

Monmouth

THE MAGAZINE OF MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY » SPRING 2021



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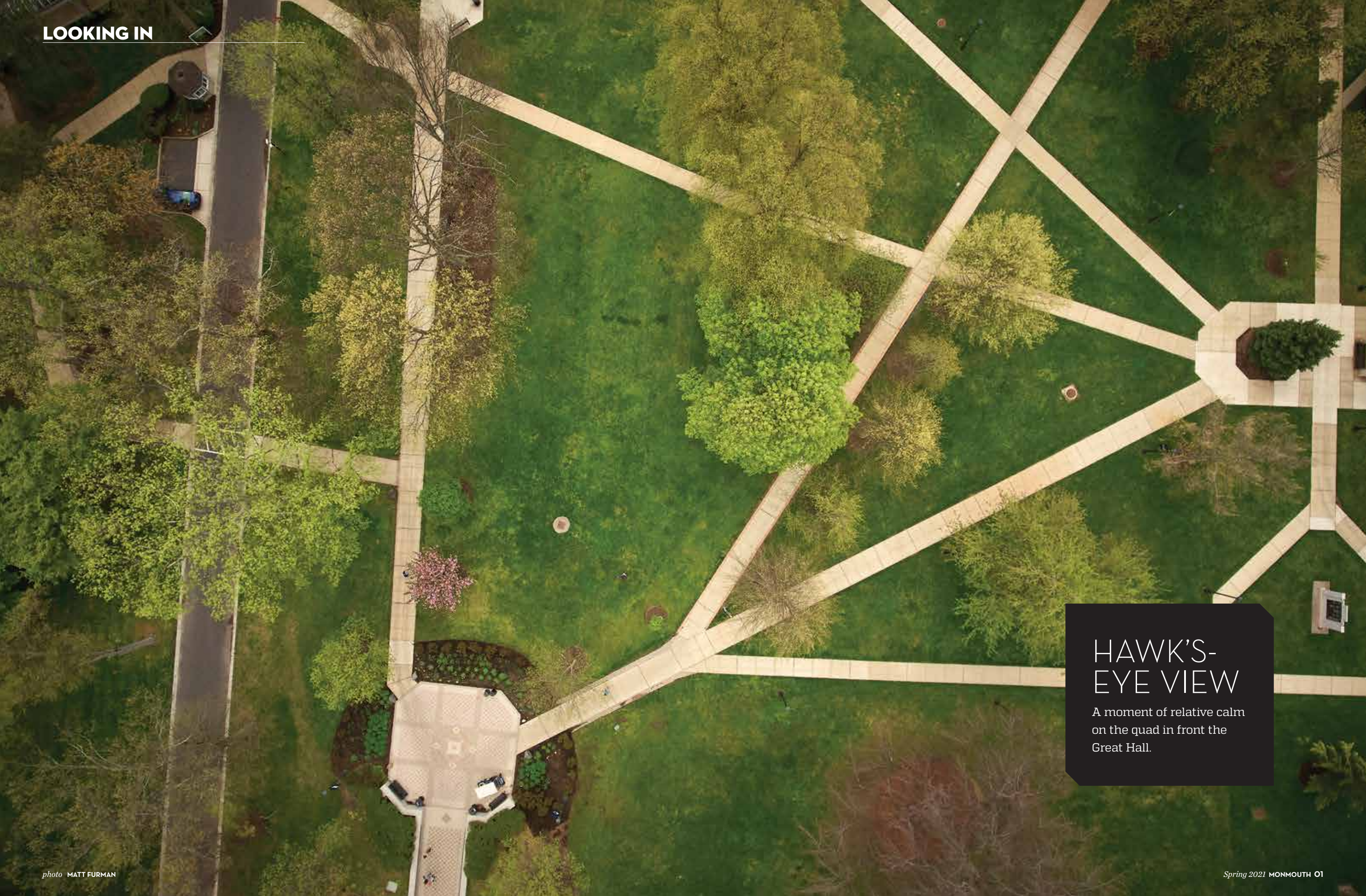
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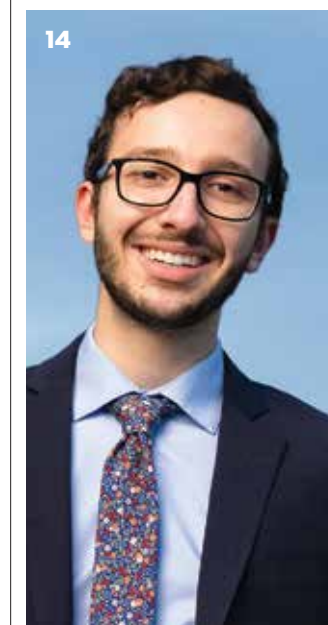
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RENEWABLE RESOURCES

POSITIONING THE UNIVERSITY FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS RELIES ON ITS UNFAILING COLLECTIVE SPIRIT.

Just over a year ago, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, and the state of New Jersey announced a public health emergency in response to this growing threat. This has been a year that has tested our resolve, but together, we have faced these unexpected challenges with great patience, flexibility, and fortitude.

I am confident that these strengths, coupled with the resilience of the Monmouth spirit, will help us successfully navigate through the next several months and transition into a post-pandemic reality that more closely resembles our pre-pandemic living and learning environment at Monmouth. As we develop plans for the upcoming academic year and beyond, we are encouraged by increased surveillance testing, widespread vaccination efforts, and the over-

whelming desire of our students to return more fully to campus. While we have been carefully managing the day-to-day details of operating in a pandemic, we also have been keeping our sights firmly focused on the future. Though we paused our strategic planning efforts last spring when the pandemic first emerged, we have spent the past several months reenergizing our work in developing the University's next five-year plan. Thanks to thoughtful input and

“
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 ”

ideas from members across our University community, I am confident that we have produced an ambitious yet achievable blueprint for Monmouth University's success now and for generations to come.

While the importance of integrating excellence and access has been embraced and popularized by many colleges and universities over the last decade, I am convinced that Monmouth has all the makings of becoming a bona fide leader in this endeavor. Our high rankings in various third-party publications point to the measure of our excellence, and our commitment to serving a high number of Pell-eligible and first-generation students is evidence of our accessibility.

Our new strategic plan, which officially launches on July 1, details through six central themes the many innovative ways in which we plan to become both more excellent and more accessible. Through an institution-wide commitment to these virtues, our ambition is for Monmouth University to become the most highly ranked institution with our access measures in our category, anywhere in the country. Your ongoing support of Monmouth will help us both to rise in the rankings and to offer the distinctive Monmouth experience to deserving students of all backgrounds.

I am grateful that we have reached this point of the semester with so few disruptions to the academic experience. Together, we have persevered through an unprecedented year in modern history, and together, we will find our way in a post-pandemic world to best serve the evolving needs of our students and their families. As we hope for a safe return to near-normal operations in the fall, I look forward to reuniting and thanking you *in person* for your steadfast commitment to our exceptional university community.

—Patrick F. Leahy, Ed.D., President

photo MATT FURMAN



BLACK WOMEN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Thank you for the insightful interview with Dr. Hettie Williams (“The Long Struggle”) in which she discussed the ongoing struggle for Black equality. I agree wholeheartedly with her point that the civil rights struggle is about much more than just Black Lives Matter. Black people, especially Black women, very often face racism in the workplace. It can take many forms: unequal pay, unrealistic expectations, harassment. I know this from personal experience. The struggles that Black people face are indeed real, and much work remains to be done to end systemic racism in America. I'm proud to see my alma mater addressing it in this way.
 —Lyreshia (Hailstork) Bonds '04

IN DEFENSE OF WILSON

Regarding your Fall 2020 magazine, I am disappointed with your choice of cover artwork. Is it not enough that the mainstream media is constantly showing scenes of violent riots under the guise of “protesting for equal rights”? Monmouth University is supposed to be an educational institution for all in a broad range of occupational fields, not acting as an arm of the liberal agenda.

Moving on to the letter from Fred Dente '65, “Woodrow Wilson Flunks Out of Monmouth,” I feel his assessment is more opinion-based than historically accurate.... Let us remember that the 1918 H1N1 flu is well documented as the Spanish flu. But true to current revisionist tactics, Mr. Dente places opinion-based blame on America, writing that the flu “was likely to have originated in American training bases and was then exported to Europe on crowded troop ships.” In truth, actual historical and epidemiological data are not adequate to certify the origin of the Spanish flu. It was early identified not only in America, but also in France, Germany, and the UK.

I'd be interested to see reliably sourced, pre-2000 documentation rather than the popular and shameful trend to blame America for everything and see what sticks. Stating something as fact in one form of media does not make it true, although our country is suffering dearly from just that means of spreading fake information. There are more than enough revisionists and cancel culturists mostly doing more damage than good, but where are those who would preserve our history as written, as something to learn from rather than erase?

Buying in to revisionist history and the destructive cancel culture, Monmouth's Board of Trustees caved on renaming the former Wilson Hall based on negative sensationalism of Wilson's life and administration. Rather than taking an in-depth look at the context of the period, the board partnered in the tragic rewriting of historical facts to adapt to today's hot-button issues, destroying an important part of Monmouth's legacy for those of us who used to be proud of it. —Dierdre (Hulse) Egizi '97M

I disagree with the opinions stated in the letter “Woodrow Wilson Flunks Out of Monmouth.” Wilson was not a warmonger. Just the opposite! In fact, he avoided our entering World War I for three long years despite the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the number of U.S. merchant ships continually sunk, and the many U.S. civilian lives taken. Does the writer not see the continual taking of American lives as a “definitive or convincing reason” to enter World War I?

There are an incredible number of challenges facing Monmouth University and other similar-sized schools, especially this year. However, the “canceling” of Woodrow Wilson will not solve them for us. What we need is astute management by our leadership and an incredible amount of support from our alumni and friends.

—Paul W. Corliss

LET'S CONNECT

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TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Email us at magazine@monmouth.edu, or write us at *Monmouth* magazine, Monmouth University, 400 Cedar Ave., West Long Branch, NJ 07764. Submissions for the Letters page are subject to editing for clarity and length and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number for confirmation.

GREAT HALL MEMORIES

Study carrels were on the main floor, and I had classes throughout the building. It was amazing—marbled steps, chandeliers, and the Versailles room. It was unbelievable. The name change is good. —Diana L. DiFerdinando '69 via Facebook

I had many classes there in the '60s. It was a marvelous building. The Winter Balls held in the Great Hall were fabulous, as was the playing of Christmas carols on the magnificent organ. The sound resonated throughout all three floors. There were so many amazing architectural features, as well as the unforgettable marble staircase. I am glad it's being opened back up to students and hope the integrity of the architecture and decorations is kept as it was when I attended. —Leah Singer '69, '87M via Facebook

A MEMORABLE WIN FOR THE HAWKS

It was Dec. 1, 1961, prior to anyone even thinking about awarding three points for long-range shooting. Tiny Monmouth College did not yet have a basketball court on campus. The Hawks were still practicing outdoors and playing their "home" games at Asbury Park's Convention Hall. And they were hosting what was considered, at the time, a small college basketball powerhouse—Long Island University (L.I.U.)—and its All-American, Ed "Cornflakes" Johnson.

It was supposed to be no contest. Many even wondered how Hawks Coach/Athletic Director Bill Boylan even managed to book L.I.U. on the schedule.

A bit more than 1,000 fans were on hand for the big game, and they were becoming discouraged when, with just six minutes left on the clock, Monmouth was still trailing by eight points. But the Hawks lit a fire under their fans by rallying in the closing moments to knot the score 64-64 on a driving layup by Hank Arning before time

expired. Then, Monmouth's Bruce "Hot Thumbs" Beckman poured in six points and George Gill two in the five-minute overtime to put the game in the Hawks' win column, 72-70.

Beckman wound up with a game-high 32 points, hitting mainly on booming jump shots from 25 to 30 feet. He also made two clutch free throws with 20 seconds left to give Monmouth a 72-68 cushion. Walt Mischler scored 18 points and pulled down 16 rebounds before fouling out late in the second half. The Hawks' 66-inch sparkplug, Barry Ayers, continually out-hustled everyone and wound up with 10 rebounds. When Ayers fouled out with two minutes remaining, Gill, his replacement, stole the ball at half court and dropped in the basket that cut the margin to two points, 62-60. Arning, a 6-foot-1 freshman, made several key baskets and finished with 14 points.

That scintillating overtime victory propelled the Hawks to prominence in NAIA circles nearly 60 years ago. Phew! And Mischler went on to earn NAIA All-American honors. It was a glorious Monmouth sports moment. —Chuck Hassol '61A

PADDY'S ON MY MIND

Paddy Murray's was my favorite hangout during my junior and senior years back in the early days of Monmouth College. It was in Paddy's quiet and comfortable surroundings where many of us would be able to sit at the bar or at a small table and carry on conversations. It was a wonderful place, full of Paddy's own antiques. He trusted his clientele within the atmosphere he established. There was no dancing; yes, there was music on the jukebox, but it was Tony Bennett (Paddy's favorite) or Ray Charles singing "Georgia on My Mind." Even a rock 'n' roll lover such as myself welcomed the quieter atmosphere for many evenings with my Monmouth classmates. After I graduated in 1961, Paddy's remained the place to spend an evening until I left the area in 1967. It was an original Monmouth hangout. —Ron Emmons '61

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THE AFROFUTURE IS NOW

AFROFUTURISM IS EXPANDING BOUNDARIES AND POSSIBILITIES IN ACADEMIA, ART, AND SOCIETY.

INTERVIEW BY STEVE NEUMANN

Afrofuturism—the cultural, political, and aesthetic movement that reimagines a future filled with arts, science, and technology seen through a Black lens—is thriving. From movies and TV to music and literature, there has been an explosion of science fiction-inspired works rooted in, and celebrating, the uniqueness and innovation of Black culture. We asked Walter Greason, Ph.D., creator of the popular “Wakanda Syllabus,” which was named after the fictional African country featured in the equally popular *Black Panther* movie and comic books, to explain what the Afrofuturism boom means for the broad academic discipline of cultural studies as well as for society as a whole.

What was the starting point for Afrofuturism?

In the early 20th century, African American scholars recognized that mainstream academic society assumed there was no history in Africa, and that the peoples of the African diaspora had no useful path to offer any kind of productive lesson. The corollary was that for two or three generations people then

produced the work to demonstrate that history.

But by the early 1990s, a pernicious pattern had emerged within literature. When people wrote fantasy or science fiction, there were rarely people of African descent in those stories, the implication being that at some point, all people of African descent would somehow disappear. People who had no past

FUTURE REFERENCE

IN ADDITION TO the popular *Black Panther*, *Lovecraft Country*, and *Watchmen*, Greason recommends these other novels, movies, and TV shows in the Afrofuturism genre:

» *Kindred* (1979)—“Octavia E. Butler’s classic novel explores the intersection of the past and present through the ongoing legacy of racial slavery in the United States. It defines the principle of Afrofuturism that ‘every past was once a future.’”

» *Brother from Another Planet* (1984)—“Joe Morton continues to distinguish himself as one of the great actors of this generation. His performance in this film revealed the contradictions of racial judgement through the metaphor of extraterrestrial alien experiences.”

» “Epilogue,” *Justice League Unlimited* (2005)—“One of the greatest animated

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were being imagined as having no future. Within that context, author Octavia E. Butler really emerged as the leading voice in challenging that assumption by centering science fiction stories on African American women characters. The second major figure that I talk a lot about is Dwayne McDuffie, who, within comics, created a company called Milestone Media that created a universe that was much more diverse.

It was that foundation with those literary and artistic influences in the 1990s that inspired work like *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, which featured an African American commander and had many stories that talked about the uniqueness of that heritage in the future. So that was a moment where people started to explore the possibility of a future that included people from Africa.

How has Afrofuturism grown since then?

What emerged in the last 15 or 20 years is that people like me, who grew up fascinated with that premise, became adults and produced a lot of new work. The big one for me is, of course, the *Black Panther* movie. I spent a lot of time from 2003 to 2016 talking about what should be in such a film. And then, when the concept of the character was launched in the *Captain America: Civil War* movie for Marvel, I wrote up a document called the “Wakanda Syllabus” that talked a lot about all the different influences that had developed and how to use them going forward. 📖



illustration BRIT SIGH

You would also get more work like *Watchmen* with Regina King and *Lovecraft Country* with Aunjanue Ellis, both on HBO. You get this explosion of new work that would go on for decades to come.

Which musical artists are embracing the idea of Afrofuturism in their work?

OutKast is probably the most aesthetically resonant, but also Busta Rhymes and Missy Elliott. There's that whole thread of reimagining reality and expressing yourself in a way that breaks the boundaries of what we find to be the everyday, and that's tremendously important in music, whether it's funk, jazz, hip-hop, or R&B. I think most famously in the last decade is Janelle Monáe, who, on her first album, crafted herself as "The ArchAndroid," a woman who could be an entire universe unto herself, and then constantly pressed the boundary of expressing and exploring new freedoms.

But all of that grows out of multiple generations of writers that go back before James Baldwin and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who are all playing with similar ideas, but largely in terms of politics and economics and culture. But within music, there's an attempt to do things sonically that could change those boundaries.

How would you compare Afrofuturism to a genre like cyberpunk, which imagines a dystopian future?

Octavia E. Butler is definitely playing with the idea of dystopia and the basic symbols of cyberpunk as a genre. In particular I think of her *Patternist* series, where she deals a lot more with psychology at its core of where the distortions are and how we deal with them. But the most famous one is *Parable of the Talents*, her next-to-last novel written in the 1990s, where the main antagonist is a religious conservative who wins the presidency with the slogan "Make Amer-

ica Great Again," and talked about how the country and the world was changed as a result of that ascendancy. Of course everybody looked at the Trump campaign and the Trump presidency to see these kinds of allegories in the writing that she had done.

» **Get Out**

(2017)—"Jordan Peele's debut film transformed the conventions of the horror genre by emphasizing the constant suspense of racial perceptions and negotiations, leaving the audience gasping in anticipation until the final scene."

» **Star Trek: Discovery**

(2017-present)—"Michael Burnham, who was portrayed by Sonosue Martin-Green, was the first African-American woman character to lead a Star Trek series, realizing the potential presented in the original series by Nichelle Nichols. Her performances, especially in seasons two and three, laid the foundation for later speculative breakthroughs of Regina King in *Watchmen* and Jurnee Smollett in *Lovecraft Country*."

Walter Greason is an associate professor and chair in the Department of Educational Counseling and Leadership whose scholarship focuses on racial enslavement, segregation, and globalization in world economic history.

Dystopia is very powerful for Butler, but there's a deeper sense that what we left behind as primitive is much more valuable than we appreciate, and that is her critiquing nostalgia. A common theme for her work is that nostalgia is this kind of dangerous illusion, in that by longing for a romantic past we're overlooking the really dangerous and pernicious aspects that made it a painful, even deadly reality for different people who are not included in that nostalgia. And so the kind of critique that comes out of Butler is very similar to the kinds of cyberpunk stories that you see in movies like *Blade Runner*: What is it that we're really protecting? Do we really represent ourselves honestly? So Afrofuturism is very much about revealing truth and showing stories that had not been told.

How does Afrofuturism fit into cultural studies?

Cultural studies opens the door to interdisciplinarity, the idea that multiple disciplines can combine and overlap and create new forms of expression. It takes multiple approaches and explores experiences in new ways, ways that don't marginalize different voices and different insights. The initial breakthrough was Black Studies, a demand made by students at San Francisco State in 1967. They said, "We want a curriculum that actually represents our experience."

Afrofuturism is the natural fruit of interdisciplinary work, in that it requires that you're familiar with multiple fields in order to enter the conversation. You can't just be a historian or a political scientist or a musician and come to

the table; in Afrofuturism, you have to have elements of all of those. And you have to have a desire, a fundamental commitment, to continue to explore. You have to have the humility that you know that you don't know all of it, and you're constantly trying to find a way to grow, because you're seeking out a bigger and bigger universe of experience and ideas.

Has Afrofuturism had any impact on attitudes and beliefs around race in America?

If you look at a moment like 1920, the high point of the second Ku Klux Klan, there were dozens of deadly race riots across the country where white mobs were destroying Black communities and killing any family that showed signs of Black prosperity. It was an extraordinarily horrific time. But out of that, the folks who adapted and overcame it produced a gigantic artistic and musical renaissance that now we look back on with amazement in terms of jazz, poetry, fiction. A lot of the roots of what we're talking about with Black Studies started in the 1920s in Harlem, Chicago, and Los Angeles. So that kind of renaissance is what we're in right now.

Folks outside of the African American community—folks from Europe, folks from Asia—are really embracing this idea of anti-racism. They looked at the killing of George Floyd, the shooting of Breonna Taylor, the Capitol Hill riot, and they don't want to return to a world where that is normal. Just on campus, we read Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Antiracist*, and he spoke to campus via Zoom in January. We had another great speaker, Reginald Hudlin, who was one of the founders of Afrofuturism in the '80s and '90s. Those voices are opening up new doors for all people to build organizations and institutions, and a society as a whole, where everyone has a better chance to succeed, where equity and justice have a chance to prevail. [M](#)



BRIDGING THE GAP

A MONMOUTH PROFESSOR'S AWARD-WINNING APP KEEPS REFUGEE CHILDREN CONNECTED TO THEIR HERITAGE.

BY BREANNE MCCARTHY

During the Second Sino-Japanese War, a woman by the name of Jiang Jian (蒋鉴) left behind her affluent life to help wounded warriors and refugee children. Her efforts, which included founding a school and co-establishing a relief and education association for refugee children, were part of the larger Mothers' Movement in China, which was estimated to have helped rescue and educate more than 30 million displaced children during the war.

Jing Zhou, associate professor of art and design, learned of Jiang's efforts through her grandparents, who knew Jiang personally. Her compassion and love

inspired Zhou to create Cradlr, a digital platform that helps keep the world's more than 13 million refugee children connected with their families, resources, and heritage.

“**FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY YOUNG CHILDREN, IF THEY GROW UP WITHOUT A COLLECTIVE MEMORY, THEY’RE A BLANK PAGE WITHOUT FAMILY HISTORY, MEDICAL HISTORY, ET CETERA. AND I OBSERVED THAT KIND OF BRUTALITY REPEATEDLY IN MY RESEARCH.**”

Jing Zhou is a United Nations Academic Impact representative and serves on the Faculty Advisory Council for Monmouth's Institute for Global Understanding.

Parents and guardians of refugee children can use Cradlr to report their child as missing; upload information such as photos and the child's medical and personal history; and even communicate with foster families, teachers, or international organizations caring for their child. The app also allows current guardians, foster families, teachers, and rescue workers to share information on refugee children with each other and with the child's family.

"When I was in China conducting research, I met a 90-year-old woman who was a wartime refugee child in Jiang's school. She had no idea where she was born or who her parents were. She had to come up with a name for herself when she was rescued," Zhou says. "For refugee children, especially young children, if they grow up without a collective memory, they're a blank page without family history, medical history, et cetera. And I observed that kind of brutality repeatedly in my research."

Zhou received the Creative Work Award of the 2020 Design Incubation Communication Design Educators Awards for her work creating the design and vision for the Cradlr project, which is a United Nations Academic Impact project. With a patent pending, she has already donated the platform to multiple international humanitarian organizations, including the United Nations, Save the Children, Rotary International, and the Open Society Foundations for potential future use.

"There are a lot of unfortunate situations in this world that many of us are lucky to not be in, and we often don't realize how much people suffer, especially children," says Zhou. "For many of us, this type of app might not ever be needed unless a global catastrophic event broke out, but even for the 13 million refugee children across the globe today, a platform like this can help them to preserve their memory and identity."



ANSWERING THE CALL

A NEW TELEHEALTH CLINIC STAFFED BY GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS IS DELIVERING COUNSELING SERVICES TO THE JERSEY SHORE REGION.

BY BREANNE MCCARTHY

In June 2020, just three months into the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a study that found that 40% of U.S. adults reported they were struggling with mental health or substance use—a significant increase from similar studies done the prior year.

To meet the growing need for counseling services to support people through the pandemic, and to provide a hands-on professional learning opportunity for graduate students, in July the School of Social Work launched the Monmouth University Community Care Telehealth Clinic (MUCCTC), a free, online counseling service available to adults living in New Jersey.

“We had always wanted to start some type of free clinic for social work, but we had never really considered telehealth before,” says Elena Mazza, Ph.D., clinic coordinator and director of the social work master’s degree program. “But between the stress people were, and still are,

under due to pandemic-related challenges such as job loss, loss of insurance, and a shortage of in-person counseling services, we knew there was a growing need for accessible telecounseling.”

Last spring, Mazza worked with Robin Mama, Ph.D., dean of the School of Social Work, and several licensed clinical faculty members to develop the program policies and set up a HIPAA-compliant video conferencing platform. She then recruited six clinical graduate student interns who, with COVID-19 infection numbers surging, were having difficulty securing field placements they needed in order to graduate. The clinic offered the students a way to get supervised, hands-on experience in order to fulfill their field education hours, while also serving the regional community.

The program, which is open to New Jersey residents 18 years or older who are not members of the Monmouth University community, launched over the summer with interns seeing their first patients in July.

Itiesha Glover ’21, one of the graduate interns who helped to build the program and do outreach across the state, says the clinic helped to quickly fill a void left open by the pandemic.

“Right now, everything’s telehealth, but at that point, when the pandemic hit, telehealth wasn’t that big of a thing, and trying to convince someone that they can get the same level of care [virtually rather than in person] was something that we were concerned about,” she says. “But it’s become such a great program and resource for people, especially in this environment... being able to meet people where they are. We came right on time, right when we were needed.”

Each intern works closely with four clinical licensed faculty members, who volunteer their time to support the program.

The faculty members meet with the interns at least once a week to discuss cases and conduct trainings, and one faculty member is always on call while interns meet with their clients to provide additional support if needed.

For clients, the clinic offers flexible hours with counseling sessions available seven days a week via phone, tablet, or computer.

Mazza says each person who calls in is initially screened by a licensed clinical faculty member before they are scheduled for their first appointment with an intern, which they are usually able to book within a week.

The interns are able to see an average of five to eight clients per week, and there are currently no time limitations in terms of the number of weeks clients can receive counseling services. Mazza says that even when an intern graduates, if one of their clients wants to continue receiving counseling they will help transition the client to one of the incoming graduate interns. That way the clinic is able to offer services continually throughout the year without having to break from May to September.

To date, the MUCCTC has served nearly 100 people from seven counties across the state.

Glover, who has worked for New Jersey’s Division of Child Protection and Permanency for nearly 20 years, says she believes telehealth is here to stay. Therefore, having a program in which Monmouth graduate students can gain hands-on experience providing telecounseling, while being accessible to people all around the state, is more important than ever.

“Even outside of the pandemic, some people are really hesitant to get counseling because they may have negative connotations attached to therapy—they don’t want to be seen walking in or out of the office, they worry others can hear what they’re saying,” Glover says. “So

“**EVEN OUTSIDE OF THE PANDEMIC, SOME PEOPLE ARE REALLY HESITANT TO GET COUNSELING BECAUSE THEY MAY HAVE NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS ATTACHED TO THERAPY... SO BEING ABLE TO MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE—IN THEIR HOME, WHERE THEY KNOW THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND CAN TALK FREELY—THAT’S A REALLY POSITIVE THING FOR PEOPLE.**”

being able to meet people where they are—in their home, where they know their environment and can talk freely—that’s a really positive thing for people.... It’s very accessible and a reason why telehealth should definitely stay.”

The program has become so popular that Mazza has received calls from other universities across the country that are interested in adopting a similar model.

In addition, MUCCTC has partnered with a number of organizations that refer their clients to the clinic, including community colleges, family support centers, veterinary clinics, visiting nurses, and agencies providing recovery from substance use services.

Mazza says her hope is to grow the program in order to include more interns and to serve more clients, especially from underserved and vulnerable populations like the elderly, who might have no method of transportation to receive counseling services in person. There are also plans for expanding the program to work with groups across campus, like the occupational therapy and the professional counseling programs, to make the clinic more interdisciplinary.

In addition, the interns who graduated have all volunteered to be part of the steering committee to ensure that MUCCTC remains a leader in providing free counseling services across New Jersey while supporting the growth of future professional social workers.

“Our goal is to make this last forever, to be a resource for the community, but also for our students to get one-on-one experience working with clients,” says Mazza. “We’ve received calls from clients thanking us for this service and referring friends and family members to the clinic for counseling, and it just makes us so happy to be able to help people when they need it most.”

AMERICAN DREAMING

HOW ONE GRADUATING SENIOR IS FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF THE GENERATIONS BEFORE HIM.

BY MELISSA KVIDAHL REILLY

Senior Nick Goranites witnessed the American dream firsthand. His Syrian-born mother and his father, a first-generation American, built successful real estate careers—despite never finishing college—thanks to hard work and grit. In so doing, they set an example for their son.

“As I got older and entered high school, my objective was to work hard because my grandparents and parents sacrificed a lot to make a better life for their children,” says Goranites. “It’s important I make them proud and show them their hard work was not done in vain.”

Following in his older sister’s footsteps, Goranites enrolled at Monmouth University, where he is pursuing a double major in business and political science. His interest in business comes from witnessing his parents’ entrepreneurial success, but his interest in political science and foreign affairs is a product of his larger family’s experiences, says Goranites. He has family throughout the Middle East, some of whom died or became refugees during the Syrian civil war.

“The fact that I come from an immigrant family means I’ve had close exposure to these issues my whole life,” he says. “I’ve also seen how, in America,

you don’t have to be born with everything to be successful if you are willing to be innovative and put in the work. It inspired me to help others do the same.”

With his heart set on a career in politics, Goranites saw his path begin to take shape during his freshman and sophomore years, when he landed an internship in the office of Congressman Chris Smith, the U.S. Representative for New Jersey’s 4th Congressional District. There, he fielded calls from constituents who needed assistance navigating federal agencies, exposing him to citizens from all walks of life as well as agencies from across the political spectrum. He helped veterans resolve challenges within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, assisted seniors with the Social Security program, and answered questions about the U.S. Postal Service. It was Goranites’ first professional—and first political—experience, and he wanted more.

“**MY GRANDPARENTS AND PARENTS SACRIFICED A LOT TO MAKE A BETTER LIFE FOR THEIR CHILDREN. IT’S IMPORTANT I MAKE THEM PROUD AND SHOW THEM THEIR HARD WORK WAS NOT DONE IN VAIN.**”

OPPOSITE: Goranites pictured on the National Mall, one of his favorite spots in D.C. “The Mall’s monumental scope and majestic neoclassical architecture remind you that you are in the capital of this great republic,” he says.

Meanwhile, Goranites rose to a variety of leadership positions on campus, thriving in an environment that supported him after a history with bullying. He’s the president of the Student Alumni Association, a senior senator for the Student Government Association, and president of MU SPECTRUM, a student club aimed at creating and promoting awareness for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer/questioning community within Monmouth. “When I arrived at Monmouth, my life changed,” he recalls. “I kept to myself and didn’t have the courage or confidence to come out as gay until I got to Monmouth, and so the University has also been a big part of my personal journey.”

Recently, Goranites landed an internship working for the Minority Republican Ranking Member Kay Granger on the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, thanks to earning a spot in the Washington Center Internship Program. He gathers data for staff, helps craft memos and briefs, and sits in on hearings. “It’s all about learning how to work as part of a policy-oriented committee staff,” he says. It’s also his first exposure to Capitol Hill, where he hopes to stay after he graduates in May.

“My dream is to work in the American political system, which enabled my parents and grandparents to come here, work hard, and make a change for their family,” he says. “I want to be able to contribute to helping the American people thrive through our system of politics, wherever I happen to find myself.”



photo MIKE MORGAN



THIS IS MONMOUTH » The scene at West Long Branch

CAMPUS BRIEFS

NEW CAMPUS SIM LAB TAKES HEALTH CARE EDUCATION INTO THE FUTURE

The Linda Grunin Simulation Lab and Learning Center, a 7,000-square-foot state-of-the-art health care education and training facility, was dedicated at the University's Graduate Center earlier this academic year. The lab, which was created through a partnership between the University and Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), with funding from the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation, provides hands-on learning and training opportunities to students in the University's nursing, physician assistant, and occupational therapy programs. It also serves MMC's resident physicians and medical students, and will be a resource for training local first responders.

ABOVE, CLOCKWISE: Specialist Professor Joan Raso, a certified health simulation educator, with two manikins; President Patrick F. Leahy; Jeremy Grunin, president, Grunin Foundation; Jay Grunin, cofounder and chairman, Grunin Foundation; and Eric Carney, president and CEO of Monmouth Medical Center and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus cut a ceremonial ribbon to dedicate the new lab on campus; one of the patient exam rooms.

The ultramodern facility boasts four high-fidelity simulation suites with attached observation rooms for training with computerized manikins in simulated real-life settings, as well as six standardized patient exam rooms. The lab design and equipment incorporate the latest technology and best practices in simulated learning in OB/GYN, pediatrics, medicine, surgery, and intensive care.

The lab is “a terrific example of the service culture that is at the center of Monmouth University’s mission,” says President Patrick F. Leahy. “We feel a strong obligation to partner with our host communities, and we believe this facility will provide exponentially greater long-term benefits to health care in our region. To be truly great, we believe universities must be anchors of community enrichment, and we are proud of our partnership with Monmouth Medical Center.”

ABELE MINDED

Students in Professor Melissa Ziobro’s Fall 2020 Museums and Archives Management Basics class curated a virtual exhibit on Julian Abele, the pioneering African American architect who played a key role in designing the building now known as the Great Hall. Their work, which includes an interview with Abele’s biographer, Dreck Spurlock Wilson, can be viewed at guides.monmouth.edu/abele.

WE’RE DOWN WITH OTD

Monmouth University will launch its third doctoral degree-granting program this summer when it welcomes the inaugural cohort of the new Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program. The three-year, full-time OTD program requires 105 credits over nine

semesters, including summers. Students will take a mix of traditional and hybrid courses that place a heavy emphasis on experiential learning and hands-on training.

More information is available at monmouth.edu/OTD.

DAUGHTER KNOWS BEST

Just how solid was the business plan that senior business management major Lex Walker submitted for her Small Business Management and Marketing class last fall? So solid that it persuaded her father, Robert, to start his own company. “He was kind of thinking of doing it already but was unsure if he could make it work,” says Lex. But after reviewing his daughter’s plan, Robert liked what he saw and opened a landscape design and supply business in Edison, New Jersey. He’s even renting the location that Lex recommended in her plan.

THE FORCE IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE

Senior communication major Sean Gerhard’s Star Wars Show on WMCX was named “Most Innovative/Creative Program” in the 2021 Intercollegiate Broadcast System (IBS) Media Awards. Each week, the broadcast highlights a different movie from the franchise and features music from that film and discussions of related topics by Gerhard and, occasionally, special guests. The end of each episode is reserved for Star Wars news, which most often covered the newest episode of *The Mandalorian*. In addition to his Star Wars show, Gerhard also serves as the station’s sports director and was nominated by IBS for Best Men’s Basketball Play-by-Play.

NURSING SCHOOL RANKED ONE OF THE NATION’S BEST

The Marjorie K. Unterberg School of Nursing and Health Studies was named one of “The 100 Best Private Nursing Schools in the United States” by *Nursing Schools Almanac*. According to the *Almanac*, a research team collected data on more than 3,000 institutions throughout the U.S. to evaluate each institution’s academic prestige and perceived value; the depth of nursing programs offered; and student success, particularly first-time National Council Licensure Examination pass rates, in selecting the top 100 list.

BELOW: Ibram X. Kendi presenting his book *How to Be an Antiracist* at Unitarian Universalist Church in Montclair, New Jersey, in 2019.



WE JUST MADE THE LIST

PR News named Monmouth University to the inaugural “Education A-List” earlier this year. The list showcases the top 35 educational institutions that are advancing the careers of public relations and communication professionals in the U.S., and includes Columbia University, Harvard University, and Georgetown University, among other national institutions.



“I THINK IT’S IMPORTANT FOR US TO KNOW THAT WHEN WE SAY ‘I DON’T DO POLITICS,’ WHAT WE’RE ACTUALLY SAYING IS ‘I DON’T DO POWER.’ POLITICS IS ANOTHER WORD FOR POWER. THINK ABOUT WHAT WE’RE SAYING WHEN WE SAY ‘I DON’T DO POWER.’ ... THE IMPLICATION OF THAT IS—DOMINATE ME. CONTROL ME. I DON’T NEED TO BE AT THE TABLE OF MY OWN EXISTENCE. I DON’T NEED TO BE A VOICE AT THE TABLE FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE. DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO ME—I AM YOUR SLAVE.”

—Ibram X. Kendi, speaking with a Monmouth audience via Zoom about the importance of civic engagement in the ongoing struggle for racial justice. The award-winning author, who was named one of *Time* magazine’s “100 Most Influential People of 2020,” delivered this year’s Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Lecture in Social Justice.



AN INSTITUTION UNTO HERSELF

PATTI SWANNACK REFLECTS ON HER 46-YEAR CAREER AT MONMOUTH.

BY BREANNE MCCARTHY

Since she arrived at Monmouth more than four decades ago, Vice President for Administrative Services Patti Swannack '02 has been witness to institutional history several times over.

She was working in the human resources department when the athletics program celebrated its move to Division I. She saw Monmouth welcome its first female president, her friend and mentor, Rebecca Stafford. And she was newly appointed in her current role when Monmouth gained University status in 1995. She's also witnessed the University community come together to persevere through trying times including 9/11, Superstorm Sandy, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic.

As she readies for retirement this June, Swannack, who has worked at Monmouth for more than half of the institution's history, took a moment to reflect on

the accomplishments she's had and the friendships and memories she's made along the way.

"When I came to Monmouth, I'll never forget, there was one female administrator and she wasn't even permitted to wear slacks," Swannack laughs. "I never expected I'd end up becoming the executive director of HR let alone the vice president for administrative services. I treasure every moment of my career."

Swannack was just 19 years old when she began her career as an entry-level clerk in the human resources department. She quickly moved up the ranks, becoming executive director, and then, in 1994, vice president, where she has spent the last 27

"**I THINK WE'VE HAD SOME GREAT SUCCESS STORIES AND I'VE MADE WONDERFUL FRIENDS WHOM I WILL NEVER FORGET.**"

"

years overseeing the departments of facilities management, campus planning and construction, human resources, student employment, and the University police department.

Under her watch, the University has performed over \$325 million in construction and renovation projects including, in 1996, the installation of what was then the largest solar energy system in higher education east of the Mississippi River. She oversaw projects that forever changed the campus footprint, including the construction of four residence halls and three academic buildings; the renovation and addition of the Edison Science Building; the renovation, restoration, and expansion of the Guggenheim Memorial Library; the restoration of the Great Hall at Shadow Lawn, which included securing more than \$4 million in preservation grants; and the University's largest construction project, the OceanFirst Bank Center. She also negotiated the contract for, and oversaw the multiyear renovation of, the University's satellite campus at the Monmouth Park Corporate Center.

During her tenure as vice president, the University's property holdings have increased over 50% while its financial obligation for utilities has remained flat. Thanks to her efforts, the University has won numerous awards for being a leader in sustainability.

Despite her laundry list of accomplishments, Swannack says she's most proud of the 40 odd years' worth of friendships that she's made during her tenure.

"Every person that reports to me directly has worked for me for 18 to 20 years and we've laughed, we've worked through trials and tribulations, through personal issues, and celebrations," she says. "Even when I was in HR—it was always more than just hiring people, it's helping people who are experiencing difficulties and challenges every day, and I think we've had some great success stories and I've made wonderful friends whom I will never forget."

photo ANTHONY DEPRIMO



Hollywood Golf Club



Deal Golf & Country Club



June 14, 2021

Hollywood Golf Club and Deal Golf & Country Club
Deal, New Jersey

President Patrick F. Leahy invites you to be part of the inaugural Monmouth University Golf Outing, a new tradition that will support the Athletic Director's Excellence Fund, which helps Monmouth student-athletes excel in the classroom and on the playing field.

Scheduled for June 14, 2021, this premier event will take place at two of the region's finest private clubs: Hollywood Golf Club and Deal Golf & Country Club. Players will enjoy lunch followed by 18 holes of golf on one of the region's most picturesque courses. Following the afternoon round, all golfers will enjoy a dinner reception at Hollywood Golf Club. Participants will have an inimitable opportunity to network alongside business, community, and University leaders, and to partake in an auction featuring first-rate items and extraordinary experiences.

Limited spots and sponsorship opportunities remain.



monmouth.edu/golfouting
golfouting@monmouth.edu

MONMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

ALL GOOD THINGS

MARILYN MCNEIL, A CHAMPION FOR GENDER EQUITY WHO TRANSFORMED MONMOUTH ATHLETICS, CALLS IT A CAREER.

BY MARK GOLLA

If there is one thing Marilyn McNeil holds in higher regard than relationships, it's treating those relationships equally. Fairness defines both her character and her leadership style; it is the ideal that has driven her to create positive change throughout a 53-year career in collegiate athletics.

"One of my first memories from when I arrived at Monmouth in 1994 was watching the men's basketball team depart for a conference game on a charter bus," recalls McNeil, vice president and director of athletics at Monmouth. "Not far behind them was the women's basketball team headed to a conference game in a van driven by their part-time head coach."

That—and so much more—has changed during McNeil's 27-year tenure, which will come to a close on June 30 when she retires. It has been an era of unparalleled growth and achievement for the Hawks' athletics program. Perhaps Krissy Turner, the women's soccer head coach, best sums up the impact McNeil has had on Monmouth's student-athletes, coaches, and the University itself in that time: "Legendary."

A COACH AT HEART

McNeil graduated from the University of Calgary and began her career in athletics at age 21

doing what she calls "the greatest job in the world": coaching. Over the next seven years, she coached multiple sports at McGill University in Montreal and the Quebec System of Junior Colleges before returning to her alma mater as the head coach of women's basketball in 1975.

At Calgary, McNeil quickly built a successful program, earning Canadian Coach of the Year in 1979. But it was also there that she got her first taste of the inequity of college athletics. The men's basketball coach, her friend, told her what his salary and budget were, and she couldn't help but notice the enormous gap between the two.

"I didn't ask to be paid the same as the men's coach, but I wanted to be paid fairly," says McNeil. "I wanted the AD to make a commitment to the women's program, and told him I'd leave Calgary if he refused. Sadly, I had to walk away from my alma mater."

McNeil took over as the women's basketball head coach at California Polytechnic State

University, San Luis Obispo, in 1979. The move across the border was difficult personally, but professionally, McNeil was filled with optimism. Title IX legislation had passed in the U.S. in 1972, and McNeil was eager to continue her career under the warm blanket of equity. She quickly learned that perception fell short of reality.

"They had some real equity issues at Cal Poly," says McNeil. "It caught me off guard because I thought America was much further ahead than Canada because of Title IX. But the U.S. was *behind* Canada."

Uncertain about her future in collegiate athletics, McNeil decided to pursue her doctorate. She figured that a terminal degree would position her for an administrative role in athletics, or strengthen her profile for a new career path.

"It was a good decision," says McNeil. "Writing that dissertation was such a process that it's something you can't fully appreciate unless you experience it. It's allowed me to have a connection with faculty that's helped build relationships."

McNeil eventually opted to leave the hardwood at Cal Poly, but she remained in athletics. Rather than coping with inequity as a coach, she thought, perhaps she could help bridge the gap as an administrator.

TAKING FLIGHT WITH THE HAWKS

When former Monmouth President Rebecca Stafford hired her in spring 1994, McNeil became the first woman to serve as a college athletic director in New Jersey. The appointment was major news—*The New York Times* ran a Q&A with McNeil in its national

OPPOSITE: "I fell in love with sports at a very young age and have never lost my passion for it," says McNeil, who was a three-sport athlete, playing volleyball, basketball, and field hockey, in college.

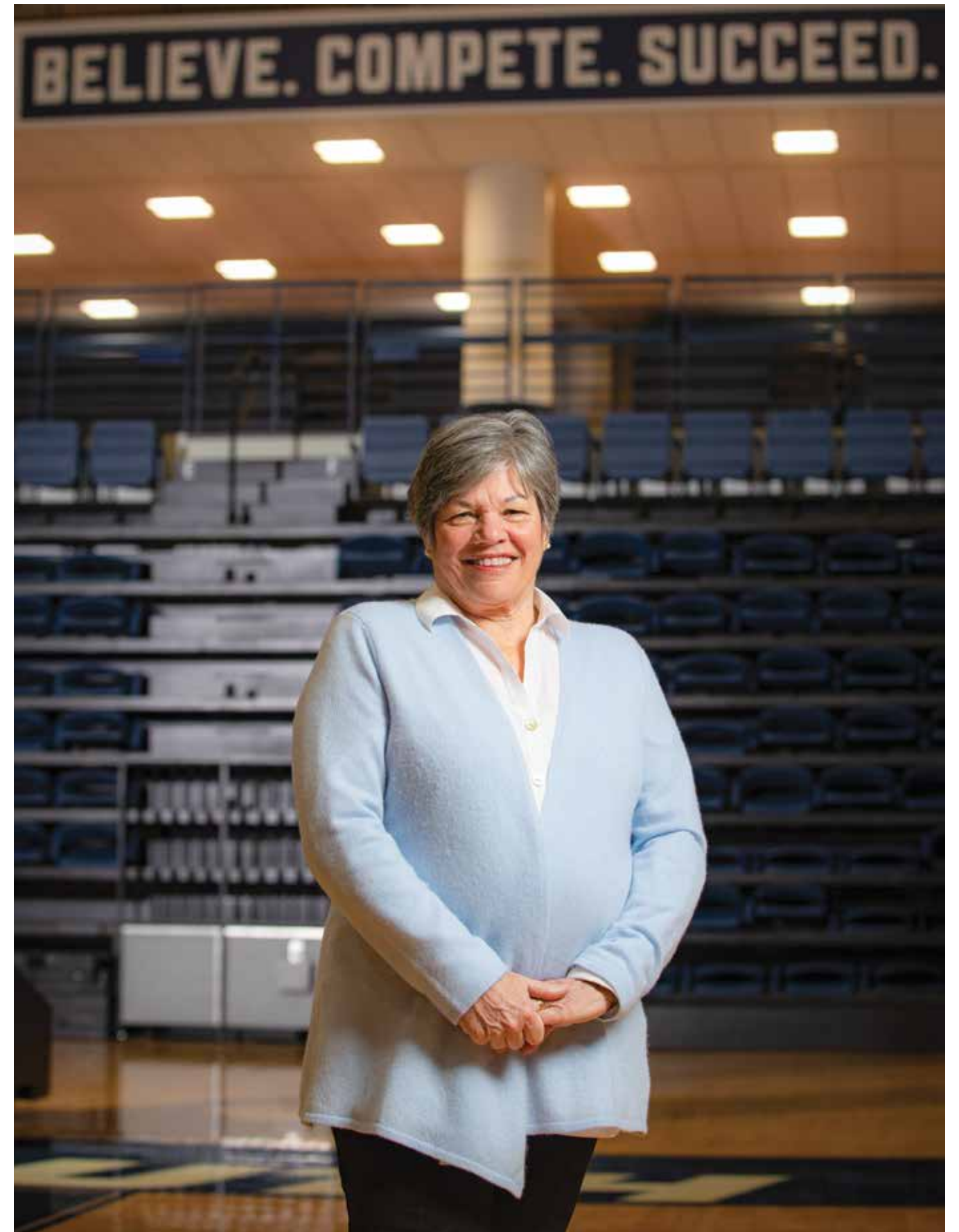


photo ANTHONY DEPRIMO

edition—but that didn't make the work any easier.

"I was the only woman, and that was reflective of how things were in college athletics at the time," says McNeil. "I had two young children who I'd just uprooted from California, and there were times I was treated with disdain in my position as a working mom."

When she arrived on campus, the Hawks had two full-time head coaches: football and men's basketball; every other program was led by part-time coaches. McNeil quickly went to work establishing relationships and helping the institution understand the value of athletics.

She also needed to battle the perception that her agenda was to advance women's sports at the expense of the men.

"I wanted to *build*, not *destroy*," says McNeil. "There was this fear when I arrived that I was going to blow up the men's programs. I love men's sports as much as I love women's sports. But I was determined to build a strong program based on equity and fairness, a program we could all be proud of."

Progress is a process, and McNeil had three primary areas of focus in constructing a competitive athletic program: full-time head coaches for each program, fair allocation of resources, and enhanced facilities. All three components would lead to attracting quality coaches and student-athletes.

Establishing strong relationships with administration and faculty was key to getting buy-in from the institution. Anytime McNeil presented her vision for Monmouth athletics, it came from the heart of a former coach—but was spoken by a colleague who had earned a doctoral degree in higher education administration.

"The University should feel that athletics is a part of—not apart from—the institution," says McNeil. "If the institution believes that athletics is a fundamental piece of higher education, then

having the conversation about how we can get better is so much easier. It's about more than wins and losses. It's about having an engaged student body, alumni returning to campus with pride, and trustees attending events and being part of the experience."

The change on campus was palpable. Kevin Callahan was one of the two full-time head coaches at Monmouth when McNeil arrived. He has watched the number of full-time coaches grow to 16 while the number of sport programs has grown to 23.

"Marilyn is a fierce competitor at heart, and she led this department through an evolutionary process," says Callahan. "She was determined to hire quality coaches and has always fought hard for us. Equally important, she's fair with her decisions. As coaches we didn't always get what we wanted, but we left every conversation knowing that she was fair in her process."

Hawk coaches learned they could count on a few things from their AD. First, she would attend any event that she could. McNeil always wanted to show her coaches, student-athletes, and families that she cared. "Why wouldn't I go to the events?" she asks. "That's the fun stuff!"

She also had an open-door policy with her staff. If they had needs or concerns, or just needed to bounce ideas around, McNeil was willing to listen.

"She's a true educator who was able to provide guidance for her coaches without micromanaging," says Turner, who was hired by McNeil in 1998. "Every time you left her office after a conversation, you knew that you were heard and that your thoughts mattered to her."

Running an athletic department with integrity is essential, but a little eye candy never hurt either. The Monmouth athletics facilities are symbolic of the relationship building that McNeil made a priority. University administration, alumni, trustees, and community donors all

“**I WANTED TO BUILD, NOT DESTROY. THERE WAS THIS FEAR WHEN I ARRIVED THAT I WAS GOING TO BLOW UP THE MEN'S PROGRAMS. I LOVE MEN'S SPORTS AS MUCH AS I LOVE WOMEN'S SPORTS. BUT I WAS DETERMINED TO BUILD A STRONG PROGRAM BASED ON EQUITY AND FAIRNESS.**”

worked in collaboration with athletics to achieve significant upgrades across campus. Highlights include the 2009 addition of the OceanFirst Bank Center, home to Monmouth's basketball and track and field programs, as well as the massive 2017 renovation of Kessler Stadium, where football, lacrosse, and track and field compete. Hesse Field on the Great Lawn added lights in 2011, allowing the soccer programs to host night games, and field turf in 2014.

"The legacy that she leaves is how much she cared about us," says Turner. "She did everything in her power to ensure that the coaches had what they needed and the student-athletes enjoyed the most positive experience possible."

McNeil's devotion to equity and advancing women in collegiate athletics has been extraordinary. She's served on numerous committees, including the Division I NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics and the Management Council, and also served as president of the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators.

But her biggest contribution to women in sports might be her 27 years of artistry at Monmouth University. What McNeil accomplished speaks for itself, and the breadth of her impact is unquantifiable. She came in as the first ever and departs as one of the best ever.

"I've always believed we need more women in leadership roles, and still do," says McNeil. "We bring a different set of values to the table and offer different ways of finding solutions. I think all parties benefit when there is equity and balance."

"What's most important to me as I leave Monmouth is that I accomplished things with integrity and ethics. I'm proud of who we are, and I hope Monmouth keeps getting better. We've definitely got a great thing going here."



GAME ON

WITH EVERY HAWKS TEAM BACK IN ACTION THIS SPRING, KEEPING PLAYERS HEALTHY ENOUGH TO COMPETE DURING A PANDEMIC HAS BEEN NO SMALL TASK.

BY MARK GOLA

The COVID-19 pandemic was indiscriminate in its wrath on collegiate athletic programs. At Monmouth, every player in every sport was sidelined for health and safety precautions for most of 2020.

"It was a difficult time for our athletes last fall," says Simon Rosenblum, associate athletic director for sports medicine. "They really struggled coming to terms with their seasons being shut down. Maybe the toughest part was there was no light at the end of the tunnel."

Spring is the season of new beginnings, and at Monmouth, the athletics program is in full bloom. Every sport—23 men's and women's programs—has been competing this spring. It's been a massive undertaking for athletics support staff, and perhaps no office has been leaned on more than sports medicine.

Rosenblum and nine staff members are juggling the traditional

duties of athletic training with the additional responsibilities brought on by competing in a pandemic: performing regular testing and contact tracing, and providing guidance on new protocols that keep everyone safe.

"It's been a little crazy, but the coaches and athletes have been outstanding in modifying routines and adjusting to the guidelines," says Rosenblum. "There's a lot more structure to practices, limits on how many athletes can be in the locker room, and changes in how we schedule training appointments. Athletes had to be cleared just to get here."

Upon returning to campus last January, student-athletes needed to test negative for the virus

or show proof of a negative test within five days of their return. University leadership also supported a more rigorous testing schedule than the one recommended by the NCAA.

Throughout the spring, every Monmouth athlete is being tested once per week, even athletes playing sports with a low risk of transmission (e.g., swimming, tennis, track and field) in which the NCAA doesn't require any testing. Men's and women's basketball—classified as a high-risk indoor sport—had their players tested three times per week.

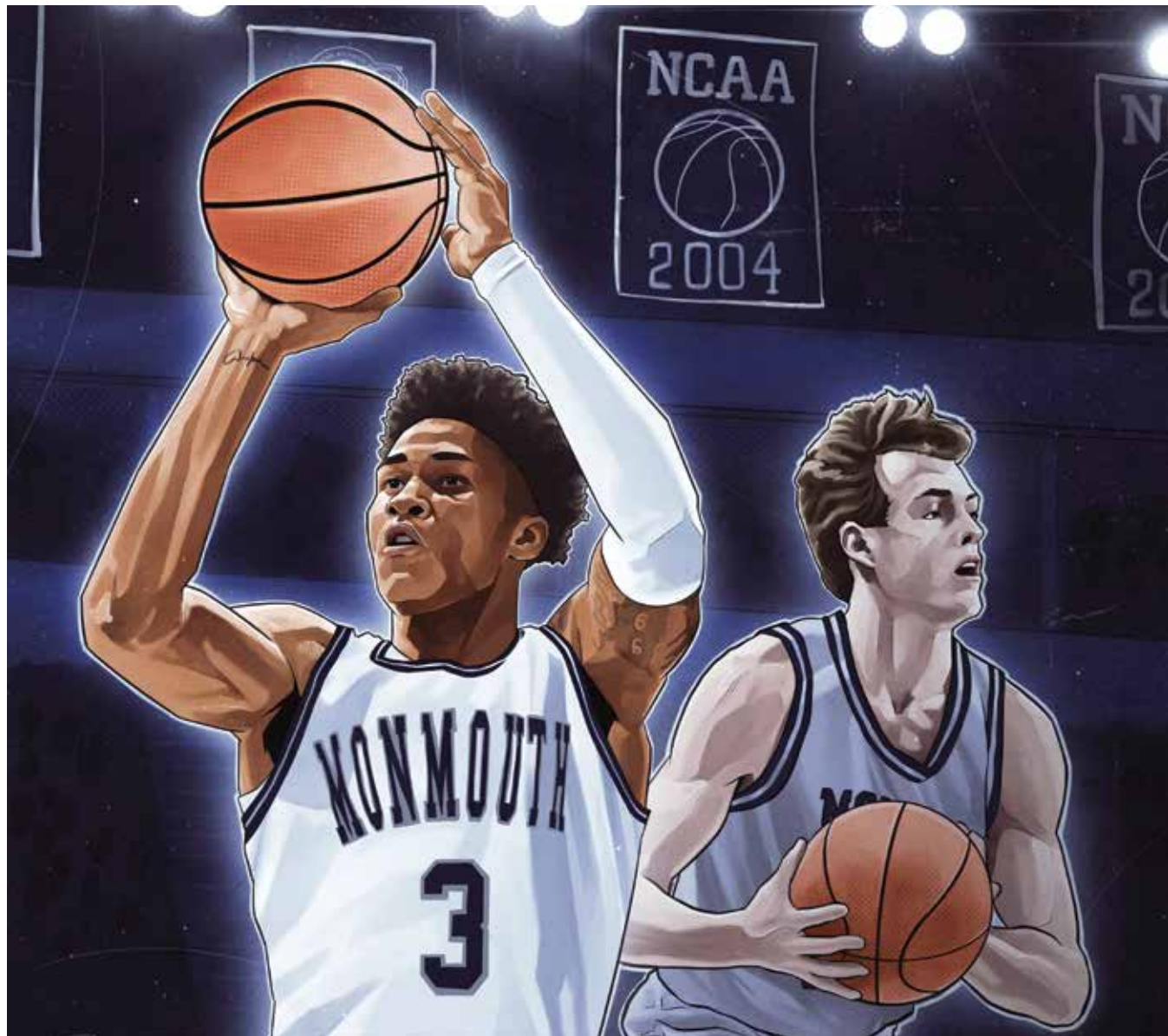
Speaking in early March, Rosenblum said they were averaging more than 300 tests per week, and he expected those numbers to increase.

The University also formed a contact tracing team for students who test positive. Associate Athletic Trainer Siobhan Huggins-Sullivan is the athletics representative, and, according to Rosenblum, "knows how to get the right answers from people."

Athletes are creatures of habit by nature, but adapting has become their new routine. Locker rooms are used in shifts to avoid large indoor gatherings and maintain social distancing. Athletes must schedule treatment appointments online. Trainers continue to provide all services but have extended office hours to limit the number of visitors at any one time.

Along the way, Rosenblum has preached common sense when advising athletes about their behaviors outside the athletic arena: Keep your circles small, avoid busy places, wear face coverings, and don't hang out with other teams. Players have been receptive to the message, he says: "The athletes are all too aware that seasons can be shut down in an instant, so they're looking out for each other. These kids just want the opportunity to play the sport they love, so they're avoiding the interactions they're accustomed to as college students."

ABOVE: Associate Athletic Trainer Siobhan Huggins-Sullivan (right) tends to Jesi Rossman, a junior defender on the women's soccer team, during a match against Fairfield in March.



TWO ON THREES

THE HAWKS' NEW AND FORMER CAREER THREE-POINT RECORD HOLDERS TALK ABOUT LIFE BEYOND THE ARC.

INTERVIEW BY PETE CROATTO

For 30 years, Dave Calloway '91, '95M, the former Monmouth men's basketball coach, held the school record for career three-pointers—until senior guard Deion Hammond broke it on Feb. 7 when he canned his 261st trey during a 71-69 road win over Manhattan College. Fortunately, it was a peaceful takeover: The two Hawk greats are acquaintances, and were happy to sit down and talk with us about their shared love of the game, who their favorite shooter is, and more.

This isn't the first time the two of you have chatted.

Dave: Deion was a sophomore when my son, David, was a walk-on freshman, and David always talked very fondly of him: "Dad, this guy is *good*. He's gonna break all your records." More importantly, David always talked about what a great person Deion is, and how Deion kind of took him under his wing. That always stuck with my son, and I'm thankful for that.

Deion, Dave's record was older than you. Have you seen any highlights of Dave from his playing days?

Deion: Oh, well, I wanted to. I'm trying to find ways to get it.

Dave: It might be in black and white, Deion [laughs]. I don't know that we had color back when I played.

Who's your favorite three-point shooter to watch?

Deion: I'd have to say Steph [Curry] is the best shooter I have ever seen. He will take any shot. That confidence he has, that comes from just hours of practice—that really stands out for me.

Dave: My new favorite is Deion. You can see the confidence in his shot. And I think it's interesting that his favorite player is Steph, because I see some of the quick release that Steph has in Deion. Like in transition, they'll advance [the ball] to him and he's already up into his shot as he's catching the ball. I hope Deion keeps playing as long as he can, because once you get to my age....

Do you ever get out there anymore?

Dave: Well, David, who's a junior at Monmouth, has a nine-year-old brother. So I will do some shooting with him. We have some fun with that. But as far as actual playing—even just a 30- or 40-minute game of just three-on-three—the knees don't feel as good as they do after a round of golf.

Deion, can you imagine your life without basketball?

Deion: Absolutely not. I've been playing my whole life. So it will be hard to live a life without basketball. And this is what's putting me through college right now. I'm blessed to say I can go to college for free because of the game I love. If it wasn't for basketball I probably would have joined the military or something like that.

When did you fall in love with the game?

Deion: I started playing when I was like four or five, and I knew right away this was it, and I've just stuck with it.

Dave: I played football, basketball, and baseball as a kid, so if you asked me then I would have said it was whatever season we were in at the time. But when I got to high school, I grew a little bit. I went to a small Italian Catholic high school, which meant 95% of the guys were 5' 10". I was 6' 2". So I was the center on my high school team, and we started four 5' 10" guys and myself. We went on to win a sectionals championship and lost to St. Anthony's in the state finals. My senior year, I started getting recruited by Monmouth, and then was fortunate enough, like Deion, to earn a scholarship and have my education paid for. It was the best decision for me. Basketball was my life at Monmouth for 24 years.

How did you become a three-point shooter?

Deion: My dad is actually a great shooter, and I learned from him. Growing up I didn't really have concrete, but I had a hoop, so I'd shoot a lot but couldn't really dribble. I'd make my own games, all sorts of stuff,

just shooting from everywhere around the backyard. We had this hill back there, and I'd go all the way up on the hill and start shooting down on it.

Dave: My sophomore year, I led the country in three-point shooting. The end of that season, and then all offseason, all the coaches would implore me, "Listen, when you're back there, make sure you're behind the line, we'll get an extra point for it." And my junior year was more of a focus of actually shooting threes. My last two years, I made a lot more threes because it was more of a focus.

Dave doesn't seem fazed to have relinquished the crown. If your record falls, Deion, will you be happy with that?

Deion: I'm not the type of person that would ever talk negatively about people in my sport. So I'll probably be like, "How did you do it so quickly?"

Dave: I'll have a problem with it because I don't want to be number three [laughs]. I'm used to being the number-two person; that's what I am at home.

POP QUIZ

TEST YOUR HAWK SPORTS KNOWLEDGE

1. In April, senior Sergio Martinez became the second person in men's tennis program history to be nationally ranked when he landed at No. 117 in the Oracle ITA Division I Men's Singles Rankings. Who was the first?
2. The football team opened its season with a 35-17 victory over Charleston Southern and with a true freshman, Tony Muskett, under center. Who was the last true freshman quarterback to start a game for the Hawks?
3. The men's basketball program reached a major milestone on Jan. 10 when it won the 1,000th game in the history of Hawk basketball, beating Marist College 72-62. When was the program's first win and what team did the Hawks beat?

ANSWERS: 1) Nicola Pipoli was ranked No. 99 in 2017. 2) Doug Rossback started against Sacred Heart on Sept. 25, 1993. 3) On Dec. 1, 1956, the Hawks beat Jersey City State, 51-47.



AHEAD OF THE CURVE

ENTREPRENEUR KRISH RAMAKRISHNAN HAS MADE A CAREER OF BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

BY DAN MORRELL
PHOTOS BY ANGELA DECENZO

On a Thursday night in March 2020, while waiting for a flight in a Chicago airport, BlueJeans co-founder Krish Ramakrishnan '83M, '19HN got an urgent call from one of his company's biggest customers, Facebook. With cases of COVID-19 cropping up globally and cities mulling stay-at-home orders, the social media giant was going to shut down its global offices and have its employees work remotely—and lean heavily on BlueJeans' video conferencing platform. "You're going to be the mission-critical connection for us," they told Ramakrishnan. "Are you ready?"

Facebook was the first domino. The next day, another Fortune 500 company called with the same message. Soon after, a large, top-ranked public research university in the Midwest called to let him know that they would be transitioning to remote learning. Over the next four days, traffic on BlueJeans' networks shot up by 250%.

While the pandemic's instant demand spike was impossible to predict, Ramakrishnan had been seeing the trend lines lead here for decades. With increasingly globalized workforces, companies would need a better way to connect with employees working remotely and expand their talent pool—and video, he believed, would be the communication medium that could make that happen.

Ramakrishnan's ability to identify these kinds of movements in their nascent stages is a big part of what has made him a successful serial entrepreneur, having built and sold two tech companies before BlueJeans. "If you want to start a company, you need to look at technology and project it two to three years out," he says. "You want to create a company that solves tomorrow's problem, not today's problem."

Ramakrishnan attributes his precociousness to an outsider's perspective borne of his immigrant experience. Raised in a small village in Southern India, he moved to New York City in 1971 when his father, a diplomat, was stationed at the Indian Consulate. After his first-ever train and plane rides, he arrived in his new home, which "might as well have been on Mars."

The contrast was striking: Items that would have found ample reuse in his village—everything from yesterday's newspapers to outdated-but-working TVs—lay discarded on the streets of his new neighborhood of Forest Hills, Queens. The supermarkets floored him, filled with unimaginable amounts and varieties of foods. "You know how immigrants will say that when they come to America, the streets are filled with gold?" says Ramakrishnan. "It really felt like that."

He would return to India in 1974 for his undergraduate studies in physics when his father was reposted back to New Delhi, but his mother, brother, and

sister stayed in the United States. After his father died suddenly, his family convinced him to return to the States, and in 1981, he moved in with his sister in New Jersey.

Once he was settled in, his sister began to offer counsel. His experience working in construction in India was not going to help him here—and the same went for his physics degree. "Nobody's going to recognize any of that," she told him. "You need to start new."

Long interested in engineering, Ramakrishnan enrolled in summer math classes at what was then Monmouth College. When he arrived for the first class, though, a sign on the door announced that it had been canceled. Peeking into the room next door, he noticed some math on the blackboard and took a seat, figuring there might have been a mix-up. There wasn't: The instructor informed him at the break that it was actually an advanced IBM mainframe programming class. "Huh, computers," his sister said as she drove him home that evening. "I think I heard something good about computers being important in the future. So maybe you should do that."

The next day, she drove him back to Monmouth, and he discussed the possibility of enrolling in a master's program with Gilfred B. Swartz, who at the time was chair of what was then the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. Naturally, Swartz asked him about his prior experience. "I have never even seen a computer," Ramakrishnan told him. Swartz made him a deal: If Ramakrishnan aced the three programming courses offered that summer, he would write him a recommendation. Ramakrishnan spent long hours in the Monmouth computer lab that summer, finding his way through the work. He aced the courses and was admitted.

The education at Monmouth had a practical grounding. Many of his instructors

“**WHEN SOMEBODY SAYS, ‘THIS IS THE WAY IT NEEDS TO BE DONE,’ THAT JUST RUBS ME THE WRONG WAY. I’M ALWAYS ASKING, ‘WHY SHOULD IT BE LIKE THAT?’**”

came from nearby Bell Labs, which is where Ramakrishnan began his career after earning his master's. But he was soon lured west by the promise of Silicon Valley. One day in 1987, he packed his bags—sight unseen, with no job—and moved to California. And while he had never seen himself as an entrepreneur, he found himself wondering about the clunkiness of some of the early internet infrastructure he was seeing as he started his career in the Valley. This is archaic stuff, he thought. We're never going to see the full promise of the internet without better tech.

His outsider's perspective, he says, helps him recognize opportunity. "When somebody says, 'This is the way it needs to be done,' that just rubs me the wrong way," he says. "I'm always asking, 'Why should it be like that?'"

So Ramakrishnan decided to build something better. In 1993, he launched Internet Junction, an early e-commerce solution, with two friends. He spent his days in tech consulting and his nights helping to write code for the start-up. (He was nominated by his two cofounders to serve as the company's president—a role he believes he was given because he was the slowest coder.)

Self-funded and lacking any name recognition, the startup still managed to get the attention of Silicon Valley tech giant Cisco Systems, which eventually offered to buy the company. The final negotiations were a remarkable scene. Ramakrishnan was called in to meet with John Chambers, Cisco's legendary CEO, who told him he wanted to buy the company on the condition that Ramakrishnan work there for four years afterward. There would be a contract, Chambers said, but what guarantee could the founder really give him that he would stick around? "You're right," Ramakrishnan told him. "No contract is going to force anybody to stay if they don't want to stay." He extended his hand. All he had was his word: "I don't need a contract. You just need to trust me." Chambers took his hand, and the deal was done.

After five years at Cisco, Ramakrishnan tried retirement for three months. It didn't take. "Staying at home, learning golf—it wasn't working," he says. In 2001, he became CEO of Topspin Communications, whose tech helped string clusters of servers together. Or at least, that was the company's eventual offering. When



Ramakrishnan arrived, Topspin was in disarray. The market for its main product had collapsed, he soon realized, and he had no ready fix. "So we either had to return our investors' money," which was about \$14 million of the \$15 million it had raised, "or we had to find something different to do." He divided the company into three teams, each tasked with devising a new idea in 30 days. "All of the ideas were bad," he says with a laugh, "but one idea was slightly better than everything else." The new tech found a market, took off, and—once again—caught the attention of Cisco. In 2005, they acquired Topspin for \$250 million.

After another stint at Cisco, he spent a few years at Silicon Valley venture firm Norwest Venture Partners, where he met his BlueJeans cofounder, Alagu Periyannan. Ramakrishnan had a vague interest in doing something in the video space; Periyannan had relevant experience, including working at Apple on the company's QuickTime video application. They hit it off over an initial coffee and spent the next several months developing what

would become BlueJeans—a simpler, more user-friendly videoconferencing system. (The name BlueJeans is meant to connote its strength and ease of use. Ramakrishnan came up with it while driving to a pitch meeting with venture capitalists, listening to Neil Diamond's "Forever in Blue Jeans.")

Again, it would be Ramakrishnan's job to run the company. He attributes his fit in this role to "a disability of mine." "I can't dive that deep into a subject, but I can see the forest from the trees. I can see the pattern," he says. "My cofounder, Alagu, is a very rigorous engineering talent—very bright, very articulate. I could only paint a picture, but he had the wherewithal to construct it."

Periyannan says those pictures are important, of course. "My ideas were very broad and focused on how to solve a problem," he says. "And Krish had a really nice way of taking that and creating a story out of it."

Periyannan also heralds his cofounder's steadiness: "With any sort of entrepreneurial journey, it's got many ups and

downs. Lots of these can actually pull apart a founding team. That never happened with us—we've always had that trust, but also a fair amount of empathy for each other."

Navigating the downs can be emotionally taxing, though. Periyannan offers an example from a few years ago, when BlueJeans' growth stalled a bit and the pair decided it was best to bring on an outside CEO and have Ramakrishnan move into an executive chairman role. "That was not easy," says Periyannan. Humility can be a rare trait in Silicon Valley, but it's another reason why Ramakrishnan has thrived, he says. "One of the things that Krish has taught me is that when you start a company, it's about the investors, the shareholders, the employees, the customers—you know, all of the stakeholders. It's not just about the two founders and what we wanted." It's about doing the right thing, he says, even if it's the hard thing.

In mid-April 2020, BlueJeans announced that it was being acquired by Verizon. In the midst of an unprecedented traffic surge that tested its mettle, the company was now also in the process of managing its sale, with the cofounders ping-ponging between war room calls to address the booming traffic and huddles about the upcoming acquisition.

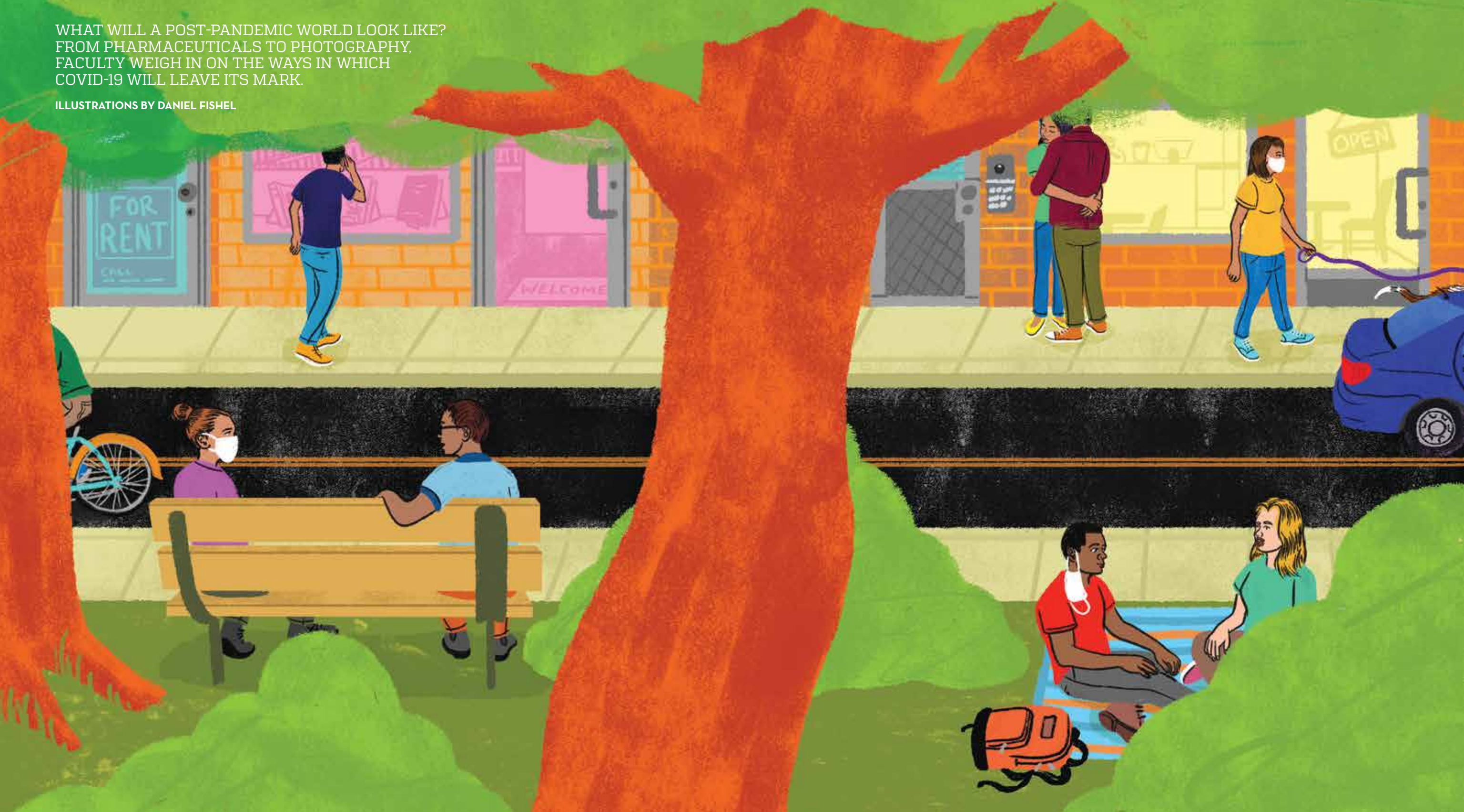
The move offered the company an instant influx of cash and the stability of a Fortune 500 company in Verizon, says Ramakrishnan. And as he did when he sold his previous companies to Cisco, he has stayed on to help with the transition. "I need to feel that this acquisition has been successful for Verizon," he says.

But there won't be a victory lap. "My success has really been about being fortunate and being lucky more so than being smart," he says. Turning a canceled class into a master's degree at Monmouth, chasing a dream in Silicon Valley, hoping a handshake would make a viable replacement for a contract—these are all moments where Ramakrishnan could easily have failed. And while some might naturally attribute Ramakrishnan's success to perseverance, honesty, integrity, gumption, or guile, he prefers to attribute it to simple good fortune. [M](#)

THE NEXT NORMAL

WHAT WILL A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD LOOK LIKE? FROM PHARMACEUTICALS TO PHOTOGRAPHY, FACULTY WEIGH IN ON THE WAYS IN WHICH COVID-19 WILL LEAVE ITS MARK.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANIEL FISHEL



A SAFER PUBLIC AND A SPEEDIER DRUG PIPELINE

JEFF WEISBURG » SPECIALIST PROFESSOR, BIOLOGY

Every time you have these large disease outbreaks, it has a lasting effect on our everyday life. I'm 51, and I was about 13 years old when HIV and AIDS first reared its ugly head. Before that, doctors didn't wear gloves when they saw you. We didn't have equipment that covered needles, because you weren't so concerned about needle sticks. Now it has become part of our everyday life.

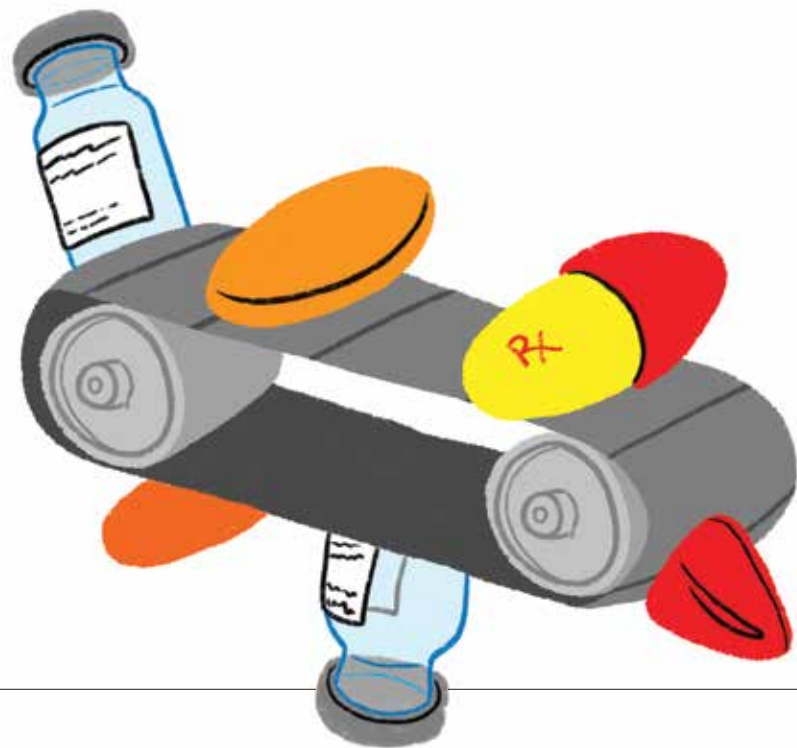
The pandemic is going to have a lasting effect, too. There will always be hand sanitizers now in every room in public places. I think masks may also become more prevalent in the United States than they ever were before. And I think, no matter what, there's going to be a large number of people who will not go to large gatherings ever again.

For the vaccine, we saw collaborative responses, which we've never seen before. Johnson & Johnson and Merck worked together; Pfizer and BioNTech worked together. Universities got involved, too, with Oxford working with AstraZeneca to develop their vaccine.

So we saw how the science world could come together.

The other big thing was the smoother, faster FDA approval process for the vaccine. FDA approval for most medications is really a long, drawn-out process, and I think that this experience will hopefully speed up the response for any new medication. Of course, you always want to worry about safety, but people complain that—in the United States—we take a lot longer to approve our medications than most other countries. So I do hope that this is going to be a norm for the relationship between the pharmaceutical industry and the FDA. —as told to Dan Morrell

“
I THINK, NO MATTER WHAT, THERE'S GOING TO BE A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT GO TO LARGE GATHERINGS EVER AGAIN.
”



THE RISING ROLE OF NURSES AND TELEHEALTH

ANN MARIE MAURO » DEAN OF THE MARJORIE K. UNTERBERG SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTH STUDIES

Nurses in many states, including New Jersey, do not have the benefit of practicing to the full scope of their education and their potential practice. Many of these regulations were lifted during the pandemic because of need, and there has been a push to keep them off, because evidence shows that health care delivered by advanced practice nurses is more economical, with higher quality outcomes and higher satisfaction.

There needs to be more understanding of this at the government level. I've lobbied for nursing and health care on Capitol Hill a number of times, working to educate legislators and lawmakers about what it is that nurses do and the value of their work.

The rise of telehealth has also changed care, just as the technology has changed the delivery of academic courses and many other parts of our lives. I don't think it will completely replace in-person care, but it can certainly be an excellent substitute. The challenge is that there are people who don't have access to it. People from disadvantaged or underrepresented and minority groups may not have the economic resources for internet service. Elderly people, too, may be more challenged with that type of delivery or not trust it.

So telehealth has a real value. We just need to make sure that it's not another way for health disparities to proliferate because of a lack of access. —as told to Dan Morrell



▶ THE GAMES WILL GO ON, BUT THE OPPONENTS COULD CHANGE

MARILYN MCNEIL » VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

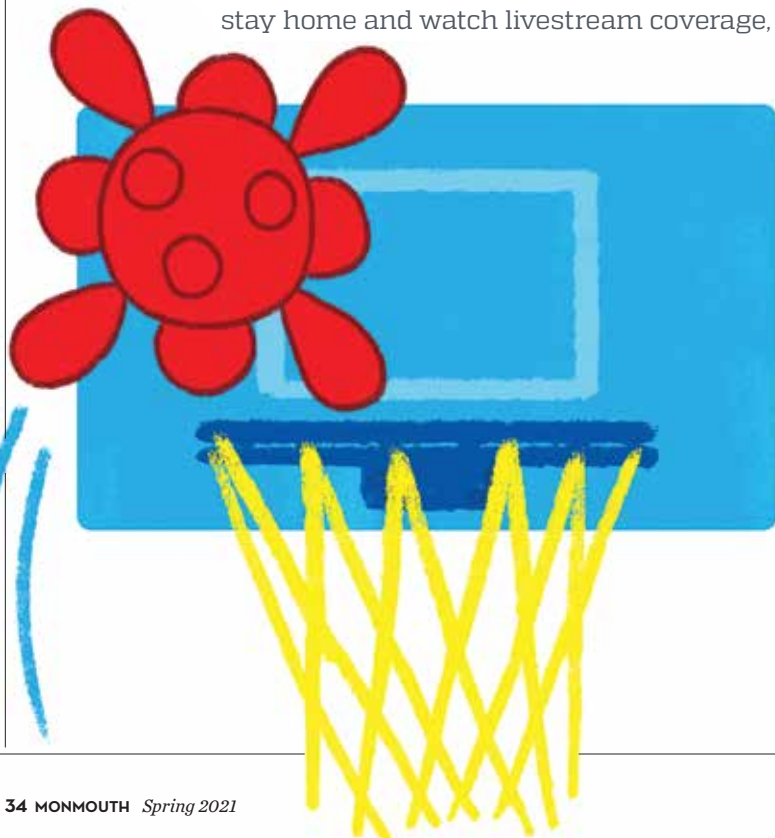
Coaches have had to adapt their recruiting practices, and I think they may continue to use some of the new technology they've learned during the pandemic. Video calls (Webex, Zoom) will likely be a tool they use to maintain contact with recruits. Expressions during a video call can give a coach a better feel for the person, their level of maturity, and interest in the program that you can't absorb through phone, text, or email communication.

Another area that will be given thoughtful consideration is event scheduling and conference realignment. Institutions are going to assess where they're playing and why. Now that universities were forced to take a hard look into travel and the costs and additional risks it incurs, I think there will be a more practical approach to building conference and non-conference schedules.

Athletic departments are also going to have to work hard to fill seats at their events. COVID-19 is going to stick with people for a while, and I think there will be hesitancy in attending crowded events. We've made it very convenient for students and families to stay home and watch livestream coverage, and feeling safer at home could give

some fans another reason to opt out of attending.

The majority of changes will apply to the peripheral elements of athletics. Fortunately, I don't think the rules of sports and how they are played will be affected, and that's the silver lining. Athletes can adjust to limits in locker rooms or scheduling training room appointments online. They just want the opportunity to compete in the sport they love. —as told to Mark Gola



VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION IS NOT GOING AWAY

JOHN HENNING » DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

A common refrain in education has been that the pandemic made everyone a first-year teacher. The overnight switch to virtual instruction forced educators to completely reconceptualize their work to accomplish virtually what previously was done in person. What we've learned over the last year or so is that many of the technological tools that teachers had to quickly get up to speed on in order to facilitate remote instruction can—and I think should—continue to be used when all instruction goes back to in-person.

Even before COVID-19, some school districts were already experimenting with how to use technology to better engage students in the classroom. But the pandemic really thrust our thinking ahead on that front, and it revealed the potential that these virtual platforms have for increasing student engagement with the content and giving students more autonomy over their learning. At the same time, teachers have become increasingly more comfortable and adept at using these various technologies in their instruction.

In some regards, the pandemic provided an opportunity for the School of Education to aim our change initiatives at technology. We're incorporating what we've learned about virtual teaching into our Methods courses so that our teacher candidates will be better prepared for classrooms in which technology will play an ever-increasing role in student learning. We're piloting a simulated instruction program that provides our teacher candidates a "safe space" in which to learn to teach. And we created a School

Change Academy through which our faculty and doctoral students are helping principals and aspiring principals from across the region lead innovations in their own schools and districts.

There have been other changes brought on by COVID-19 that will affect P-12 education in the future. The pandemic heightened our awareness of the importance of social and emotional learning. A teacher's presence—their physical proximity to the student, their body language—matters so much to learning, and we're seeing the results that our current disconnectedness can have on some students. The pandemic also revealed to a greater extent the inequities that so many students face. We saw that early on with some students not having computers and internet access, and then later as teachers got to look into their students' home lives like never before. That greater understanding will remain with teachers when everyone returns to the classroom, and it will help better inform their planning and teaching. —as told to Tony Marchetti

“ [THE PANDEMIC] REVEALED THE POTENTIAL THAT THESE VIRTUAL PLATFORMS HAVE FOR INCREASING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CONTENT AND GIVING STUDENTS MORE AUTONOMY OVER THEIR LEARNING. ”

THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS

JOE RAPOLLA » CHAIR OF THE MUSIC AND THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENT AND DIRECTOR OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY PROGRAM

The music business has been disrupted many times, so the industry seems to be well groomed for change and innovation. Just over the last several decades, we've gone from a physical product—vinyl, eight-track tapes, cassettes, and CDs—to virtual products—such as MP3s and downloads—to, right now, where we're essentially an all-streaming, non-ownership service-based model.

But live music has obviously been impacted. And live music, over the last couple of decades, has been one of the biggest revenue chunks within the overall music industry pie. It used to be that you put a live tour together to go to the individual markets to expose your music to different fans and get them excited about buying your records. Well, over the last couple of decades, people haven't been buying the records anymore, they've been streaming them, turning the live part of the business into a bigger part of the pie.

So artists have had to really ramp up their use of online and social platforms to try to fill in some of the gap. They're finding new, virtual ways to connect with and perform for fans to give them somewhat of a live experience. With the student record label, Blue Hawk Records, we had live, virtual song release events. And think of Travis Scott's (April 2020) concert in Fortnite, where you saw an artist using AI to create an experience with fans that they would never

have had before and have fans really interact with the whole concert experience in a video game. So the industry has been demonstrating that it is, at its core, a creative industry, and its creativity is helping it develop new ways for fans to connect with artists.

But the pandemic has changed the way we will experience live music. There will be more precautions, like the way we incorporated new travel procedures after 9/11. And there'll probably be some new safety procedures incorporated into the live experience. But we're coming back and we're coming back sooner than we think. In fact, in the UK, there are large-scale concerts scheduled for this summer that sold out in 72 hours. There's a pent-up appetite.

The return will be a little slower in the United States. Some of the venues are opening now at 10% to 50% capacity, and some of the big promoters like Live Nation are waiting, but they're optimistic that 75% capacity shows are within sight. So I think there's light at the end of the tunnel here. —as told to Dan Morrell



THE DANGERS OF A POST-COVID-19 TOURISM BOOM

KAREN SCHMELZKOPF » ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, HISTORY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Tourism certainly engenders exposure to other places and cultures—and while the ability to travel has been on hold, the pandemic has opened up the world in different ways. This year we have talked with people we might never have engaged with before on Zoom. We have had the time to watch foreign TV shows and travel documentaries on Netflix. And young people from all over the world are engaging with TikTok, producing their own content and transcending many of the cultural bubbles of more established social media. In addition, knowing that this is a pandemic—a global phenomenon—has brought some sense of commonality with distant places and people.

When tourism does resume, one unfortunate possibility is that the vaccine could actually help spread COVID-19, because the vaccinated can carry the virus and infect people who are not. We might see people who are vaccinated taking advantage of the cheap flights and hotel rooms to go somewhere as soon as they can. Not only could this cause a surge of infections, but as we are increasingly aware it could also spur variants that are not susceptible to the vaccines.

Encouragingly, though, many tourist agencies have been using this time to rethink tourism and its impact on local people and the environment. Restrictions such as limiting the numbers of tourists, encouraging the use of electric cars, using GPS and surveillance technology to monitor flows of people, and increasing carbon removal and storage technologies are being proposed. On the other hand, the economic impacts on the tourism industry have been devastating. The incentive to be sustainable may not be viable in the face of the pent-up demands of tourists and the economic needs of tourism, resulting in an increase in extreme over-tourism after the pandemic is over. While the duration of the pandemic has given us time to investigate much-needed changes, the end of the pandemic may give us minimal time to bring them about.

However, I am optimistic that with public-private alliances and community participation, including wearing masks and practicing social distancing, the pandemic will in some ways prove beneficial for the future of tourism. —as told to Maureen Harmon

“ WE’RE COMING BACK AND WE’RE COMING BACK SOONER THAN WE THINK.... THERE’S A PENT-UP APPETITE. ”



WORK FROM HOME IS HERE TO STAY

NOAH HART » COORDINATOR OF FIRST YEAR ADVISING, WHOSE RESEARCH FOCUSES ON THE WORKPLACE

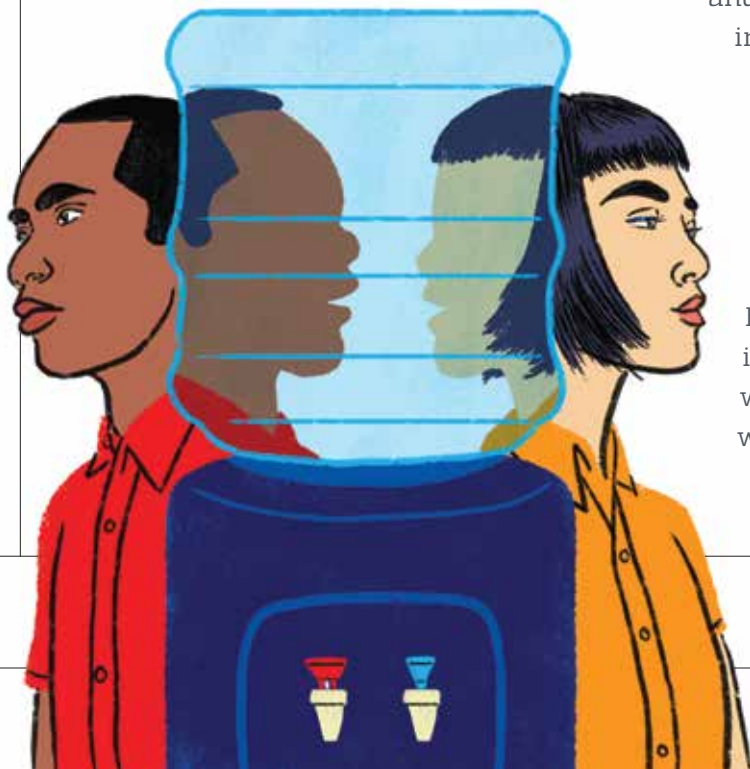
Based on what we've seen over the past year, a large percentage of staff—especially professional and technical staff—are working remotely, and the overwhelming majority of that work has gone much better than anyone ever expected. So the trajectory of moving into the next 10 or 15 years has really been accelerated. Business doesn't need to go on as it did pre-COVID-19.

What American capitalism is all about is profit, the bottom line, and nonprofits want to minimize expense. So what's happened already, and I don't see it stopping, is brick-and-mortar organizations—which require that staff be in the office at 9 a.m. and leave at 5 p.m.—became part of history.

I think what's going to really suffer is spontaneous interaction and spontaneous growth—growth that comes out of personal, in-person relationships, not on Zoom but over a cup of coffee or during a brief break when you go out and you sit in the sun and think through an issue with colleagues from another area—and eureka. That's not something that you can schedule; it's organic. And I think that's going to be where organizations are going to be challenged.

Management will need to be really innovative and creative, and I think they really will have to borrow from psychology, sociology, and anthropology to learn how to sustain culture. Organizational culture is an intimate thing,

and it's shared, in many ways, informally. So there will need to be an opportunity for groups to get together and have face time—weekly, monthly, or quarterly. The ability to do that will certainly improve with the vaccine. But even if tomorrow we have a situation where COVID-19 is largely neutralized, I don't see a wholesale return to pre-COVID-19 work. —as told to Maureen Harmon



THE ART OF THE PANDEMIC

COREY DZENKO » ART HISTORIAN AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ART AND DESIGN

Right now, I think it's too early to know the impact of COVID-19 on art and visual culture. But what keeps coming to mind is the AIDS epidemic and the direct parallels that artists are already making to COVID-19. Last semester, one of my students, David Rogers '20, delivered a thoughtful presentation about graphic design used for social change. He looked at advocacy designs through the AIDS epidemic, but then he brought in COVID-19—because in both instances in the United States, we had a federal government that was ignoring or downplaying the impact of these health crises on the national populace. The first major exhibition to look at AIDS in the United States wasn't until 2015, and *New York Times* art critic Holland Cotter asked, "What took so long?" Why did it take us so long to address this disease that impacted such a large part of the population?

There's a way that art records what's happening. There's a way that artists work through what they're experiencing. There's a way that artists look at their past work as resonating again now, which I've seen. And there's a way that they create this psychological working through. That's why I say it's so early—we don't know the trauma that people are going to come out of this with as a whole.

We can't disconnect the trauma of COVID-19 from the social justice movements like Black Lives Matter that are going on, especially as we see how COVID-19 affects different communities disproportionately. The ways that we represent and understand recent social justice events and the way that we understand those events are deeply embedded and connected to the way we understand and are experiencing COVID-19 as a disease.

Very early on in the pandemic we lost two very important art history scholars. One was Maurice Berger, a curator and an art critic. He was very important in pointing out the racial and class biases in the art world throughout his career. He died in March. Artist and curator David

Driskell was very important in recognizing and telling the history of African American art. He died in April. Their voices are now gone.

Berger's husband, curator and writer Marvin Heiferman, also connected to photography, has been sharing his journey of grief through photographs on social media, with captions like: "This is my first day sleeping in our bedroom again; this is my first time returning back to our New York City apartment." He has even shown images of the ambulance and the emergency team about to use a helicopter to take Maurice away, but it was too late.

I think that's what some people don't understand about art and visual culture. It's not just pretty pictures on your wall. It's recording what things have happened. It's visual language used to communicate. It's strange to look at Heiferman's photos because it feels, in one sense, voyeuristic, but he's putting them out there for us to see as he mourns. And then if we just take a step back we can see that this is not an isolated incident; it connects to the larger public moments of trauma. —as told to Maureen Harmon M



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I THINK THAT'S WHAT SOME PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT ART AND VISUAL CULTURE. IT'S NOT JUST PRETTY PICTURES ON YOUR WALL.... IT'S VISUAL LANGUAGE USED TO COMMUNICATE.
”

THE RESILIENT ONE

NT

BY NICK DIULIO
PHOTOS BY JOHN EMERSON

DAMON COLBERT SPENT MUCH OF HIS TEENS AND 20s HOMELESS AND BATTLING PERSONAL DEMONS. NOW, AFTER EARNING THREE DEGREES FROM MONMOUTH IN UNDER A DECADE, HE'S COMMITTED TO HELPING AT-RISK CHILDREN REALIZE THEIR OWN POTENTIAL.

It's often challenging to identify definitive turning points in the path of someone's life. But Damon Colbert '15, '16M, '20Ed.D. doesn't hesitate when asked to recall the exact moment his life took a turn toward trouble.

It was the end of his first marking period at Long Branch High School, and for the first time in his life Colbert had taken pride in his grades, which was no small feat. Colbert's childhood had been mired in disadvantages and obstructions. His father was an emotionally and physically abusive addict who maintained only the faintest pretense of parenting, leaving Colbert's mother to care for her son and three daughters while wrestling with her own substance abuse.

"Growing up, we really had nothing," says Colbert. "We were dirt poor. My father was running around in the streets, neglecting his family, so I had no guidance, no role models or inspirations or anyone giving me a sense of positive manly direction or support. My mother was struggling with her own demons and spent most of her attention on my sisters. So, I was kind of left to figure it out for myself."

In middle school this proved extremely difficult. Colbert's grades were awful, his behavior abysmal, and he generally classifies that time as "just barely getting by." But he vowed to begin high school with renewed focus and tenacity. He started playing football and actually tried to apply himself academically. When he got his first report card, Colbert was elated to see his efforts had paid off.

"I had B's and C's, maybe even an A in there, but for the first time no D's or F's. I was extremely excited," says Colbert. "I was even more excited to show my father,

because he was always hard on me, and I would get a beating for bad grades. He beat me with a belt or extension cord until I was in *eighth grade*. And when I finally showed him my report card, he shrugged and said, 'Huh. You got C's. This isn't nothing.'"

Here Colbert pauses and sighs.

"I really wanted him to be proud of me, but it wasn't impressive *enough* to him," he continues. "That was a turning point in my life. I came to him with good grades expecting him to get behind me and be happy for me. Instead, I got a shrug. That really hurt. And things changed. For the worse."

Colbert's grades plummeted. His behavior worsened. And his life quickly spun out of whatever control he'd previously tried to exert over his circumstances, eventually ending with him becoming homeless at the age of 16. And yet the story of Damon Colbert was far from over. In the end he would achieve incredible things, including serving

in the U.S. Army for four years, marrying, and becoming a father to twins, and receiving three degrees from Monmouth University, including his doctorate in educational leadership last August. But before we get there, it's important to understand *how* Colbert got there, because his struggles are also the source of his inspiration.

By the age of 16, Colbert's performance on his high school's football field had propelled him to local celebrity status. As a defensive end, Colbert set a new school sack record with 29 tackles. He was adored—at least during the fall. "Anything outside of that," he says, "was horrible."

Colbert was missing countless days of school, and when he did show up, he put forth the bare minimum to keep his head above water. Meanwhile, outside the classroom, he'd started "running around with the wrong people." He was drinking, smoking weed, and often not coming home until the early morning hours, if he came home at all.

"My mother was overwhelmed with struggling through her substance usage, caring for my sisters, and trying to stay strong through heartache," says Colbert. "My dad just left his family, and my mother had no support, no family around. It was just her and us, and my behavior at the time was completely out of line. I didn't follow any rules she put forth to establish order in her house."

Eventually his mother gave an ultimatum: Be home every night by a certain time or leave. And so, he left.

For almost the entirety of his senior year of high school, Colbert was a teenage nomad. He'd sleep wherever he could—friends' couches, abandoned cars, train stations, alleyways, emergency rooms. He even made a regular practice of setting his watch alarm for 5:30 a.m. so he could use a tucked-away bathroom inside Monmouth Medical Center to wash himself, get changed, and brush his teeth before the morning rush of medical staff arrived. What's perhaps most striking is that Colbert didn't really give any of this a second thought.

"It felt normal because that's all I knew. I wake up and I survive and I go to school. It wasn't a matter of wishing I could live another way because there *was* no other way to compare it to," says Colbert.



ABOVE: Colbert at home with his wife, America, and children (from left) Damon II and Ilyiana.

"I just remember thinking, 'All right, things will get better because maybe when I'm 20 or 21 I'll be in the NFL and have a nice house and everything will be fine.' I thought that would *just happen*. No work. No direction. No plan. Life was just going to take care of itself."

For a short while Colbert's sudden homelessness came with a rush of adrenaline and newfound freedom. But this didn't last long, and he eventually needed to summon a robust work ethic in order to survive. He took jobs wherever he could find them. A gig at JCPenney. Pushing carts at FoodTown. Working for the city of Long Branch on the back of a garbage truck. Whatever it took.

"I wasn't a career criminal and I was never scared of work. Faced with survival and having to eat and have a roof over my head all pushed me to get jobs," says Colbert. "But I didn't take anything into context. I was blind to whatever the outcome was. I was living in the moment and not seeing past it."

Colbert spent much of the next decade in various stages of homelessness,

spanning multiple states, and the surreal, sinuous path of his life during that time contains more multifarious experiences than can be chronicled here. But suffice it to say, after working odd jobs and enrolling for brief stints at two different colleges in the South, Colbert found himself, at age 27, back in New Jersey.

"My problem wasn't about getting a job. It was that I didn't know how to live up to my responsibilities. All I knew was get money, get a room," says Colbert. "And I was drinking and smoking the whole time. My lifestyle was similar to an addict. I moved back home to try and make sense of everything."

Colbert's life didn't spontaneously improve when he got back to New Jersey, but it did mark the beginning of the end of his aimlessness. Shortly after getting a job at a produce warehouse in Long Branch, he met a young woman named America at a party. The next day he spotted her inside a fast-food restaurant, so he popped in to chat with the woman who would eventually become his wife.

The Army changed everything. Following boot camp, Colbert was stationed in the 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and eventually deployed to Haiti for six months to assist in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in 2010. Colbert's work there as a human resources specialist impressed his sergeant major so much that, when the officer's unit was given orders to deploy to Iraq, he stopped Colbert's orders to a new duty station and retained him for the Iraq deployment.

Here Colbert—typically effusive and unrestrained—becomes reticent. He doesn't like to talk much about his time in Iraq, where he served until being medically discharged following an IED explosion.

"There are certain things I don't want to open up for myself," he says. "Prior to that deployment I was going to stay in the military for 20 years. I was doing excellent and it felt like I was where I was supposed to be. But by the end of my time in Iraq, I hadn't seen my wife in over a year and I was extremely ready to come home."

And, so, Colbert's life took one last dramatic turn. Following his discharge for combat-related injuries in fall 2012, Colbert immediately started taking classes at Brookdale Community College and preparing to become a father. And while his time in the military had its mix of highs and lows, the overall experience was exceptionally transformative.

"I used to live by the mantra that a soldier only needs four hours of sleep, and that's how I got my associate's, bachelor's, and master's in under four years," he says. "I was able to do that because that's how I operated in the military. It's the discipline that was instilled in me."

After Brookdale, Colbert enrolled in Monmouth's School of Social Work in 2014, where he went on to earn both his bachelor's and master's degrees by 2016, all the while guided by one abiding passion: to one day help kids who faced challenging circumstances similar to his own. "I don't want kids like me to suffer through almost 30 years before seeing an opportunity to thrive," he says. "I don't want these kids to go through life blind for so long."

Looking back, Colbert says he chose Monmouth because he wanted to challenge himself in an environment that was academically and demographically outside of his comfort zone. He wanted to

"**I DON'T WANT KIDS LIKE ME TO SUFFER THROUGH ALMOST 30 YEARS BEFORE SEEING AN OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE. I DON'T WANT THESE KIDS TO GO THROUGH LIFE BLIND FOR SO LONG.**"

walk amongst people with vastly different experiences than his own and, just as importantly, "to understand those perspectives while elaborating on my own experiences."

With his graduate work complete, Colbert began working for the New Jersey Reentry Corporation, helping recently released inmates find employment and housing. After a year there, he accepted a position as a social worker for the Veterans Health Administration, where he currently case-manages homeless veterans throughout New Jersey.

Colbert decided to take one last educational leap in 2018, when he returned to Monmouth once more to earn his doctorate of educational leadership. For two years he worked on his dissertation, "Examining the Emotional Impact on Educators Working with Trauma-Affected At-Risk Youth," which he completed last summer. And while he's not entirely sure what the next step in his journey will look like, he knows that it will, in some way, involve helping children who were as disadvantaged as he was. Whether that means establishing a local after-school program, starting a nonprofit for at-risk children, or potentially working for a school one day, Colbert knows that some of his greatest accomplishments are yet to come.

"I've been through a lot—from the bottom of the barrel to the success I see now. I've done a lot of things I'm not too proud of. But on the flip side, there's a lot I *am* proud of. I don't think people should be judged on their past. Everybody has potential, and sometimes you just have to unlock that potential. My goal is to provide opportunities for *kids* to unlock that potential," says Colbert. "No one is lost. My story is one of trauma, hopelessness, and struggle, but I like to think of myself as the *potential* of the struggle." ■



OUR MAN IN THE PENTAGON

Lowman (second from left) speaking with officers in the Afghan National Army during his 2017 deployment.

AS THE ARMY'S SECOND-HIGHEST-RANKING CIVILIAN, CHRISTOPHER LOWMAN IS WORKING TO MODERNIZE THE LARGEST BRANCH OF THE US MILITARY.

BY MOLLY PETRILLA



Here's Christopher Lowman '94, '96M, on the phone from his Pentagon office, leading the U.S. Army at a level few will ever reach—and explaining his prestigious role for those who don't quite understand it:

"I think it's analogous to the CMO in a large corporation," he says. "We have a secretary of the Army—that would be the CEO—and then the under secretary is really the chief management officer." That makes Lowman the Army's second-highest-ranking civilian leader right now.

"This is a big deal—a job that only the best are selected for," says Brigadier General Martin F. Klein, who has worked in the Pentagon for over a decade.

"Both humbling and an honor" is how Lowman, a Marine Corps veteran who joined the Army as a civilian employee in 1989, describes it. He spent the last 32 years advancing from "an extraordinarily low position" to eventually become the acting under secretary on Jan. 20, 2021. Only a few dozen people have ever held the title, interim appointments included, since its debut in 1947.

But to those who have worked with him, it's not surprising that Lowman is now one of them. "Mr. Lowman is very well-versed in the way that the Pentagon runs, and is considered one of the most gifted senior leaders in terms of understanding how to steer issues within the Pentagon and get things done," says Klein. "Now he's in a position to make enduring change for our Army and for our nation."

As under secretary, Lowman heads up three crucial areas of Army management. The first is "anything related to people," he says—and with a million soldiers in uniform right now, their 1.2 million dependents, another million veterans, and roughly 300,000 people who, like Lowman himself, work for the Army as civilians, there is no shortage of people-related issues to tackle. Second and third, he oversees the Army's commitment to modernizing and its ongoing readiness.

He arrived in the role at a time of transition: after the Trump-nominated under secretary left and before a Biden-selected, Senate-confirmed replacement has been named. Until then, Lowman will continue to act as the "senior official performing the duties of under secretary of the Army."

"It's a big job in a large organization with a very important mission," he says. But it's also "a challenge that I think I've prepared for my entire life."

Born into a family that prized "serving something larger than yourself," Lowman spent most of his childhood in Germany, where his father worked for the U.S. Army as a civilian. After enlisting in the Marine Corps and then following his dad's lead into Army civilian service, Lowman found himself assigned to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, in 1990.

"That's when I realized I could rise to a certain level, but I was going to need a college degree to progress further," he says.

So at 22 years old, and working full time during the day, he enrolled as a freshman at Monmouth. Thanks to night-time, weekend, and lunch-break classes, he zipped through his B.S. in business administration and management in just four years. From there, it was straight on to an MBA, also at Monmouth.

"It really was a foundational experience for me," he says of the five years he spent as a Hawk. On top of imparting business fundamentals, Monmouth granted him flexibility with its off-hours course options for adult learners. Now he tries to share that same adaptability with his own teams.

"You have to lead with an understanding that all of your employees have challenges somewhere in their lives or commitments they must meet," he says. "But the mission will go on, and you will

build a better and more cohesive team by exercising that flexibility. I really credit Monmouth with giving me that understanding.”

The business school’s emphasis on teamwork and collaboration also reinforced what he’d been learning in the military—and mandatory in-class presentations “taught me that to professionally grow, you have to be a little bit uncomfortable,” he says.

While enrolled at Monmouth, Lowman also met Tracey, a born-and-raised Jerseyan who’s now his wife of 24 years and the mother of their four children. “We often joke that there are still fingernail marks on the Delaware Memorial Bridge from when I dragged her across the state line when we moved to Virginia,” he says. But they had a good reason for leaving: the Pentagon had called.

FROM MONMOUTH TO D.C.

Lowman became maintenance staff officer at the Pentagon in 1999—and he was working in his office on Sept. 11, 2001, when a plane smashed into the building about a hundred yards away. “It really drove home this notion of service,” he says, “and also that just because we worked in the Pentagon, we weren’t immune to the world’s problems.”

In 2003, as the U.S. prepared to invade Iraq, Lowman accepted a job in Germany supporting all of the Army’s maintenance and supply operations across 94 countries. “Preparations from a material perspective was not a job I’d held before,” he says. “It made me very uncom-

fortable, but it forced me to learn a new discipline very quickly, to think critically, and to defend my position. And I credit all of those skills to Monmouth.”

He continued to advance after returning to the United States in 2006, attending the National War College, receiving an M.S. in national security strategy, and eventually managing Army maintenance programs that totaled \$10 billion annually and employed over 22,000 people around the world.

Lowman became a deputy assistant secretary of the Army in 2015, overseeing acquisition policy and logistics. Then in 2017, he asked to deploy to Afghanistan as a civilian. “Since 2001, I had watched many of my peer group in uniform deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan for multiple one-year tours,” he says, “and I really felt that it was my duty to contribute to that.”

For 13 months, he led a few hundred experts—surgeons, logisticians, cybersecurity experts—in rebuilding the country’s supply chain and medical infrastructure, and expanding its internet. “It was an unbelievably rewarding experience to watch the Afghans grasp on to what we were trying to teach them and to incorporate those lessons in order to build a functioning government,” he says.

Upon returning from Afghanistan, Lowman was awarded the Presidential Rank Award for accomplishments leading up to and including his work there.

At the end of 2018, Lowman became the civilian equivalent of a three-star general. As assistant deputy chief of staff, he shaped strategy and policy,

managing everything around Army operations and training—right up until he assumed the under secretary role.

#THEUNDERISLISTENING

Speaking in early March, about six weeks into his work as under secretary, Lowman was open about some of the challenges he and the Army are up against. “The Army is not shy talking about some of the people challenges we’ve had here in the past,” he says, listing off sexual assault, sexual harassment, extremism, and racism. “We’re tackling those head on,” he says, starting with a newly created People First Task Force to help identify problems and build better teams.

The Army also launched a new modernization strategy last year. They’re working to update everything from air and missile defense to combat vehicles and field equipment between 2020 and 2035. “Because of the scale of the Army, it takes a fairly deliberate process and an enormous amount of capital investment,” Lowman says. “We have to be very careful about what we invest in and why we are investing in it.”

But as he approaches these sweeping initiatives from one of the top posts, Lowman also wants to hear from those at the ground level. That’s where #TheUnderIsListening came from. Despite some early wariness from his PR team, he’s been scheduling weekly ask-me-anything-style chats, making himself available to anyone with a Twitter account.

Some have tweeted in their complaints about on-base housing, others want to see postpartum physical fitness testing and BMI requirements change. “It’s those real-life, granular questions,” he says. “Questions that, while maybe broadly discussed down at the ranks, are not broadly discussed at the senior leader levels.”

How long will the tweet go on? No one knows exactly, but Lowman is well aware that this job is only a temporary one for him. He’s a career civilian, and has been since 1989. So once President Biden nominates his own under secretary and the Senate confirms that person, Lowman will return to his previous work. But until then, he’s fully committed to doing all that he can as the Army’s under secretary.

“I’ve told everybody here that as long as I’m in this chair, I will press for change and continue to help the Army move forward,” he says. [M](#)



ABOVE AND BEYOND

ROBERT B. SCULTHORPE TO RECEIVE INAUGURAL PRESIDENT’S MEDAL IN RECOGNITION OF HIS EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE, PHILANTHROPY, AND LEADERSHIP OF MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY.

BY TONY MARCHETTI

Growing up in Long Branch, New Jersey, Robert B. Sculthorpe ’63, ’15HN had his sights set on Wall Street but little interest in attending college. Yet thanks to the gentle prodding of his mother, an Italian immigrant whose own formal education ended at the eighth grade but who understood the importance of attaining a college degree, he enrolled at Monmouth in the fall of 1956. After earning his B.S. in business administration, Sculthorpe, never short on gumption, bootstrapped his way to Wall Street, where he enjoyed a storied 35-year career at one of the world’s largest investment banks and financial services companies.

Despite his initial misgivings about college, Sculthorpe said he never forgot how fundamental his Monmouth education was to his professional success. So as his career drew to a close, he sought to give back to the University that had given him his start. He served on Monmouth’s Board of Trustees in various capacities for more than a decade, including four as chair. And through the years, he has funded a host of initiatives that have benefited students and enhanced the cultural and intellectual life on campus.

In recognition of Sculthorpe’s outstanding service and philanthropy to Monmouth University, President Patrick F. Leahy will present him with the first President’s Medal at this fall’s Founders Day Gala. The newly established event is Monmouth’s premier fundraising event of the year, and the President’s Medal represents the highest honor the University can bestow on an individual.

“I can think of no one more deserving of receiving the inaugural President’s Medal than Bob,” Leahy said. “His extraordinary [»](#)



Lowman in his office at the Pentagon.

leadership and support have provided countless opportunities for Monmouth students through the years, and I look forward to celebrating him this fall as part of our Founders Day Gala.”

A FIRST-GENERATION SUCCESS STORY

Sculthorpe said his youthful disinterest in college stemmed in part from not being “smart enough to see what lay ahead.” He assumed his ticket into the business world would come by way of working in his uncle’s clothing store. But his mother, Geraldine, who had come to America from Naples, Italy, as a child, had other ideas.

“She was a seamstress, but she was much more than that,” Sculthorpe explained. “She was almost a designer, really, and was quite successful in her own right, but she didn’t have the education to compete in that world. So she was *always* encouraging my brother, sister, and me to finish high school and go to college.”

Sculthorpe paid his own way through Monmouth by working multiple jobs, and when he graduated in 1963, he was the first in his family to earn a college degree. “It was a breakthrough for us,” he said.

He still had that glint in his eye toward Wall Street. “It always held a romantic place in my mind,” he said. “I had subscribed to *The Wall Street Journal* when I was in high school and loved reading about the markets.” But his first job out of college was selling insurance. He didn’t like the work or the product, and quickly moved into a corporate sales position with the H.J. Heinz Company. That was a better fit, “but I always kept an eye out to see if any of the Wall Street firms were looking for training program recruits,” he said.

After a few years, his persistence paid off when Dean Witter & Co., the former stock brokerage and securities firm, hired him. In those days, Wall Street was in many ways reserved for “elite” school graduates. “I certainly didn’t have

the money or the ‘family legacy’ those guys had,” Sculthorpe said. But what he lacked in pedigree and connections, he made up for with initiative and affability—qualities he inherited from his mother. “I’ve always been able to ‘meet people’ very easily, and no matter how tough it might be, to make it work.”

Sculthorpe built a substantial business as a broker handling individual and institutional clients, and through the years worked his way up to become one of the most influential employees at the company. By the time Morgan Stanley acquired Dean Witter in 1997, Sculthorpe was director of its Institutional Equity Division. The merger created the world’s largest securities company at the time, and Sculthorpe’s role in it was chronicled in the *Harvard Business Review*.

At Morgan Stanley, Sculthorpe took responsibility for numerous business units, including Regional Management, Head of Global Private Wealth Management, Economic and Stock Market Research, and Institutional Equity Sales and Trading. When he retired in 2003, he was vice chairman and managing director of Morgan Stanley’s Private Client Group in London, responsible for all European, Middle East, and Asian private client businesses.

RECONNECTING WITH MONMOUTH

Sculthorpe said he never forgot how “absolutely key” his Monmouth experience was to his success. Now free from the 50- to 60-hour workweeks that Wall Street demanded, he wanted to play a more active role at his alma mater.

He was elected to the University’s Board of Trustees the same year of his retirement and served as treasurer and vice chair before being elected chair in 2010, a position he held for four years. In 2016 he received trustee emeritus status. His long service with the board has given him the opportunity to work with several

“**GOOD LEADERSHIP IS CONTAGIOUS. IT’S WHAT MAKES ORGANIZATIONS GREAT. AND MONMOUTH HAS HAD SOME EXCEPTIONAL LEADERS IN MY VIEW.**”

Monmouth presidents. “All organizations are measured by their leaders,” said Sculthorpe, who during his Wall Street days met with chief executives from around the world. “Good leadership is contagious. It’s what makes organizations great. And Monmouth has had some exceptional leaders in my view.”

Sculthorpe has particularly enjoyed the opportunity to interact with Monmouth students through the years, and it is they who have benefited most from his generosity. His support of Monmouth’s academic programs includes the establishment of the annual Heidi Lynn Sculthorpe Memorial Scholarship, which is named in honor of his late daughter and funds dozens of student research projects each year that make a positive impact in coastal communities. Many of those research experiences take place aboard Monmouth’s largest research vessel, also named in Heidi Lynn’s memory in recognition of another Sculthorpe gift that ensures the vessel’s seaworthiness.

A staunch supporter of the arts, Sculthorpe made a substantial donation to bring Metropolitan Opera programming to campus. He was also an early benefactor of the OceanFirst Bank Center, helping to launch construction of the facility that today serves as the area’s premier venue for large-scale concerts and shows and is home to several Monmouth athletics programs.

The list goes on and on. When asked what has inspired him to this level of service and support for Monmouth University, Sculthorpe unassumingly said, “I was raised a Catholic, so giving back has always been a part of who I am. And I always thought that to the degree I could help, I would.”

He will forever have a “soft spot” in his heart for his alma mater, he continued: “I was fortunate to find a career I really loved and was good at; that it paid well was a byproduct. But none of it would have been possible without my Monmouth degree.” [M](#)



FOUNDERS DAY GALA

President Patrick F. Leahy is pleased to announce the inaugural **MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY FOUNDERS DAY GALA**

October 16, 2021 | OceanFirst Bank Center

Join campus and community leaders for Monmouth University’s premier fundraising event, the inaugural Founders Day Gala. Proceeds from the evening will support the **Monmouth Access Fund**, which provides critical scholarship support to deserving students whose financial circumstances preclude them from accessing a highly personalized education.

During the event, President Leahy will award the first President’s Medal to **Trustee Emeritus Robert B. Sculthorpe ’63, ’15HN**, whose extraordinary service, philanthropy, and leadership has provided countless opportunities for Monmouth University students.

MONMOUTH.EDU/FOUNDERSDAYGALA



Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, please contact foundersdaygala@monmouth.edu or 732-263-5400.

THE CHANGEMAKER » Alumni making waves

A FORCE FOR CHANGE

FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE'S OFFICE TO THE STATEHOUSE, EILEEN GAVIN IS HELPING TO SHAPE HOW WE TACKLE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES.

BY MOLLY PETRILLA

Confronting public health issues has always been a top priority for school nurses. During her 17 years working in the Middletown, New Jersey, school district, Eileen Gavin '03, '10M has helped students dealing with mental health issues, abusing drugs, and grappling with food scarcity at home.

"Everything that happens in our communities is reflected in our schools," says Gavin, "and school nurses have their fingers on the pulse of it all."

Never has that been more evident than the past year, as countless school nurses landed on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. They prepared school reopening plans, screened students for symptoms, and even contact-traced outbreaks. For Gavin personally, 2020 was also the year she threw herself deeper into effecting change, through both legislative efforts and COVID-19 strategies.

"When I see something that's not working correctly, I always want to change it," she says. "Whether it's systematic or just personally, I want to see how we can do it better."

Gavin has been a nurse since 1983, but her state-level activism ignited in 2014, shortly after she participated in a health leadership program through Johnson & Johnson. The opioid epidemic was surging, and she'd been hearing from parents who

were terrified that their kids might overdose.

She wanted the opioid reversal drug Narcan available in schools. With support from her then-superintendent William George '97M—now a Teaching Fellow at Monmouth—Gavin developed Narcan protocols and procedures for her own district that were later replicated throughout the state. She also advocated for legislation requiring that Narcan be made available in all New Jersey high schools. "That kind of propelled me into the limelight as an expert," she says now.

She was ready for it, thanks in part to her multiple degrees from Monmouth. Gavin completed her B.S. in nursing in 2003 and continued on to a Master of School Nursing degree, followed by a post-master's certificate in advanced practice nursing, all while working as a nurse, volunteering at a clinic for uninsured patients, and raising her three children.

"Monmouth is a small school, and I was an adult learner going

“
WHEN I SEE SOMETHING THAT'S NOT WORKING CORRECTLY, I ALWAYS WANT TO CHANGE IT. WHETHER IT'S SYSTEMATIC OR JUST PERSONALLY, I WANT TO SEE HOW WE CAN DO IT BETTER.
 ”

OPPOSITE: Gavin says she's immensely grateful for the scholarship that covered the entire cost of her Master of Science in Nursing degree program: "[It] played a big role in my career."

to class with younger students, so I could have easily been discouraged," she says. "But I was very much *encouraged* and promoted by the faculty to be a change agent." That support and recognition she received from nursing faculty members, particularly Associate Professor Laura Jannone, gave her the confidence to take on the state-level advocacy work, she says.

When the pandemic struck last March, Gavin worked with her local health department to develop a training video and webinar for school nurses across the state who, like her, were suddenly tasked with contact tracing.

As a legislative co-chair for the New Jersey State School Nurse Executive Board, she also urged State Senator Theresa Ruiz to propose a state-level school nurse consultant position—something 44 other states already had in place. Ruiz wrote the proposal and Gavin testified on it multiple times. Gov. Phil Murphy signed the bill into law on Sept. 14, 2020. "To be part of legislation from conception to when it's passed is probably one of the highest honors," says Gavin.

In the final days of 2020, Gavin was reflecting on these bright spots within a tumultuous year—and preparing to administer COVID-19 vaccines as a volunteer through the Monmouth County Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps. Whether she's working inside a school, testifying in the State Senate, or soon, administering lifesaving vaccines to people in New Jersey, "I'm a nurse every day, 24/7," she says. "People are always texting me, emailing me questions. Neighbors even come to my door if their child is hurt. Being a nurse is just part of my DNA. It's a sense of service, and I think a lot of nurses have that in them."



photo ANTHONY DEPRIMO

ALUMNI ROUNDUP

LISTED BY GRADUATION YEAR

1970s

» **Kenneth F. LePosa '71** and his wife, **Barbara Ann (Lagrottieria) LePosa '72**, proudly reported that their son, Ken; daughter-in-law, Michelle; and grandsons Giovanni and Vincent donated food to feed 50 families in the Camden, New Jersey, area this past holiday season.

» **Sandra Eber-Noble '71** has worked in the field of elementary and preschool special education for 49 years, in both New Jersey and New York, including directing a special education preschool and evaluation site. She currently works for Kids-Centric in Brooklyn, New York, supervising and training preschool special education teachers. Noble has a master's degree in special education and a second bachelor's degree in education supervision and administration. She received an art-in-therapy certificate from Turtle Bay School of Music in New York City and enjoys songwriting and performing her original songs.

» **Barbara Ann (Lagrottieria) LePosa '72**. See note for **Kenneth F. LePosa '71**.

» **James Fisher '73** retired on July

31, 2020, from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) in Greensboro, North Carolina, at the end of a 42-year teaching career. At UNCG, Fisher served as department head of theatre from 2007 to 2014 and is the recipient of many awards for teaching and his scholarship, which includes 19 books and many essays and reviews. He is also an actor and director, staging over 150 theatre productions in his career. Fisher lives in Greensboro with his wife, Dana Warner Fisher, and he is the father of two children, Daniel and Anna. At Monmouth, Fisher was a speech and drama major and was a communication alumni academy award recipient in 2015.

1980s

» **Deborah Capasso '80** retired from the Federal Aviation Administration William J. Hughes Technical Center after 39 years and 9 months of service as a mathematician/computer specialist providing support to our nation's air traffic control systems.

» Veteran editor **Rob Reinaldo '80** published *Why Editors Drink*, a

snarky look at the foibles of online writing. Reinaldo is the founder of Word Czar Media, which specializes in editing, proofreading, writing coaching, and more.

» **Martin Saltzman '82** is co-host of *It's Your Money with Jo Ann & Martin*, which seeks to educate viewers on all aspects of financial planning and investment topics, from mortgage forbearance to retirement plans for small businesses. The show is broadcasted by RVN TV and can be viewed through Apple TV, Roku, and Amazon Fire TV. Saltzman is the principal/chief operating officer of AFM Investments Inc. in Toms River, New Jersey.

» **Guy Pedelini '84M** was elected president of the board of directors for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Pedelini has been a human capital senior executive for diverse global organizations including RCA, GE, Bayer, and Bowne Inc. He is currently president of Double Black Human Capital Solutions, a full-service human capital consulting firm. Pedelini holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration from the University of Delaware Lerner College of Business & Economics in Newark, Delaware, and is a graduate of the Villanova University certified Project Management Institute in Villanova, Pennsylvania.

» In April 2019, Siemens Demag Delaval Turbomachinery Inc. closed its doors in Trenton, New Jersey, and sent manufacturing back to Germany, so, after 30 years of service as a manufacturing manager, **Thomas Fryc '87** was fortunate to land a new position as the director of facilities and grounds with the Bordentown Regional School District in Bordentown, New Jersey. Fryc says he's privileged to work in his hometown and at his high school alma mater, where he graduated in 1983.

» **Kim Cuny '88**, a communication studies professor and director

of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Speaking Center, has been awarded the 2020 Service Engagement Award from the National Communication Association, the largest professional organization of the communication studies academic discipline. Cuny was recognized for a partnership she formed with Peacehaven Community Farm, an 89-acre sustainable farm in Whitsett, North Carolina. For the past five years, she and her students have been helping adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities improve their communication skills.

» **Mike Farragher '88** and **Barbara (Miskoff) Farragher '89** launched Love Letters Profiles, a writing service specializing in career profiles, résumés, and dating profiles. Mike, who has lectured on humor writing, is the author of *This Is Your Brain on Shamrocks*, a series of essay books, and Barbara is an internationally known voice-over artist and radio DJ.

» **Barbara (Miskoff) Farragher '89**. See note for **Mike Farragher '88**.

» **Brian M. Schwartz '89** married Michele Morra on Oct. 30, 2020, at The Westmount Country Club in Woodland Park, New Jersey. Several alumni were in attendance including **Peter Simpson '88**, **Jeffrey Gibbs '88**, **John Haluska '93**, and **Kent Smith '89**.

1990s

» **Kenneth Long '95M** is the interim president at East Stroudsburg University (ESU) in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. Prior to that, he had served as ESU's vice president of administration and finance since 2013. Long, who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in math and political science from Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, previously worked in university administration at Kutztown University in Kutztown, Pennsylvania; the Uni-

versity of Toledo in Toledo, Ohio; and at DeVry University, headquartered in Naperville, Illinois.

» **Tara Clark '96M** was appointed the mayor of Hazlet Township on Jan. 5, 2021. Clark, who served as deputy mayor in 2020, was appointed to a one-year term. A member of the township committee, she has served on the communications committee, environmental commission, and library commission during her tenure. She has worked as an educator in the East Brunswick Public School District in East Brunswick, New Jersey, for the past 24 years.

» Communication specialist professor **Matt Harmon '96, '04M** earned his Ed.D. in sports management from the United States Sports Academy, headquartered in Daphne, Alabama. For nearly 20 years, Harmon has directed Monmouth's sports communication minor. He serves as an advisor to the Surf Club and is co-advisor to the Sports Industry Club. In the classroom, Harmon teaches a wide array of courses in sports and communication. He is the play-by-play announcer for the New York Red Bulls Radio Network, the Monmouth Athletics Digital Network, and the Shore Sports Network. Harmon is an active member of the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association and the National Sports Media Associa-


tion. The Broadcast Education Association named Harmon the New Jersey Sportscaster of the Year in 2007, 2011, 2012, and 2013.

2000s

» **Steven Chadwick '03** is an attorney at Leech Tishman Fuscaldo & Lampl, LLC in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, serving as counsel in the real estate, corporate, and energy practice groups.

» **Eileen Gavin '03, '10M**, co-lead nurse for Middletown Township Public Schools; **Cathy Grano '14M**, co-lead nurse for Middletown Township Public Schools; and **Karla Manchester**, who completed her New Jersey School Nurse certificate at Monmouth and is a school nurse for Middletown Township Public Schools, were recently featured on the cover of the National Association of School Nurses newsletter.

» **Nicole (Virgilio) Smith '04** and her husband, Sean, welcomed their second child, Jameson Cash, on Aug. 28, 2020. Their son joins big sister, Piper Ann.

» In September, artist **Nicholas Bautista '05** debuted new paintings in the group exhibition, 



NOT TO MISS » Thursdays, May 13, 20, and 27
POETRY APPRECIATION

This three-session virtual course taught by English professor and director of Monmouth's Visiting Writers Series, Michael P. Thomas, provides attendees with an introduction to the craft of poetry. Register at monmouth.edu/events.



WHAT IT'S LIKE » Firsthand accounts

MARLEY & ME

FORTY YEARS AGO THIS MAY, BOB MARLEY DIED, AND JEFF STEINBERG '84 WAS THE LAST PERSON TO INTERVIEW THE REGGAE LEGEND. HERE, HE RECOUNTS THE CALL AND BREAKING THE NEWS ON WMCX.

BY JEFF STEINBERG

My connection to Bob was through my father, who was his longtime attorney and friend, so it wasn't just luck that I tracked Marley down for my first interview as a freshman disc jockey.

By then, everybody knew Bob was sick. Most people knew the story: He had discovered acral lentiginous melanoma in his toe after a soccer injury in 1977 but didn't want the toe amputated due to his Rastafarian faith, and the cancer eventually spread throughout his body.

In 2006, Steinberg's interview with Marley was submitted to the archives of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Marley was in Germany receiving treatment for the cancer when I interviewed him. I was at home for Passover, and my father told me he would be talking to Bob and perhaps I could talk to him if he was willing. Bob didn't want to talk to anybody at that point. So in the beginning of the recording you can hear my dad asking, and Bob says, "No, no, I'm all out of time." My father persisted. "Please Bob, it will take just a few minutes, he's all hooked up on the phone." "OK," Bob said, "Let's hear what he have to say."

I got on the phone and started firing away with my questions: *Who created reggae music?* "Reggae music was created through the environment." *Where is the Rastafarian movement headed?* "Africa." *Do you enjoy any other*

kinds of worldly music? "I enjoy all music, but to tell you the truth I am not into the punk business, but I like some of the new wave music. I like the Police, some of the music of dem do." *What's the message you are trying to portray in your music?* "Peace, love, and harmony." Before I knew it, the interview was over.

Fast-forward about two weeks. It's Monday, May 11, and I'm back on campus studying for a final when I got a call from my father saying that Bob had died. I was incredibly sad, of course, but my first instinct was to run to the station. I kicked the disc jockey off the air and made the announcement at 9:25 a.m. "We have some really sad news to pass along," I said. "I just found out that international recording

"**I DIDN'T THINK MANY PEOPLE WOULD BE LISTENING, BUT WITHIN MINUTES THE PHONELINES LIT UP... WE WERE GETTING CALLS FROM THE AP, CNN, AND MTV.**"

star Robert Nesta "Bob" Marley, at the age of 36, has died this morning in Miami, Florida, with his family by his side, and we're going to do a tribute and play Bob Marley music all day." Then I played *Redemption Song*.

I didn't think many people would be listening, but within minutes the phonelines lit up, and I remember thinking, "Oh no, I'm in trouble." We were getting calls from the AP, CNN, and MTV. I talked with Pete Fornatale, the legendary disc jockey from WNEW in New York City. The wire services started reporting that WMCX had announced Marley's death. At some point I picked up the phone, and it was my father on the other end. "What the bleep did you do?" he shouted. And I was like, "You

didn't tell me I couldn't tell anyone!" The phones rang all day long.

I played reggae music well into the afternoon and aired parts of the interview, which ended up being Bob's last, and is likely the last recording of his most precious and beautiful voice. At the end of my interview with him, I had asked him to say, "This is Bob Marley, and you're listening to WMCX in West Long Branch," which he did. But for me, the best part of that interview—then and now—is the end. After I hopped off the phone with Bob, he and my father had this beautiful exchange, and the last thing you hear on the recording is Bob faintly saying, "Good mon. Bye-bye." —as told to Breanne McCarthy

“Turn a Leaf” at Agora Gallery in New York City; it was his first New York show. He also exhibited more new work in October, as well as a full solo show in early 2021, both at Agora Gallery.

» **Adam Powley '05M** was named the 2020-2021 Teacher of the Year at Eastern Christian High School (ECHS) in North Haledon, New Jersey. He teaches 11th grade American history and has been with ECHS for 15 years.

» **Chrissy Skudera '05** was promoted to senior director of curriculum development at Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC), a national trade association for merit shop electrical and systems contractors. In this role, she serves as quality control for all IEC educational products, including its four-year electrical apprenticeship program.

» **Anthony Campanile '08** won the Deal Golf and Country Club Championship held in Deal, New Jersey, in September, beating out Monmouth sophomore Matt McCormick in a 36-hole match. Campanile is a former member of the men's golf team while McCormick, who knocked off several highly skilled golfers to get to the finals, is currently a member of the team.

» **Tina (Teresi) DiFazio '08** and Michael DiFazio welcomed a daughter, Ruby Evangeline DiFazio, on April 23, 2020.

» **Lee Simonetti '09**. See note for **Melissa Mehrer '12**.

2010s

» **Robert Donato '10**. See note for **Heather Donato '11**.

» **Daniel Jones '10** is a managing director of UHY Advisors, a leading professional services firm. He is a leader of the audit and

assurance group and has extensive knowledge of U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) reporting requirements for companies ranging in size from small to large accelerated filers. A licensed CPA in the state of New York, Jones was recently honored with an Emerging Leader Award by M&A Advisor.

» **Heather Donato '11** and **Robert Donato '10** welcomed their second child, Amelia Joy Donato, on May 15, 2020.

» **Morganne (Firmstone) Dudzinski '11, '13M** is associate director for the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU). In her new role, Dudzinski will develop, propose, and advocate for state higher education policy recommendations on behalf of NJASCU's seven member institutions, while also contributing to the association's communications and media relations. Previously, Dudzinski was Monmouth's director of news and public affairs and was responsible for creating, implementing, and managing a strategic media relations plan to expand the University's visibility, strengthen its reputation, and build support among key constituencies. Dudzinski, who previously worked as an adjunct instructor in the Department of Political Science and Sociology, served as captain of Monmouth's Division 1 field hockey team.

» **Anthony Mauro '11**. See note for **Gina Columbus '12**.

» **Maria Mazzone '11, '14M** is engaged to wed James Berner. The couple met in Asbury Park, New Jersey, in 2009 when Berner worked for Mazzone's father at his restaurant, and they started dating in 2017. They were engaged on Dec. 28, 2019, in Ventura, California, and are planning to wed on Nov. 13, 2021.

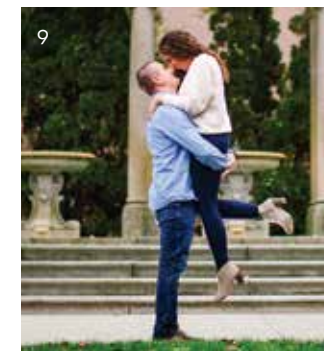
» **Gina Columbus '12** wed **Anthony Mauro '11** at the Jacques Reception Center in Middletown Township, New Jersey, on Aug. 29, 2020.

They celebrated with family and friends, many of whom are Monmouth University alumni—including **Sandra Meola '12, '15M** who was a bridesmaid.

» **Samantha DeAlmeida '12, '14M, '18M** was recently named to The 2020 Insider 100: Millennials, Insider NJ's listing of the most influential up-and-comers in New Jersey politics. DeAlmeida, who earned her bachelor's degree in political science and two master's degrees in public policy and homeland security at Monmouth, was recently named the second vice president and government affairs liaison for the Associated Builders and Contractors of New Jersey. She previously served as the New Jersey government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, where she worked to achieve legislative support for the organization's initiatives, resulting in several bills being signed into law by Gov. Phil Murphy. Prior to that, DeAlmeida served as deputy director of government relations and policy for the New Jersey Hospital Association, and as a policy analyst for the New Jersey State Legislature. DeAlmeida also works as an adjunct political science professor at Brookdale Community College and serves as the director for a nonprofit that provides equine-assisted therapy to veterans with PTSD.

» **Melissa Mehrer '12** wed **Lee Simonetti '09** on Jan. 7, 2021. The couple met while playing softball at Monmouth. They moved to North Carolina, but when they were visiting New Jersey for the holidays in December 2018, Simonetti took Mehrer to the beach to propose to her after they had enjoyed dinner at their favorite spot, Brickwall Tavern in Asbury Park, New Jersey.

» **Christina Forrest '13** was promoted to account director at Violet PR, a boutique, New Jersey-based public relations firm specializing in economic development, professional services, and social good. As account director



CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHS: **1.** Tina (Teresi) DiFazio '08 and Michael DiFazio welcomed a daughter, Ruby Evangeline DiFazio, on April 23, 2020. **2.** Heather Donato '11 and Robert Donato '10 welcomed their second child, Amelia Joy Donato, on May 15, 2020. **WEDDINGS:** **3.** Gina Columbus '12 wed Anthony Mauro '11 on Aug. 29, 2020. **4.** Melissa Mehrer '12 wed Lee Simonetti '09 on Jan. 7, 2021. **5.** Oscar Sanchez '13 wed Cameron Withers on Oct. 31, 2020. **6.** Kristen Harz '14 wed Michael Parisi '14 on Aug. 7, 2020. **ENGAGEMENTS:** **7.** Maria Mazzone '11, '14M is engaged to wed James Berner. **8.** Julie Green '17 is engaged to wed Vinny Mazzone '15. **9.** Sarah Marie Lewis '17 is engaged to wed Bradley Meyer '16. **10.** Stephanie Holtje '18 is engaged to Dominic “Dino” Marino '18.

at Violet PR, Forrest will manage media relations, content development, and social media programs for clients including Pittsburgh International Airport, Biggins Lacy Shapiro & Co., Kansas City Area Development Council, Luis Vidal + Architects, and the New Jersey Business Action Center, among others. Forrest was named a “Top 40 Under 40 PR Professional” by the NJ Ad Club in 2020, and has led 15 award-winning campaigns recognized by Bulldog Awards, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA NJ), and PRNEWS.

» **Oscar Sanchez '13** wed Cameron Withers on the beach in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Oct. 31, 2020. The couple enjoyed an intimate ceremony surrounded by a small gathering of family and friends. They plan to celebrate with a large reception of family and friends—including several alumni and Monmouth University staff members—on Oct. 30, 2021.

» **James Berner '14.** See note for **Maria Mazzone '11, '14M.**

» **Kristen Harz '14** wed **Michael Parisi '14** on Aug. 7, 2020. Family and friends—including a handful of fellow alumni who were in the wedding party—were able to attend the ceremony and small backyard reception, both of which were held in Toms River, New Jersey. Alumni in the wedding party included **Andrea (Harz) Maturo '10, Kristin Chevrier '14, Christina Zalot '14, Matt Laduca '14, Joe Bruno '14,** and **Tyler Driscoll '14.** The couple plans to hold a big celebration in June 2021.

» **Michael Parisi '14.** See note for **Kristen Harz '14.**

» **Keilynn Alicea '15M** recently set the record for the fastest known time running a round-trip course on New Jersey’s Appalachian Trail (AT). New Jersey is home to 72 straight miles of the AT that runs from the New York/New Jersey border near Wawayanda State Park in Hewitt, New Jersey, to the New Jersey/Pennsylvania border



CELEBRATIONS

ACCOLADES:

1. Martin Saltzman '82 is co-host of *It's Your Money with Jo Ann & Martin*, which seeks to educate viewers on all aspects of financial planning and investment topics.
2. Mike Farragher '88 and Barbara (Miskoff) Farragher '89 launched Love Letters Profiles, a writing service specializing in career profiles, résumés, and dating profiles.
3. Steven Chadwick '03 is an attorney at Leech Tishman Fuscaldo & Lampl, LLC in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, serving as counsel in the real estate, corporate, and energy practice groups.
4. Chrissy Skudera '05 was promoted to senior director of curriculum development at Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC).

Join us in June to relive your Monmouth moments.

ALUMNI WEEKEND
JUNE 11 – 14

Learn more about our in-person and virtual events at monmouth.edu/alumniweekend.

Opt in to receive updates by texting “Hello” to 732-314-5837.

near Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. Alicea ran the “out and back” course—running the full course one way, then turning around to traverse the same course back—covering a total of 144 miles in three days, 19 hours, and 52 minutes.

» **Vinny Mazzone '15.** See note for **Julie Green '17.**

» **Victoria Elizabeth Esler '16** was appointed assistant prosecutor for the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office in Toms River, New Jersey.

» **Margaret Evans '16M** has been selected as one of 25 inaugural Fellows of the Social Work Futures Lab at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. The project is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Evans is a program officer at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), based in Arlington, Virginia. In this role she manages programs, provides technical assistance, and further advances gender equity in partnership and collaboration with over 22 refugee resettlement agencies across the U.S. Her work as a Futures Fellow will focus on the future of gender justice and the intersections of white supremacy and capitalism that influence and hinder gender justice in the U.S. and globally.

» **Bradley Meyer '16.** See note for **Sarah Marie Lewis '17.**

» **Julie Green '17** is engaged to wed **Vinny Mazzone '15.** The couple met through friends at Monmouth University in 2014 and have been together ever since.

» **Sarah Marie Lewis '17** is engaged to wed **Bradley Meyer '16.** The couple met at Monmouth during their last year of college when they were group project partners in their senior perspectives course on video games; they became friends before going their own ways beginning their careers. Months later, they reconnected and, while getting to know each other, noticed the undeniable connection they shared. They have been together for more than three years and were engaged at their favorite beach spot in front of the University Bluffs in Long Branch, New Jersey, on Sept. 19, 2020. “Being Monmouth alumni, naturally we had our first date at the beach, and it has always been ‘our spot,’ which holds even more meaning now,” Lewis says. “We are filled with love and happiness for all that is to come.” The couple would also like to thank Assistant Professor of Art and Design, Corey Dzenko, Ph.D., for, “playing a role in our love story,” Lewis says. “We will never forget the first time we met and the project we worked on that started it all.”

NOT TO MISS »
Saturday, Oct. 2
HOME-COMING



Save the date for Monmouth University's Homecoming! Details of the event are still being developed and will be shared in the coming months at monmouth.edu/alumni.

» **Justin D. Okun '17** passed the Pennsylvania bar exam in October 2020 and recently began practicing as an attorney for Farrell & Associates in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in October 2020.

» **Stephanie Holtje '18** is engaged to **Dominic “Dino” Marino '18.** The couple met at Monmouth in 2016 and, upon graduating, started their careers—Holtje is a teacher and Marino is an officer in the Marine Corps. The two moved in together while Marino was stationed in San Diego, California, and, after a year of living together and exploring their new home, the groom-to-be proposed on the cliffs overlooking the water at sunset on Aug. 21, 2020. The couple plans to wed on July 22, 2022.

» **Dominic “Dino” Marino '18.** See note for **Stephanie Holtje '18.**

» **Miles Austin III '19** is the wide receiver's coach for the New York Jets. Austin is a former offensive quality control coach for the San Francisco 49ers and former wide receiver who spent the majority of his 10-year NFL career with the Dallas Cowboys. Prior to his career in the NFL, Austin was a standout wide receiver for Monmouth from 2002 to 2005. During his four years, Austin helped lead Monmouth to back-to-back Northeast Conference Championships in 2003 and 2004, and was the Hawks all-time leader in receptions, receiving yards, and touchdown catches. Austin, who was elected to Monmouth's Board of Trustees in July 2020, was inducted into the Monmouth University Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016.

» **Kayvon Paul '19** was recently named to The 2020 Insider 100: Millennials, Insider NJ's listing of the most influential up-and-comers in New Jersey politics. Cited for his background working on political campaigns and Garden State Equality, Insider NJ described Paul as “a rising star at [Trenton-based



UP TO THE TEST

ADELE BEEGLE LEADS PRODUCTION AT A ROCHE FACILITY THAT MAKES 250,000 COVID-19 TESTS PER WEEK.

BY MEERI KIM

Containment is key during the early stages of an outbreak, and the first step is identifying those who are infected. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it became clear that testing on a massive scale was desperately needed.

But how do diagnostic tests get made in such chaotic times? As quickly as possible, says Adele Beegle '98, senior operations manager at Swiss biomedical giant Roche.

In 2020, Beegle and her colleagues developed, manufactured, and received an Emergency Use Authorization from the Food and Drug Administration for a point-of-care COVID-19 test in only four months. The term “point-of-care” refers to testing that can be done outside a central laboratory, such as at a patient's bedside or a doctor's office. She leads a Branchburg, New Jersey-based team that produces 250,000 COVID-19 tests per week, with plans to double that amount later this year.

“There weren't many COVID-19 tests at the time, and it's been exciting that we were able to launch this so quickly,” says Beegle, who graduated from Monmouth with a degree in biology. “Everyone feels a sense of pride that what we're doing is really important.”

Beegle traces her career in biotechnology back to her undergraduate years at Monmouth, where she first learned about polymerase chain reaction (PCR), the revolutionary, Nobel Prize-winning technique used in Roche's diagnostic test. Without PCR, detecting the presence of a virus within a patient sample is like finding a needle in a haystack. PCR acts as a “molecular photocopier” that creates millions

of copies of a small portion of the virus's genetic material to make it much easier to spot.

The cobas SARS-CoV-2 & Influenza A/B test looks for genetic material from the viruses that cause both COVID-19 and the flu in order to distinguish which illness a patient has. A straw made up of packets of chemicals, along with the patient sample, pops into a toaster-sized analyzer called the cobas Liat System. Results are ready in just 20 minutes with an accuracy of 95% to 98%.

“When you put the patient sample into the analyzer, it's breaking those packets up in a certain order and doing the mixing and processing right in that straw,” she says. “At the end, it performs the PCR and gives you a positive or negative result.”

Beegle first put the skills she learned in Monmouth's labs into practice as an early-career scientist at Sanofi and Shiseido after graduation. In 2000, she landed a position at Roche doing quality control for PCR devices. That launched a 20-plus-year career at one of the world's largest biomedical corporations.

“I was in the quality control area for 13 years,” she says. “First, I was doing the testing, then I was reviewing and approving the data, and eventually I transitioned into managing the whole 40-person team.”

Today, Beegle leads the manufacturing team responsible for supplying Roche's test to the global market. Once the test received its Emergency Use Authorization in September, her team ramped up production to a 24-hour operation. She had to juggle the hiring of employees for a new overnight shift, competition with other companies to get the chemical raw materials, and the installation of new and complex equipment—all while trying to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak from occurring at the site.

Roche plans to scale up production within the next year and expand manufacturing to a COVID-19-only test as well. Despite the long hours, she pushes through, knowing the significance of her role in the midst of a global pandemic.

“What's exciting is that now everyone knows what PCR testing is, since it was all over the news,” says Beegle. “Whenever we go to parties again, I won't have to explain to people what I do. That's pretty cool.”

lobbying firm] MBI, focusing on helping nonprofits navigate the government process.” In September, Paul left MBI to complete an externship with Michael A. Shipp, U.S. District Court Judge for the District of New Jersey. He has an interest in copyright and trademark law and hopes to eventually work with minority-owned businesses, entrepreneurs, and start-up companies. While earning his bachelor’s degree in political science at Monmouth, Paul also worked as a research assistant for the Monmouth University Polling Institute, creating datasets for congressional house races across the country for the 2018 midterms. He is also a founding member of the Asbury Park Young Democrats and the Monmouth University Democrats.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

» Online: monmouth.edu/ClassNotes

» By email: classnotes@monmouth.edu

» By mail: **Class Notes, Monmouth University Magazine, 400 Cedar Ave., West Long Branch, NJ 07764-1898**

Monmouth University encourages alumni to share news regarding career changes, awards and honors, marriages, anniversaries, births, and other life events for inclusion in Class Notes. All submissions are subject to editing for clarity and length. We welcome submissions of high-resolution digital images for possible inclusion with your class note; however, we reserve the right not to print submitted photos due to space limitations or issues with image resolution.

In addition to the news items sent by alumni, the University receives press releases from businesses and organizations announcing alumni achievements, and subscribes to an online news clipping service that provides news items about alumni. These items are edited and placed in the appropriate class section. Monmouth magazine staff members try to verify the accuracy of this information; however, the University cannot be responsible for incorrect information contained herein. If you would like us to correct any inaccuracies that have been printed, please contact the magazine at magazine@monmouth.edu.

2020s

» **Erica DiNapoli '20** is an assistant editor for OnLive, a web resource for physicians and health professionals that’s part of MJH Life Sciences, a full-service medical media company. She joined the company in 2020 and now assists in editing and publishing both videos and informational articles to the website, as well as assisting in managing the company’s social media platforms. Prior to joining MJH Life Sciences, she held two marketing internships at United Teletech Financial Federal Credit Union and Trendsetter Media & Marketing.

» Basketball forward **Mustapha Traore '20** signed a professional contract with UMF Skallagrimur Borgarnes in Iceland. Traore, who played in 123 games in four seasons for the Hawks, starting 83 of them, netted 611 career points and grabbed 520 career rebounds while blocking 47 shots in his time. UMF Skallagrimur Borgarnes competes in the D1 division of the Icelandic Basketball Association under the umbrella of International Basketball Federation (FIBA) Europe. [M](#)

IN MEMORIAM

» ALUMNI

Stacia E. Apostolos '41A (Sept. 7, 2020)

James “Jim” Elmer '61 (Oct. 30, 2020)

Richard Fuhrmann '63 (April 30, 2020)

Wayman F. Smith III '63 (Sept. 15, 2020)

Sydney S. Brooke '64 (October 2020)

Edward “Ed” P. Draney '64 (Nov. 26, 2020)

Susan C. Koestler '64 (Aug. 25, 2020)

Thomas W. Wright '64 (1980)

Aaron B. Cohen '65 (July 26, 2020)

Robert W. Landis '65 (Nov. 13, 2020)

Richard (“Dick”) H. Topham '65 (Sept. 17, 2020)

James F. Isacson '66 (March 21, 2020)

Sarah (George) Arndt '67 (Sept. 2, 2020)

Robert Freyman '67 (Feb. 10, 2021)

Denise Fronapfel '67 (Oct. 19, 2020)

Linda C. Greene-Feinberg '67 (Sept. 11, 2020)

William A. Berger '68 (April 2020)

William Eugene San Filippo Jr. '68 (Aug. 29, 2020)

Patricia F. Waldman '68A (Dec. 7, 2020)

William “Bill” Salandi '69 (Oct. 31, 2020)

Paul J. Abrams '70 (Dec. 4, 2020)

Joseph F. Dennis '70 (June 1, 2020)

Douglas H. Ewing '70 (Aug. 27, 2020)

Jean S. Lizotte '70 (April 28, 2014)

Sharlene Wach '70 (July 7, 2020)

Jay K. Andrews '71M (Oct. 12, 2020)

Shirley G. Carpenter '71 (Nov. 10, 2020)

Sharon Rose (Monaghan) Mallikarjun '72, '82M, '01M (Oct. 1, 2020)

Joan C. Hall '73M (Aug. 26, 2020)

Elise Ann Gonzales '74 (Sept. 10, 2020)

James W. Breitbach '75M (Dec. 4, 2020)

Mary DeRidder '77M (Oct. 5, 2020)

James B. Golden '78 (Oct. 17, 2020)

Barbara J. McCarthy '79 (Nov. 25, 2020)

John H. Newsome '79M (Sept. 8, 2018)

William “Bill” Esler '82 (Sept. 14, 2020)

Kathleen Hauck '90A (December 2020)

Kathleen Holevinski '94M (Oct. 18, 2020)

Veronica Freeman '95 (Aug. 23, 2020)

Catherine “Cathy” Villani '96M (Jan. 18, 2021)

Patrick J. Duva '20 (Nov. 5, 2020)

» FACULTY AND STAFF

John “Jack” Burke (former associate professor and chair of the Department of Music and Theatre Arts) Dec. 10, 2020

Richard J. Pirchner (associate professor emeritus of computer science) Oct. 3, 2019

Dianne McKinney Van Arsdale '75 (former longtime adjunct in the School of Nursing and Health Studies) Aug. 26, 2020

Karen Wyant (assistant registrar for academic affairs) Dec. 30, 2020

» FRIENDS

Patrick S. Clay (former student) Sept. 3, 2020

Peter Cartmell (friend) Feb. 22, 2020

Charles Sills (friend) Aug. 28, 2020

Margot Warters (friend) Jan. 15, 2021

REMEMBRANCES



MARGARET “MARGOT” WARTERS PHILANTHROPIST, 1930–2021

Margot was always a kind, inquisitive, and supportive presence on campus, and her light shone brightest when she spoke with our students. Her thoughtful investments in scholarships for promising scientists were instrumental in the dramatic rise in the caliber of students Monmouth has recruited and retained in recent years.

Her generosity touched the lives of so many budding young scientists, and Margot cherished the time spent with each, hearing about their goals, ambitions, and research. We all will miss Margot at the annual School of Science Summer Research Program Symposium, and we recall fondly the many conversations she had with her scholarship recipients. She would walk from poster to poster, reviewing the research and asking challenging questions. She always told me how proud she was of our students.

Margot and her late husband, Bill Warters, who was a past chair of the Board of Trustees, had been close members of the Monmouth family since 1970. Bill and Margot’s family commitment and support were enormously influential over the past six decades, and their legacy will live on through Monmouth’s students. —Beth Brody, Director of Development

JACK BURKE

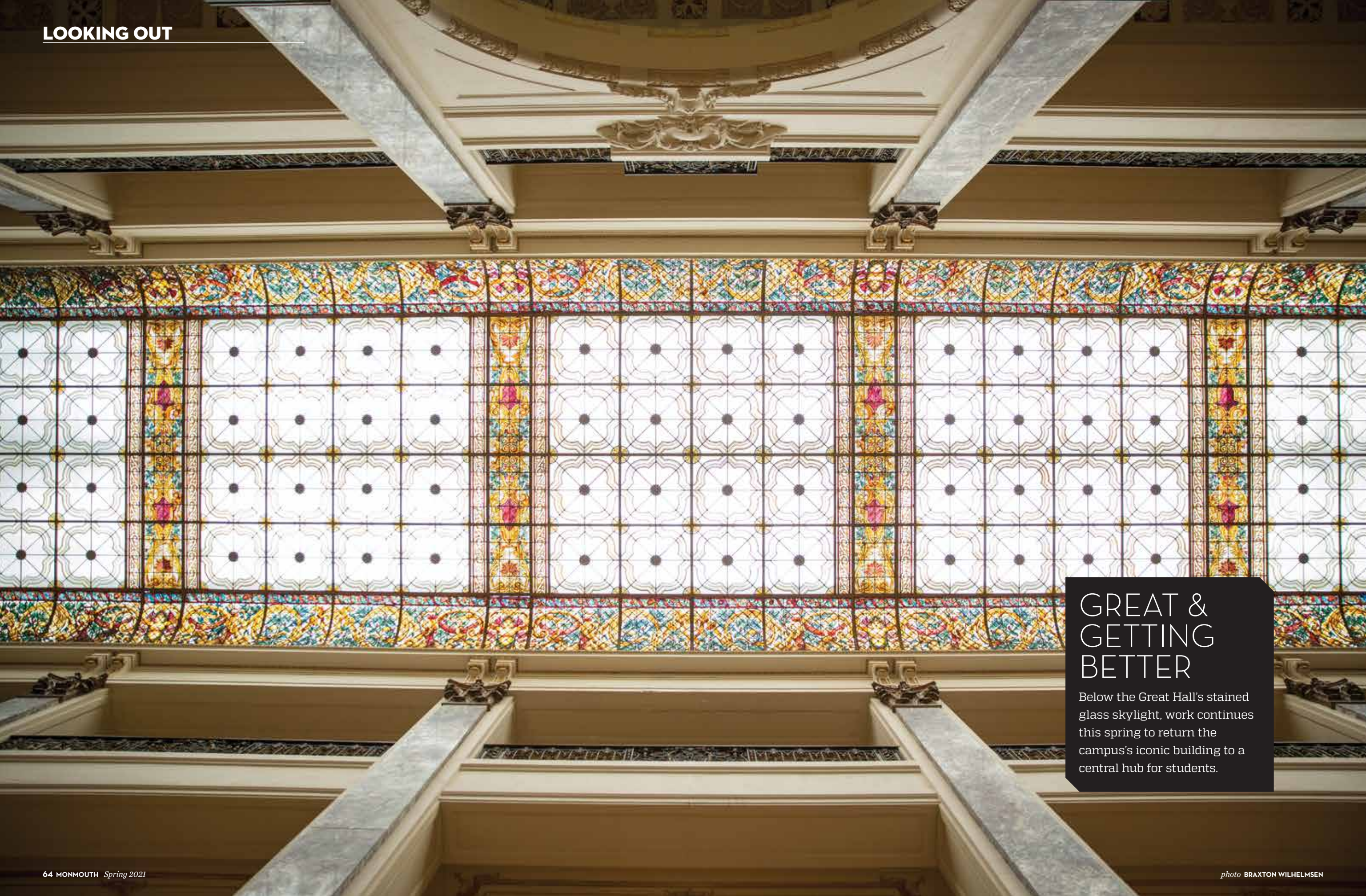
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND THEATRE ARTS, 1945–2020

As a master teacher, Jack expected the best from his students. He applied his professionalism to every aspect of theater production, from auditioning to the notes he would give on a play’s final performance. He expected students to work hard, but most importantly, he urged them to care about their work.

He applied the same standards to his classes, including the history of theater and acting for non-majors. He engaged students personally so that they could use theater and acting to understand themselves. He taught them tools for reflecting on their lives that they could use for their lifetime. He showed them how acting offered them many practical ways to better themselves. Those of us who are teachers know how self-sealed so many college students are and how much difficulty they have in opening up. Students in Jack’s classes were given the great opportunity to learn how to see themselves from the outside and the inside.

—Stanton Green, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and Former Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences





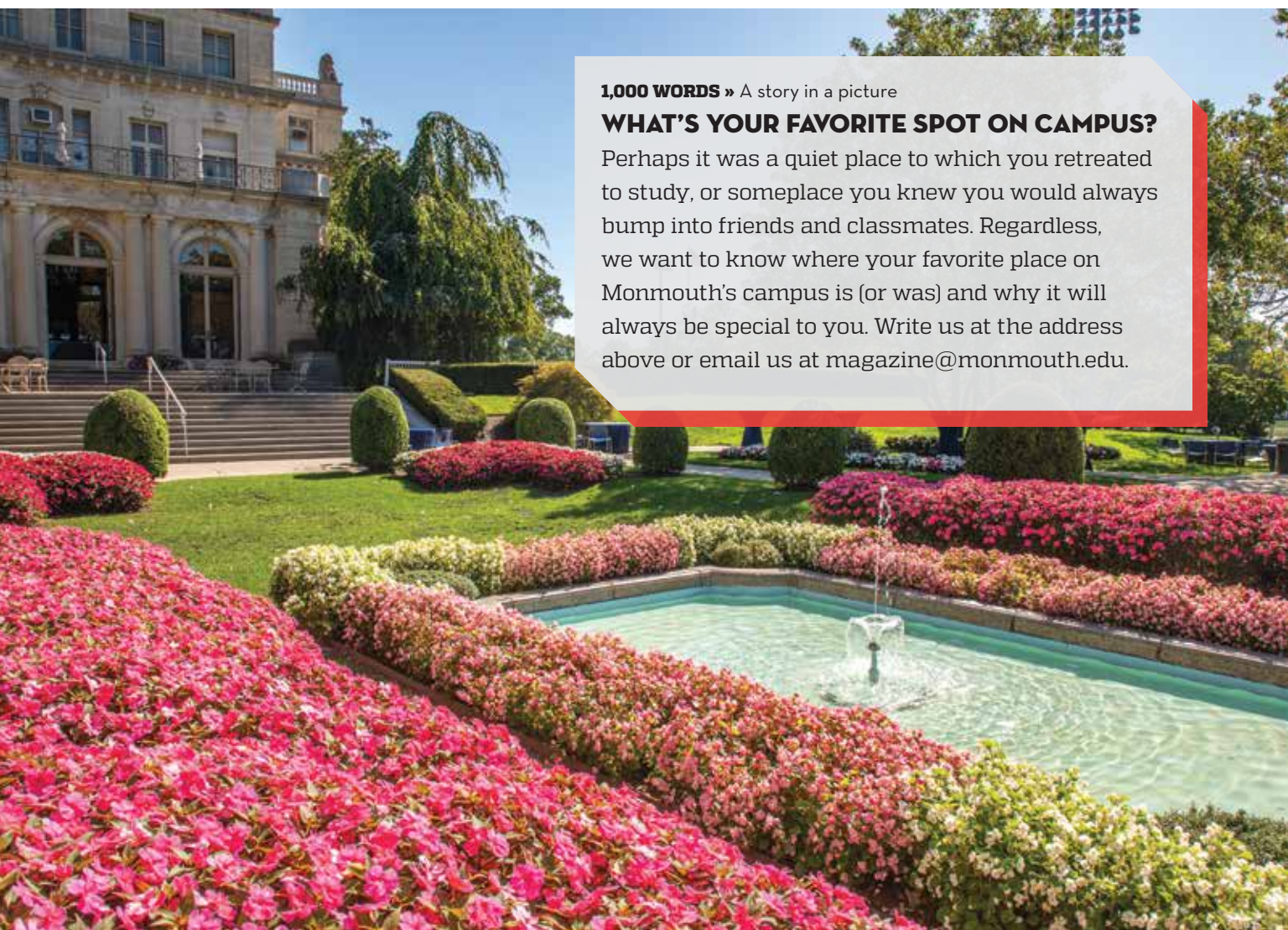
GREAT & GETTING BETTER

Below the Great Hall's stained glass skylight, work continues this spring to return the campus's iconic building to a central hub for students.

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WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SPOT ON CAMPUS?

Perhaps it was a quiet place to which you retreated to study, or someplace you knew you would always bump into friends and classmates. Regardless, we want to know where your favorite place on Monmouth's campus is (or was) and why it will always be special to you. Write us at the address above or email us at magazine@monmouth.edu.