



## For the Love of Sicily

**Allison Scola** '94, '95 (T5) was backpacking through Europe a year after graduation when her brother suggested she meet up with a second cousin who lived in Rome. She persuaded a stranger who spoke Italian to call the cousin, a pastry chef in his 70s, and arrange a get-together.

"He brought me all this cannoli, which I can completely relate to, and that was it," she says. "The floodgates were open. I was in love with Italy."

The musician, songwriter, singer, and travel guide has maintained a connection to the country since—the round-about result of that cousin's old-fashioned customs.

Scola had returned to Rome several months after her first trip to learn Italian, hoping her cousin would help her find a job. He had other plans for her, however. "He said, 'Why are you here?'" she recalls. "You should go home. You should get married."

Disheartened, Scola decided she'd return home to launch a career in advertising. But her cousin told her she should first go to Sicily to meet his two brothers. Knowing only some 150 words in Italian, she headed to Palermo. "I didn't even know what these guys looked like, but as soon as I got off the train and onto the platform, I recognized them," she says. "I saw my grandmother's arms and my uncle's cheekbones and immediately knew they were family."

That three-week stay, despite the language barrier, changed the course of her life.


Almost two decades later, after years of working in advertising, the former music and theater arts major is, among other things,

a performing artist creating eclectic acoustic songs heavily influenced by Sicilian folk culture.

Living in New York City, she and her husband, guitarist Joe Ravo, also make up the music ensemble Villa Palagonia, named after the Sicilian town near where Scola's paternal grandmother grew up. Blending American pop with traditional Sicilian and Italian folk, they recently recorded *Rhythms & Roots*, their first album.

Scola has also launched a boutique travel organization, Experience Sicily, through which she leads small-group tours of the island that last up to 15 days. This June, she'll lead "Soulful and Sunny Sicily," combining theater, swimming in the Mediterranean, a cooking class, and a vineyard tour. Next year, among the tours she'll lead is "Music and Revelry in Sicily." She's exhibited at the Philadelphia Travel & Adventure Show, drumming up business for her tours and playing four 15-minute concerts with her husband.

"She's absolutely captivating because she dances so well, she sings so well, and she plays the tamburello—what we'd call a tambourine—the traditional way, which is hard to do," says Barbara Shiller, board president of the folk music organization CT Folk in New Haven, Connecticut. Shiller has known Scola for years and accompanied her on a trip to Sicily last fall. "Most performers, certainly here in America, are not playing that kind of music, but [her] interpretation just makes it so accessible."

"I have this vision," Scola explains. "Music is my love, and it's in my blood, and it's another avenue to introduce people to Southern Italy." 

—ROBIN L. FLANIGAN

**ROOTS AND MUSIC:**  
Scola blends Sicilian and Italian folk, on traditional instruments, with American pop.

# A Different Kind of Group Therapy

For the past 25 years, **Leonard Jason** '75 (PhD) has been researching and empowering what is likely the most successful nationwide addiction-recovery program you've never heard of: the Oxford House.

This residential rehab model is soundly rooted in what's called community psychology, a branch of psychology forged in the 1960s by, among others, Rochester's Emory Cowen. Jason, a protégé of Cowen's, is among the leading practitioners of community psychology today. "Psychology is very individually oriented, but the reality is, there's a contextual piece to most mental health problems," Jason says. Community psychologists understand mental health problems as *social* problems, experienced in the context of a community.

A professor of psychology at DePaul University and director of the university's Center for Community Research, Jason first found out about Oxford Houses from a *60 Minutes* special in 1991. He was intrigued. From a community psychology point of view, he wondered, why do they work?

In 1975 the first house opened outside Washington, D.C. An Oxford House is a house like any other, often in the suburbs, where a person can come to live for \$100 per week and a commitment to abstinence from substance use. Essentially Oxford Houses are self-help recovery homes where six to 12 residents work to sustain a substance-free life together. Each house is dem-

**SOLVING SOCIAL PROBLEMS: The key to addressing social ills is community psychology, says Jason, a leading expert in the field.**

ocratically run by the residents, without professional staff. Today over 25,000 people reside in such houses every year.

In the early 1990s, Jason began a study of the model with 150 participants in Illinois. Helping Jason recruit participants was Leon Venable. Ven-

able first met Jason in 1993 when he was a resident at an Oxford House. "The first time I met Dr. Jason I was terrified," says Venable. "I had completed high school and six years of military, and I was also addicted to drugs." But Venable's initial apprehensions quickly dissipated. "He was a good listener, and that's what I admire about him the most," says Venable. "Going down and listening to him allowed me to gain a lot of self-confidence."

In the process, Venable learned more about himself. His collaboration with Jason is a perfect example of the power of community psychology. "I was able to go out in the community and promote the Oxford Houses," says Venable, "I was able to do better presentations of what Oxford Houses could do for an individual based on working with Dr. Jason." Today, Venable is the president of Kalimba House Corporation, a nonprofit that oversees the Oxford Houses throughout Illinois.

The results of Jason's study showed that the supportive community environment of Oxford Houses helped people remain abstinent, out of jail, and employed at much higher rates than if

they went through standard rehab programs. But despite the data-backed success of the Oxford Houses, some communities still stigmatize them. Frightened by the idea of neighbors who are recovering from addictions, many formerly incarcerated, some towns have passed ordinances against the homes.

Jason's work, however, has been instrumental in fighting such laws. He is regularly called in as an expert witness in court cases involving Oxford Houses. One case, which dragged out for months in a suburban community, was resolved in favor of the Oxford House the day that Jason presented his research findings. "In one day they basically solved the problem with data," says Jason.

For Jason, combining outreach, research, and action is a way to democratize psychology and expand its usefulness to people outside the academy. "I can outline a problem, I can collect data on it, and I can add that to the effort to bring about change in a very systematic way," he says.

To address social problems effectively, as he describes in his 2013 book *Principles of Social Change*, environments, not just individuals, must change. "A lot of our mental health and other in-



terventions are limited by being so person-specific," says Jason. It's a challenge because "very powerful people control resources and the status quo.

"You have to have allies and citizens and community groups and people to work with you, to challenge those individuals that are controlling the power to get to more substantial change." <sup>®</sup>

—MAYA DUKMASOVA '12



**ETCHED IN HISTORY:** Hooker, who was the first African-American woman to serve in the U.S. Coast Guard, poses for a selfie with Petty Officer First Class Patricia Brown.

## In the News

### A Trio of Landmarks for Olivia Hooker '62 (PhD)

**Olivia Hooker** '62 (PhD) reached a personal landmark in February, when she turned 100 years old. Two other landmarks, in brick and mortar, were named for her the following month.

As a college student at Ohio State University during World War II, Hooker participated in a campaign to guarantee African-American women the same opportunities in the U.S. military as white women. In early 1945, Hooker became the first African-American woman to enlist in the U.S. Coast Guard.

Seventy years later, almost to the day, Hooker appeared at a standing-room-only ceremony at the Coast Guard Sector New York, in Staten Island, to dedicate the Olivia J. Hooker Dining Facility. Shortly afterward, a training facility at the Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C., was named in her honor.

Hooker earned a doctorate in psychology at Rochester, and went on to become a professor of psychology at Fordham University. She has also achieved prominence as the oldest living survivor of the infamous Tulsa, Oklahoma, race riots of 1921, during which white rioters destroyed her father's store and bombed her school. She has been part of a long-standing campaign for restitution among families of victims.

### Canada Honors Chuck Daellenbach '66E, '71E (PhD)

**Chuck Daellenbach** '66E, '71E (PhD), co-founder of the Canadian Brass, has won Canada's highest civilian honor, Member of the Order of Canada.

Daellenbach, who plays tuba, was a professor of music education at the University of Toronto when he cofounded the ensemble with trombonist Gene Watts in 1970. The quintet began touring in 1972 and soon achieved international fame. The Canadian Brass has recorded more than 130 albums, appeared on popular television programs in nations from China to the United States, and performs regularly for the Canadian government to welcome visiting heads of state.

Daellenbach is the only original member still performing with the group.

### Carolyn Burr '78N (MS) a Lifetime Achiever in AIDS Prevention

**Carolyn Burr** '78N (MS) has received the 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care. Over the past two decades, she has played a lead role in drastically reducing the rates of mother-to-child HIV transmission. Now the deputy director of the Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Center at the Rutgers School of Nursing, Burr spearheaded the development of Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention guidelines to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission. Since 1994, the rate of infant HIV infection has fallen 95 percent, to just 2 percent of births to HIV-infected women.

### Leaders in Enterprise

*Black Enterprise* magazine named **Kathy Waller** '80, '83S (MBA) to its list of the 50 Most Powerful Women in Corporate America.

Waller is chief financial officer and executive vice president of the Coca-Cola Co., as well as a University trustee. She began her career at Deloitte, and joined Coca-Cola in 1987 as a senior accountant.


Ursula Burns, a University life trustee and chairman and CEO of Xerox, was also named to the list.

*Black Enterprise*, published since 1970, compiles the list to celebrate executives who have broken significant racial and gender barriers.

### Jazz Musicians Team Up

A faculty-alumna jazz duo is taking music abroad.

Pianist **Dariusz Terefenko** '04E (PhD), associate professor of jazz studies and contemporary media at the Eastman School of Music, and alto saxophonist **Alexa Tarantino** '14E performed and taught at the Academy of Music in Kraków in Poland in March. They plan to be in Brazil for a week-long tour in June, during which they will perform with pianist Marcelo Pinto '15E (DMA).

Tarantino took several classes from Terefenko at Eastman, and the pair teamed up as performers during her senior year. Their first recording, *Crossing Paths*, was released in January on Tarantino's label, Infinite Records. They have performed in New York City, Dallas, Rochester, and Hartford, Connecticut. 



**A DYNAMIC PAIR:** Tarantino (left) and Terefenko, an Eastman alumna-faculty jazz duo, are taking their act abroad.