

## LIFETIMES

# Teacher, Scholar, and Academic Leader: Hugo Sonnenschein '61

One of the most prominent economic theorists of his generation, Hugo Sonnenschein '61 is equally at home crunching mathematical models, leading a classroom discussion, and guiding the nation's leading universities. A former president of the University of Chicago and provost at Princeton University, he is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. A Rochester trustee, he was awarded an honorary degree from the University this fall in recognition of his achievements as an academic leader, scholar, and teacher.

## My childhood

I was surrounded by love and I received considerable attention. But I have no recollection of my mother, who died when I was very young. I was raised by my aunt and

surrounded with in my early years and throughout my life.

## My Rochester days

Elizabeth Gunn Sonnenschein '61, '62N and I met in our freshman year. I was 16. Beth

given my math background. Bingo! I found a paper on "social choice" and the work of Kenneth Arrow. It was another "love at first sight." "Life Partner and Scholarly Mission": I owe so much to Rochester.

## My scholarship and teaching

Graduate school was a breeze. Rochester had prepared me very well. I finished my PhD at Purdue at age 23 and was appointed assistant professor at the University of

Several have held important positions in government and in the private sector.

## My time as president

I served at the University of Chicago during a time of change. I felt that it was essential to elevate the place of undergraduate students at the university. We put substantial resources into student life. I called on the faculty to reexamine our core curriculum and this generated controversy within the university and in the larger society. Chicago



**ROCHESTER TIES:** University Trustee Hugo Sonnenschein was awarded an honorary degree from Rochester this fall (right) for his leadership and achievements, part of a lifelong set of connections to the University, where he and his wife, Elizabeth Gunn Sonnenschein (left), met as freshmen.

her family in a modest home in Brooklyn. At age nine I moved to boarding school, and I completed high school at Oakwood Friends. My fellow students and teachers were good people and I learned a lot.

Neither my father nor my aunt attended college. Yet they cared about what I would become and they valued education.

I was a happy child, and I'm grateful for the love, attention, and values that I was

maintains that I looked 12. However, she eventually took me seriously and we were married one year after graduation. Rochester economics, led by Lionel McKenzie and with the great Nobel laureate-to-be Bob Fogel, was in the vanguard of places that anticipated the extent to which mathematics and statistics would transform their discipline. A young economics professor encouraged me to search for economics papers that I might find interesting,

Minnesota. I was promoted to full professor at age 27. I work with mathematical models of social science phenomena. A theorem that bears my name characterizes the mathematical structure of multimarket demand and supply functions. My proudest achievements include the extraordinary success of my students, some of whom have gone on to teach at Harvard, Berkeley, Stanford, Princeton, Chicago, Yale, and other outstanding universities worldwide.

continues to be known for its rigorous curriculum, and I believe that our revised core has helped us to attract serious young people who thrive at Chicago. The size of the College increased and we simultaneously became substantially more selective. We tripled the size of our endowment, which protects the future of Chicago. A primary purpose of academic leadership is to guide a university to appreciate its strengths, to examine what it can do better,


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and to help it to serve society. We are expected to lead the cheers, but we must also hold up a mirror. Great universities need to be challenged. I am immensely proud of the quality of faculty and students who came to Chicago during my tenure as president. Two were subsequently awarded the Nobel Prize, and a third, admittedly a half-time appointment in our law school, went on to become President Barack Obama.

### My service as a trustee

I have spent considerable time with the trustees of Chicago, Princeton, and Rochester. These universities have a unique ability to make this a better world. Especially, if one values democracy and appreciates the importance of ideas and a well-educated citizenry. Rochester trustees have been generous with their contribution of resources. But more important has been their wisdom, their different perspectives, and their critical understanding of the discovery and learning that goes on at Rochester. The trustees work in support of an outstanding faculty and superb academic leadership. It has been an honor to serve with such a dedicated and talented group.

### My life today

I am in my Chicago office most every day. Beth is a retired cancer epidemiologist. We serve on boards, with a tilt toward advanced learning, child welfare, and community service. Our grandchildren are at universities in D.C., England, New York, and Chicago. They will make the world a better place. We stalk them! We remain in contact with Rochester classmates, and we enjoy theater, biking, and music. Beth belongs to a recorder group. It is a long way from Brooklyn. Some of what has been most formative began at Rochester. Meliora! 

—AS TOLD TO  
ROBIN L. FLANIGAN

Pictured are (seated, left to right) Joan, **Ethel Bernstein**, **Stanley Berman**, (standing) Peggy Fiddler (Nick Fleisher's wife), **Charles Tabb**, Randi Fox Tabb (Charlie's wife), **Andrew Bernstein**, **Nicholas Fleisher**, and **Marc Zlotnik**.

**1972 Tom Bonfiglio** has published his fifth book, *The Psychopathology of American Capitalism* (Palgrave Macmillan), part of the publisher's Critical Political Theory and Radical Practice series. Tom is the Gaines Professor of Literature and Linguistics at the University of Richmond.

**1974 Ross Petty** '74S (MBA), a professor of marketing law and faculty scholar at Babson College, has published *Petty's Branding Law: A Guide to the Legal Issues in Brand Management* (West Academic).

**1975 James Kennedy** writes: "Hi, Rochester friends. I wanted to share a link to a sci-fi short story I've written, in which a character is a University of Rochester astrophysicist (my initial dream as a freshman). Besides aliens and asteroids, the tale also touches on politics, the media, and faith." The free e-book can be found at [Medium.com/@jimkenedy250/seti-oz-b4beed199fd4](https://medium.com/@jimkenedy250/seti-oz-b4beed199fd4). . . . **Barbara London** was married last June to Stephen Presser. Stephen is a Rochester dermatologist, and Barbara is, she writes, "a happy retiree as of 2015 after a 38-year career as a medical social worker in Cincinnati." She "loves living in Rochester after 40 years away."

**1977 Peter Friedenberg**, a real estate lawyer with the Boston firm Sherin and Lodgen, was selected by his peers for inclusion in the peer review publication *The Best Lawyers in America 2018* (Woodward/White). *Best Lawyers* highlights the top five percent of practicing attorneys in the United States.

**1978 Barry Bergen** celebrated two milestones last June. He writes, "I retired from my position as professor of history at Gallaudet University. My 25 years of service there included seven years as chair of the Department of History and Government, now the Department of History, Philosophy, Religion, and Sociology, and three additional years as program coordinator for the history program." In addition, "I celebrated 20 years with my



1971 Zlotnik



1975 London

partner, Jim Schank. We were legally married in a private ceremony in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, in April 2015." . . . **Michael Corp**, a partner in the law firm Hancock Estabrook, has been selected for inclusion in *Upstate New York Super Lawyers* for 2017. Michael is the chair of the tax, trusts and estates, and elder law and special needs department. . . . **Kevin Maier** sends a photo and

a note: "On August 27 I competed in the World Multisport Championships in Penticton, Canada, where I was invited to be on Team USA and finished eighth in the 60-64 age group in the aquabike, completing the two-mile swim and 75-mile bike in 4 hours 29 minutes. Penticton hosted the first annual week-long Olympics-type festival of multisport races put on by the International Triathlon Union, which included sprint duathlon (run/bike/run), standard duathlon, cross triathlon (off-road triathlon), aquathlon (swim/run), long-course triathlon, and aquabike. A total of nearly 5,000 athletes from 39 countries competed in the six events."



1978 Maier

**1979 Steven Goldberg**, an environmental litigation attorney with Downey Brand, was named a Northern California Super Lawyer and was recognized by *Sacramento Magazine* as a 2017 Top Lawyer. . . . **Valerie Leeds** wrote *George Sotter: Light and Shadow* (James A. Michener Art Museum) to accompany the museum's retrospective exhibition of the Pennsylvania artist's paintings and stained glass. *Light and Shadow* is the first publication devoted to Sotter's work.