

A History in Genetics

As a former biology major at the University, I was at first thrilled to see the article “The Genes of Genetic Recombination” in the May-June issue. However, I was disappointed that the article did not mention that the first cytological proof that crossing over occurs was demonstrated by Curt Stern, a former member of the biology faculty at Rochester.

I did not know Professor Stern until I was in graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley and served as a teaching assistant in his undergraduate course in genetics. It was a great privilege to know him personally, as well as professionally, as he always opened his home and family to graduate students.

Professor Stern is part of the distinguished history of the U of R and famous in the history of genetics. He should be remembered with pride by the University.

*Dorothy Botkin Rosenthal '55, '83W (EdD)
Amherst, Massachusetts*

The Graduates Wore Yellow

Richard Alioto '88M (MD), '94M (Res) of Clayton, North Carolina, says the photo on the opening page of class notes in the May-June issue shows graduates from the School of Medicine and Dentistry in 1988. “Top row: **Giovana Thomas** '88M (MD) and **Steven Nakada** '88M (MD), '94M (Res); bottom row: **Steven Grinspoon** '88M (MD), **Carol Rosenbaum** '88M (MD), **Christine Shotzko** '88M (MD), and **Martha David** '88M (MD), '91M (Res). My classmates—and I miss them all!”

And **Mary Jo Heath** '88E (PhD) of Stamford, Connecticut, writes: “Love the photo from 1988 commencement . . . with all of us in our bumblebee suits. I was the marshal for the PhD candidates that year, and I still carry the key chain that was attached to my ceremonial baton. I returned to Eastman in 2016 and gave the commencement address and received a Distinguished Alumni Award. At my request, they searched far and wide for a bumblebee suit for me to wear on the occasion (my friend, Dr. Betsy Marvin '89E (PhD) of the Eastman faculty, still wears hers!). Alas, none could be found, so I was forced to wear the black one. Sigh.”

Department of Corrections . . .

Methinks you were a bit overexuberant when you billed Michael Steele as making “history as the first African American

elected to statewide office” in 2003 (“Set Your Calendar for Meliora Weekend,” May-June). Unfortunately for poor Michael, Douglas Wilder was elected as governor of Virginia in 1990, more than a decade earlier. I think you owe Mr. Wilder an apology.

*Karl Roth '62
Westerville, Ohio*

Our apologies to Wilder and the people of Virginia. We should have made clear that Steele, who is a guest speaker at this fall's Meliora Weekend, was the first African American elected to statewide office in Maryland.—Editor

. . . and Clarifications

Regarding your article, “Was the University a Player in the Invention of Baseball” (Ask the Archivist) in the May-June issue, the later works of Priscilla Astifan (a Webster, New York-based historian) would appear to make it probable that a form of baseball recognizable as today's game was played in Rochester earlier than 1858, possibly as early as the 1820s or 30s, and almost certainly by 1855.

*Michael Nighan
Rochester, New York*

Melissa Mead, the John M. and Barbara Keil University Archivist and Rochester Collections Librarian, responds: “While my answer drew on Astifan's scholarship in Rochester History, her more recent work indicates that early Rochesterians played ‘base ball’ in a former meadow in what is now downtown Rochester as early as 1825. Those articles can be found online, along with a video interview of Astifan: Rochesterbaseballhistory.org/research-projects. Although the game the young men played was not the organized ‘New York game’ that came to Rochester in the mid-1850s, my assertion that ‘Rochester—either as a city or university—played no special role in the early development of the game’ is an unforced error: Rochesterians certainly did play an early role. At this point, it seems safe to say the University did not.”

Review welcomes letters and will print them as space permits. Letters may be edited for brevity and clarity. Unsigned letters cannot be used. Send letters to Rochester Review, 22 Wallis Hall, Box 270044, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627-0044; rochrev@rochester.edu.

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