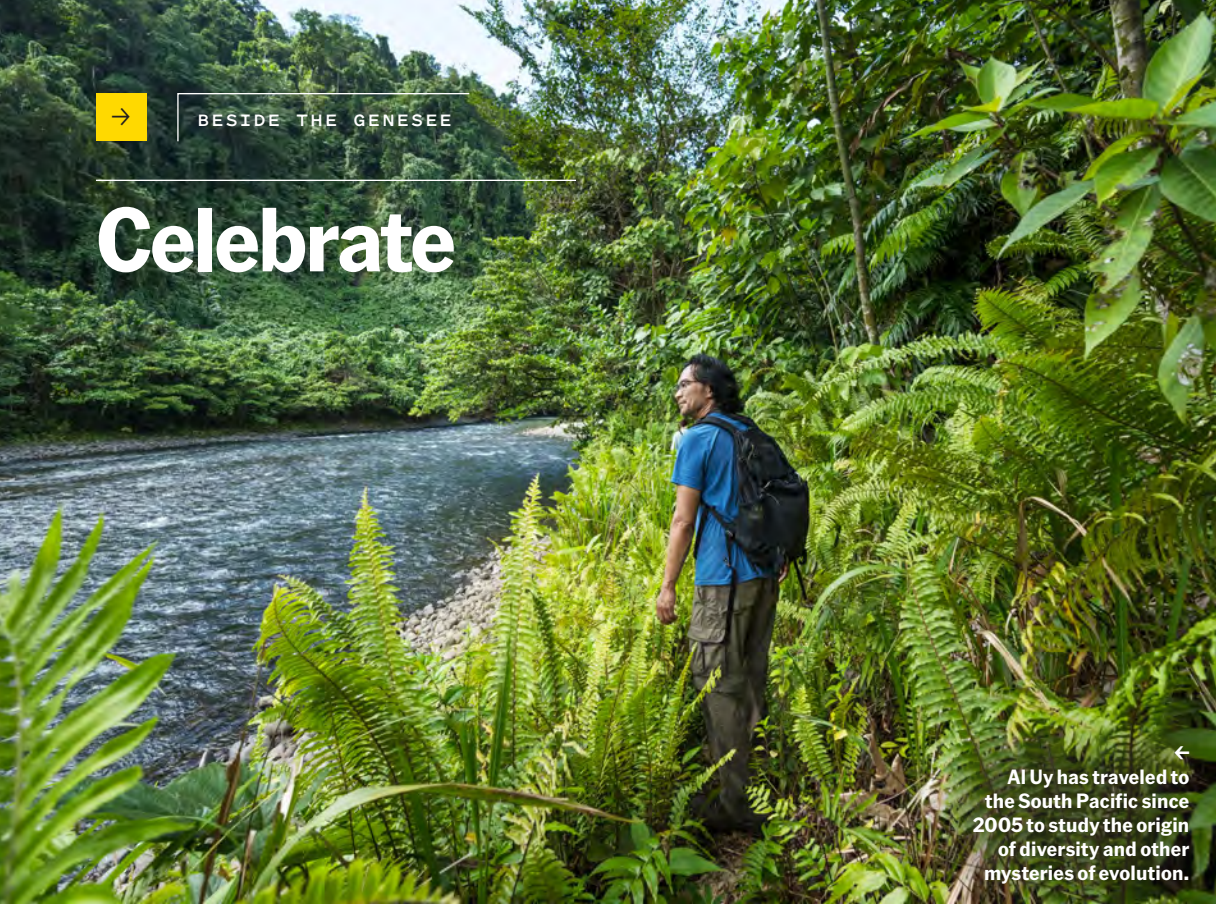
February 7, 2016

An intentional free throw miss by Sam Borst-Smith '17 sets up a buzzer-beating three-pointer by Mack Montague '17, lifting URochester past No. 21 Chicago in overtime. The play lands at No. 2 on ESPN that evening and earns Borst-Smith the College Assist of the Year crown.

February 6, 2026

Standout forward Tyler Zachem '88 and his wife Karen establish the University's first endowed coaching position, honoring the legacy of longtime coach and influential mentor Mike Neer '88W (MS).

Celebrate



Al Uy has traveled to the South Pacific since 2005 to study the origin of diversity and other mysteries of evolution.

A New Leaf

Biologist Al Uy marks a conservation milestone in the Solomon Islands.

BY LINDSEY VALICH

In the remote forests of Makira in the Solomon Islands, biology professor Al Uy has spent decades studying evolution and how new species form, focusing on the subtle interactions between closely related bird species. That work—combining field observation with genetic analysis—has long depended on deep collaboration with local communities. Now, that partnership has led to a milestone that extends far beyond the lab.

Following years of consultation, mapping work, and coordination across village, provincial, and national leadership, the Solomon Islands government has officially designated Yato—a 25,000-acre region where Uy conducts fieldwork—as a federally protected conservation area. The designation makes Yato the largest protected forest in the country and solidifies the community-driven conservation framework that Uy has helped build over 20 years.

The effort grew out of relationships Uy cultivated studying the island's unique bird species and ecosystems. As logging pressures increased, local communities sought alternatives that could preserve their land while supporting their livelihoods. Together with village leaders, Uy helped develop conservation plans, establish management structures, and build consensus across stakeholders.

A key component of the project is a carbon trading initiative that allows communities to generate income by preserving forests rather than selling rights to logging companies—offering a long-term financial incentive to sustain conservation efforts. For Uy, Yato's designation reflects what's possible when scientific research is rooted in trust and shared purpose—and what's at stake when it isn't.

One for All

URochester has again earned the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement, a designation from the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that recognizes the University's commitment to improving well-being, expanding economic mobility, and addressing urgent and persistent challenges in Rochester and the surrounding region. The University—which first received this national distinction in 2020—is one of only 277 institutions nationwide to meet the strict criteria for the 2026 classification.

J. ADAM FENSTER (YATO, CARNEGIE), PAUL MELNIKOW (ALARM WILL SOUND)

Kudos

Dean's Professor Suzanne Haber has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine in recognition of her contributions to neuroscience and psychiatry over the past 40 years.

The Warner School's Tricia Shalka is one of 22 people nationwide recognized as a 2026 Diamond Honoree by the ACPA–College Student Educators International.

Ali Goli, an assistant professor at Simon Business School, has been named a Marketing Science Institute Young Scholar—placing him among the most promising early career researchers globally.

Striking a Chord

Alarm Will Sound earns its first Grammy nomination—and its first win.

BY JONATHAN HEATH

When the members of Alarm Will Sound took their seats at the 68th Grammy Awards in February, the 22-person ensemble—officially formed at Eastman in 2001—was quietly optimistic. After 25 years of dedication, experimentation, and collective risk-taking, they had secured their first Grammy nomination. By the ceremony's end, they had their first win: Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance for *Land of Winter*, a 12-movement work by Irish composer Donnacha Dennehy inspired by the ancient Roman name for Ireland, Hibernia. Recorded at the University of Chicago's Logan Center, the album had already been named one of *The New York Times*' Best Classical Music Albums of 2025.

"My gut said, 'We're gonna win this thing,'" says composer and executive director Gavin Chuck '96E (MA), '04E (PhD), who accepted the award onstage alongside artistic director and conductor Alan Pierson '06E (DMA). The feeling, he says, wasn't bravado—it was trust, built over years of shared work.

The ensemble carries deep Eastman roots. Among its members are a dozen University alumni, including trombonist Michael Clayville '00E, who found himself reflecting on his student days following the win. "We were just kids hanging out at Eastman School of Music," he says. "We loved making music together, staying awake until 11 o'clock to squeeze in extra rehearsal time. I never imagined this was in our future."

For Chuck, the win points back to something Eastman cultivated in the mid-1990s: a grassroots, student-led culture where, he says, "it felt possible to make something ourselves." That ethos—DIY, collaborative, unafraid—carried the ensemble forward as they left Rochester. It will come full circle this October, when Alarm Will Sound launches its next project—*New Acoustica*—onstage at Eastman.

Several members of Alarm Will Sound joined Gavin Chuck and Alan Pierson (standing, center, in glasses) at the Grammy ceremony. ↓

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FLASHBACK

Common Ground

Designed by Pritzker Prize–winning architect I.M. Pei as "a place to be, and a place to remember," Wilson Commons opened on the River Campus on April 4, 1976. Ever since, the trapezoid-shaped building—and its sunlit atrium—has been a centerpiece of campus life. Wilson Commons even earned a mention in *The New York Times*, which in 1986 ranked it as the second-best student union in the country.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES/DEPARTMENT OF RARE BOOKS, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, AND PRESERVATION

Class Notes

MELIORA WEEKEND

This year's Meliora Weekend will be held October 1–4, 2026.
Visit rochester.edu/melioraweekend for details and rochester.edu/reunion for information on the Medallion and other reunions (for class years ending in '1' or '6').

'40s

Ann Goodenough Dinse '45 died in August 2025 at age 101, reports her daughter, Dede Johnston. Born in Rochester in 1924, Ann earned a degree in biochemistry from the University. During World War II, she supported the war effort through volunteer and factory work and was later employed as a research associate on the Manhattan Project in New York City.

Julia Lobotsky '46M (MS) died last August at age 102. "She had a long career in science at a time when women were not that welcome in the field—but she persisted and prevailed," writes her niece, JoAnne Lobotsky. Julia had asked that her obituary be shared with the University community: bit.ly/4qDpUJX.

'50s

Leo Stolbach '58M (MD) died in July 2025, his daughter Deborah shares. "While in medical school," according to his obituary, "he worked in the lab of [cancer researcher] Dr. William Fishman, who sparked his commitment to cancer research." The two later collaborated on the discovery of an enzyme test still used today to track cancer growth. Leo's career as a medical oncologist spanned four decades and two countries. Known for his compassionate, holistic approach to patient care, he trained generations of oncologists and oncology nurses and remained active as a volunteer mentor after retiring in 1998. He received the Massachusetts Oncologist of the Year Award in 2012 and was named Senior Volunteer Physician of the Year by the Massachusetts Medical Society in 2014.

'60s

Maureen McGuigan Baldwin '60 shares that she and her husband, **Benjamin** '58, are both retired—"a good thing," she notes, "since we are now 87 and 89." Their family continues to grow, with two granddaughters expecting babies as of December 2025. At the time, the couple already had 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Maureen and Ben still spend summers at Galway Lake with help from their children and enjoyed having all 10 great-grands there at once last summer. They now live in a continuing care retirement community in Schaumburg, Illinois. "This is easy living," Maureen adds, "and still close to three of our kids."

Ann Weintraub '60, '69W (MA) died in September 2025 at age 86, her niece, Jenna Weintraub, reports. "She adored her time at the University of Rochester and kept the 'City Girls' together for many years following [graduation]." In 1956, Ann helped form and lead the group of Rochester city residents enrolled at the University—most of whom commuted to campus for classes to make attendance financially feasible. The City Girls group was formally recognized as a campus organization in 1959. A memorial service for Ann was held in November at the University's Interfaith Chapel.

Arthur Rosen '62, '68 (PhD) proudly shares that in May 2025, "My grandson, Matt Vine, received his MBA from Columbia University and granddaughter, Alyssa Vine, received her MPH from Boston University. Also, grandson Ross Vine is currently an undergraduate at Brandeis University and is interning with US Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut."

Joel Schwartz '62, a retired biology professor and historian of the natural sciences, writes that he has published a memoir, *Cape Breton Memories* (Flint Hills Publishing). In it, he reflects on a lifetime shaped by Margaree Valley on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia—a place he first visited as a boy and returned to over decades as a husband, father, and grandfather. Joel says readers will be transported by Cape Breton's beauty, welcoming people, and vibrant traditions of music and art.

Patricia "Anne" Senning '63 died in November 2025 at age 84, surrounded by family and close friends, shares her son, Joe Senning Wallerstein. Anne attended URochester on scholarship and fondly recalled sledding on dining hall trays and reading Shakespeare. After earning a degree in English, she completed an MFA in theater at Carnegie Mellon University before moving to Massachusetts, where she taught in the Boston area and later earned an MEd. She worked for more than 30 years as a social worker at a community-based mental health clinic.

Harrington "Kit" Crissey Jr. '66 reports that he presented a concert in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, last November. Tenor **Joshua Graves** '98E performed a Ukrainian folk song and two songs by Sergei Rachmaninoff.

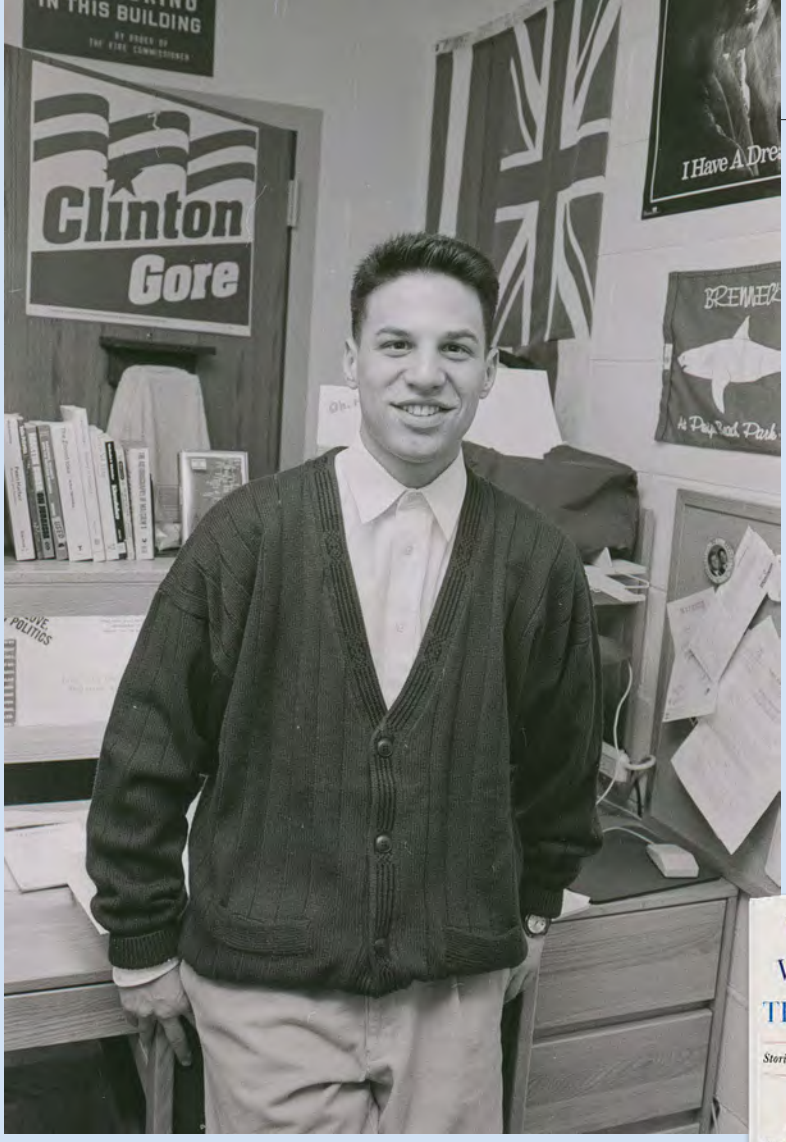
"The Class of 1966 mourns the passing of **Betsey Barney Edwards** '66 in June 2025," writes **Betsey Weingart Cullen** '66. "Betsey enriched our lives with her wit, wisdom, and lifelong friendships. Family and friends celebrated her life last August in Brookline, Massachusetts."

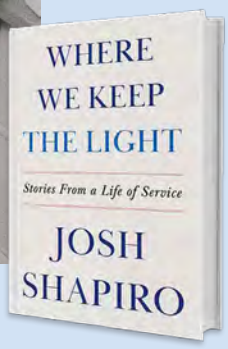
Hock Yeoh '66M (MD), retired former chief of nephrology at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Los Angeles, shares, "I'm enjoying retirement: doing some volunteer work with the National Kidney Foundation of Southern California, doing some traveling, writing, and spending quality time with my family, especially with my four grandchildren." He sends "greetings

Larry Barth '68 and fellow alums enjoy a reunion last September

Abbreviations Your Class Notes cheat sheet **E:** Eastman School of Music **M:** School of Medicine & Dentistry **N:** School of Nursing **S:** Simon Business School **W:** Warner School of Education & Human Development **Dpl:** Diploma **Flw:** Postdoctoral fellowship **Pdc:** Postdoctoral certificate **Res:** Residency

We want to hear from you! Submit your news, updates, and photos at rochester.edu/alumni/forms/class-notes. We also welcome snail mail and email at 22 Wallis Hall, University of Rochester, Box 270044, Rochester, NY 14627-0044. ✉ rochrev@rochester.edu. Class notes may be edited for length, clarity, and style. Submissions for the fall 2026 issue must be received by June 30, 2026. Find more class notes and stay up to date with all your classmates at uofr.us/alumniportal.





FIRST PERSON

Opportunity Knocks

Before he was Pennsylvania's governor, Josh Shapiro '95 was a heartbroken first-year with no team, no major, and no plan—until a knock on his dorm room door changed everything.

Late into the fall just as the season was getting going, I got cut from the college basketball team. I was crushed. I loved to play, of course, but I loved being part of the team even more. Basketball was a huge part of my identity and made up a gigantic portion of my new social life and community on campus. . . .

It just so happened that on the very day I was cut, my premed professor called me into his office. Out of the 165-point exam he had given that week, I scored a 4. I studied hard. I didn't screw around. I was a serious student at that point. It just didn't click for me. I didn't like it. I couldn't begin to grasp it.

"I don't think this is for you," he said, meaning the premed track. So I didn't have [my girlfriend] Lori. I couldn't hack it at basketball. And I was never going to be a doctor.

I called my dad when I was back in my dorm that evening. . . . Everything I wanted and everything that I had was slipping through my fingers. And, adding to all that misery and pressure and defeat, I couldn't stomach the idea that I would disappoint my dad. "Just be whatever it is that you want to be," he said. "You don't have to be a doctor. You just have to find the thing that makes you happy, and I don't think that being a doctor is your path to that."

So, some relief washed over me. But not enough. Now what am I going to do? I thought. "Shapiro?" I heard a knock at my door that same evening. It was one of the guys who lived down the hall. "Have you ever thought about student senate? They need someone from our dorm and I heard you have the time."

I really had no interest . . . but I did have the time. I had nothing to lose, and if I wasn't going to be a doctor—as that exam grade was proof of—then maybe this could be another way for me to serve. . . .

I won the race. I got along with the other students involved and enjoyed the work that we got to do together. It just so happened that that semester the university's president had cut funding to club sports. So if I focused on this area for the senate, then I would not only be able to keep my connection to the athletic community, but I'd actually be able to make a difference and help them out. I could have my foot in both worlds.

And I was actually able to get stuff done. I organized a student protest against the funding cuts, worked with administrators, and ultimately was able to claw back a big chunk of money to support the athletes.

By second semester of my freshman year, I had switched my major to political science. The race for student association president had just heated up. There were others who had already declared they were running, all of them juniors, which would make them president in their senior year. That was how it always was. Until that year, when I decided to throw my freshman hat into the ring. Why not?

That April, the *Campus Times* . . . ran a spread featuring each of the six candidates, myself included, where we laid out our vision for our terms as president. I wrote, "As a freshman, I have learned how to listen to your needs and desires and cultivate that input into concrete ideas, goals, and in the end—results. I have grown this year through meeting and discussing the issues with as many of you as I have been able to. This growing-up process has included so many of you, in both the academic field and the social field, and has made me discover just how special the U of R and its student body really is."

Clearly, what I lacked in actual wisdom, I made up for with my earnestness and self-seriousness. I can feel my kids' embarrassment for me reading this (if they ever read this, which they have sworn to never do).

I made some promises about handling faculty cuts and strengthening the requirements for teaching assistants. I knocked on what felt like every dorm room door on campus. I made myself known. I listened to what my fellow students wanted.

I won the race. It was the first time in school history a freshman had ever done so, kicking off a long tradition of me being the youngest guy in the room and me doing a lot of things that everyone would tell me I was insane for doing.

Reprinted with permission from *Where We Keep the Light: Stories from a Life of Service* (Harper, 2026) by Josh Shapiro.

to all faculty members and friends at the great University of Rochester."

Lucien Lombardo '67, a professor emeritus of sociology and criminal justice at Old Dominion University, where he taught for 40 years, notes that he received the Prevention Award from the Association of Professionals Solving the Abuse of Children at the association's annual colloquium in New Orleans in June 2025. He continues to teach online courses at Old Dominion and remains active in national and international efforts to support children's dignity and eliminate violence from their lives, including work with the National No Hit Zone Committee and the Future Leaders Initiative in Sierra Leone.

Larry Barth '68 shares a photograph taken last September at a reunion of URochester alumni and friends. Clockwise from bottom left are **Robert Zweiben** '68, **David Richheimer** '69, **Marvin Moss** '69, Larry, Pamela Altman, Fran Powell, Olga Oy, **Aniko Reich Richheimer** '70, **Andrew Braun** '68, **Bruce Kauderer** '68, **Lynn Morey Kauderer** '68, **Jeffrey Powell** '68, and Kathy Zweiben. Also present but not pictured was **Randy Kleinrock** '68.

Max Stern '69E, a professor emeritus at Ariel University in Israel, announces publication of *In Search of a Sacred Ethos: Articles, Essays, and Lectures on Music and Culture* (Nova). The book, he explains, "is about my search and research into music as a form of sacred cultural expression—from perspectives of inspiration, creativity, education, art, religious identity, ethnic influences, and contemporary cultural issues." Supplementary musical examples and YouTube links connect broader themes with original compositions and biblical motifs.

'70s

Geary Larrick '70E (MM) reflects on shared experiences with the late jazz musician and fellow alumnus **Chuck Mangione** '63E, '85 (Honorary). "In summer 1969, when I was finishing my graduate school residency at the Eastman School, Mangione was rehearsing on flugelhorn as featured flugelhornist in front of an orchestra in the Eastman Theatre, and I sat down and enjoyed the performance. I had previously recorded as percussionist in that venue with Professor Donald Hunsberger and the Eastman Wind Ensemble as well as performed in concert there as principal percussionist . . . so Mr. Mangione and I had that in common: performing in Eastman Theatre." Geary is grateful for other experiences in common with Chuck, including having performed in the same Ohio venues. He also notes that he played flugelhorn as a first-year undergraduate at Ohio State—an instrument closely associated with Mangione.

David Skonieczki '71 and friends gather to celebrate the late John Cogar '71

Frank Mamat '71, a partner at the law firm Plunkett Cooney, reports that he was named to the 2025 class of "Go To Lawyers" in employment law as determined by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly*.

David Skonieczki '71 reflects on the life of **John Cogar** '71, who died in August 2025. "John was my classmate, DKE fraternity brother, and football teammate. He was a Pat Stark football captain and a member of UR's Athletic Hall of Fame," he writes. "'Johnny C' was very well respected and loved among his UR friends as an undergraduate and for the rest of his life." David adds that a celebration of John's life was held in October in Saranac Lake, New York, attended by 13 alumni, including, from left, **Kathy Cappella** '71, **Roger Watts** '72, David, **Don Gaudion** '71, **Janice Hutta Cogar** '72, **Rick Magere** '72, **Dave Cidale** '69, **Joe Novek** '73, **Lynn Hall** '73, **Mike Roulan** '71, **Pete Waldt** '78, and **Phil Chrys** '75. Also attending but not pictured was **Tony Graceffo** '71. David adds that Kathy and Tony also graduated from high school with John in Auburn, New York, in 1967.

Dick Rasmussen '72,'97W (EdD) sends a photograph of "our Class of '72 Psi U contingent enjoying our UR and Psi U swag. The photo is from June 2025 and was taken at Hook's Waterfront Bar and Grill in Ruskin, Florida, during our visit with **Charlie Feldschau** '72 in Sun City Center." Pictured are, clockwise from far left, Dick, **Mike Jenks** '72, **John Howell** '72, **Gordon Book** '72, **Paul White** '72, and Charlie.

Kevin Feeney '74, '75S (MBA) writes, "**Carol Buttenschon Feeney** '76N and I were married at the Interfaith Chapel in December 1975, and we are approaching our 50th wedding anniversary. To celebrate this, our two adult children arranged a party for us that was held in upstate New York in July 2025 to make it easier for family and friends to attend. Carol and I have been retired since December 2018, and we moved to Abington, Pennsylvania, in February 2019." Kevin includes a photo from the event. From left are **Carolyn** '76, '01 (PhD) and **Chuck Whitfield** '75, '76 (MS), Kevin and Carol, and **John Storz** '74.

James Bennett '75, an international development policy advisor based in Germany, authored *Social Protection, Risk Finance, and Insurance*, a paper published online by the United Nations Development Programme in September. He explains that the work explores how governments can mobilize risk finance and insurance to absorb fiscal shocks and strengthen community resilience in the face of climate and natural disasters.

Clarinetist **Nancy Braithwaite** '75E, a retired conservatory professor of clarinet and chamber music at Codarts Rotterdam Conservatory, writes that her newest recording, *Wonderings and Other Revelations* (Etcetera Records), released in the US in October, features works by five composers from the Netherlands and the US. "My goal in making this CD is to share the music of these remarkable composers with a wider audience. It is the culmination of years of collaboration and friendship with both the composers and the musicians. I perform on it with nine fantastic artists with whom I have had a close connection for many years," she adds, including soprano **Claron McFadden** '82E and pianist **Vaughan Schlepp** '77E, '79E (MM).

Debbie Campbell Kampff '75N, a semiretired pediatric nurse and CPR/AED instructor, shares a photo from her 50th reunion at Meliora Weekend with suitemates, from left, back row, **Barbara Harty Figura** '75, **Joyce Hagin** '75, and **Lynn Evensen Carnegie** '75; front row, **Deborah Storm** '75N, **Robin Kramer** '75, and Debbie.

Alicia Good Sargent '75 sends a photo from an April 2025 "mini 50th reunion" in Washington, DC. She writes, "Thanks to **Vicky Weisz** '75 for hosting again. **Darryl Sargent** '75 and I have been married for 48 years and have two adult children and four grandchildren. **Judy Kremnick Lapping** '75N and Darryl and I live

Dick Rasmussen '72 and his Psi U pals

Kevin '74 and Carol Feeney '76N celebrate their 50th anniversary

Debbie Campbell Kampff '75N with former suitemates at Meliora Weekend

Alicia Good Sargent '75 and friends

Bill Robiner '76 and Ron Taylor '76

Joseph Carson '76 and his gold-medal-winning team at the Senior Olympics

outside of Boston. The others all reside in DC now." Pictured from left to right, standing, are Darryl, **John Storz** '74, and **Joanne Harap Kovener** '74. Seated are **Linda Reiman** '75, Vicky, Judy, and Alicia.

Joseph Carson '76 shares a photo of his gold-medal-winning age 70+ basketball team, Wazee Nickels, at the 2024 Senior Olympics in Des Moines, Iowa. He writes, "We went 7–0 over four days. The format is three-on-three half-court, with 15-minute halves. I nearly hit my first 'official' three-point shot! There were a few seconds left, we were up by 20 points, and I thought I was behind the three-point line. My shot was a 'swish,' but I was a step short of the three-point line! . . . I think it safe to assume UR was well represented" among the 12,500 senior athletes in Des Moines. Joseph adds, "The next national Senior Olympics will be in 2027 in Tulsa, Oklahoma."

Bill Robiner '76 shares a photo with classmate **Ron Taylor** '76, '77S (MBA) at Machu Picchu during the URochester Travel Club's "Treasures of Peru" trip last year. Though they did not know each other as students, the two bonded during the trip. Bill, pictured right, adds, "Kudos to the UR team that organized a great travel experience."

Ron Taylor '76, '77S (MBA) also sends a photograph, from the wedding of his son **Jeff Taylor** '18 and **Kyra Battaglia** '19 last October in Tamworth, New Hampshire. Pictured from left to right are, top row, **Brendan Chin** '18, **Sam Vannoy** '17, **David McFarland-Porter** '16, **David Schatz-Mizrahi** '18, Ron, Jeff, Kyra, **Brian Shenker** '05, **Sheldon Glassman** '77, **Dave Crowley** '78, '79S (MBA), **Jeff Elsner** '77, **David Meister** '18, and **Alizah Barker** '17; and, bottom row, **Jacob Margolis** '17, **Alex Crowley** '19, **Sandy Loomis** '18, **Teddi Shapiro** '19, and **Alex Velberg** '21.

Brandon Beck '77 (PhD) died in August 2025 at age 80. He was a son of URochester philosophy professor Lewis White Beck, the Burbank Professor Emeritus of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy at the time of his death at 83 in 1997. Brandon was a respected historian, inspiring teacher, distinguished author, eloquent speaker, charismatic guide, visionary founder and director of a historical institute, and loving husband, father, and grandfather, writes his brother, Hamilton. "When Brandon visited Rochester, he joined a lunch group of university professors and librarians that our father, inspired by the ideas and practice of Immanuel Kant, initiated in the 1970s, and which continues to this day. We encourage gifts in Brandon's honor to the University of Rochester archives."

Rick "Carlo" DiBlasi '78 sends a photograph of himself with **Alan "AJ" Dole** '78, '79S (MBA), **Greg "G Roy" Roy** '78, and Bill Ramirez, "the 'Gravellers.'" They held a mini reunion in Chicago at the May 2025 wedding of Rick's son, **Rob DiBlasi** '11. "It was a chance to reminisce and celebrate," adds Rick. "It's been almost 50 years, and this friendship is as strong as ever. Thanks UR!"

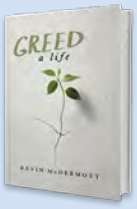
Terry Schaack '78 has been chosen as the 2025 Catholic Doctor of the Year by the Mission Doctors Association in recognition of his lifelong dedication to healing and service; he received the World of Difference Award in October at the Los Angeles Archdiocese Annual Mass for Healthcare Professionals. Terry has maintained a private practice in internal medicine and rheumatology in Beverly Hills since 1990. He served as medical director and president of the California Health and Longevity Institute for two decades and, from 2013 to 2025,

Rick "Carlo" DiBlasi '78 with fellow alums at son Rob DiBlasi '11's wedding

Ron Taylor '76 and more celebrate his son Jeff Taylor '18 and Kyra Battaglia '19

FEATURED WORKS

Świnica and Other Stories
Paul Linczak '03 presents the unique voices of troubled characters—Polish and Ukrainian, young and old, rich and poor—as they struggle with their faith in religion, family, society, and themselves. The debut collection won the 2025 Iron Horse Prize. (Texas Tech University Press)

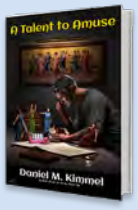


Greed: A Life
Journalist, novelist, poet, and playwright **Kevin McDermott** '76 presents "a story made of stories." The book, he explains, is "about the ways stories—love stories, comic stories, heartbreakers—can make a mess of life and leave us still hungry for more." (ThickWinter Press)

Has Medicine Lost Its Mind?
George Engel Award recipient **Robert Smith** '80M (Flw) exposes how the gap between physical and mental health treatment has created a two-tier system of care with catastrophic consequences. (Prometheus)

FEATURED WORKS

Talking with Boys
Pakistani American writer **Tayyba Kanwal** '94 presents a collection of 15 stories "filled with irony, humor, and magic" spanning generations and continents—and exploring lives shaped by political upheaval, economic change, and personal betrayal. (Black Lawrence Press)



A Talent to Amuse
For his 11th book and fifth novel, Hugo Award finalist **Daniel Kimmel** '77 weaves the tale of struggling writer Sherman Biberman as he falls in love with Vinteokaséta, the erstwhile muse of Blockbuster Video stores. (Fantastic Books)

Meat Cove
Concert pianist and author **Janice Weber** '74E blends family saga and geopolitical suspense in the tale of a heroic Mountie on Nova Scotia's remote Cape Breton Island "with a price on her head and a veritable ossuary of skeletons in her closet." (Seacoast Press)

was principal investigator for the Project Baseline Health Study at the institute's Southern California site.

Kevin Campbell '79M (PhD), the Roy J. Carver Professor and chair of the University of Iowa's Department of Molecular Physiology and Biophysics and director of its Wellstone Muscular Dystrophy Specialized Research Center, has been named a recipient of the 2025 Louisa Gross Horwitz Prize, awarded annually by Columbia University Irving Medical Center. His pioneering research has yielded critical insights into the biological causes of several forms of muscular dystrophy, with significant implications for diagnosis and treatment. Along with two other honorees, Kevin is recognized for forging a path from fundamental discovery to transformative therapeutic innovation—work that has advanced scientific understanding of muscular dystrophy and offered hope to thousands of affected families.

George Holloway '79S (MBA), a retired computer consultant, has published *From the Mountains to the Prairies* (Fulton Books), which, he writes, "documents the history of the family of my fifth great-grandparents through the American revolutionary period, from the North Carolina mountains to the founding of Nashville, Tennessee, and their experiences in the Natchez District, where the legal and business environment propelled the region into the strongest US economy prior to the Civil War."

'80s

Michael Mirrington '80, of Tampa, Florida, writes that he retired last January from practicing law.

Jeffrey Cohen '81 reports that he was appointed chief executive officer of i-charging USA in January. Based in Porto, Portugal, i-charging designs and manufactures high-powered direct-current charging stations; Jeff leads the company's Atlanta-based US business unit and has worked in the EV charging industry since 2014. Jeff also shares a photograph from a surprise 40th anniversary celebration for himself and his wife, **Beverly Gield Cohen** '81, hosted last September by their sons, Joshua and Danny, and Joshua's spouse, Camille. The couple continued their anniversary festivities with a trip to Mallorca and Barcelona, Spain.

Jeffrey '81 and Beverly Cohen '81 at a surprise 40th anniversary celebration

Randy Sue Kornfeld Marber '82, 10th Judicial District director, attended a statewide conference of New York State Supreme Court Justices held in Fairport, where she coordinated appearances by the YellowJackets a cappella group. Also performing, on subsequent evenings, were two different jazz trios composed of Eastman students. She shares a photograph with Justice Frank Caruso and Eastman students **Will Anderson** '27E on guitar, **Danica Rebudiao** '26E on bass, and **Kai Leeflang** '26E on drums.

Michele Marder Kennedy '83, '84W (MS), a retired high school counselor, sends a photograph from the Travel Club's 2025 trip to Peru, where,

Randy Sue Kornfeld Marber '82 with a trio from the Eastman School of Music

she writes, "A group of UR alumni, family, and friends had an amazing time seeing all that Peru has to offer. It was a fabulous trip." Tour members included Jeff Baron, a doctoral candidate in the URochester history department; **Prudence Bradley** '88 (PhD); Connie Satz; Gaylan Braselton; **Karen Osborn Carhart** '23S (MBA), director of student and young alumni engagement; **Kristen Kawakami Dean** '72; **Michael Dolan** '81; Roseann Dolan; Suzanne Felt-Lisk; **Craig Lisk** '83, '84 (MS); **Tomas Hernandez** '85, '96W (EdD); **Keith Reas** '84E (DMA); Michele and **David Kennedy** '84; **Sara Krusenstjerna** '79; Karen Oberhauser; Ann Oberhauser; **Robert Overfield** '74; Nancy Overfield; Susan Robiner; **Bill Robiner** '76; **Lusette "Andy" Lopata Smith** '72; **Edgar Smith** '72; **Ron Taylor** '76, '77S (MBA); and Cindy Taylor.

James Killius '83, '85 (MS), a board-certified radiologist at Radiology Associates of Tallahassee, has been elected chair of the board of directors for Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH), a private, nonprofit community healthcare system serving 22 counties across northern Florida and southern Georgia. He has held numerous leadership roles at TMH, including as a member of the board, chair of the medical staff, radiology department cochair, and radiation safety officer. James earned his medical degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo and completed residency and fellowship training at Duke University Medical Center.

Elinda Kornblith Kiss '83 (PhD) announces that she has retired as a professor of finance from the University of Maryland's Robert

Michele Marder Kennedy '83 and the Travel Club on a 2025 trip to Peru

Jeff Kranis '83 and friends in New York

Hope Shapiro Lilian '83 and friends from Morgan 4

H. Smith School of Business. Her academic career also included appointments at Rutgers University and the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. Her nonacademic career included working at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. She and her husband have retired to live in Deerfield Beach, Florida.

Jeff Kranis '83 sends a photo from a meetup in New York City last October with classmates who all made friends as first-year students in Susan B. Anthony Halls in September 1979. From left are Jeff, **Doug Roth** '83, **Yoram Yossefy** '83, **Dom Palma** '83, and **Dave Hirschler** '83. Jeff writes, "Always remaining in close contact after 46 years, including attending each other's important family functions, this was just another one of our semiannual dinners in the city."

Hope Shapiro Lilian '83, '84W (MS), a senior manager of social services at Family Services of Westchester in Westchester County, New York, shares a photo from a mini reunion. **Susan Gail Biller Salzman** '82, Hope, **Jill Segal Toporek** '83, **Jennifer Pekale Schulman** '83, and **Lori Tannenbaum Solano** '83, friends from Morgan 4 since 1979, gathered last summer for a soirée in New York City. Hope adds that they all are grateful for their longtime friendship.

Tom Chrien '84, '86 (MS) writes that he spent a week in Rochester last September to attend a remote sensing experiment called ROC-X hosted by Rochester Institute of Technology at its Tait Preserve in nearby Penfield. He stayed with classmate **Paul Michaloski** '84, '86 (MS), who lives near Rochester's Highland Park. Tom is a cofounder of Matter Intelligence, a venture-capital-backed start-up specializing in extracting valuable information from remotely sensed electro-optical sensors. Matter flew a hyperspectral sensor on a drone over a set of targets at the Tait Preserve and will share its data from a large group of other researchers who brought ground-, drone-, aircraft-, and satellite-based sensors. Tom adds that he and Paul caught a Red Wings game; visited the Eastman Museum; ate garbage plates, red hots, and Rochester- and Buffalo-style chicken wings; and attended the kickoff of the University's *For Ever Better* fundraising campaign.

Thomas Kim '84 sends a photo and writes, "I ran into two 1984 alumni at a Washington Nationals baseball game in September 2025. We were seated in the same section at the ball game and got to talking and learned that all three of us attended UR and were in the same class. Although we did not remember each other specifically, we had several common acquaintances from the '84 class." The photo shows Thomas with **Scott DeBlock** '84, '86W (MS) and **Heidi Frutchy DeBlock** '84, '93M (Res), '95M (Flw). Thomas notes, "The DeBlocks live in Portland, Maine, and I live in Rockville, Maryland."

John Cigliano '85, a professor emeritus of biology and former director of environmental conservation at Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, is coeditor of *Citizen Science for Coastal and Marine Conservation* (Routledge), part of the publisher's Earthscan Oceans series.

Thomas Kim '84 and fellow '84 alums

Randall Hems '85, a lifelong resident of Fairport, New York, died in September 2025, his wife, **Lisa Milano Hems** '87, '95W (MS) reports. Randall and Lisa met at URochester in 1984. A memorial service for Randall was held at the University's Interfaith Chapel.

Jeannine Shao Collins '86, a widely respected leader in media, advertising, and innovation, delivered this year's Commencement address. The chief client officer at multiplatform advertising and media company Kargo founded Girl Starter, a media and technology company dedicated to empowering young women entrepreneurs, and served as president of SeeHer, the industry's leading global initiative focused on improving the accurate representation of women and girls in advertising and media. Jeannine earned a bachelor's degree in economics and has been recognized with some of the advertising industry's highest honors.

Glenn Stambo '86, a private practice radiologist in Tampa, Florida, writes, "I have been an interventional radiologist for 28 years. In December 2025, I published an interventional radiology article with my daughter, who is a second-year med student. It was published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Clinical Gynecology and Obstetrics* discussing an interesting case, and Nicole was first author." He adds that it's a "great article and read" and he is "definitely a proud father."

Tony D'Agnese '87 and Sean Pybus '79

Tony D'Agnese '87, a senior executive engineer and department manager at the Idaho National Laboratory, sends a photograph and writes that he had the opportunity to work with retired Navy Vice Admiral **Sean Pybus** '79 as part

SONY PICTURES TELEVISION

BUZZWORTHY

Double Jeopardy

Dave Bond '84, '92 (MS) was back on *Jeopardy!* in January as part of the game show's Champions Wildcard tournament. The Rochester native was a two-time winner in December 2024, earning $54,700. He made another $5,000 in the Champions Wildcard episode despite finishing second. "[Eventual winner Michelle Tsai] was very fast on the buzzer," Bond says. "I got in 16 times and got 15 of those right, but Michelle got in 27 times." Bond earned a bachelor's degree in English and a master's in public policy from the University. He retired after a long career in research administration and grant writing and has been taking art classes at the Memorial Art Gallery, even listing himself as "art student" on the January episode of *Jeopardy!*. —*Jim Mandelaro*

Phyllis Gordon '87 and longtime friends toast to a milesone birthday on Cape Cod

of the lab's annual advisory committee workshop.

Phyllis Gordon '87, a technical writing lead at Salesforce, writes, "In June 2025, longtime U of R friends got together on Cape Cod for a special birthday celebration. We've been friends since freshman year and have stayed connected across the years and the miles." Pictured "toasting to a milestone birthday" are, from left, standing, **Nancy Lehman-Leibowitz** '87 and **Carol Thurer Wolk** '87 and, seated, **Diane Karlsruher Kaye** '87, **Amy Leavitt Gilbert** '87, Phyllis, **Meryl Engler Hickey** '87, **Liat Jehassi Wasserman** '87, and **Debbie Esrig Simon** '87.

Lisa Cohen Barrios '88, a health scientist and division director at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has written *K–12 Schools and Public Health Partnerships: Strategies for Navigating a Crisis with Trust, Equity, and Communication* (Routledge). The book addresses ways that school leaders can develop and maintain partnerships with

Melinda "Mindy" Sammons '88 and friends celebrate her 60th in Bermuda

public health leaders during times of crisis. Drawing on real practices of leaders and insights from public health professionals who helped bring children back into buildings during the Covid pandemic, it offers guidance on how to keep students safe, healthy, and learning during inevitable public health crises that impact K–12 schools.

Melinda "Mindy" Sammons '88, a retired market research manager

Mark Zaid '89 and wife Penelope Jones

for Apple, sends a photo from her 60th birthday celebration in Bermuda with **Sonya Moore McNeill** '88 and **Maria Cristina "Cris" Lazo** '88. Mindy, who lives in California, shares that she "loves to travel and catch up with her two besties from the U of R."

Lisa Kent Abel '89N (MS) writes that in July 2025 she accepted a new position as the associate dean for nursing programs at Seattle University College of Nursing and Health Sciences in Seattle. Lisa earned her DNP degree in June 2016 from the University of Washington in Seattle.

David Stier '89 shares a photo "from a Simulation Gaming Association (the people who put on Simcon each year) reunion last summer in Rochester featuring seven alumni." Pictured are, from left, standing, **Jevon Garrett** '87, Karen Stone, **Mark Stone** '87 (PhD), **Chris Schulitz** '89, **Laura Schulitz** '90, David, Bill Chamis, Greg Hauser, Joe Harley; and, seated, **Fred Grossman** '89, Monica Grossman, **Regina Harley** '87, '99M (MS), Dina Stier, and Karen Chamis.

Attorney **Mark Zaid** '89 shares a photograph from his wedding to Penelope Jones last October in Washington, DC.

'90s

Noelle Ulterino McWard Aquino '91, a licensed clinical social worker and the founder of Counseling Solutions, a group psychotherapy practice in Chicago, announces publication of her book *Anxiety Unpacked: Discover Your Type and Recover Your Peace* (Muse Literary). The book challenges the idea that anxiety is a one-size-fits-all experience, outlining three distinct anxiety types and offering strategies to help readers identify their own patterns and address root causes.

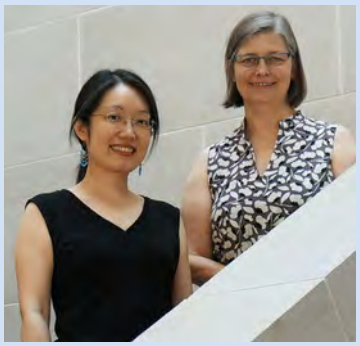
Col. **Andrew Regan** '91, commissioned through the NROTC program in 1991, retired from the United States Marine Corps after 34 years of service. He shares a photograph from the NROTC 80th anniversary alumni reception at Meliora Weekend last September.

Violinist **Pia Terndrup Jensen Liptak** '92E (DMA) and pianist **Yi-Wen Chang** '14E (DMA) have released *Reflections: American Music for Violin and Piano* (Centaur Records). The recording, explains Pia, explores how external impressions can transform into inner experience. It includes works by Pia, Charles Ives, Baljinder Sekhon, and **David Liptak** '76E (DMA), a professor emeritus of composition at Eastman.

Gaelen McCormick '92E, an instructor of arts leadership at Eastman and director of Eastman Performing Arts Medicine, has edited a new annotated edition of Franz Simandl's *30 Etudes* (Carl Fischer). Gaelen is the author of three pedagogy books for developing bow

David Stier '89 reunites with friends from the Simulation Gaming Association

Andrew Regan '91 and fellow NROTC alumni at an 80th anniversary celebration



Pia Terndrup Jensen Liptak '92E (DMA) and Yi-Wen Chang '14E (DMA)

Nigel Richards '92

technique, *Mastering the Bow,* Vols. 1–3, as well as *Double Trouble*, a book of duets for developing bassists (all published by Carl Fischer).

Nigel Richards '92 traces his love of music to his time at URochester and involvement with WRUR Radio, first on AM and later FM. That passion led to a 20-year career as an international DJ, performing in 19 countries and all 50 US states. Now in his 21st year in real estate sales and development, Nigel manages a portfolio of several hundred thousand square feet of commercial space across Philadelphia. He focuses on restoring and revitalizing 18th- and 19th-century factory buildings, transforming them into thriving hubs for creatives and small businesses.

John Gustavsson '93M (MD), shares that after 22 years as a musculoskeletal and trauma radiologist in Portland, Oregon, he has retired—and is "loving every minute of it."

Alice Homolka Tate '93 sends a photo from a mini class reunion hosted last summer by **Michelle Axelrod** '93 and **Jon Bruck** '93 at their Rhode Island home. Pictured from left are **Annette Warriner** '93, **Jennifer Pierce Duggal** '93, **Liz Goldberg Reeder** '93, Michelle, **Erica Intzekostas** '93, Alice, and **Rachel Madden** '93.

Don Gala '94W (PhD) returned to the study of judo in 2024 after a 49-year hiatus, retraining at the Sankyu (brown belt) level. That same year, he sustained multiple injuries from a fall, he writes, but resumed training following seven months of physical therapy. Don went on to compete in the 2025 USA Judo Senior National Championships in Birmingham, Alabama, where he earned a gold medal after defeating a Sandan (third-degree black belt) competitor. A life member of three national judo organizations, he was recently promoted to Nikyu and continues training toward Ikkyu, with hopes of becoming a certified referee to support younger competitors.

Classical guitarist **Peter Fletcher** '95E (MM) last year released *Peter Fletcher in Concert* (self-published), featuring studio and live recordings of works by Scarlatti, Albéniz, Dowland, and others.

Paul Aiello '96 writes that he has been named New Jersey girls volleyball official of the year for

Don Gala '94W (PhD)

Alice Homolka Tate '93 and friends at a mini class reunion in Rhode Island

CLASS ACTS

Don't Call It a Comeback

Three alumni return to lead high-priority centers shaping the University's next chapter.

Barry Silverstein '84

The former senior director and chief technology officer of optics and display in Meta's Reality Labs—and 2024 Oscar recipient for his role in developing the IMAX Prismless Laser Projector—was tapped to direct the newly launched Center for Extended Reality, one of four transdisciplinary research centers established last summer.

"The University of Rochester is uniquely equipped with the technological and humanistic pieces to make extended reality—AR and VR combined with artificial intelligence—useful, productive, and valuable for humanity. Pulling together those pieces is something that I've dreamed about for more than a decade."

Dennis DeSantis '05E (DMA)

The composer, percussionist, sound designer, and author—and former head of music learning at Ableton—joined the faculty in fall 2025 in the newly created position of associate professor of music and technology. He will play a key role at SoundSpace, another of the four new transdisciplinary research centers, which sits at the intersection of music, science, and engineering.

"My time as an Eastman student gave me so many answers, but it also gave me the confidence to keep asking questions. I look forward to working with amazing colleagues and students to build this new program in a way that treats music technology not only as a means of production, but as a medium for imagination, collaboration, and discovery. I'm honored to be part of this incredible community again."

Tanya Mayadas '83, '89 (PhD)

After more than 32 years at Harvard Medical School, where she rose to tenured professor, and as a senior staff scientist at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Mayadas was named chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology and inaugural director of the new Institute for Immunological Sciences.

"As a former PhD student at [University of Rochester Medicine], I know firsthand the warmth and support of this community. [URochester Medicine] offers the ideal blend of quiet confidence, deep expertise, and a collaborative culture between researchers and clinicians to build a world-class immunology institute advancing new therapeutic targets, immune-based interventions, and biomarkers."

POINT OF VIEW

The Script Doctor Is In

Sylvia Owusu-Ansah '00 shapes medical storytelling on HBO Max's *The Pitt*.

In 1967, 25 Black men from Pittsburgh's impoverished Hill District were trained as the country's first paramedics—not by a university hospital or a government agency, but through a community initiative called Freedom House Ambulance Service. They revolutionized emergency medicine. Then history mostly forgot them. Sylvia Owusu-Ansah '00 made sure HBO Max didn't.

Owusu-Ansah—medical director of prehospital and emergency medical services at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh—joined *The Pitt* as a medical advisor through Hollywood, Health & Society, a University of Southern California program that helps the entertainment industry tell accurate health stories. The show, which follows a single shift at a fictional Pittsburgh emergency department, swept the television drama category at the Emmy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, and Critics Choice Awards. Season 2 is currently streaming.

"If you're going to talk about healthcare in Pittsburgh," Owusu-Ansah told the writers, "you have to talk about Freedom House Ambulance." The story found its way into the show through Willie, an 81-year-old patient revealed to be a former medic in the program. Within weeks of the episode's release, social media lit up with people discovering this history for the first time—fueling bipartisan support for a bill to award Freedom House the Congressional Gold Medal, a cause Owusu-Ansah has long championed.

Freedom House was one of many ideas she brought to *The Pitt*. When the producers asked what storylines had been missing from medical dramas, she raised the underrepresentation of Black physicians—only 5 percent of active physicians identify as Black, and just 2.3 percent are Black women—and the growing number of children ingesting THC. She also shared insights into the demographics of Pittsburgh and how healthcare workers observe a moment of silence after a patient dies.

One storyline drew directly from her own life. A 17-year-old Black girl arrived at Owusu-Ansah's emergency department spitting, biting, and complaining of pain. "I heard a lot of screaming," she recalls. "She was in four-point restraints. The security guard even had his hand around her neck."

Owusu-Ansah—the only other Black person there—immediately recognized the patient was not an addict but in the throes of a sickle cell pain crisis. "I yelled and screamed, told them to get off her, and kneeled down next to her, whispered in her ear, 'Just try to relax. I'm here for you. I'm your advocate.'" That patient became Joyce St. Clair on *The Pitt*, with third-year resident Samira Mohan (played by Supriya Ganesh) taking on the role of Owusu-Ansah.

For season 2, she helped build the story of one-month-old "Baby Jane Doe," abandoned in the hospital bathroom. She shared information on Pennsylvania's Safe Haven law and the threshold—older than 28 days—at which leaving an infant at a hospital becomes a crime.

Originally from Boston, Owusu-Ansah majored in biochemistry at URochester before earning an MD from the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine and a master of public health from Johns Hopkins University. Long before *The Pitt*, she was channeling her own experiences into educating and standing up for others.

While at URochester, she founded Kids for College, a mentorship program that brought students from underserved Rochester communities to campus for STEM and liberal arts enrichment. She later spent more than a decade on Capitol Hill advocating for pediatric healthcare legislation.

Since October, Owusu-Ansah has stepped back from the emergency department: She is a cancer survivor who completed her final chemotherapy treatment on February 10. She has also stepped behind the camera. *In Good Hands,* a finalist for an HBO Short Film Award, draws on her experience as a Black physician in academia. Featured at last year's American Black Film Festival, it is currently screening on American Airlines.

For Owusu-Ansah, navigating the television and film industry as a full-time physician provides a newfound sense of balance—and a way to reach people medicine alone cannot. "Over the span of a lifetime of my profession, I may touch hundreds, maybe thousands of lives individually," she says. "But through media, you touch millions of people all at once."

—Subaah Syed '27

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MEDICAL CENTER

This story is adapted from a piece in the *Campus Times*. Read the full version at rochester.edu/news/pitt.

2024–25 by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Kevin Sweeney '96 shares a photo of former Major League Baseball pitcher Jerry Reuss holding Kevin's fourth and fifth books on coaching baseball. Kevin notes that he has since released a sixth title, *New York Yankees 2025 Season* (self-published), with plans to "write 100 books."

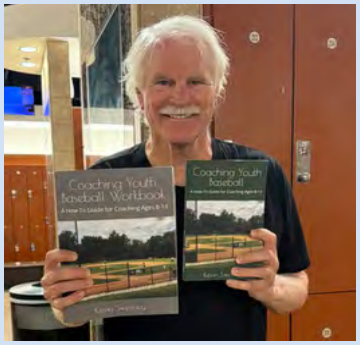
Ronian Siew '97, '99 (MS), an optical consultant in Vancouver, British Columbia, writes that he has been named to the 2026 Photonics100 list by *Electro Optics* magazine. Launched in 2023, the annual list recognizes innovators shaping the global photonics landscape and driving the industry forward. This year's honorees were selected for their pioneering work in academia, industry, and entrepreneurship spanning five broad areas: next-generation optical communication and networking, advanced laser systems and materials processing, integrated photonics and chip-scale devices, novel sensing and imaging, and quantum technologies.

Felena Kaba Finley '98N, a registered nurse working in a trauma unit, published *Courage: The Ready Force Concealed* (Page Publishing) in 2024. She describes the book as "a short allegory of a man's journey through a period of intense discouragement, climbing out of it, learning lessons, and rebuilding his life."

Signe Kastberg '98W (PhD), a retired mental health counselor, announces the release of her third book, *Meeting of the Minds: A Guide for New Mental Health Professionals* (self-published). Drawing on the insights of seasoned psychotherapists, clients, and research, the book addresses common fears and challenges faced by those entering the profession. Before retiring, Signe for many years provided counseling services and taught graduate courses in mental health counseling.

Govind Krishnaswami '99, '04 (PhD), a professor of physics at Chennai Mathematical Institute in India, announces publication of his book *Classical Mechanics: From Particles to Continua and Regularity to Chaos* (Springer-Nature and Hindustan Book Agency). Issued as Volume 22 in the Texts and Readings in Physical Sciences series, the book offers a comprehensive, graduate-level treatment of classical mechanics, emphasizing connections to quantum, thermal, electromagnetic, optical, and relativistic physics—making the book useful in allied areas and as a stepping stone for embarking on research.

Paul Aiello '96



Former MLB pitcher Jerry Reuss holds two books by Kevin Sweeney '96

CITY OF ROCHESTER

BUZZWORTHY

Urban Legend

Malik Evans '02 was sworn in for a second four-year term as mayor of Rochester on New Year's Day at the Eastman School of Music's Kilbourn Hall, with his son Cameron administering the oath of office. Evans majored in political science at URochester and was first elected mayor in 2021. The Rochester native said his second term will focus on "creating new pathways to financial empowerment and economic mobility for our residents" while reducing crime. "We 'Stand ROC Solid' for the homeless," he said, name-checking a community-focused initiative his office launched last September. "We 'Stand ROC Solid' for those who seek refuge and sanctuary. And we are not finished. We are not done." —*Jim Mandelaro*

'00s

Todd Florin '00, '04M (MD), a pediatric emergency medicine physician-scientist, shares: "I was appointed the founding codirector of the Center for Pediatric Acute and Critical Care Research and Innovation (PACCRI) at Stanley Manne Children's Research Institute and Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago." PACCRI is the first US research center focused solely on pediatric acute and critical care, uniting experts across medicine, science, engineering, and ethics to improve outcomes for acutely ill and injured children. Todd notes that millions of children face emergencies annually, yet care is often "fragmented across settings, specialties, and disciplines." PACCRI seeks to close those gaps by accelerating team-based discovery and advancing integrated, evidence-driven solutions. "Our mission is to transform the way children receive care during life's most critical moments," he adds. Todd and his colleagues aim to set a new national standard for seamless pediatric emergency and critical care.

Darren Gaul '01, a remote production coordinator at ESPN, reports that he won a 2024–25 Sports Emmy Award for Outstanding Live Series, *SEC on ABC*, as an associate producer.

Ryan Walters '02, an attorney in private practice, wrote last November, "After 14 years on the city council of my hometown of Anacortes, Washington, I was elected to a four-year term as mayor." He began his legal career as a civil deputy prosecutor for Skagit County. For a decade, Ryan advised county departments and commissions on land use, natural resources, and public works.

Shiuen-Huang Tzeng Suen '04E (DMA) and **Kenneth Kam** '25E (DMA) formed the Suen-Kam Guitar Duo in 2019, building on their shared Eastman training. In 2025, they completed a concert and teaching tour across the Carolinas, performing and leading masterclasses. They also released their debut album, *Between Strings*, featuring duo and solo works from the 17th to 20th centuries, on custom guitar-shaped USB drives.

Lee Frankel-Goldwater '05, an assistant teaching professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, writes, "I published a book that builds on work I started as a computer science undergrad at Rochester. The book is called *Lily in a Codebox: The Search for AI's Poetic Voice* (Spinning Leaf Press), an experiment in the computational humanities, and extends my undergrad thesis project, Computers Composing Music: An Artistic Utilization of Hidden Markov Models." He credits his URochester experience with laying the foundation for the project.

Susan Schultz '05W (EdD), a professor emeritus at St. John Fisher University in Rochester, shares that she received the 2025 Eagle Award for lifetime achievement from the American Council on Rural Special Education.

Daniel Donaghy '06 (PhD), a professor of English at Eastern Connecticut State University since 2005, has been awarded a Connecticut State University

Tess Troha-Thompson '06 and family

Professorship. No more than four faculty members receive the honor each year, and no more than 12 serve concurrently. He will retain the title for the remainder of his tenure within the system. Daniel has published five books of poetry and is a lead organizer of Eastern's annual literary festival for high school students. He supports college-bound high school students by leading a precollege summer poetry course and partnering with area high school teachers on dual enrollment initiatives. Also in 2025, Daniel won a first prize from the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Awards sponsored by *The Paterson Literary Review*.

Tess Troha-Thompson '06 shares a photo and the news that she and Alex Peterson welcomed "future Yellowjacket (hopefully!)" Parker Thompson Peterson-Troha, born in June 2025 in Washington, DC.

Elisha "Elie" Biel '07 has been promoted to partner in the Minneapolis office of global law firm Faegre Drinker, where he helps clients defend, resolve, prevent, and manage medical device and pharmaceutical product liability litigation throughout North America.

Dan Kennell '07 has been named commercial group manager for the Rochester market at Community Bank, where he will lead sales and business development efforts for the Rochester and Southern Tier markets and support continued expansion throughout the Rochester region. Previously a commercial business relationship manager for the bank, he lives in Penfield, New York, with his family and volunteers with the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Western New York.

Sarah Lynch '07 celebrates fellow Navy Commander Andrea Benvenuto '07

Navy Commander **Sarah Lynch** '07 writes that in June 2025, Commander **Andrea Benvenuto** '07 assumed command of USS *Hopper* (DDG 70). Sarah attended the ceremony, along with Commander **David** '08 and **Moriah Heller Nissan** '08, and shares a photo. Andrea earned an MA in national security and strategic studies from the US Naval War College in 2022 and has received the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal as well as unit and service awards.

Ran Kampel '09E, an assistant professor of clarinet at Baylor University School of Music in Texas, has written *Clarinet Practice Unlocked* (Conway). The comprehensive guide is designed for clarinet students and teachers at all levels and draws on standard excerpts from orchestral, opera, and wind band literature to address technique, phrasing, intonation, articulation, breathing, and rhythm.

'10s

Jessica Ryan '10, a logistics officer in the United States Marine Corps, writes that she and **Adam Barrett** '09 reconnected last year after being selected for the Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting. They both graduated in June 2025 and are now serving together at Marine Corps headquarters.

Jessie Giambra '11, a program director at the Arizona Farm to School Collaborative, and Marco Suarez were married in July 2023. Jessie writes, "Hello, world! We are beyond happy to announce [our marriage] and the blessing of our children, Ehecatl and Huitzilin. Here's to our Cosmic Family, near and far!"

Lindsay Miller '11 "joyfully announces" her wedding to **Mitchell Goldenberg** '11 last August. The photo she shares from the celebration includes the couple and their alumni parents. From left are **Harry Robert "Bob" Miller** '77, Mitchell, Lindsay, **Jill Goldenberg** '82, '84 (MS), and **Barry Goldenberg** '81.

Jessica Ryan '10 and Adam Barrett '09

Benjamin Snyder '11, an assistant professor of chemistry at the University of Illinois, has been named a 2025 Packard Fellow. He joins **Caitlyn "Rose" Kennedy Aggarwal** '11, the James P. Wilmot Distinguished Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry at URochester, who was named a fellow in 2022, and **Mark Levin** '11, a chemistry professor at the University of Chicago, named in 2021. Although only 20 Packard Fellows are selected nationwide each year across multiple disciplines, all three University alumni from the Class of 2011 majored in chemistry and took many courses together.

Paige Levy Glassman '12 writes, "My husband, **James** '12, and I welcomed our second baby girl, Hailey, in August 2025." Paige adds that the girls' grandfather—James's father—is **Sheldon Glassman** '77.

Jessie Giambra '11 and family

Lindsay Miller '11, Mitchell Goldenberg '11, and their alumni parents

Paige Levy Glassman '12 and family

Cait Munro '12 and friends in New York

Cait Munro '12 sends a photo and writes, "**Dan Novograd** '12, **Jake Baritz** '12, **Sonya Bentovich** '12, **Andrew Huang** '12, '23M (Flw), **Hillary Goldman** '14, and I hung out in Zohran Mamdani's New York City and lived to tell the tale."

Mark Zawacki '12S (MBA) shares that he has been named the 2025 Robert A. Clinger Outstanding Fundraising Professional given by the Genesee Valley Chapter of the Association for Fundraising Professionals to recognize outstanding success. Notably, Mark played a key role in Heritage Christian Services' Homes with Heart campaign, which supports people aging in place in 13 renovated or newly constructed homes. He has created comprehensive leadership giving and gift programs and increased annual appeal success for the Heritage Christian Services Foundation, significantly expanding its assets. He is a member of the fundraising association and holds the Certified Fundraising Executive credential. Mark also volunteers on committees for the Seneca Park Zoo and the Genesee Land Trust and has completed an international ministries trip, which supports people with disabilities and their families in rural areas of Central America.

Diana Satterfield '13W (EdD) served in 2025 as a Fulbright

Newlyweds Brooke Brehm '16 and Theodore Lincoln '14 with alumni friends

Basketball players Lauren Deming '18 and Tucker Knox '18 tied the knot in August

Specialist in Prizren, Kosovo, where she designed and delivered customized communications workshops for the 40-member governing assembly and cabinet staff. Collaborating with leaders from diverse professional backgrounds, she tailored sessions to meet varying skill levels and delivered the program in Albanian, Kosovo's primary language. The experience, she maintains, strengthened her expertise and expanded her teaching practice into public-sector communications and governance. Diana writes that crossing the "ocean between fear and opportunity" was daunting but profoundly transformative, both personally and professionally.

Steven Solowsky '13 has joined the law firm Hahn Loeser & Parks as a partner at its Sarasota, Florida, office. He earned a JD from the University of Georgia School of Law and is certified by the Florida Bar as a specialist in real estate law. His practice focuses on commercial real estate matters, including construction, transactions, development, and related commercial and residential property issues. Last year, Steven was named a Rising Star by Florida Super Lawyers.

Julie White '13W (PhD), the chancellor and CEO of Pierce College District, was awarded the 2026 Campus Compact Eduardo J. Padrón Award for Presidential Leadership. The award recognizes presidents and chancellors from community colleges who exemplify a deep and sustained commitment to civic and community engagement throughout their careers. A first-generation student from a rural community, she is passionate about the role of community colleges in creating healthy, equitable, and thriving communities.

Amanda Graham '14 (PhD) reports that she recently began an inaugural entrepreneurial role at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as creative director of the Jeanne Tannenbaum Center for Creative Practice. "My deep understanding of inter- and transdisciplinary research and production—very much seeded at Rochester—contributed to my interest in the Tannenbaum Center and will no doubt impact my programming vision." She adds, "I would love to reach other Rochester alumni in North Carolina and beyond who may be interested in creative partnerships or simply learning more about accessing the space that will contain the largest LED volume [a high-resolution wall used to create immersive backgrounds and environments] in the state."

Rachel Eskridge '15 shares that she began a new role as the collections manager and chief registrar at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts. She joined the museum as an assistant registrar in 2017 and writes that she "is honored to have the opportunity to grow professionally alongside the museum."

Brooke Brehm '16, '22 (MS), a data scientist at Constellation Brands, announces that she and **Theodore Lincoln** '14 were married in March 2025 at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She adds that she and Theo "met in Todd Theater in 2014 while we were both studying at the University." The photograph shows the newlyweds and their "closest alumni friends and family posing with Rocky on the dance floor."

Zachary Hession-Smith '17 reports that he began a new role as the assistant director of donor relations at the Northfield Mount Hermon school in Massachusetts. He has also begun work toward a master's degree at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

Carly Fleischer '18 has founded Moxie Barbell, an online strength, nutrition, and health behavior coaching business that supports high-achieving women in building sustainable strength without guilt, perfectionism, or burnout, writes George Payne, a freelance journalist based in Rochester.

AnneMarie Cucci Haumesser '18W (EdD) has been appointed vice president for advancement

COURTESY OF BETH GREENWOOD

BUZZWORTHY

Stepping Up to the Plate

Beth Greenwood '22 was drafted by Boston in the third round of the inaugural Women's Pro Baseball League. The Amherst, New Hampshire, native made history at URochester, becoming the first American female to catch in an NCAA baseball game. She has been a member of the USA Women's National Baseball team since 2018 and is currently the pitching coach at Vassar College after working two years in the Philadelphia Phillies organization. "As a little girl, I dreamed of playing pro baseball," says Greenwood, who majored in mechanical engineering. "Getting drafted by Boston, just an hour from my home, is icing on the cake. I can't wait to show everyone what women in baseball can do." The WPBL begins play this August. *—Jim Mandelaro*

DISPATCHES

Fund Times

You don't have to wait for Meliora Weekend for some University-sponsored fun with your fellow alums. Here, recent graduates share meetups they hosted over the past year with the backing of the Young Alumni Opportunity Fund.

Washington, DC

Daniel Hargrove '17 hosted an art event and dinner with **Shalin Nohria** '14, **Shray Nohria** '08, '15M (MD), **Hayden Freedman** '16, **Matt Yetto** '16, '17 (MS), **Brendan Coli** '16, **Phil Fenimore** '17, **Jason Altabet** '17, **Leah Nason** '18, **Monica Nair** '18, **Crystal Kim** '19, **Natalie Chait** '18, and **Elliot Ding** '18.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Liying Wang '22 and **Rachel Tse** '22 met up for lunch.

Grand Canyon, Arizona

Emily Miron '18 organized a hike in the Grand Canyon with **Lindsay Bagwin** '18, **Madeline "Maddy" Levy** '18, **Sarah Jahnige** '18, **Bethany Walker** '18, and **Mackenzie Ward** '18.

New York, New York

Daniela Novoa Molina '22 hosted a dinner party for **Larissa Daruge** '21, **Alejandro Gutierrez Molina** '21, **Ishaan Kumar** '20, **Isabella Orup** '22, **Marcelo Guerra Gonzalez** '20, '21 (MA), **Maximiliano Suarez Huerta** '22, **Anela Karamustafic** '22, **Shivali Singh** '22, **Claude Mulindi** '22, **Lionel Imena-Kirenga** '21, **Cesar Segundo** '22, **Svarina Karwanyun** '20, '21S (MS), **Andrew Trepanier** '22, and **Nishith Atreya** '23.

Madison, Wisconsin

Angie Lara '20 had dinner and played board games with **Tom Hanson** '20, **Colin Schultz** '20, **Jonah Shafran** '20, and **Sophia Alami** '20.

New York, New York

Bryce Davis '20 hosted a karaoke night with **Ryan Racicot** '20, **Tim Sullivan** '20, **Bepen Neupane** '20, **Reagan Casteel** '20E, **Ben Schmitz** '19, **Joe Buckley** '18, '19 (MS), and **Sailesh Kaveti** '20.

To learn more about the Young Alumni Opportunity Fund, visit uofr.us/youngalumnifund. Undergraduates who graduated within the last 10 years from the School of Arts & Sciences, Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences, or Eastman School of Music will receive an email when the next grant cycle opens. Keep your email address current so you don't miss out: rochester.edu/alumni/explore/update-your-information/

Syracuse, New York

Alexa Turgeman '19 caught up with **Corey Ziring** '19, **Sydney Goldberg** '19, **Kallen Prosak** '19, **Anna Olsen Carrier** '19, '20 (MS), **Katherine Woo** '19, '24M (MD), **Mara Karpp** '17, **Madeline Mullholand** '18, **Brian Charlamb** '19, **Jake Hertz** '20 (MS), **Jack Donlon** '20, **Jack Herman** '19, **Kevin Ho** '19, **Aiden Finch** '19, **Jack Denzer** '19, and **Grant Kilmer** '19.

London, United Kingdom

Megan Arnett '24 hit a local pub with **Hannah Gordon** '24 and **Isaac Degenholtz** '24.

Somerville, Massachusetts

Jenny Jordahl '23 celebrated Shabbat with **David Plotkin** '20, '21 (MS), **Jessica Robbins** '20, **Rachel Goodman** '20, **Isabel Rothman** '19, and **Max Spector** '20.

at Canisius University in Buffalo. Previously, she served as assistant vice president for advancement, where she expanded alumni engagement, strengthened donor relations, and supported strategic fundraising initiatives. She joined the university's advancement team in 2023 after holding leadership roles at D'Youville University and Nardin Academy. She began her career at URochester, first in Fraternity and Sorority Affairs and later as assistant director of alumni engagement. A longtime member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Western New York chapter, AnneMarie was recognized as its 2025 Rising Star Fundraising Professional.

Lauren Deming '18 and **Tucker Knox** '18 married in August 2025 at the Inn at Taughannock in Trumansburg, New York. Lauren writes that they met as members of URochester's varsity basketball teams, where their shared love of the game sparked a lasting connection. She adds that their "celebration was made even more special by the presence of many fellow Yellowjacket alumni and friends, including longtime women's basketball head coach Jim Scheible." Pictured, from left, are **Jillian Silvestri** '18, **Mary Demirali** '18, Tucker, Lauren, **Madeline Karafanda** '18, **Brigid Regan** '18, and **Alexandra Leslie** '18.

Lauren Shapse '18 shares a photograph from her May 2025 wedding to Max Solomon. With graduation years ranging from 1975 to 2018, 26 alumni—both family and friends—attended, including Lauren's father-in-law, **Robert Solomon** '86. Pictured from left are 24 alumni: top row, **Michael Berkin** '86, **Amy Matik Berkin** '88, **Beth Solomon German** '83, **Julia Weisman** '18, **Rachel Kaplan** '18, **Sara Crane** '20, **Lexi Lubin** '18, **Robert Solomon** '86, **Mitchell Roberts** '86, **Bryan Hoffman** '15, **Jeffrey Sottolano** '03, **Mark Savan** '86, '87 (MS), **Marc Sperber** '86, and **Judith Appel** '86; bottom row, **Jonathan Goldheim** '88, **Lauren Hoffman Brock** '18, **Emily Miron** '18, **Sydney Goldberg** '19, Lauren, **Rachel Golden Hoffman** '17, **Steven Fox** '75, **Stacey Fox Sottolano** '06, **Jan Abramson Fox** '77, and **Andrew Hoffman** '86.

Baltimore, Maryland–based singer-songwriter **Siena Facciolo** '19 has issued the album *Yin* (self-released) under her artist name, Siena Rose. *Yin* was recorded live in front of a studio audience at the Watermelon Room in Baltimore.

Harpist **Rosanna Moore** '19E (DMA) and bassoonist **Blaire Koerner** '19E (DMA), who perform together as the Hats + Heels duo, released their second album and an accompanying sheet music collection in December. *Nollaig Na mBan: A Little Christmas* (self-published) features festive arrangements in "true quirky Hats + Heels style," writes Rosanna. Also known as Little Christmas or Women's Christmas, Nollaig na mBan is an Irish tradition observed on January 6 to mark the end of the 12 Days of Christmas. In many parts of Ireland, the day was traditionally set aside to honor women for their tireless work throughout the festive season and to offer a rare opportunity for female camaraderie. "This CD," adds Rosanna, "is a tribute to that spirit—a musical gathering that honors the women who held

Lauren Shapse '18 with 23 of the 26 URochester alums at her May 2025 wedding

households together, kept traditions alive, and brought warmth to the heart of winter."

'20s

Patrick Benka '20 announces that he and **Alma Petras** '21 were wed last summer in Greece. Their celebration was "joyfully attended" by fellow URochester alumni **Aidan Miller** '20, **Kate Kujawa** '20, **Marysa Corona** '20, **Megan Benka** '20, **Erik Braaten** '20, **Ryan Algier** '22, '23S (MS), **Anabel Monegro** '21, **Thomas "TC" Price** '23, and **Ross Gang** '22 along with friends Aaron Brandeis and Steinar Solvang.

In May 2025, **Lauren Chavanne** '20 and **Tyler Pauly** '20 were married in the Fountain Court of the University's Memorial Art Gallery, with a reception at the Jackrabbit Club. Pictured, from left, are **Michael Chavanne** '91, '92S (MBA), **Tracy Chavanne Pritchard** '96, **Susan Davidson Chavanne** '91, '94N, **Frederic Davidson** '69 (PhD), **Ethan Schlotterbeck** '20, Tyler, **Derek Fisher** '92, Lauren, **Sean Kilcullen** '20, **Rachel Iaione** '20, **Garrett Renslow** '20, **Molly Behan** '21, **Craig Bowden** '91, **Noah Anderson** '20, '21 (MS), and **Matthew Sharon** '20.

Rachel Iaione '20 reports that she and **Sean Kilcullen** '20 married last year. The two lived on the same floor of Susan B. Anthony Halls their first year but didn't meet until senior year. After graduating, Rachel built a career in finance, while Sean pursued medicine. He proposed in Colorado in February 2024, and they were wed on Cape Cod in August 2025. At URochester, Sean was active in Delta Upsilon, UR FOOT, and club sailing before earning an MD from the University at Buffalo. He is now a general surgery resident at Lenox Hill Hospital. As a student, Rachel played on the field hockey team and later earned a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Rachel adds that she and Sean now happily reside in New York City.

Former URochester squash standouts **Ashley Davies** '21, **Marcus Sim** '21, and **Thijs van der Pluijm** '21—who are all based in New York City—compete professionally on the Squash Doubles Association tour. They teamed up again at Squash for Jamaica, a charity exhibition benefiting Jamaica's Hurricane Melissa Relief Fund. While playing for URochester, the team reached a No. 2 national ranking in 2018–19. The November 2025 event—organized by Thijs—drew 60 participants and surpassed its fundraising goal, delivering critical support to families affected by the hurricane. Pictured, from left, are Marcus, Max Forster, Thijs, and Ashley.

Shubhonkar Paramanick '23 (MA), a doctoral student in the Department of Physics and Astronomy and a Horton Fellow at the Laboratory for Laser Energetics, reports that he published a paper in *Nature Communications Earth & Environment* with URochester faculty Eric Blackman, John Tarduno, and **Jonathan Carroll-Nellenback** '12 (PhD). Shubhonkar elaborates: "Numerical simulations reveal that the transfer of ions from Earth's atmosphere to the Moon is efficient only in the sustained presence of a geomagnetic field, suggesting that lunar soils may record the histories of the atmosphere, solar wind, and geodynamo."

The University and varsity baseball team are mourning the sudden death in November of **Alex Gonzalo** '25, who was struck by a car while riding a scooter in downtown Austin, Texas. Gonzalo earned a finance degree from URochester. He played third base for the Yellowjackets and last spring hit .347 while leading the team in home runs, runs batted in, and total bases.

Patrick Benka '20 and Alma Petras '21 with friends at their wedding in Greece

Lauren Chavanne '20 and Tyler Pauly '20 celebrate their nuptials at MAG

BUZZWORTHY

Triple Threat

Triplets who were members of URochester's Class of 2022—Matthew, Nicole, and Robert Gelb—became the fourth generation in their family to graduate from Syracuse University's College of Law. The siblings were born 11 weeks premature in 1999, weighing a combined 6.3 pounds. They spent three months at Strong Memorial Hospital's neonatal ICU and eventually earned their undergraduate degrees across the street on the River Campus. Their mother, Sandra Wolk Gelb '89, and great-grandmother Anne Wolk '58 are alumni. "We couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments," says their father, Jay Gelb. "For all three to accomplish the same goal at the same time is truly remarkable." The siblings are now studying for the Florida bar. —*Jim Mandelaro*

Thijs van der Pluijm '21 and friends

In Memoriam

Faculty

Suzanne Brendze '00M (Res), a clinical instructor of urgent care. September 2025
David Dobrzynski '83M (MD), '86M (Res), a professor of medicine. July 2025
Kevin Parker, the William F. May Professor of Engineering and Applied Sciences and dean emeritus of the School of Engineering & Applied Sciences. December 2025
Walter Psoter '80M (Pdc), '80M (Res), a clinical professor of dentistry. December 2025
Yanfang Ren '98M (Pdc), '99M (Pdc), '06M (MPH), the chair of the Eastman Institute for Oral Health Diagnostic Sciences Department. March 2026

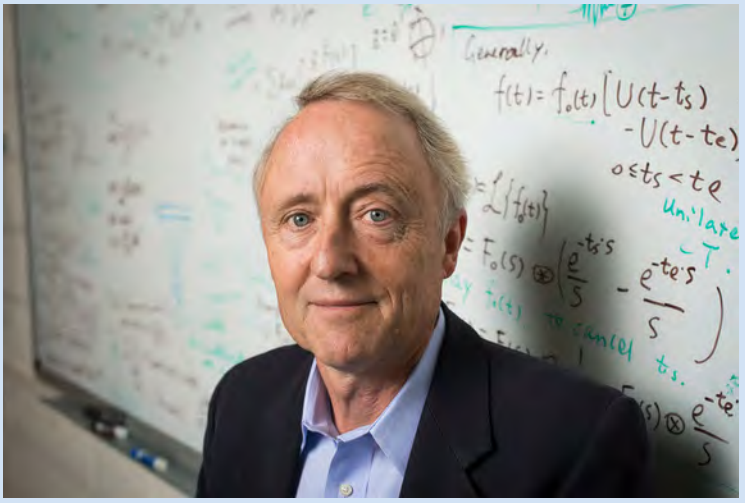
Former Faculty

Cherry Beauregard '70M (DMA), an associate professor in the Department of Woodwinds, Brass, and Percussion. September 2025
Edward Deci, the Helen F. and Fred H. Gowen Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychology. February 2026
Michael Finigan '59M (MD), '64M (Res), a clinical professor emeritus of pulmonary diseases and critical care. July 2025
Robert Gauldin '59E (PhD), a professor emeritus of music theory. September 2025
Russell Hilf, a professor emeritus in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics. August 2025
Thomas Hsiang, a professor emeritus in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. February 2026
Elaine Hubbard, a professor emeritus at the School of Nursing. December 2025
Gary Kawczynski '85, '89M (MD), an assistant professor in the Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine. November 2025
Robert ter Horst, a professor emeritus in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures. November 2025
Alvin Ureles '45M (MD), a professor emeritus of medicine. December 2025
Michael Venezia, a professor in the Department of Art and Art History. June 2025

Alumni

This list includes notices received and confirmed by the Office of Gift and Donor Records from July 1 through December 31, 2025, for deaths occurring on or after April 1, 2025.

Ann Goodenough Dinse '45, August 2025
Virginia Vail Janda '45M (MS), April 2025
Gloria Hibbeian Mikialian '45E, November 2025
Alvin L. Ureles '45M (MD), December 2025
Douglas G. Campbell '46E (MA), '57E (PhD), October 2025
Julia Lobotsky '46M (MS), August 2025
Richard B. Bicknell '47, October 2025
Teresa Marotta Livingstone '47, June 2025
Warren G. Urlaub '47, April 2025
Barbara Matz Bliss '48E, December 2025
Roger W. Zaenglein '48, October 2025
Manuel Cohen '49, December 2025
Austin R. Leve '49, '53M (MD), '58M (Res), November 2025
Nancy Carlyon Millett '49, '51 (MA), August 2025
Caroline Neel Yaude '49, October 2025
Margaret Garrison Brooker '50N, November 2025
Natalie Holmes MacKintosh '50, June 2025
Melvin H. Berger '51E, July 2025
Raymond C. Ettington '51, August 2025
Robert G. Greenler '51, September 2025
Frederick J. Jacoby '51, October 2025
Rufus R. Nutting '51E (MA), September 2025
Mario Sparagana '51, '55M (MD), October 2025
Beverly Richardson Verbridge '51, '52N, December 2025
Janeen Lane Fowler '52, '53N, August 2025
Andrew L. Sperr '52, July 2025
Jack D. Ferner '53, July 2025
Peter E. Frankenburg '53 (PhD), September 2025
Shirley Willis Plummer '53E, July 2025
Barry L. Siegel '53, November 2025
John W. Baum '54M (MS), May 2025
Harriet R. Chase '54E (MM), May 2025
Joseph J. Demo '54, September 2025
Eugenia Sepe Douglass '54, July 2025
Dorothy Hatch Keating '54E (MM), June 2025
Jane Strother Hill '56N, August 2025
Donald E. Hultquist '56, '62M (PhD), November 2025
Thomas S. Keller '56, June 2025
Natalie Silverstein Potter '56, August 2025
Carol Elmer Roberts '56, October 2025
Franklin W. Stahl '56 (PhD), '82 (Honorary), April 2025
L. Deloyce Harrington Watkins '56E, '59E (MM), August 2025
William B. Buchanan '57, May 2025
Lynn M. Carlton '57, '67 (MS), March 2025
Bruce H. Hudson '57M (Res), October 2025
Lucienda Luchterhand '57N (Dpl), October 2025
Carolyn Elser Monahan '57, July 2025
Patrick K. O'Neill '57 (MS), October 2025
Porter R. Poindexter '57E, September 2025
Martha Sullivan '57N (Dpl), December 2025
Bruce H. Thompson '57, August 2025
Ruth Chambers Thompson '57N, October 2025
Joan Haitz Brault '58, November 2025
Virginia White Clark '58, '59N (Dpl), August 2025
Marsha Steininger Ford '58N, July 2025
Judith Doremus Levy '58, July 2025
Deanne Molinari '58, August 2025
Leo L. Stolbach '58M (MD), July 2025
Richard R. VanDerMeid '58, September 2025
Richard J. Vogler '58, July 2025
John J. Bigenwald '59, September 2025
Beverly Stark Eddy '59W, September 2025
Warren S. Eddy '59, July 2025



J. ADAM FENSTER

KEVIN PARKER, 1954–2025

* * *

"Professor Parker was a brilliant scientist, inventor, teacher, and importantly, a wonderfully kind and generous person."

Read the tribute at rochester.edu/news/parker.

Michael M. Finigan ’59M (MD), ’64M (Res), July 2025
Robert L. Gauldin ’59E (PhD), September 2025
John G. L. Giess ’59, ’61, ’67S (MBA), October 2025
Marvin Lederman ’59, ’63M (MD), November 2025
John R. Merkel ’59, October 2025
Gerald S. Murante ’59, December 2025
Claude B. Smoyer ’59, ’65 (MS), October 2025
Jeanne Sterner Wolfanger ’59E, November 2025
Edward M. Wolpert ’59E, ’60E (MA), September 2025
Wendy H. Faber Yee ’59W, November 2025
John V. Atanasoff ’60 (MS), October 2025
Alan R. Gregory ’60E, July 2025
Kenneth E. Hayden ’60, August 2025
Elmer C. Humes ’60 (MS), October 2025
Harley D. Moyer ’60, ’73S (MBA), July 2025
Kathryn Bevans Mullervy ’60, July 2025
George C. Nebel ’60, October 2025
Clyde N. Riley ’60, September 2025
Robert F. Ritchie ’60M (MD), October 2025
Robert E. Sheldon ’60E, August 2025
Jewel Taylor Thompson ’60E (MM), ’82E (PhD), June 2025
James R. Tompkins ’60, September 2025
Ann D. Weintraub ’60W, ’69W (MA), September 2025
Alan R. Ziegler ’60, November 2025
Joseph T. Black ’61, June 2025
Charles S. Faulkner ’61M (MD), ’63M (Res), September 2025
Judith Grant Forbes ’61, ’62N, August 2025
Frances M. Fox ’61E, August 2025
George E. Giroux ’61E (MA), November 2025
James M. LeGro ’61, December 2025
Constance Brainard Pettinger ’61, September 2025
Laurence A. Savett ’61M (MD), November 2025
Ruth Shafer Stork ’61, ’62N, October 2025
Joyce Pilkington Brown ’62N, July 2025
Ronald N. Czadzeck ’62W (MA), July 2025
Roberta Ewing Frederick ’62, November 2025
Gerald D. Gibson ’62E, ’75E (MA), November 2025
Don S. Schalch ’62M (Res), April 2025
Richard W. Swingly ’62, November 2025
Patricia Wager Wheeler ’62, ’65W (EdM), October 2025
Thomas J. DelVecchio ’63, October 2025
Deborah Greabell Dougan ’63N, October 2025
Edward A. Geier ’63, July 2025
Rita Finley Hilsen ’63, October 2025
Donald F. Hoffer ’63S, ’65S (MS), July 2025
Judith L. Ross ’63E, ’70E (MA), September 2025
Anne Senning ’63, November 2025
Thurman E. Tobias ’63M (MD), August 2025
Mahlon W. Wagner ’63 (PhD), December 2025
Judith M. Binder ’64E, December 2025
Katherine Chlopinski Brooks ’64 (PhD), December 2025
Kathryn Bills Bushnell ’64, September 2025
Carolyn Hooper Hargrave ’64S (MS), December 2025
Edward J. Miller ’64M (PhD), October 2025
John E. Molis ’64, August 2025
Theodore J. O’Neill ’64 (MA), October 2025
Aaron Satloff ’64M (Res), August 2025
Richard S. Swacen ’64, November 2025
Thomas C. Fay ’65E, June 2025
Elizabeth Hersey Kimbrough ’65, November 2025
Paul W. Kuppinger ’65W (MA), November 2025
Suzanne Miner Moore ’65W (MA), November 2025
Dennis K. Murphy ’65W (MA), ’67W (EdD), July 2025
Elizabeth D. Oehrle ’65E, April 2025
Donald W. Schoeneman ’65, August 2025
Chi-Kai Shih ’65 (PhD), October 2025
Betsey Barney Edwards ’66, June 2025
H. Bruce Gilkes ’66E, December 2025
Mary Dellano Illingsworth ’66W, June 2025
Gary R. Lounsberry ’66, September 2025
Linda Finney Nemeth ’66E, November 2025
James S. Schlonski ’66, October 2025
David J. Storch ’66, July 2025
George E. Veomett ’66, November 2025
Mark S. Ain ’67S (MBA), July 2025
Thomas M. Bonafede ’67, November 2025
Marilyn Yeaw Hesser ’67, October 2025
Neil A. Kayes ’67, June 2025
Noelle Goslee Smith ’67, October 2025
Roland E. Stevens ’67, October 2025
John J. Teunissen ’67 (PhD), July 2025
Hans VonBriesen ’67 (PhD), November 2025
Barbara Poole VonSchilcher ’67W, August 2025
Herbert M. Ausman ’68E, July 2025
Ann R. Carlson ’68, ’68N, December 2025
Richard H. Nagel ’68S (MBA), August 2025
John E. Reuter ’68 (PhD), ’13M (Res), December 2025
Blair Whittemore ’68M (Flw), July 2025
Carl F. Annand ’69E, December 2025
James M. Boyle ’69M (MD), November 2025
Valerie Graeff Chasin ’69, August 2025
Ranny Frances Cooper ’69, October 2025
Eric H. Holtzman ’69, July 2025
Paula Lyon ’69N (Dpl), October 2025
Leslie Jaffe Miller ’69, ’69N, April 2025
Albert Nicoletti ’69W (EdM), May 2025
Tanya Roth Plutzik ’69W (EdM), July 2025
Mary Ann Quinn ’69, August 2025
Ellen Auslander Reitkopp ’69W (EdM), November 2025
Cherry N. Beauregard ’70E (DMA), September 2025
Lawrence A. Belli ’70, December 2025
Leonard M. Borthwick ’70, October 2025
R. Gary Deavel ’70E (PhD), July 2025
Joyce L. Hiller ’70, May 2025
Charles F. Moore ’70S (MBA), October 2025
Earl A. Neal ’70M (MD), September 2025
Nancy Connor Pingleton ’70, August 2025
Stephen E. Waldhorn ’70, December 2025
T. Alan Wyle ’70, December 2025
John D. Cogar ’71, August 2025
Michael J. Deasy ’71M (MS), ’71M (Pdc), July 2025
Douglas B. Diamond ’71, June 2025
Marc A. Frader ’71M (MD), ’72M (Res), August 2025
Esther R. Friedman ’71, June 2025
William E. Kramer ’71, September 2025
Russell E. Lafever ’71 (MS), July 2025
Michael M. Luckey ’71, July 2025
Gretchen V. Williamson ’71, October 2025

COURTESY OF THE ESTATE OF HYAM PLUTZIK

TANYA ROTH PLUTZIK ’69W (EdM), 1919–2025

* * *

“Her proudest purpose was sharing [acclaimed poet and former URochester faculty member Hyam Plutzik]’s poetry with the world.”

Discover the Plutzik Reading Series at rochester.edu/news/plutzik.

J. ADAM FENSTER

EDWARD DECI, 1942–2026

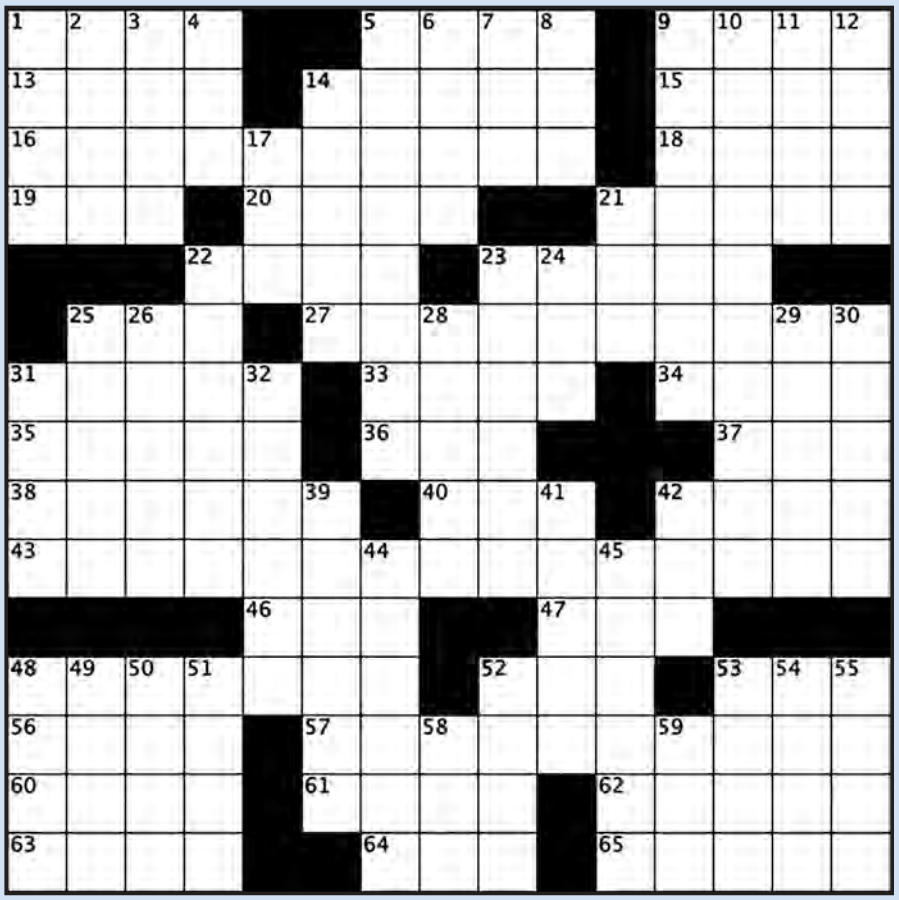
* * *

"Ed had a profound passion for understanding human motivation and for putting that knowledge into practice."

Read the tribute at rochester.edu/news/deci.

Renee Wilk Wright '71, '74 (MS), July 2025
William E. Akin '72 (PhD), June 2025
David A. Alber '72E, December 2025
David A. Kaufman '72, July 2025
Carol E. Latta '72, '78S (MBA), October 2025
Elizabeth Brown Paddack '72E, October 2025
Mary Lipke Rodning '72W (MA), October 2025
Rodney R. Rynearson '72W (EdM), July 2025
John G. Cartledge '73, August 2025
Deann McVean Evangelist '73W (EdD), December 2025
Scott A. Garretson '73, September 2025
Steven G. Gilbert '73, '86M (PhD), July 2025
Bonnie Herold McCabe '73, '76W (MA), August 2025
Warren Schwarz '73, July 2025
Bruce A. Biagi '74 (PhD), August 2025
Bonnie Smith Doell '74N, '88N (MS), August 2025
Constance Asher Hipolit '74, October 2025
Joanna Bailey Hodgman '74 (MA), August 2025
Barbara Kay Rappaport '74W (MA), October 2025
Karen L. Ritscher '74E, '79E (MM), July 2025
Scott D. Sherwood '74, '76 (MS), July 2025
Sheila Griffiths Dermody '75, July 2025
Elaine A. Dewey '75, August 2025
Gerald J. Fay '75M (MD), '78M (Res), September 2025
Janet L. Levatin '75, June 2025
Helen S. Nunberg '75, October 2025
Stephen L. Parysek '75, July 2025
Deming L. Payne '75M (Res), October 2025
Kathleen M. Thaney '75N (MS), '83M (Flw), September 2025
Richard P. White '75M (MD), '77M (Res), November 2025
Thomas G. Wise '75M (Res), November 2025
Meng-Chao Yao '76 (PhD), October 2025
Robert D. Buckland '76M (MD), August 2025
Ethline Mais '76N, '80 (MS), May 2025
Raymond J. Mayewski '76M (Res), '79M (Flw), July 2025
James W. Sandy '76W (EdM), August 2025
Tej V. Bansal '77M (Res), January 2025
Brandon H. Beck '77 (PhD), August 2025
Edward P. DeJong '77, October 2025
Catherine A. Hiler '77, October 2025
Terry L. Keister '77, October 2025
Patricia M. Mallon '77N, '85N (MS), July 2025
Dennis B. Dundon '78S (MBA), October 2025
Nancy Keith '78S (MBA), October 2025
Cheryl Favier Toyama '78E, July 2025
Joseph J. Zeccardi '78S (MBA), November 2025
Henry B. Albro '79 (MS), November 2025
Mohssen M. Ghalichebaf '79M (Pdc), '81M (MS), July 2025
MaryAnn L. Grumley '79, September 2025
Corine Leo '79N (Dpl), December 2025
Virginia E. Parry '79N, February 2025
Laverne Woods Poindexter '79, '80N, July 2025
Debra Solveson '79N (Dpl), September 2025
David C. Stabler '79E (MM), September 2025
Timothy D. Landry '80M (PhD), August 2025
William H. Pastor '80 (MA), October 2025
Walter J. Psoter '80M (Pdc), '80M (Res), December 2025
Peter G. Shoun '80E, September 2025
Brian D. Dailey '81M (MD), October 2025
Lee R. Himelfarb '81S (MBA), July 2025
Frederick J. Lacey '81M (Pdc), August 2025
Robert C. Maddamma '81S (MBA), July 2025
Kristine Zabinski Birmingham '82S (MBA), November 2025
Kenneth P. Shepard '82, July 2025
Alan C. Wilkinson '82, November 2025
Erin K. Byrne '83, June 2025
Richard L. Bailey '83S (MBA), December 2025
Mary E. Corey '83 (MA), '95 (PhD), July 2025
Viktor M. Daragjati '83 (MS), November 2025
David M. Dobrzynski '83M (MD), '86M (Res), July 2025
Terence L. Griswold '83S (MBA), September 2025
Craig A. Lucker '83, November 2025
Louis J. Perretta '83M (MD), July 2025
Kathleen Staszak Walker '83, September 2025
Jane Thomson Hickok '84M (MS), October 2025
Susan Jaquith Pickhardt '84W (MS), July 2025
Frank J. Sheroshek '84, '90S (MBA), June 2025
Simon J. R. Vicary '84 (MA), May 2025
Lucy A. Albrecht '85, August 2025
Carolyn Tette Dehond '85W (MS), December 2025
Randall K. Hems '85, September 2025
Gary M. Kawczynski '85, '89M (MD), November 2025
Ann E. Mehrhof '85N, '92N (MS), September 2025
John R. Tassone '85S (MBA), July 2025
Harris R. Levinson '86, June 2025
Andre L. Marquis '86, July 2025
Susan Heard Spear '86W (EdD), August 2025
Joyce Bedrava Ebmeyer '87W (EdD), November 2025
John J. Woods '87W (EdD), August 2025
Sharon M. Higgins-Brunner '89W (MS), August 2025
Frank V. Lovecchio '89S (MBA), July 2025
Harrison K. Roberts '89, August 2025
Kathleen M. Meeusen '90N (MS), August 2025
Kevin P. Powers '90, December 2025
Mary A. Vacher-Weill '90E (MM), June 2025
Marc E. Young '91S (MBA), October 2025
Denise Laverty Allen '92 (MS), July 2025
Corey Brown '92, May 2025
Martin F.X. Ryan '92, October 2025
Kerinchan Babaoglu '93S (MBA), November 2025
Joanna Graser Kane '93, September 2025
Judith S. Stahl '93N, '96N (MS), October 2025
Scott Stewart '93M (Flw), '93M (Res), July 2025
Toni Osso McGhan '94N (MS), September 2025
Ahmet E. Abaci '95S (MBA), August 2025
Sally-Ann Whelan '96N (MS), December 2025
Suzanne Brendze '00M (Res), September 2025
Suzette Welch '01N, September 2025
Kristin Stadler-Boyd '02, September 2025
David A. Stringham '03E, '11E (PhD), November 2025
Karen A. Miller '06N, May 2025
Eric D. Lovullo '10M (PhD), December 2025
Michael Storonsky '11, July 2025
Steven A. Fowler '12S (MBA), July 2025
Dahlia L. Veyrat '18 (MA), '23 (PhD), October 2025
Tane R. Robinson '19W (AC), June 2025
Isaac Jin-Ray Li '20E, September 2025
Glynis M. Hunt '21W (MS), July 2025
Stefani R. Patten '24M (Res), December 2025
Alexander W. Gonzalo '25, November 2025

You Snooze, You Win



ACROSS

1. Sunrise over the Genesee River
5. Odometer unit
9. Part of a process
13. 6.7 million square feet, for the River Campus
14. Stopwatch, for example
15. Prefix with "dynamic"
16. Kitchen analogy for the glymphatic system, which "scrubs" the brain during sleep
18. Hand, in Spanish
19. Exam that's optional when applying to URochester
20. Singer in the Eastman Chorale
21. Bit of gossip
22. Norse god of thunder
23. Set back to active, as a security system
25. The Raptors' league: Abbr.
27. URochester professor Maiken who has made important discoveries about the purpose of sleep
31. Sound made during sleep
33. Paid assistant
34. Possible answer to "You need Lasik surgery"
35. Semesters at URochester, for example
36. Pub fixture
37. Is able to
38. Think up a new invention, say
40. *Game of Thrones* patriarch
42. Points of convergence
43. "Internal clock" that doesn't fully settle until around age 25
46. ____ Peterson (nickname of the contemporary art curator at MAG)
47. Yes, to Yves
48. What spiders spin
52. Popular Christmas tree
53. Spelling competition
56. Completely unadorned
57. Term for an episode of self-awareness during a nighttime vision
60. "Look out! It's a ____!"
61. Peterson who wrote "While You Were Sleeping"
62. Absolute minimum
63. "Well, ____ that special?"
64. Come to a close
65. TV awards won five times by Jeff Beal '85E

DOWN

1. Fathers
2. Eastman Opera Theatre song
3. Direction from Mount Hope Cemetery to the River Campus
4. Casual denial
5. Handle roughly
6. Texter's "I think..."
7. Oscar-winning director Ang
8. Make a mistake
9. Warrior of feudal Japan
10. Rocky the Yellowjacket, to URochester
11. Composer Dohnányi
12. Low-quality
14. Eagle's claw
17. Baby's cry
21. Use for an old T-shirt
22. Surface at Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport
23. Old-school editing tool
24. Poetic "before"
25. Sci-fi writer Okafor
26. Insect that eats holes in wood
28. Subject of the 2021 biopic *Spencer*
29. Get to
30. Jeans material
31. Clic ____ (Bic pen)
32. What the George Eastman Museum once was
39. Fit to be consumed
41. *Star Wars* robot
42. Abbreviation at the start of a memo
44. "You're not kidding"
45. Obstacle at Fauver Stadium
48. Way to treat sleeplessness: Abbr.
49. Tools used by rowers at Genesee Valley Park
50. Muffin ingredient
51. Showed sorrow, in a way
52. Locate
53. Light seen in the Laboratory for Laser Energetics
54. Not hard at all
55. Some first responders: Abbr.
58. The NFL's Bengals, on scoreboards
59. Phase of sleep: Abbr.

Send a photo of your completed puzzle to rochrev@rochester.edu or post it on social media with the hashtag #RochesterReview for a chance to win exciting prizes! We'll choose the lucky puzzlers on July 1, 2026. (Psst: The solution can be found at rochester.edu/news/review.)

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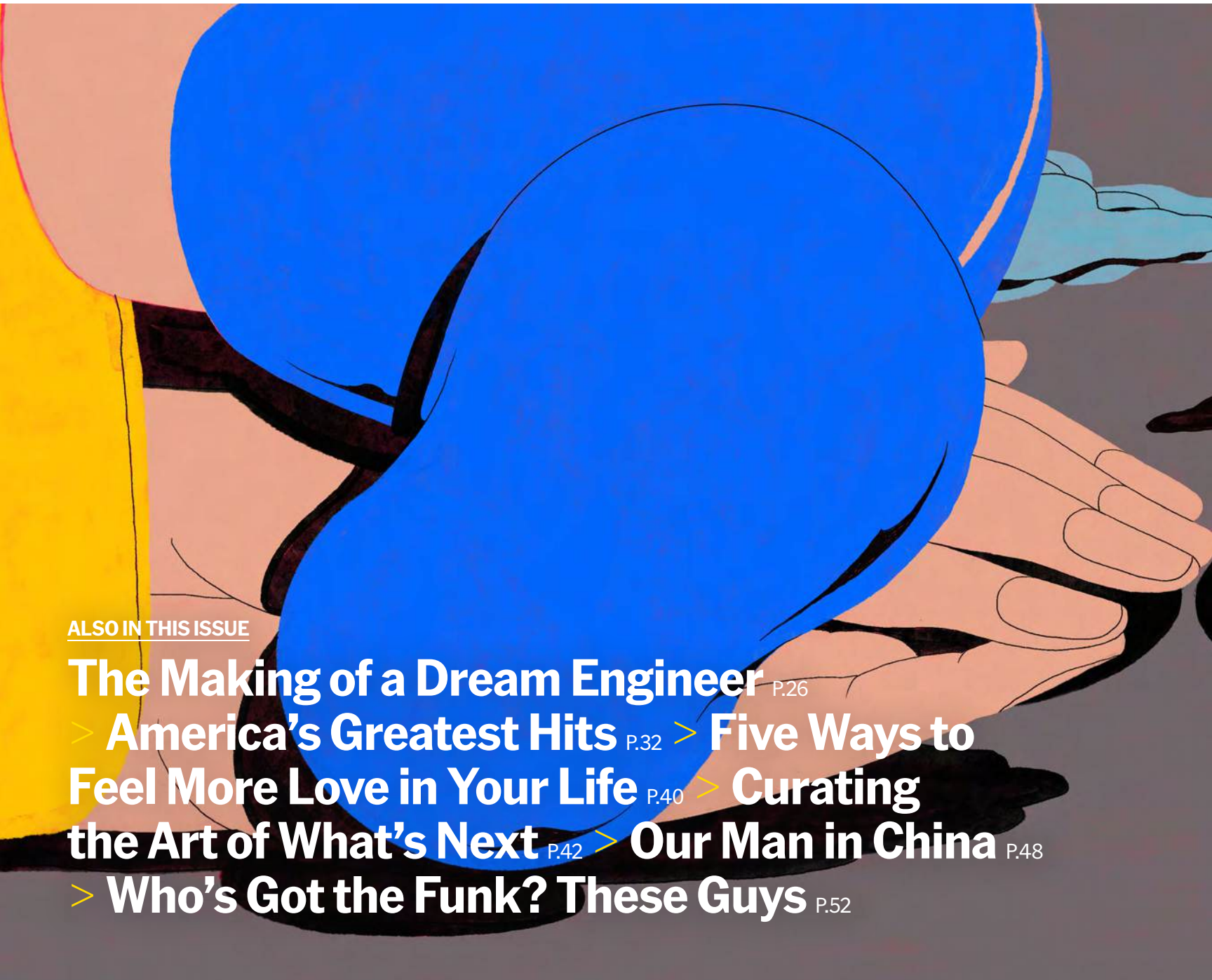

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