

GEAR SHIFT

BEN SINCLAIR '06, STAR AND CO-CREATOR OF *HIGH MAINTENANCE*, MAPS HIS NEXT MOVE | PAGE 24



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WELCOME BACK

In October, the Class of 2020 officially returned to campus for the first time since COVID-19 for a proper commencement. For pictures of the 2020 celebration and the 2021 commencement, visit Oberlin's Flickr page: www.flickr.com/photos/oberlin.

PHOTO BY MIKE CRUPI

ON THE COVER

Ben Sinclair '06 of HBO's *High Maintenance* decamps to California.

PHOTO BY RYAN PFLUGER





An Ambitious Commitment to Students

OBERLIN HAS A WELL-EARNED REPUTATION FOR ACADEMIC RIGOR AND MUSICAL EXCELLENCE, a powerful combination not often seen on a single campus. The experience we provide students during their time with us is transformational.

But an Oberlin education extends beyond our campus and classrooms. We put our liberal arts education to work, fostering lives of purpose and meaning through the integration of academic and experiential learning opportunities such as winter term intensives, undergraduate research, internships, fellowships, study away, and community engaged learning. Oberlin has a long-standing tradition of encouraging students to explore the practical application of their studies. By opening our classrooms to the globe, we help our students flourish and make the world a better place.

Internships and other pre-professional opportunities are among the high impact experiences that shape success after college. Through the Junior Practicum and other programs, Oberlin already is providing more than 400 internships and experiential learning opportunities during which students interact with all kinds of organizations. Often, their experiences change how they see themselves and the future direction of their lives.

Now, we are taking the next step to amplify our efforts to launch students into successful and impactful careers. Beginning with the Class of 2026, all Oberlin students will be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 to support a full-time unpaid or underpaid high-quality summer internship, research experience, or other pre-professional opportunity. We call this the Oberlin Internship+ Commitment.

As the program's name states, the Internship+ Commitment will expand Oberlin's obligation to provide applied learning experiences for its students. It will not be a competition, as co-curricular programs often are at other institutions. All Obies, regardless of background, will have access to opportunities that enrich their time at Oberlin and prepare them for a bright future.

Of course, we recognize that each student has their own unique path, and we celebrate that. If an internship does not appeal to a student, this program also will help fund individuals doing research, performance-based programs like summer festivals, and other similar types of experiences. This will be open to every student who wishes to participate.

This new approach will leverage the elegant design of our Career Communities structure, including Junior Practicum and Senior Launch programs, which we developed to meet student needs during the first year of the pandemic. The series of programs guides students throughout their time at Oberlin, providing access to a network of alumni, friends, peers, and mentors from the moment they first step foot on campus.

The Internship+ Commitment will allow us to offer a co-curricular approach in an even more fulsome way. It is a truly Oberlin construct. A difference maker for our students.

One of the clear strengths of the Internship+ Commitment program will be how it taps into one of this institution's greatest strengths—our alumni. There is no school on earth that has Oberlin's incredible network of alumni at the ready to connect students to opportunities that could change their lives. Many of you have already offered your support of our Junior Practicum program by committing to sponsoring internships for the summer of 2022.

If you would like to become involved in the Oberlin Internship+ Commitment, I encourage you to reach out to our Career Development Center staff at internships@oberlin.edu or (440) 775-8140.

CARMEN TWILLIE AMBAR
President, Oberlin College

Oberlin

VOL. 116 NO. 2

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The *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* (ISSN 0029-7518), founded in 1904, is published by Oberlin's Office of Communications and distributed to alumni, parents, and friends of Oberlin College.

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VOICES HEARD

When the recent issue of the alumni magazine came, I intended to add it to the pitiful pile on my nightstand, to be ignored with the others. But the cover caught my eye. So instead, I opened it to the feature story (“Black Voices,” Spring 2021). The beautiful artwork drew me in, and the stories told by fellow students, graduates, and faculty, swallowed me, so that I left my own small world as I read. Thank you all, writers; Noa Denmon, the artist; and editors for a creation beautifully carried out. No other words needed.

BETTE LEDDY MCDEVITT ’54
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Congratulations on “Black Voices.” It was an extraordinary editorial idea, well carried out, beautifully illustrated, and reminded me of the Oberlin I knew nearly 80 years ago. I read every word in print and on the web, and was struck by the ring of truth in almost every sentence. This was not PR copy. It came straight from the hearts and minds of real people. Sometimes Oberlin seems to forget where it came from. It shouldn’t.

JIM SUNSHINE ’46
Oberlin, Ohio

The cover illustration depicts two white police officers dominating the foreground of a quiet residential street in an upper-class neighborhood. Their heads are turned to observe a Black homeowner mowing his lawn. The Black man looks apprehensively toward the officers, framed in the space between them as though anticipating some inexplicable inflammatory confrontation. The lower right caption provides the context: “Black Voices: Recollections and Reflections on Racial Injustice in America.” The narrative implied

outside the frame of the literal illustration is contrived to play out in the imagination: racist cops are poised to harass or harm an innocent Black man for “no reason” other than the color of his skin. The complexities of racial injustice and policing in America deserve a far more expansive discussion than this reductionist simplicity.

JAMES W. VALENTINE ’67
Woodland Hills, Calif.

REMEMBERING STUART FRIEBERT

How baffling to learn of Stuart Friebert’s death (Fall/Winter 2020). I graduated from Oberlin in 1974. Yet somehow Stuart kept occupying my hopes, my humor, and my creative practice. He was the professor (along with the great David Young) who introduced us poets to Tranströmer and Kafka, to the vast sea of world writers, and to the beautiful wanderers of the pages of [poetry magazine] *Field*. He was the guy who made us set our alarms for 3 a.m. so we’d wake up (grouching) and record our dreams. Still kneeling with a notebook some nights, arthritic, fumbling with my pen, I’m roused by the wavelengths and fireworks of strange stories more piercing than any clock. It’s that experience of trusting the dark that still feeds my experimental prose, my interactions with students of writing and English as a Second Language, and my expressive arts clients. And with the autistic adults I have the great privilege to support. They think a lot like Stuart—remarkably.

Two years ago I wrote Stuart to thank him for so much after so many years, and he sent a hilarious response. He was the teacher whose sandals I memorized because I couldn’t look him in the face, I was so shy and fond. I owe Stuart my second life. In his new place, I’m sure he’s blooming.

LISSA MCLAUGHLIN ’74
Madison, Wis.

When I learned that Stuart Friebert had died, I went to my collection of quotations about writing and found this paraphrase of what Mr. Friebert said during a creative writing class in the early 1970s: “Write about things, places, people, that are yours and no one else’s. One time a teacher put a pineapple in front of the class and told everyone to write about the pineapple, and I wrote pages and pages about

the pineapple. But I did not hate the pineapple, nor did I love the pineapple, nor did I care at all about the pineapple. And consequently, none of my words was true or meant a thing. Write about what is *yours*. Don’t write about *any* tree. Pick a tree: then climb it, eat its fruit, prune it, smell its leaves, have a picnic under it, rake its leaves, make love under it. And then—*maybe then*—you can write about it, and your words will have meaning and be true.”

DAVID PELL ’75
Rochester, N.Y.

COVERING BEN SINCLAIR

Have I missed something? Has there ever been an article about Oberlin graduate Ben Sinclair, television writer and producer of the HBO series *High Maintenance*? [The show] is truly a work of art, totally original and absolutely stellar in terms of writing, acting, and directing. Sinclair, as “the guy,” along with his ex-wife, Katja Blitchfeld, acts in and directs the series. Each episode of all four seasons is an artistic and humanitarian gem. Not only does this talented man deserve an article in our alumni magazine, he deserves a feature article! I’m so proud of my school to have produced such a genius. Kindly update me if there has ever been mention of or an article of this Oberlin graduate, Ben Sinclair.

DEBORAH SWANGER FORTIER ’72
New York, N.Y.

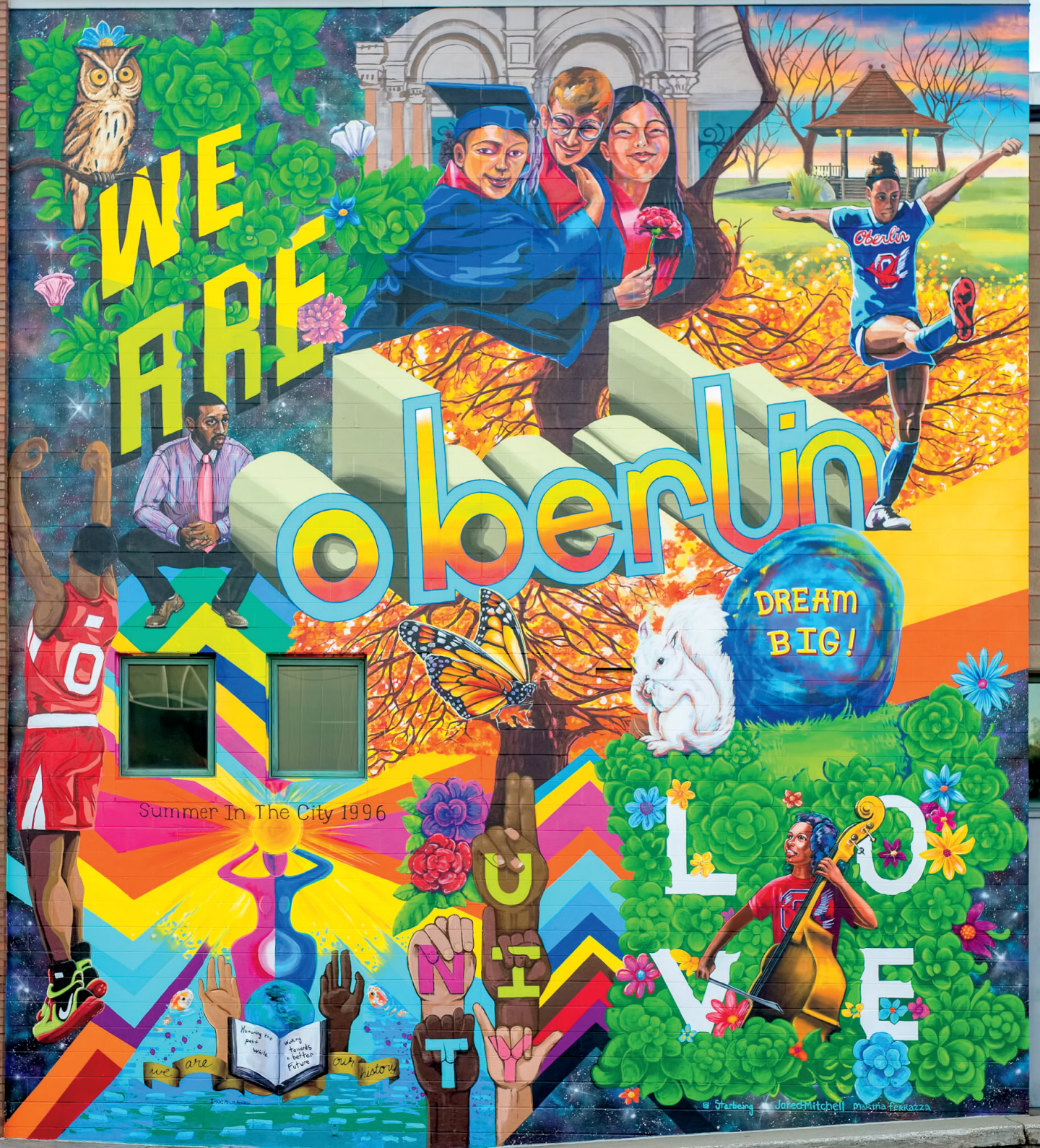
Update to Deborah: Please see the cover of this issue.

CORRECTIONS: *In our story on Cheryl Willis Hudson ’70 and her publishing house, Just Us Books, we incorrectly characterized her time working at Houghton Mifflin; she was with the publisher for three of her 15 years in publishing. We also misspelled the names of her children; they are Katura and Stephan Hudson.*

Readers pointed out that our recipe for flan de queso left out an ingredient: the queso. The recipe should have included a package of cream cheese.

Send letters to *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*, 247 W. Lorain St., Suite C, Oberlin, OH 44074-1089; or send emails to alum.mag@oberlin.edu. The magazine reserves the right to determine the suitability of letters for publication and to edit them for accuracy and length.

Around Tappan Square



The mural, located behind the Oberlin Bookstore, was a collaboration between Taya Rosen-Jones '97 and, pictured at right, muralists Martha Ferrazza, Isaiah Williams, and Jared Mitchell.



TOWN/GOWN

Highlights of Oberlin Life Featured in New Community-Created Mural

BY YVONNE GAY

MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE FROM THE COLLEGE AND TOWN came together to create a 32-foot mural on the back of the Oberlin Bookstore during a community paint day in August. The result is an expressive collage that project organizer Tanya Rosen-Jones '97 hopes will delight and inspire passersby.

"I hope [people] feel joy when they see the vibrant colors," she says. "I hope they feel pride in what a special place Oberlin is. I hope they realize there is a strong arts, sports, and music culture in this town."

Rosen-Jones, who owns a photography studio in downtown Oberlin, collaborated on the project with Oberlin High School and mural painters Martha Ferrazza of Oberlin, Jared Mitchell of Amherst Township, and Isaiah Williams of Cleveland. With community members lending a hand, the August installation of "We Are Oberlin" took just two weeks, but its groundwork was two years in the making. Its location was inspired by an existing installation painted in 1996. The mural, which had become weather beaten, depicted a sitting figure whose hands steadied a ball of light on top of its head, with the Earth and an open book at its feet. "I wondered about its origins," says Rosen-Jones. "It was almost 25 years old, and there was no graffiti. I wondered how it was still respected after so much time."

Her inquiries led to former Oberlin associate dean Brenda Grier-Miller, who ran a camp in the 1990s that connected middle-school students to local artists for hands-on learning experiences. During a 1996 mural painting class, students came up with the concept and installed the work with the help of Nanette Yannuzzi, Oberlin professor of studio art, and Miller's daughter, Imani Miller-Annibel '03.

"They were sad to see the mural go, but excited about a new generation getting the opportunity to create something beautiful and inspirational in the space," explains Rosen-Jones. "We compromised that any new design would include an homage to the original mural."

Rosen-Jones consulted with middle school art teachers and worked with a committee of local artists and community and college members. "I wanted the mural to feel community-owned, so it involved three important steps," she says: Oberlin High School student participation, a community-wide vote, and a community paint day. Ultimately, 700 votes were cast to choose the winning design.

"Oberlin truly is a special place," says Rosen-Jones. "It's small enough so that we celebrate our victories together and we suffer our losses together. It is the kind of place where you can make a positive difference in people's lives."



PRIZE WINNER

Alum Angrist Wins 2021 Nobel Prize

Joshua D. Angrist '82, the Ford Professor of Economics at MIT, was awarded the 2021 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. Angrist shares half of the Nobel with Guido W. Imbens of the Stanford Graduate School of Business "for their methodological contributions to the analysis of causal relationships." The other half of the award goes to David Card of the University of California at Berkeley "for his empirical contributions to labor economics."

Angrist and Imbens were recognized for their work in interpreting data from natural

experiments, which laid the groundwork for researchers to draw conclusions about cause and effect from real-world situations. "Their research has substantially improved our ability to answer key causal questions, which has been of great benefit to society," says Peter Fredriksson, chair of the Economic Sciences Prize Committee.

In an MIT press briefing, Angrist said he is "humbled and gratified" by receiving the award.

Angrist's research interests include the economics of education and school reform; social programs and the labor market; the effects of

immigration, labor market regulation, and institutions; and econometric methods for evaluating programs. A native of Columbus, Ohio, he holds a master's degree and a PhD in economics from Princeton. He was an assistant professor at Harvard University for two years and a faculty member at Hebrew University until 1996, when he joined the MIT faculty.

Angrist joins three other Oberlin graduates whose work has been honored with a Nobel: Robert Millikan (physics) in 1923, Roger Sperry (medicine) in 1981, and Stanley Cohen (medicine) in 1986.

FINANCE

College Secures \$80 Million in Bonds for Infrastructure Program

INVESTORS RALLIED AROUND OBERLIN'S geothermal infrastructure project in late July, pouring \$80 million into one of higher education's first Certified Climate Bond offerings.

The certification by the Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI) indicates that independent experts have verified the environmental benefit of Oberlin's Sustainable Infrastructure Program (SIP) in alignment with the goals and targets of the Paris Climate Agreement. This is only the second Certified Climate Bond offering among U.S. colleges and universities, and third in the world.

The bonds attracted bids totaling nearly three times the amount of the offering. The proceeds enable Oberlin to fully fund the first phases of its \$140 million SIP, while realizing significant savings in borrowing costs, compared to both traditional financing and other green bonds on the market.

"Both the CBI certification and the enthusiasm shown by some of the nation's most prestigious investors serve as strong endorsements of Oberlin's Sustainable Infrastructure Program," says Rebecca Vazquez-Skillings, Oberlin's vice president for finance and administration. "The market values our leadership in environmental sustainability and has confidence in our ability to align financial stewardship, environmental innovation, and institutional mission." Vazquez-Skillings says that this issuance marks the lowest cost of long-term financing Oberlin has ever achieved.

The four-year SIP will convert buildings throughout Oberlin's 440-acre campus to geothermal heating and cooling, drawing on 1,100 wells that harness the earth's natural underground temperatures to replace traditional fuels such as coal and Oberlin's current heat source, natural gas.

The project will also replace century-old steam pipes with an efficient, low-



temperature distribution network that will save five million gallons of water a year and reduce operating costs by more than \$1 million annually. At the same time, Oberlin's buildings are being upgraded to accommodate the new system, conserve energy, and modernize electrical and communication technologies.

The project will propel Oberlin toward its goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2025.

"The SIP is a once-in-a-lifetime project that positions Oberlin as a global leader in clean energy," says Meghan Riesterer, Oberlin's

assistant vice president for campus energy and sustainability.

The college's partners on the project include Ever-Green Energy, which has been advising Oberlin on implementation of its Carbon Neutrality Resource Master Plan since 2016. Community partners include the City of Oberlin, First Church of Oberlin, First United Methodist Church of Oberlin, Oberlin City Schools, and Mercy Hospital. Design, construction, planning, and technical advisory partners include M.A. Mortenson Company,

Salas O'Brien, Makovich & Pusti Architects, Rafter A Surveyors, Frost Brown Todd, and Ernst & Young.

Oberlin was one of the first signatories of the Carbon Commitment (previously American Colleges & University Presidents Climate Commitment) in 2006. The college's commitment to environmental sustainability is longstanding and broad-based, ranging from faculty and student research and environmental curriculum to green buildings to joint environmental planning with the City of Oberlin.



OBIESAFE

Doctor on Call

NOT EVERYONE AT OBERLIN knows who James Anthony '75 is, but anyone in the college community who tested positive for COVID-19 during the last academic year knows his voice. They've spoken with him on the phone. They even have his cell phone number—and his encouragement—to call any time.

The medical director of occupational health for Mercy Health Lorain and the medical lead of Oberlin's testing program, Anthony pledged to personally call each person who tested positive—even though at the time he didn't know if the numbers would be in the hundreds or more. Oberlin's approach to the pandemic has kept positives low—as of the beginning of fall semester, only 53 out of 22,434 tests since the college began the testing protocol. And Anthony called each person.

"They deserved a physician to talk to; that's only fair," he says. "It's scary. You've got so much stress involved in these positive tests and the effect it might have on you and your family and the people around you. At Oberlin, it's a family. So if you get that call, you feel like your family's been invaded. It was a really stressful time. So I made

sure I called each person."

The conversations with students included outlining the next steps—a process managed by campus health coordinator Katie Gravens—along with providing support and answering questions.

Anthony says the reactions went in three different directions. About half simply didn't believe it was true: "They would go into a variety of questions about the test, and whether it was accurate." The second response, which he said represented about 40 percent of those he called, was, "Oh my god, you're kidding me! Now what do I do?" The third type of response was pure fear: "In these cases, they hardly talked."

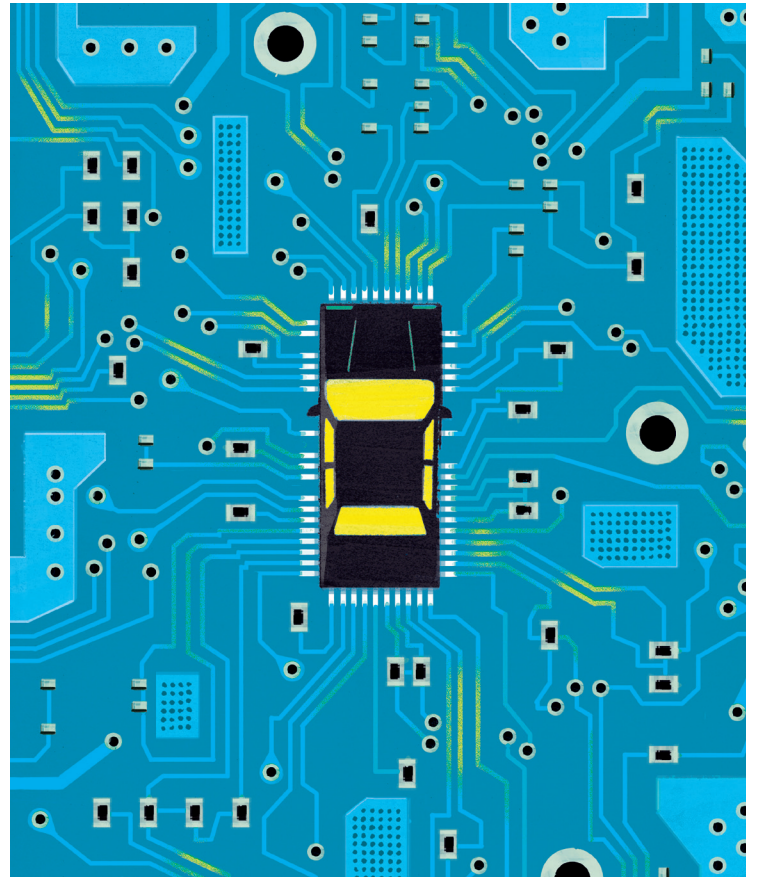
Anthony had a separate cell phone devoted to these calls and offered the number for any follow-up questions or concerns. And he knew he had to keep up-to-date on the science and the medical responses to questions. "These are Oberlin students—you had better have read everything you needed to."

Atticus Kaplan '23, an environmental studies major from Brooklyn, N.Y., was one of those students: "I was very worried, and he was very reassuring. He explained the whole process."

While those in the Oberlin community might feel lucky that a fellow Obie was leading the testing response, Anthony says it was he who felt lucky. "To have the opportunity was equally serendipitous and surprising," he says. "I wasn't trying to be their doctor—I just wanted to give them a sense of security and to let them know there was someone they could talk to.

"I can smile on the phone," he adds. "I can make it a little less stressful."

Oberlin students, faculty, and staff are required to be vaccinated for COVID-19, and all students must sign an ObieSafe Community Agreement demonstrating their commitment to the health, wellness, and safety of all community members. To keep up-to-date on Oberlin's response to the pandemic, visit www.oberlin.edu/obiesafe.



FACULTY

Maybe You Can Drive My Car

BY AMANDA NAGY

Research into hacking a car's computer system wins the Golden Goose Award

Assistant Professor of Computer Science Stephen Checkoway is among a team of researchers whose study of cybersecurity issues with internet-connected automobiles was recognized with the Golden Goose Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The award, established in 2012 to counter criticisms of wasteful government spending, honors federally funded work that according to AAAS, "may have been considered silly, odd, or obscure when first conducted, but has resulted in significant benefits to society."

Checkoway was a graduate student at UC-San Diego in 2009 when Professor Stefan Savage invited him to work on an automotive computer security project. Researchers there and at the University of Washington teamed up to investigate if a vehicle's computing systems could be hacked, and how that could affect a driver's ability to control their car.

Checkoway, one of the lead senior PhD students, worked with a team that purchased a pair of identical 2009 Chevy Impalas. Over the course of two years, they demonstrated the ability to remotely take over the car's computers and control all the functions under computer control. The team published a pair of

RECENT RELEASES

Oberlin Music Label Celebrates New Music

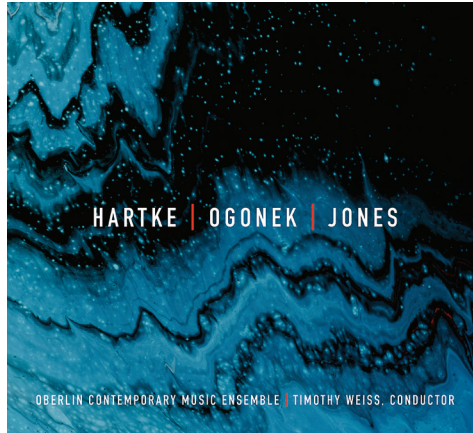
OBERLIN CONSERVATORY ENJOYS A longstanding reputation as a hub for the creation and performance of new music, and the Contemporary Music Ensemble—the student group directed by professor Timothy Weiss—is the primary conduit through which this surge of artistry flows.

So maybe it's no surprise that 2021 might be remembered as the Year of the Composer for Oberlin Music, the recording label that celebrates the conservatory's students and faculty, as well as esteemed guest collaborators. All four of the label's 2021 releases feature world premieres by acclaimed 21st-century composers, and three of them showcase the creations of Oberlin's own composition department.

Also not surprisingly: The student musicians of the Contemporary Music Ensemble—or CME—play a central role in all four projects.

The concept that led to *The Oberlin Concertos* (released in September) was initially hatched in a conversation between Oberlin composition professor Jesse Jones and his former teacher, acclaimed pianist Xak Bjerken. It was Jones who suggested writing a chamber concerto to be premiered by his friend and mentor, and it was Bjerken—a former longtime member of the Los Angeles Piano Quartet and soloist with the L.A. Philharmonic—who was immediately hooked.

Their plan gave rise to another commission—for the chair of Oberlin's Composition Department, Grammy Award-winner Stephen Hartke—and then another, for fellow composition faculty member Elizabeth Ogonek. The resulting works were recorded in three sessions over two years, with Bjerken joining forces with CME and conductor Weiss for the



world-premiere performances of each piece on campus, in addition to their recorded debuts.

The Oberlin Concertos followed the April arrival of *Hartke | Ogonek | Jones*, another showcase of Oberlin's composition faculty. (Ogonek parted ways with Oberlin this year to join the faculty of Cornell University, where Bjerken also teaches.) It was released in conjunction with *Norman | Trigos | Broening*, which features works by renowned composers Andrew Norman, Juan Trigos, and Benjamin Broening. Both recordings highlight performances by CME, under the direction of Weiss.

Due to land in early December is *Jesse Jones: In Profile*, a collection of five varied works that offer a further glimpse into the playful and numinous sides of the composer's musical language and provide a six-year snapshot from his prolific two-decade career. Once again, Jones is united with CME and Weiss, as well as the Oberlin Orchestra and conductor Raphael Jiménez. Faculty collaborators also abound, among them Richard Hawkins (clarinet), Alexa Still (flute), Robert Walters (English horn), and Drew Pattison (bassoon).

Oberlin Music recordings are available via digital music channels everywhere.

landmark papers showing how a remote attacker could use a range of digital pathways to override mechanical functions tied to the engine, lights, and brakes.

"The first paper asked what capabilities an attacker would have if they were able to compromise one of the components in the car," Checkoway says. "We connected to

the cars' internal networks to examine what we could do once they were hacked. The second paper explored how someone could hack the car from afar."

Their seminal research led automakers to adopt new security practices as standard procedure. "The work had a lot of impact," Checkoway says. "It prompted

manufacturers to start considering car safety concerns."

GM appointed a vice president of product security to lead a new division. The Society for Automotive Engineers (SAE), the standards body for the automotive industry, quickly issued the first automotive cybersecurity standards. Other car companies followed, as did the

federal government. In 2012, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency launched a new project geared toward creating hacking-resistant, cyber-physical systems.

Checkoway's current research focuses on the security of cyber-physical systems, particularly aviation.

Thought Process



ISN'T IT ICONIC? "What happens if you take an object and make a slight change to it in a different space? How does it fit in relation to the original? Is it a copy, or is it new and different? Which is also a larger question that art has always asked."

These are the questions artist and curator Aria Dean '15 is asking with her piece *Ironic Ionic Replica*, a to-scale, paper replica of the wooden column that architect Robert Venturi installed

as part of his addition to the Allen Memorial Art Museum. In an interview with Becky Akinyode in the online architecture magazine *PIN-UP*, Dean described the Venturi piece at Oberlin as "a totem for a time when I was

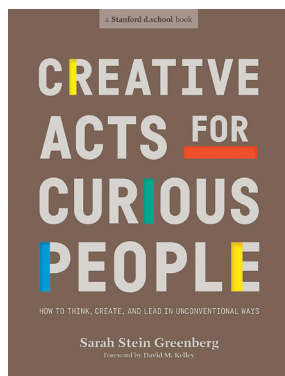
consumed with architectural theory, which led me to conceptual and minimal art from the 20th century, work that still consumes me."

Dean's *Ironic Ionic Replica* was part of the Hammer Museum's

biennial exhibition *Made in L.A. 2020: a version*, which took place last summer in Los Angeles at the Hammer and at the Huntington, a library, art museum, and botanical garden, where the work is pictured here.

BOOKSHELF

Recent Releases

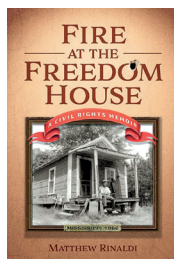


Creative Acts for Curious People: How to Think, Create, and Lead in Unconventional Ways

Sara Stein Greenberg '00

TEN SPEED PRESS

There is no ironclad design to “design thinking,” thus *Creative Acts for Curious People* is not a road map or a step-by-step “how-to.” In fact, the book is more of a how-to-undo: how to overcome self-censorship, how to unlearn the usual ways a problem is approached, how to see an issue in an entirely new light. The book offers more than 80 exercises and stories, many developed out of classroom activities at Stanford University’s Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (dubbed “the d.school.”), which Greenberg leads as executive director. Fittingly, readers are untethered to the tyranny of reading the book start-to-finish: Its assignments, many taking up just a page or two, offer handy self-contained explorations, each intended to unleash creativity and imagination. The book’s approach mirrors that of the d.school which, says Greenberg, “prepares you to take on any challenge in life or work without knowing exactly how to do it before you do it.”

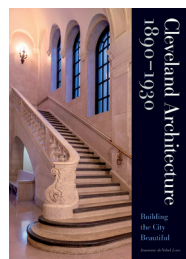


Fire at the Freedom House

Matthew Rinaldi '69

AUDACITY PRESS

Most Americans are familiar with the broad outlines of the Civil Rights Movement—the leaders, the speeches, the legislation passed. But the movement was made up of many individuals, and each has a story. Rinaldi, a white freshman from a Long Island, N.Y., Italian-American family, headed to Mississippi in 1966 with a dozen and a half other Oberlin students to join in voter registration and integration campaigns. His story is full of vivid detail and candid confessions: though committed to the cause of civil rights, he admits he may have been partly attracted to the adventure—and even danger—of participating. He was also scared, a fear that is justified by events outlined in the book. Though brimming with Oberlin content, this is a fascinating read for anyone interested in an individual’s American history.



Cleveland Architecture, 1890-1930: Building the City Beautiful

Jeannine deNobel Love M'83

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS

The City Beautiful Movement of the early 20th century was either a reform-minded, progressive attempt to transform gritty cities into more livable spaces around an orderly and monumental architecture, or, as writer and theorist Jane Jacobs called it, “an architectural design cult,” or both. Cleveland was one of the cities that adopted many of the principles behind the movement. The “group plan”—which clustered Beaux-Arts-style public buildings (city hall, library, courthouse, among others) around a grand, green mall—can still ignite passionate debate more than a century later. This study by Love, an independent art historian and a graduate of Oberlin’s MA program in art history, takes an in-depth look at this transformative period in Cleveland architecture.



How Other People Make Love

Thisbe Nissen '94

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

In a single sentence, Nissen’s writing can convey all of the complexity and density of a three-axis, multivariable graph, but with the timing and humor of an observational stand-up comic. The compression—of information, of telling detail—makes her short stories carry more story and character than their page count might indicate. While fantasy and sci-fi works get credited for world-building ability, Nissen’s tidy, down-to-earth tales create their own complete and vivid worlds. Even if you have never visited a lesbian bar in Pittsburgh or crowded into a vestibule with a minister and an F-bomb-dropping, 200-pound maid of honor wearing an “oxidized green refrigerator box” of a dress, you will think you have after reading *How Other People Make Love*. And you’ll be glad you did.

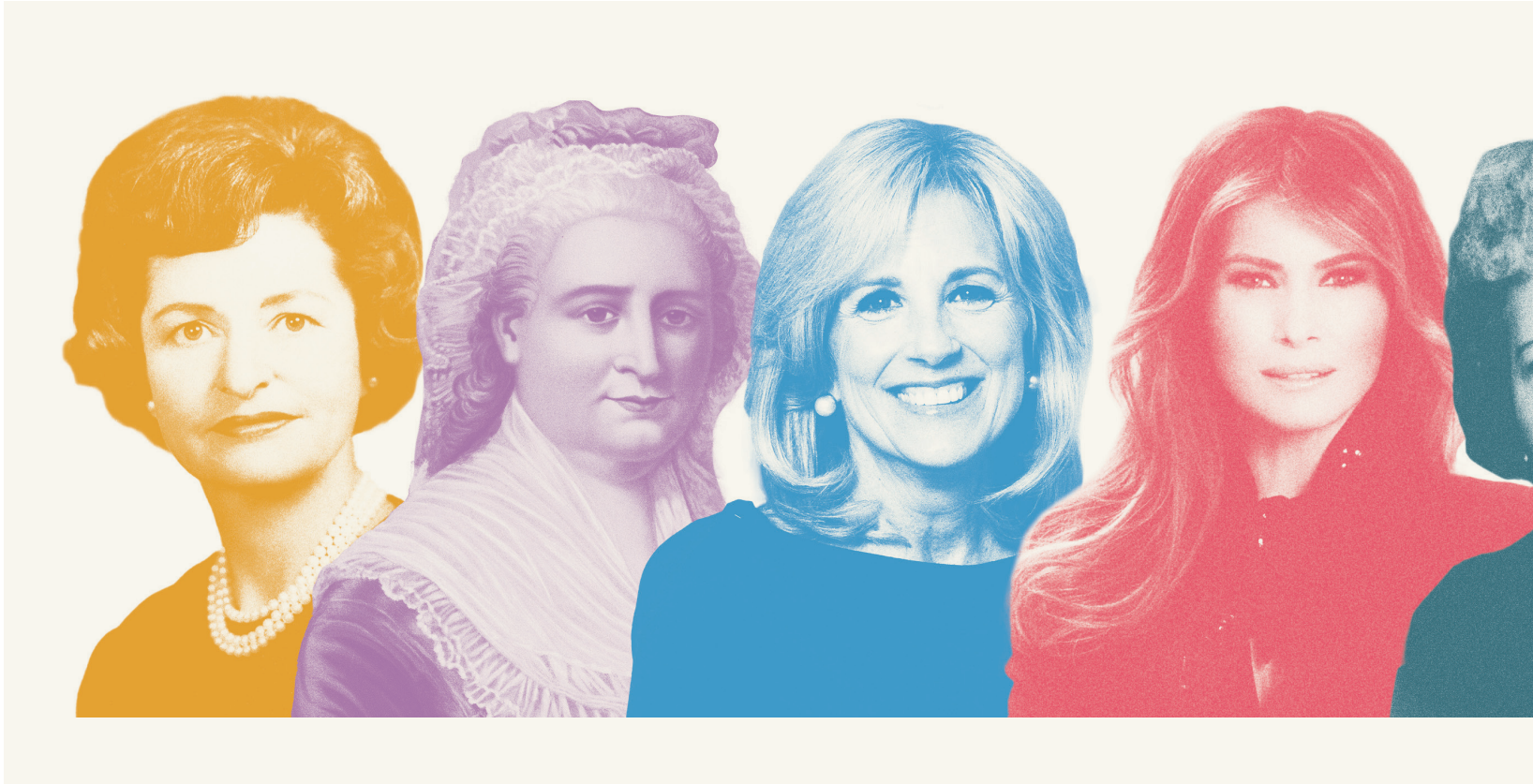


Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic

Jennifer L. Morgan '86

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Morgan, a professor in New York University’s department of social and cultural analysis, opens *Reckoning with Slavery* with the story of a woman with two names: Elizabeth Keye—carrying the name of her Englishman father, and “Black Besse”—expressing her role as an enslaved African woman. From this beginning, Morgan charts the meanings of these identifications, including the way Blackness eclipsed kinship, and slavery became entirely racialized. “By centering women,” Morgan explains in an interview about the book, “we get to what I believe is the heart of the system of racial slavery, the claim that the body is a site of commodification and the production of race as a legible sign.”



Q&A

FLOTUS in Flux

BY ALICE MIRANDA OLLSTEIN '10

Betty Boyd Caroli '60 never set out to write about first ladies. A true Obie, she bristled at the idea of focusing on women who'd achieved renown only through marriage to a man. But decades ago, at the urging of an editor, she began digging into the policy battles, power dynamics, and public relations gambits that have marked this uniquely American institution for hundreds of years. She found enough gripping stories to fill several books, including a definitive history of first ladies whose fifth edition, *First Ladies: The Ever Changing Role, from Martha Washington to Melania Trump*, was released by Oxford University Press just before the pandemic hit.

Now, with Jill Biden as the first first lady in U.S. history to hold an outside job and Doug Emhoff defining what it means to be the country's first "second gentleman," Caroli predicts more changes to come.

Caroli jumped on the phone with Alice Miranda Ollstein '10, a reporter for *POLITICO*, to talk about the Trumps, the Bidens, and why she hates the term "first gentleman" but believes we'll have one soon.

ALICE OLLSTEIN: Oberlin is a place where students question many conventions, including marriage and gender. Did you bring that lens into your work, given that the White House is such a conventional and gendered place?

BETTY BOYD CAROLI: For sure my education affected how I look at women's roles. For instance, I always look to see what independence they had when they got to the marriage and how that developed during the marriage. My book on Lady Bird Johnson explores that quite a lot. When I first began my research, I found a definite pattern: almost all the women married down, they married men and into families less wealthy and well-educated than theirs. I could see why the men married up, but I really wanted to find out why the women married down.



AO: How has the role of the first lady changed over time, and how do you see it evolving in the future?

BBC: Lady Bird Johnson in the '60s really institutionalized the role of the modern first lady. She was the first to have a large and very competent staff—people who knew Washington, who were good at diplomatic matters like how to seat people at dinners, and who knew policy and how to get things done. She institutionalized the whole East Wing and made it a very valuable part of the presidency.

Starting with Lady Bird Johnson, every first lady after her followed a formula: campaign for her husband to have the job, then take on a project that will somehow compliment the legacy of the president, manage a large staff that serves her, and then write a book about it when she leaves. Everyone did that except for Pat

Nixon, who let her daughter write the book. But the others have all followed that to a tee.

AO: It also seems like part of the first lady's unofficial job is to talk about her marriage and humanize the president by really selling their love story.

BBC: That goes right back to Martha Washington, from the very beginning, and it stems from the Washingtons' decision to make the White House both the office of the president as well as the residence, which brought the spouse into the job in a way that would not otherwise have been the case.

Even when the nation's capital was here in New York, at the beginning, she was watched closely on everything, even what food she served. And if she showed up at church and he didn't, did that mean he was sick? So the first lady has always been used both to humanize the president and as a sign of other things, like which way he might go on some issue.

AO: So was Melania Trump an anomaly or more of a sign of long-lasting change?

BBC: She took the role all the way back to what it was under Bess Truman—pretty much stay out of sight, stay away from the White House. She seemed to think that you don't have to have an opinion on everything—in fact, you shouldn't have an opinion. As Bess Truman said, "You keep your hat on straight and your mouth shut." It was nothing new, but it was different from what had been developing for 50 years.

AO: How is our current first lady following or breaking the formula? She's continuing to hold her teaching job and insisting on her professional title, while in other ways following the modern

playbook of having an issue profile and managing a large staff. There's even been a small culture war over her use of her doctorate. I've seen buttons and shirts saying: "That's Doctor First Lady to you." It's become a feminist flashpoint.

BBC: When I heard she was going to keep teaching, I thought it was a mistake. Eleanor Roosevelt thought she could keep teaching and she soon found out she couldn't. But because the job is so institutionalized now, all she has to do is make some public appearances, and everything will pretty much run itself.

If I were still studying the subject, I'd look at Jill Biden's staff to see how good they are, where they came from, and how long they last. One of the ways to judge a first lady and how she does the job is the rate of turnover in the staff. I mean, Melania had a big turnover and she appointed some very incompetent people while Lady Bird's social secretary and press secretary stayed the entire time.

AO: It's been interesting to see the reactions to Kamala Harris' husband taking on the role of the "second gentleman." Do you think that's a preview of how a first gentleman would be treated, or do you think it's a completely different ballgame?

BBC: I think the title "second gentleman" is stupid. I think those titles would go by the wayside once we get a woman president. I mean, do you know Angela Merkel's husband's name? Do you know what they call him? They just call him by his name, no title.

I live in Italy a lot of the year (well, before COVID), and certainly people do not put much importance on the spouse of the top political person there. She can walk into a department store, and

people don't even know she's there. But in the U.S., we've done it from the beginning, and I don't think it's going to stop soon.

There will definitely be scrutiny of the husband of the first woman president—and what projects he takes on—because that's part of the picture.

When I finished the first edition of *First Ladies* in 1987, my very last paragraph talked about how there will soon be a woman in the White House. I was about 40 years off, but I did write that in the '80s and still think that's what will happen.

AO: It's interesting how Doug Emhoff gets showered with praise in ways that I think a woman in that role would not. At Biden's joint address to Congress, for example, there was so much coverage of how he was smiling and waving and blowing kisses, which is the bare minimum of what would be expected of a female spouse.

BBC: That makes sense because he's the first, and therefore a novelty. But I think he's handling the job very well. He's supportive and has made a lot of public appearances that seem gender-free.

AO: What do the press and the public tend to assume incorrectly about first ladies?

BBC: People don't realize the power and the importance she has. When I first wrote the book in the 1980s, it got good responses from presidential historians, but the women's historians sort of tossed it off as unimportant. I think people have always underestimated the power that job has and the potential it has to add or detract from the presidency. Whatever Donald Trump's legacy is, I don't think anyone I know will say that Melania made it better than it would have been without her.



RECIPE

From Claire Cheney's Curio Cabinet

BY JEFF HAGAN '86

ONE DAY WHILE CONDUCTING RESEARCH FOR a poetry project at Oberlin's art history library, Claire Cheney '07 came across an image of an ancient Greek fresco showing young women in a crocus field harvesting saffron and offering it to a goddess.

"It made me feel like all of humanity was connected by the experience of connecting with plants and finding delight in that. I was looking around the library wondering, 'Does anyone else see what I'm seeing? This is so cool!' Otherwise it

was sort of a mundane moment—just a book in the library. But I was convinced there was something I needed to do with that feeling."

She later realized that the painting had triggered a memory from her childhood in Milton, Massachusetts. "When I was a toddler, like preschool age, there was an area in my town where wild crocuses grew in the woodlands—they just carpeted the whole area. The fragrance of the crocus was so pronounced and so unique; it definitely stored in my brain. Also the colors—when that purple first comes out of the ground after winter and its really vivid and uplifting."

In between her work in the specialty food and restaurant industry, Cheney traveled to Greece to study saffron production, intending to pursue a career as a food writer. Instead, she became intrigued with the idea of starting a spice business. Cheney quit her job at a Cambridge

bakery and moved to Bangkok, where she stayed with family and traveled around Southeast and South Asia to learn about small spice producers.

Cheney wanted "to create a business that was about storytelling and doing good in the world by way of sustainability and social responsibility in the spice industry." Thus began Curio Spice Co, offering a storefront in Cambridge and selling products at retailers around the country and on the web at curiospice.com.

Cheney says this recipe for saffron and apricot goldies is a great alternative to brownies. "It has the nice fudgy texture of a brownie, but with whole wheat flour that gives it nuttiness, apricots that add sweetness, and crushed pistachios that again add that nuttiness. It definitely has a Middle Eastern flavor, especially with the saffron. But it's Americanized—it's just a chewy dessert bar that's really satisfying."

Saffron & Apricot Goldies

MAKES ABOUT 30 BARS

"Like blondies, but infused with saffron for golden, aromatic goodness. Great as an energy snack, a pretty treat for afternoon tea, or warmed up with a scoop of vanilla ice cream for dessert." –Claire Cheney

INGREDIENTS

1 large pinch saffron threads, ground to a powder

2 tsp vanilla extract

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter

2 cups brown sugar, lightly packed

2 large eggs

1/2 tsp salt

1 cup all-purpose flour

3/4 cup whole wheat flour

2 tsp baking powder

1 cup apricots, chopped (unsulphured are best)

1 cup pistachios, chopped or buzzed coarsely in a small food processor

DIRECTIONS

Grease a 9"x13" pan and pre-heat oven to 350°F. Grind the saffron threads with a pinch of sugar and add to a tiny bowl with the vanilla to infuse. Set aside.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter over low heat. Add the brown sugar and stir until well combined. Transfer to a medium mixing bowl and cool to lukewarm or room temp, then add the rest of the ingredients except the nuts and apricots. Fold in the chopped apricots, then spread in the greased pan and top with the chopped pistachios, distributing evenly.

Bake for 35 minutes or until sides are golden and crispy.

Cool to room temp before slicing into small bars or squares.

PROSE POEM

Reference Point

BY DIANE LOUIE '75

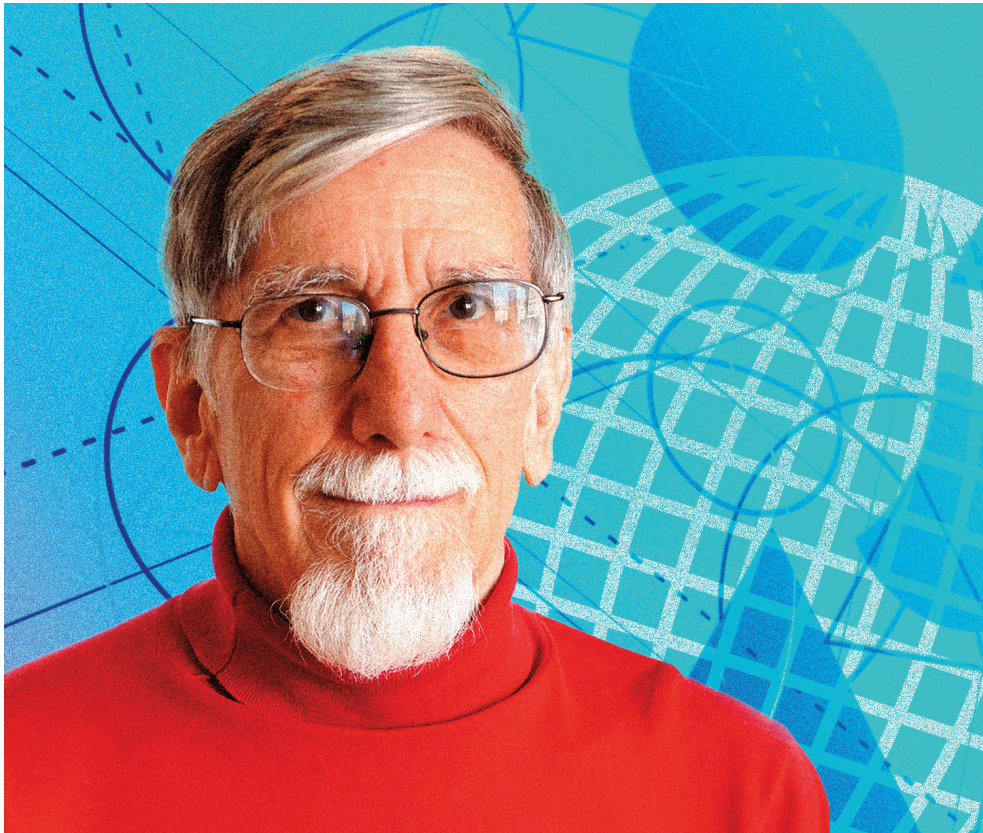
Where we were did not make us who we are, but who we were once filled a sunlit bathroom: one, half the other's age, seated on a green wooden stool, explaining *things* to which the elder, then so young, listened in the midst of hairspray, the iron hissing steam, and the younger heard her *listening* which changed sentences from chatter to virtual space. They kept talking. Filled the yellow kitchen with *sorting out* and *chiming in*, bluffs called, shrugs teased, gallon wine from the package store. All that talking. All that *mulling over*. Filled summer afternoons on the wide front porch, bare toes in the helix of morning glory tendrils trellised on string until bees, pestered from petals, tried to sting. They had their iffy moments. They had their empty stretches. When the Buddha tapped their shoulders *ahem ahem* they tried to *get a hold of* which led to *out of sight*. Which led to *letting go*, which led to *seeing light*. On the silk-wrapped pistol underneath the mattress of the elder's double bed. On the terror of feeling in the younger's head. All that *calling into question* to *get the gist* filled the empty future with bereavement's genesis.

From Diane "Denny" Louie's first book of poems, *Fractal Shores*, which won the 2021 John Pollard Foundation International Poetry Prize and the 2021 Eric Hoffer Award for Poetry. This poem is in memory of Jean Binford (1931-2014), who worked for Oberlin College's library for 35 years. Reprinted with permission from *Fractal Shores: Poems by Diane Louie*, selected by Sherod Santos (© by the University of Georgia Press, 2020).

Q&A

Misperception is Reality

BY JOSHUA KEATING '07



Political scientist Robert Jervis '62 has become one of the most widely cited and respected scholars in international relations largely by pointing out the field's inadequacies and blind spots. In his classic works, including *System Effects*, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, and the more recent *How Statesmen Think*, Jervis has drawn insights from other fields, including political psychology and complexity theory, to make a convincing case that not only are governments and leaders not the rational actors they are often presumed to be by traditional models of state behavior, but that "rationality" itself may be a flawed concept when it comes to statecraft.

Jervis, who is the Adlai Stevenson Professor of International Politics at Columbia University and a former president of the American Political Science Association, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in April 2021. He recently spoke with Joshua Keating '07, a senior editor at *Slate*, to discuss what he's learned from a career of trying to make sense of a very irrational world.

JOSHUA KEATING: Were international affairs and foreign policy something you were actively engaged with while a student at Oberlin?

ROBERT JERVIS: Oh, very much. I was there from '58 to '62 during one of the heights of the Cold War. The missile gap [between the U.S. and the USSR] was the major political issue then. There was a good group of political scientists. Four or five of us went on to get PhDs and to teach in major institutions. And so we'd talk about this all the time.

I remember when Khrushchev broke up the Paris Summit meeting in May 1960 because of Eisenhower's refusal to apologize sufficiently for the U2 incident. Khrushchev was flying back to Moscow. At about midnight one of my Oberlin section mates was listening to the radio and heard the report that Khrushchev was stopping in East Berlin to sign a peace treaty with East Germany, which would have triggered an enormous crisis and real danger of war. So he woke us up and said, "Don't bother studying for finals or anything, let's just go out and drink." So that's what we did.

JK: The topic of perception and misperception has been a major theme in your work. I'm wondering how you first got interested in looking at that.

RJ: Well, ironically, I backed into it. I was very interested in nuclear deterrence theory and practice. At that time, the main critics of deterrence were social psychologists, who argued that we'd created this myth of a Soviet danger, and that policies meant to counter it were making things worse.

I thought they were wrong about the Soviet Union, but I realized they were quite right that no political scientists, or almost none, had taken any account of perception and the possibility of recurring misperception. I thought that was something that needed to be studied. As I got more deeply into the history of social psychology, I became less critical of its application to the Cold War, although I still thought that the scholars who claimed the Cold War was a misunderstanding were wrong, but I did gain an appreciation that they were not totally foolish. And then as I got in, I just found the topic of how [policymakers] perceive each other to be fascinating on its own.

JK: As somebody who's studied how policymakers think and political decision-making, have you ever been tempted to go into government yourself and apply some of these ideas?

RJ: I have been tempted. I did quite a bit of work for the CIA and the DNI [Director of National Intelligence] and some work for the State Department and Defense Department. In a way what I'm doing parallels very much what the intelligence agencies do, and that's why in the late '70s, after the Iranian Revolution, I was asked to come in for a year to study why the analysts had missed the boat. That led to one of the major chapters in my book, *Why Intelligence Fails*.

Yes, it was a temptation, and partly a regret. I'm sure I would have learned a great deal from doing things for a year or so, but it just never worked out.

JK: Following up from that, what role do you think political scientists should play in active, ongoing political debates? Should they advocate positions, or is their role just to inform the debate?

RJ: In some ways we owe it to the public to do the best we can to bring our knowledge to bear on current issues, as long as we do it with humility, because the greatest expertise still leaves you very, very far short of complete knowledge. At minimum, we can clarify a lot of debate, or debunk myths or arguments that certain simple policies will be guaranteed to produce good results.

I'm proud of the fact that I was one of about 30 who studied security policy and took out an ad in the *New York Times* in the fall of 2002 saying a war with Iraq would be a mistake. I also organized an ad when the debate over the Iran nuclear deal was raging, saying it was a good agreement and we should definitely ratify it. Not that those had any influence, but reaching out in that way is something we should do.

JK: In 2018, you wrote that "whatever else is true of Donald Trump's presidency, it offers a great opportunity to test theories of international relations." So, now that he's out of office, what do you think are the results of those tests?

RJ: As usual with experiments, it's a mixed result. Basically, where Trump really cared and

where he appointed people who shared his views on trade and immigration, it did make a difference. He set American policy in a new direction. That's less true in a lot of the areas of foreign policy.

JK: Do you think that Trump has changed the way other countries perceive the identity of America in some kind of lasting way, or conversely, the way America conceives of its own identity as an actor on the world stage?

RJ: Well, he certainly changed it or articulated it for a very vocal but important minority in the United States. And those people generally, I think, have a very different conception of the United States than you'd find in most Oberlin students and alums.

As for people abroad, I think it alerted them to the fact that leaders of countries can't bind themselves as to how they behave in the future. We know, of course, that he lowered American standing in the world. How much he changed others' view of the United States is harder to say. Partly because there was such opposition to him, it re-emphasized both the good and the bad about the United States in many people's eyes.

JK: While most of your work is on international issues, I thought it was interesting how in your new preface to *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, you apply your theoretical framework to a lot of domestic issues as well. Are there similarities to how different countries misperceive each other, and how "red" and "blue" America misperceive each other?

RJ: I think there are important parallels. One is the degree to which partisanship drives perceptions, which is through motivated reasoning, and which is very strong. The fact that strong Trump supporters tend to see that the election was stolen and unfair, yet can't explain that by data that's in front of them—because there isn't any—is clearly building an affirmation of their identity, a shared identity with Trump, and the power of need-driven thinking.

Similarly, if you ask people, "Do you favor X?"—X being any policy—you'll get something very different if you ask, "What do you think about X, which is endorsed by Trump or Biden?" People's views on the substance of whether a policy is good or bad is strongly influenced by its association with either

Democrats or Republicans. That's not entirely irrational if you think the people you identify with or support are generally right. But people often will form their views in that way, without understanding that they're strongly influenced, not by an independent assessment of the issue, but by who was supporting and opposing it. So, yes, I think a lot of the processes I've talked about do play out domestically as well.

JK: Back to foreign policy, Biden seems to have made countering authoritarianism, principally China and Russia, the centerpiece of his foreign-policy rhetoric. I'm curious, as somebody who cut his teeth studying the Cold War and the misperceptions and dynamics there, do you see similar dynamics playing out today?

RJ: There are some parallels. I think there's almost a demonization of China, which is unfortunate. I think we have real conflicts of values with China and real conflicts of interest, but under Trump there's almost this demonization that everything that China does is bad, and an over-reaction to real threats and problems. We saw some of that in the Cold War, but I think the Soviet Union was more of a danger than China.

JK: After spending so much of your career studying bias and misperception, do you think it's helped you get better at overcoming those things yourself?

RJ: One thing I stressed is motivated bias leading people to downplay trade-offs, and to think that all relevant considerations point in the same direction. And I think that does affect the way I see the world and the political choices I make.

And also, being aware of our tendency to fit new information into preexisting beliefs. When I'm analyzing some piece of behavior in another country, do I reach my inference because of my general views of what that country is up to?

People often say, "Oh, well, that behavior provides unambiguous information that that country is hostile." Really, they are seeing that because they already think the country is hostile. I may fall into that trap of course, but I'm very aware of it and try to ask, what are the alternative explanations? How could someone see that behavior differently? And I think that's useful.

HISTORY

Oberlin Village, North Carolina

BY REBEKAH RUBIN '13

IN JUNE 2020, THE WAKE COUNTY SCHOOL Board in Raleigh, North Carolina, renamed one of the district's middle schools the Oberlin Magnet Middle School. The decision came at a time of reckoning, as communities across the country and the world come to terms with who or what should be memorialized, what statues should tower over us, and whose names should be emblazoned on community buildings.

The school had been named after Josephus Daniels, a white supremacist who in 1898 incited a mob of 2,000 white men in Wilmington, North Carolina, to murder Black citizens, destroy Black businesses, and burn the local Black newspaper offices.

Chris Heagarty, a member of the school board, proposed the renaming in the wake of protests following the death of George Floyd at the hands of police, and the vote was unanimous in favor of the change. But the school, on Oberlin Road, was not named for its street, nor even for Oberlin College—at least not directly.

In fact, Oberlin Magnet was not the first school in Wake County to be called Oberlin. Established around 1873, Oberlin Graded School was the centerpiece of a self-sufficient Black community for over 90 years. The community was called Oberlin Village, thanks to one man: James Henry Harris.

Harris was born enslaved but gained his freedom in 1848 at the age of 16. He worked as an upholsterer in Raleigh before moving to Oberlin, Ohio.

According to oral tradition, Harris attended Oberlin College for two years in the 1850s. Although the college archives has no official record of his attendance, an 1867 profile in *Zion's Standard and Review*, a newspaper published by the AME Zion Church, states: "We met [Harris] first at Oberlin, that educational hive." And it is undeniable that his time in Oberlin was formative. He left Oberlin to assist formerly enslaved people in Canada, and then spent time in Liberia and Sierra Leone. During the Civil War, the governor of Indiana appointed Harris to serve as a recruiter for the 28th Regiment of U.S. Colored Troops in Indiana. When the war ended, Harris returned to Raleigh.



Upon his return, Harris learned of a number of formerly enslaved people buying land in an area two miles west from the center of Raleigh. With J. Brinton Smith, a white school teacher, Harris incorporated and served as president of the Raleigh Cooperative Land and Building Association, which loaned money to Black families to buy land and build houses.

This community went by various names—some called it "Peck's Place" or "Morgantown," named after the white men who had previously owned the land. Others disparagingly called it "Save Rent," referring to Black homeowners no longer needing to pay rent to white landlords. Harris brought with him the name "Oberlin" and it stuck.

The white newspapers were less willing to recognize the name, prompting citizens of the new Oberlin to write a letter to the editor of the *Raleigh Daily News* in 1872: "You will please do us the kindness to correct the many errors that you have unknowingly made in the name of our flourishing little village. It is neither Morgantown, San Domingo, or 'Save Rent' but Oberlin."

The paper's response was less than kind: "At the request of 'Many Citizens,' we publish the following communication...In answer to which we will say, call it what you please. We are sorry we ever called it anything, but should necessity hereafter require it, we shall call it Morgantown-San Domingo-Save Rent-Oberlin."

Oberlin Village was populated by artisans and tradespeople, and as the village flourished and grew, so did Harris' career. In 1867, the *Raleigh Daily Standard* wrote: "Mr. James H. Harris, the orator of the day, then arose, and for two hours and thirty-five minutes, in a strain of sound reasoning, sharp invective, and loft eloquence enchained the attention of all who heard him."

Harris fervently believed that African Americans needed to fight for equality in the political realm. He served as Wake County's delegate to the 1865 North Carolina Freedman's Convention, as the city alderman for Raleigh, and as a representative in the state legislature for multiple terms. In 1870, he ran for a seat in Congress but lost by a slim margin. Eight years later, he had another chance.

In 1878, James O'Hara was nominated to run for Congress. O'Hara and Harris had crossed paths before. Both were prominent Black politicians in the Republican Party, delegates for the 1868 North Carolina constitutional convention, and representatives in North Carolina's state legislature. (Another tie entangled these two men: O'Hara's second wife, Lizzie Elenora Harris, had studied at Oberlin College.)

White Democrats worried about O'Hara's popularity. They did not like their chances and began to accuse O'Hara of corruption. This was not the first time such claims had been made, but it was the first time they had accused O'Hara,

albeit falsely, of bigamy. As a result of these accusations, the Republican Party decided to nominate someone else for the seat in Congress: James Harris.

O'Hara refused to withdraw from the race and remained on the ballot, splitting the Republican vote between him and Harris. Despite this, O'Hara had sufficient votes to win, but the white Democrats disqualified a significant number of votes and handed the seat to their own nominee.

When Harris died in 1891, Oberlin Village was thriving. In the last decades of the 19th century, more residents of Oberlin owned land than in anywhere else in Raleigh. Yet, Oberlin Village's successes would not last forever. In the 1920s, Raleigh annexed Oberlin Village, leading its residents to pay more expensive city taxes. White suburbs popped up and abutted the community, hindering further growth.

In 1948, about 1,000 people lived in Oberlin Village. Soon, urban renewal tore apart the community, as it did with many communities of color. A new avenue split the community in two and caused the demolition of numerous homes. Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, who grew up in Oberlin Village, recalls in an oral history interview the loss she felt:

"We lost...relationships but also we lost the honeysuckle vines, the blackberry bushes, the locust trees. And, I think, that sense of community. We lost that."

Once the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964, Oberlin Graded School closed. Raleigh's public schools were finally integrated—nearly a decade after an Oberlin Village resident attempted to integrate them. Oberlin Village was rezoned for commercial use, and families sold their homes and moved away.

The non-profit organization Friends of Oberlin Village, dedicated to preserving, honoring, and educating the community about the history of Oberlin Village, was formed in 2011. As a result of its efforts, the village has been designated a Historic Overlay District, and the 1873 Oberlin Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

"Each person [in Oberlin Village] has a story that hasn't been reflected in our history. It's not taught in schools," says Cheryl Crooms Williams, a member of the Friends of Oberlin Village board of directors. "And their contribution is significant to the stature, the power, the wealth of the United States, even today."

Rebekkah Rubin is a public historian and writer.



JOSHUA MENDOZA

In November 1982, my dad drove me from our home in Madison, Wisconsin, to Skokie, Illinois, where I got on a bus with other prospective Obies for a campus visit. It was during this visit that I knew I would attend Oberlin. I felt so welcomed, so comfortable during my stay.

Being a member of Oberlin's Heisman Club Board and the Alumni Leadership Council helps me to continue seeing the value of an Oberlin education. My own education encompasses much more than what I gained during my four years on campus. By staying involved through the years, my Oberlin experience remains present and vital every day.

My decision to increase my philanthropic giving came as I realized the impact Oberlin continues to have on my life. I believe in this Oberlin education, and I want to help make it more accessible for future generations of Oberlin students. — JOHN CHARLES '87

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TRUE STORIES

A LOOK AT RECENT FILMS FROM OBERLIN ALUMNI DOCUMENTARIANS

Oberlin alumni documentary filmmakers have kept busy these last couple of years, despite the pandemic. Often collaborating with fellow alumni and Oberlin faculty, these filmmakers have tackled a wide variety of topics. They include the increase in women running for public office in the 2018 midterm elections, a camp for disabled people that became a catalyst for disability rights activism, California prison inmates risking their lives to fight wildfires, the plight of economically battered Youngstown, Ohio, and its residents, and the difficulties experienced by the mentally ill—and by those who try to care for them. The films are informative and often inspiring, even if the material they present isn't always easy to witness.

Here is a small sampling of recent documentaries—many available for viewing at film festivals and on streaming platforms—written, directed, or produced by Oberlin alumni.



SURGE

Directed and produced by Hannah Rosenzweig '97 and Wendy Sachs

In 2018, two years after Donald Trump's surprise election as president, 574 women filed papers to run for the House of Representatives—a new record. More than 120 women Democrats would win their primaries. *Surge*, directed and produced by Hannah Rosenzweig '97 and Wendy Sachs, tells the stories of three of these House challengers: a labor attorney named Liz Watson in Indiana, former journalist Jana Lynne Sanchez in suburban South Dallas, and former nurse Lauren Underwood in rural Illinois.

The film is an intimate portrait of modern campaigning from the point of view of the candidates. (Refreshingly, it skips the mechanics of races—including covering the campaign managers and number crunchers that professional political reporters are more typically plugged into.) It opens with Trump's surprise victory and then follows the decision by Sanchez, Watson, and

Underwood to enter electoral politics. None was handpicked by the party. Their motivation was personal. All ran in districts Democrats had given up on decades earlier.

This is a film about people and their desire to make their country better. Anyone who has been in politics, or covered such races, will recognize that the film gets this personal part right—the good, the bad, and the exhausting—especially during the primaries. We see Watson, Sanchez, and Underwood driving themselves around in cars about to give out from all the miles. We watch the novice candidates knocking on strangers' doors and hearing people talk about their worries. We see Underwood's mother's pride in her daughter. We see the candidates and their arc as they gain momentum.

The filmmakers won the candidates' trust, which is crucial, though they don't delve into the personal dramas that usually occur in campaigns—fights with spouses, firing of staff, or screwups by volunteers.

At this level, at least initially, politics isn't ugly, it's aspirational.



Campaigns don't usually get really nasty until someone has a chance to win in a general election, and, even then, none of these campaigns gets too brutish. "The only part of running for office I like is parades," says Sanchez, who is utterly charming.

Surge captures the outrage and idealism that has inspired so many women newcomers into politics. It also nicely catches what it feels like to run. The candidates here are all Democrats; it would have been fascinating to have had the contrast of a Republican challenger, and there were record numbers in that group as well.

Still, after seeing *Surge*, it's heartening, and perhaps to some, surprising, that 2020 saw even more women run for office. *Surge* makes one feel that politics and campaigns are still about hope. That alone makes it worth watching. —Tom Rosenstiel '78

Rosenstiel is a journalism advocate and journalist-turned novelist who covered the inner workings of Washington, D.C., for three decades. His new novel, The Days to Come, arrives this fall.

CRIP CAMP

Directed by Nicole Newnham '91 and Jim Lebrecht

Emmy award-winning filmmaker Nicole Newnham '91 co-directed *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution*. The film tells the story of Camp Jened, a summer camp in the Catskills "run by hippies" for disabled teens in the early 1970s that helped spur a revolution in the disability rights movement.

The story is personal for Newnham's co-director Jim LeBrecht, who was born with spina bifida. He and other teen campers appear in archival film footage playing baseball, swimming, smoking cigarettes, blushing about make-out sessions, and falling in love. They negotiate camp life's freedoms and frustrations and hold roundtable talks about managing overprotective parents. Among the Jened alumni featured in the film is Judy Heumann, a camp counselor who became a national leader in the disability rights movement and served in both the Clinton and Obama administrations.

The filmmakers wanted the film to have an impact beyond the screen by recreating a Jened experience, allowing today's activists and advocates to engage with trailblazers from the disability movement. This campaign was led by Stacey Park Milbern, a disabilities justice leader for people of color, queer people, and persons living on the streets, and communications and inclusion specialist Andraéa LeVant. Sadly, Milbern died in May 2020 at age 33 before the campaign's launch, which included a 15-week virtual experience resulting in initiatives to create collective access and inclusive spaces for disabled persons. A

curriculum for middle-school-and-up is available for teachers to download with lessons to extend the knowledge of disability and disabled people.

These impact components were "envisioned, designed, and run by disabled people working in the disability justice movement," says Newnham, who spent five years with the disability community while making the film. "I was blown away by how liberating it was to see activists support each other across different disabilities," she says. "When you support the cause of someone with a completely [different] disability than you, with the faith that in so doing you are making the world better for everyone, you are lifting up interdependence and interconnectedness. And you are fighting for societal improvements that could well end up helping you or someone you love over time."

Crip Camp won the Audience Award for U.S. Documentary during its world premiere at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for a 2021 Academy Award. Lauren Schwartzman '11 was an associate producer and assistant editor. Executive producers Barack and Michelle Obama included *Crip Camp* in the first slate of projects for their Higher Ground Productions partnership with Netflix, where the film first screened in March 2020 in time for the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It can be viewed on Netflix with audio-described and captioned versions and a downloadable transcript. More information—and the educational curriculum—is available on the film's website at <https://cripcamp.com> —Michon Boston '84

Boston is a writer and media consultant based in Washington, D.C.





FIREBOYS

Directed by Jake Hochendoner '12 and Drew Dickler '12 | Produced by David Sherwin '11 and Geoff Pingree

As climate change and 100-plus years of land mismanagement push California further into critical fire weather and fuel conditions, the state is reaching a breaking point. Wildland firefighters are exhausted. 1,000-hour seasons (fire seasons in which individuals and different firefighting modules may hit 1,000 hours or more of overtime) are now much more the norm than the exception. Having a “fire season” is a thing of the past, as deadlier and more destructive wildfires tear through the state year-round, rather than politely ending by October or November when much of the seasonal firefighting workforce is laid off for the winter.

Inadequate wages, non-existent work-life balance, and the grueling work and poor conditions have led to a shortage of wildland firefighters across the western United States. As a result, in California, inmate crews have become a critical part of the wildland fire workforce. These crews are a partnership between the California Department of

Corrections and Rehabilitation and the California Department of Forestry (more commonly known as CalFire). When not on fires, these crews work on creating fuel breaks, thinning out forest units, and other assigned projects. Opinions may differ about using incarcerated people to fight fires, but it should be noted that the program is completely voluntary, and the inmates are paid for their time.

Fireboys, directed by Jake Hochendoner '12 and Drew Dickler '12, is a poignant and accurate look at the lives of individuals working on one of these crews. The documentary follows several young offenders—incarcerated as minors and working at the Pine Grove Conservation Camp east of Sacramento—from their selection for the crew through training and working on fires, and eventually to their release.

Fireboys is an informative and honestly refreshing take on wildland fire and an often-forgotten group of people called to fight them. Each new person introduced in the film is prouder than the last of being on the Pine Grove Crew and excited by the hard work, camaraderie, and being out in nature. Individuals in the documentary, and those I have worked alongside on fires,

say that working on fires and living at their inmate camps is infinitely better than sitting in jail.

What most stories about wildland fire get wrong is their focus on destruction, death, and cheap action shots of subdivisions and huge swaths of forests burning. *Fireboys* is not that. The way *Fireboys* focuses on the people and their mental fortitude—in surviving incarceration and subsequently thriving as firefighters—makes it the best movie I have seen about wildland fire.

Fireboys was produced by David Sherwin '11 and Geoff Pingree, professor of cinema studies at Oberlin, through StoryLens, which Pingree cofounded and directs. StoryLens makes independent documentary films about “pressing social issues in order to promote education, encourage public dialogue, and enable change,” and provides professional experience and networking opportunities for young Obie filmmakers. —Emma Patterson '17

Patterson is a senior firefighter in the Klamath National Forest. All opinions expressed here are her own and not representative of her employer (USDA Forest Service), CalFire, or any other agency.

THE PLACE THAT MAKES US

Directed and produced by Karla Murthy '95 | Executive produced by Jad Abumrad '95

The Place That Makes Us takes a look at revitalization efforts in Youngstown, Ohio, reminding viewers that the economy and the family are two institutions inextricably linked.

Directed and produced by Karla Murthy '95, with Jad Abumrad '95 as executive producer, the film opens with a young man identified only as Ian walking through an abandoned industrial husk that had once been part of that city's once-thriving steel industry. “It's been vacant for decades. I don't ever remember anything happening here as long as I've been alive.”

A greater sense of hope resides in the generation that



experienced Youngstown after 1977's "Black Monday" (when the steel plants began shutting down) than those who lived during the city's heyday—and that is a leitmotif of *The Place That Makes Us*. The film focuses on younger people who grew up when the population was already dwindling, the murder rate rising, and the crack epidemic growing. They know only a city in deep decline, and they are unburdened by their parents' memories of a bustling city that was a gateway to middle-class comforts.

This includes Julius, a self-described street hustler-turned-entrepreneur who realized people were not coming to his car wash because they felt unsafe in a neighborhood that looked abandoned and neglected. Zeroing in on who might fix some of these problems, he turned to city hall—and then ran for and won a seat on the Youngstown city council. He is seen in the film talking with his mother about his absent father and looking through

photographs, including one with his old car, an Oldsmobile 98. "I used to polish this car for hours," he says fondly.

Ian, whose father donned an asbestos suit to work in the steel mill's blast furnace, is executive director of the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, which rehabs salvageable Youngstown homes. He rehabbed his own house, which had no plumbing when he bought it through Fannie Mae for \$47,000. The now-gleaming home has features he never dreamed of. "I never thought I'd own a home with a kitchen island. And a dishwasher," he says, smiling broadly.

But for Ian's father, the bright spots are harder to come by. "If I had to do it over again," he says in the film's most heartbreaking moment, "I would not have been in Youngstown. I truly regret it."—*Jeff Hagan '86*

Hagan, the editor of this magazine, spent his first decade in Girard, an inner-ring suburb of Youngstown.



BEDLAM

Co-written and co-produced by Peter Miller '84

The heartbreak in *Bedlam*, a film co-written and co-produced by Peter Miller '84, starts in the beginning and continues unabated as it traces the history of public health approaches to treating serious mental illness. Gently propelled by the story of psychiatrist Kenneth Paul Rosenberg and his decision to become a doctor—and eventually an advocate—after his sister is diagnosed with mental illness, *Bedlam* details the series of reforms by sometimes well-intentioned leaders that led to a painfully ironic full circle.

A century and a half ago, the mentally ill were sent to poor houses and prisons, and then to "insane asylums" as a more compassionate alternative. Community care options followed, which the federal government eventually fiscally abandoned. This led to widespread deinstitutionalization, a surge in homelessness among the mentally ill, and finally a cycle of interactions with the criminal justice system that has landed thousands of mentally ill

patients in prison. It was, as one of the many experts interviewed for *Bedlam* says, "a 150-year-old disaster."

Bedlam checks in with a number of mentally ill individuals over months and even years as they navigate their illness and the systems designed to treat them. The arcs of their stories are—spoiler alert—not particularly hopeful. However, the success of one young woman to hold her life together through the difficulties of severe anxiety and depression provides the film's most compelling argument: Early intervention offers the best chance for successfully addressing mental illness.

Miller is among the most prolific alumni documentarians, and the pandemic hasn't put much of a dent in his productivity. His Willow Pond Films focus on "idealists, underdogs, visionaries, and not-so-ordinary Americans." He was the archival producer for a 2020 biopic of Gloria Steinem by Julie Taymor '74 and served as director and producer on *Egg Cream*, a short film about a chocolate soda drink he made with his daughter Nora. *Bedlam* premiered at Sundance, aired on PBS Independent Lens in 2020, and won a 2021 duPont-Columbia Award. —*Jeff Hagan '86*



A person is sitting on a wooden bench in a garden. They are wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and blue shorts. Their legs are crossed at the ankles, and they are wearing light-colored sneakers. A soccer ball is on the grass near their feet. The garden is filled with various plants, including a large white vase with greenery, and a wooden fence is in the background. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, bubbly font.

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THE STAR
AND CO-CREATOR
OF *HIGH*
MAINTENANCE
KEEPS THINGS
MELLOW.

BY
KIM FRANCE '87

PHOTOS BY
RYAN PFLUGER

Ben

SINCLAIR '06 IS THE PATRON SAINT OF UNPRETENTIOUS Brooklyn cool. So what's he doing in L.A.?

The 37-year-old has cultivated a particularly hip brand of fame as the star and co-creator of *High Maintenance*, the HBO series that follows a bicycling weed dealer—known only as “the Guy”—on his daily routine, mostly through the gritty but gentrifying streets of Brooklyn. Interestingly, though, it's not really so much a show about marijuana or its effects as it is about the connections New Yorkers make and seek in a city that can be simultaneously inspiring and soul-depleting. It owes more to Chekhov than Cheech and Chong. Sinclair and his co-creator (and now-former wife) Katja Blichfeld appear allergic to following a conventionally Hollywood path to success, from the show's origins as a web series, to its mold-breaking casting choices, to its current self-imposed limbo, during which the two are still deciding about when or whether to bring it back for a fifth season.

For a long time, Sinclair, a native of Arizona, lived in Brooklyn as something of a “hometown hero,” he says. But these days, he finds himself in Los Angeles—not the glossy environs of Beverly Hills or Brentwood, or even the affluent hipsterish loci of Silver Lake or Echo Park, but further east, in a predominantly Latino community that has begun to be inhabited by creative types like Sinclair.

Early on a Thursday morning not too long ago, Sinclair appeared on the porch of his home, espresso with pistachio milk in a small Picardie glass in his hand,

dressed pretty much entirely like his onscreen alter ego in jeans and a well-worn tee, and with his small dog, Snax, underfoot. Snax bears an uncanny resemblance (and backstory) to the dog his character acquires in season four of the show. In both cases, a canine follows Sinclair home. As it happens, Snax appeared—with no collar or chip—on the day Joe Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 presidential election. This was all the sign Sinclair needed that Snax was a keeper.

One of the more impressive aspects of *High Maintenance* is how authoritatively it delves into distinct N.Y.C. subcultures, from ultra-Orthodox Jews who've left the fold, to the inhabitants of overcrowded flight crew apartments near the city's airports in Queens, to a teenaged Muslim girl sneaking tokes and cigarettes on her roof, to a can-collecting Chinese couple with a globally renowned musician son. Critics quickly took note: “*High Maintenance* pulled off a rare trick,” says *New Yorker* TV critic Emily Nussbaum '88. “It was a risky, strange, and often radical TV show that was also reflexively humane. It pioneered a short-story, indie-movie model for TV storytelling, earning its emotions instead of taking formulaic shortcuts.”

Sinclair says they have gotten their ideas about these subcultures everywhere, from film festivals—especially short documentaries—to the old Metro section of the *New York Times*, to Craigslist, to some very highly specific Tumblrs. One character's obsession with actress Helen Hunt is based on a resident assistant in Sinclair's first-year Oberlin dorm. He adds that “For a while, I was so driven towards getting stories for *High Maintenance* that anytime someone said they liked the show, I would use that as an opportunity to ask where they were coming from, where they were going, and what their life looked like a little bit.”

High Maintenance started as a web series in 2012. It was conceived in part because when Sinclair first started trying to act professionally, he kept being cast as the “homeless guy” and “wild-eyed guy” and was aching for



PORCH SNACKS Sinclair with his dog, Snax.



**WHEELING
AND DEALING**
Like his character in
High Maintenance,
Sinclair now has a
four-wheeled option
for his next move.

more challenging roles (this isn't an exaggeration: His IMDB page includes credits as "angry man" and "Brooklyn idiot").

With some episodes as brief as five minutes, and none longer than 20, the show had something close to no budget: On average, each cost under \$1,000 to make. Eventually *High Maintenance* moved to the online video streaming site Vimeo, which financed production. The connective glue of each episode was Sinclair's character, who allowed viewers to peek into any number of fascinating private lives just long enough to reveal something truly sad, or funny, beautiful, or just plain beautifully weird.

From the start, the energy of the show was very DIY: Sinclair and Blichfeld recruited friends to act and help produce early episodes. They filmed in their homes, and

before too long HBO came courting. In 2016, a new and only slightly more slick 30-minute version of *High Maintenance* premiered on that network. How did Sinclair manage to create a show so humane and down-to-earth on the most prestigious of all prestige cable channels? "Well, we didn't have that much money, [so] there was still a scrappiness," he says. "[We] didn't know any better. We only knew how *we* made it."

And that involved a whole lot of collaborative work. "We tried to let others in on the process, which was about flexibility and not taking too seriously the words that we wrote on the page...to be able to go in [the writers' room] and be like 'OK, I know that this is what it says on the page, but this corner of the room looks really cool, and [the actor] happens to be a good—I don't know—juggler or whatever, so why don't we try to



***High Maintenance* has also been notable, especially early on, for its casting of “real-looking” people who don’t appear as though they emerged from a Hollywood star factory.**

figure out how to make that all work together? Instead of rendering something that wasn’t in front of us, right? So we put a lot of square pegs into circular holes.”

They also tried for as much of an egalitarian, communal feeling on set as possible. “There were no trailers,” he says. “We didn’t put people in a room to just be by themselves.” Extras got their makeup done next to featured actors. “It really was a humble experience that made it hard to play into the power structure that is usually inherent on TV productions.” This feeling extended to the writing as well. “We tried not to be mean, we tried not to be unkind, we tried to be funny without being unkind. We really tried to *make* kindness. We had a list of do’s and don’ts in the writers’ room and tenets of non-judgmentalness and sympathy.” The show’s message—“The twist,” he says—“is that people are nice.”

Also, he adds, “Sometimes, in our writers’ room, we bring in subjects who do the same profession, or are in the same subculture of the person we’re trying to portray in the show.” And sometimes they take research field trips, like, for instance, to the Queens neighborhood of Kew Gardens, which, he says, is also known as “Crew Gardens” for all of the flight attendants and pilots who crash there.

High Maintenance has also been notable, especially early on, for its casting of “real-looking” people who don’t appear as though they emerged from a Hollywood star factory (and the occasional nudity has been similarly—and stunningly—true to life). That is intentional. “I find it distracting when there’s a recognizable face or somebody you know,” he says. Blichfeld came from casting—she won an Emmy for her work on *30 Rock*—which provided a steady stream of

actors for their own show. “There are so many people who auditioned for *30 Rock* that she didn’t get to cast because they weren’t ‘name’ people. Those people were talented but weren’t getting the shot.” (Perhaps it’s unsurprising, given that reality, that *GQ* published an article entitled “How *High Maintenance* Became *Law & Order* for Millennial Actors.”) “And then we kind of just fell in love with the naturalism of it all,” he continues. “Our *modus operandi* was to cast mostly queer actors, to find unusual presences to be on camera, and it’s so refreshing. Also, because a lot of these people are so stoked to be there because they’re never made the center of the story, their investment is crazy.”

Right now, the future of *High Maintenance* is undecided—Sinclair and Blichfeld were determined to take a break after season four, and Sinclair says he’s up for a season five, wherever and whenever that may happen. But he’s got a full load of upcoming projects, including trying to get a Mexico City version of *High Maintenance* green-lit. He’s also been cast in *Spin Me Round*, a film directed by screenwriter Jeff Baena and starring Alison Brie, who also co-wrote the script. He is an executive producer on the FX show *Dave*, for which he’s also directed four episodes. And he’s working on a pilot about the spiritual teacher Ram Dass, in whom he has taken a personal interest.

As for what comes after that, Sinclair is happy not to have so much of a plan: “Somebody once said,” he comments with a laugh, “that if you think you are in control, then you’re lost.” *

KIM FRANCE '87, THE FOUNDING EDITOR OF *LUCKY MAGAZINE*, IS CO-HOST OF THE PODCAST *EVERYTHING IS FINE*, A SERIES FOR WOMEN ON LIFE OVER 40.



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PIONEERS OF THE BIRD WORLD

ALTHEA SHERMAN AND LYNDS JONES, CLASSES OF
1875 AND 1892, RESPECTIVELY, MADE THEIR
OWN UNIQUE MARKS ON THE FIELD OF ORNITHOLOGY.

BY TARA SANTORA '18

ILLUSTRATIONS BY VALERIE CHIANG

IT'S NOT JUST canaries in coal mines that sound alarms when there is trouble in the atmosphere. Changes in the patterns and behaviors of birds have long served as early-warning predictors of environmental disruptions. And while studying birds and their links to broader phenomena existed before Althea Sherman and Lynds Jones took up their research in the late 1800s, it was their efforts that brought the study of birds into the college classroom on a national level—starting at Oberlin.

As a child in the 1850s, Sherman noticed—in ways that few others seemed to—how the landscape was shifting for the worse. Her father was a successful farmer, but his success meant the destruction of the natural environment around the family's home in

National, Iowa. Crops replaced the native plants and wildlife in the prairie, particularly the birds that nested in the grass. Sherman regretted the ecological changes, but the money her father made would go on to fund her education and research into the lives of birds—including some that no one before her had been able to study in depth.

Despite her passion for the environment, Sherman majored in art in college, earning both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree at Oberlin. She taught at Carleton College in Minnesota and supervised art education at public schools in Tacoma, Washington. In 1895, then in her early 40s, she returned to National to care for her aging parents—and to a subject that had fascinated her as a child: birds.

Sherman began to educate herself, aided by the powers of observation she had honed as an artist and her voracious appetite for reading. Still, this self-education was difficult. A major field guide for birds hadn't yet been published, so there was no easy way to identify a species on the go.

“Think about trying to learn how to identify birds that are flitting by,” says Oberlin Professor of Biology Keith Tarvin, who teaches ornithology. “There were resources, but it takes a lot of proactivity and a lot of dedication to be able to do that.”

When her parents died, Sherman settled into the family home with her sister, a physician who served as the breadwinner while Sherman researched birds. She placed nesting boxes of her own design around the



property to house flickers and other species. Inadvertently, she attracted predators—screech owls and sparrowhawks—which allowed her to publish the first descriptions of their nesting activities. But Sherman's most novel invention was more intentional—the chimney swift tower.

As their name suggests, chimney swifts are small, fast-flying birds that nest primarily in chimneys. Because of this, ornithologists had great trouble studying their nest life, resorting to standing on a box on a chair and using a hand mirror to peer into a chimney.

The 28-foot-tall tower Sherman designed and commissioned to be built in her backyard allowed for much easier observations. The tower housed stairs that wound around a center chimney that was fashioned with peepholes and windows for viewing the birds in their nests. Visitors—more than 1,700 by

Sherman's count—traveled from far and wide to see the tower.

Sherman was well-respected by her contemporaries, but she had one major quirk: a vendetta against the house wren. While many of her peers put out bird boxes to attract the small, round, inquisitive bird, Sherman fiercely opposed this practice due to one of the wren's behaviors: it poked holes into the eggs of other bird species. She decried the house wren, calling it a “felon, criminal, demon, and devil” that contributed to declining numbers of other bird species.

When Sherman died in 1943, her will stipulated that the property become a bird sanctuary—but on the condition that house wrens would not be permitted to breed there. She also made a sizeable gift to Oberlin, requiring that some of the money be used to hire a professor who would “each year give

some special instruction in the study of birds.”

This wasn't the first time Sherman had donated money to Oberlin with birds in mind. For Lynds Jones, an Oberlin graduate and a naturalist who had taught ornithology classes at Oberlin since the 1890s, she tried to raise money for a full professorship in animal ecology. She donated the first \$500 of the \$15,000 needed to fund the position and pledged hundreds of dollars on a recurring basis. However, her efforts didn't pan out; Jones wasn't promoted until years later.

Unlike Sherman, Jones had followed a direct path to ornithology. As a boy, he collected bird eggs; he had eggs from 250 species by the time he left for college. He earned a bachelor's degree and a master's at Oberlin and began teaching. He taught a range of subjects, including geology, zoology, and entomology, and was curator of



Oberlin's zoological museum. But Jones was most known for starting the first formal ornithology class at a college or university in the United States.

That first class attracted 27 students, but interest picked up quickly; he eventually taught a class of 137. Jones was an engaging and beloved professor—so much so that a summer ecology class parodied the song “Johann Friedrich Oberlin” to be about him, with such choice lyrics as, “The bugs and spiders, great and small / And caterpillars one and all / Cried out in scientific tones / “We die for thee, Professor Jones.”

Jones required his students to keep daily bird counts and led them on early morning sunrise walks. He took students on field trips to Sherman's chimney swift tower in Iowa and even to the West Coast, where they camped under the stars for six to eight weeks

during the summer. He hoped that a love of birds would inspire a love of nature in his students and a drive to conserve it.

Jones also continued to research birds. Throughout his life, he kept track of the bird species he'd observed, a list that topped 670. He tallied birds across the country and globe, publishing his findings in more than than 140 articles.

Perhaps the most well-remembered part of Jones' legacy was the role he played as a founder of the Wilson Ornithological Society. The organization published a scientific journal called *The Wilson Bulletin*, now known as the *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, for which Jones wrote and edited. He pushed for bird counts and censuses, which may have influenced creation of the popular and ongoing Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

But for all of his accomplishments, Jones

was a quiet and homespun man. “All who knew Dr. Jones were impressed, not only by his extensive knowledge of the bird world, but by his extreme modesty. I do not recall ever having heard him assert that he knew anything about birds,” one of his students wrote.

Jones, who was married and had five children, taught at Oberlin for more than 58 years. Upon his death, a former student wrote, “The college can't find another Jones, but they can continue ornithology and influence other students in acquiring an appreciation of nature.” ●

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VALERIE CHIANG IS A PHOTOGRAPHER AND ILLUSTRATOR BASED IN NEW YORK CITY. SHE STUDIED PIANO PERFORMANCE AT THE OBERLIN CONSERVATORY FROM 2010 TO 2012.

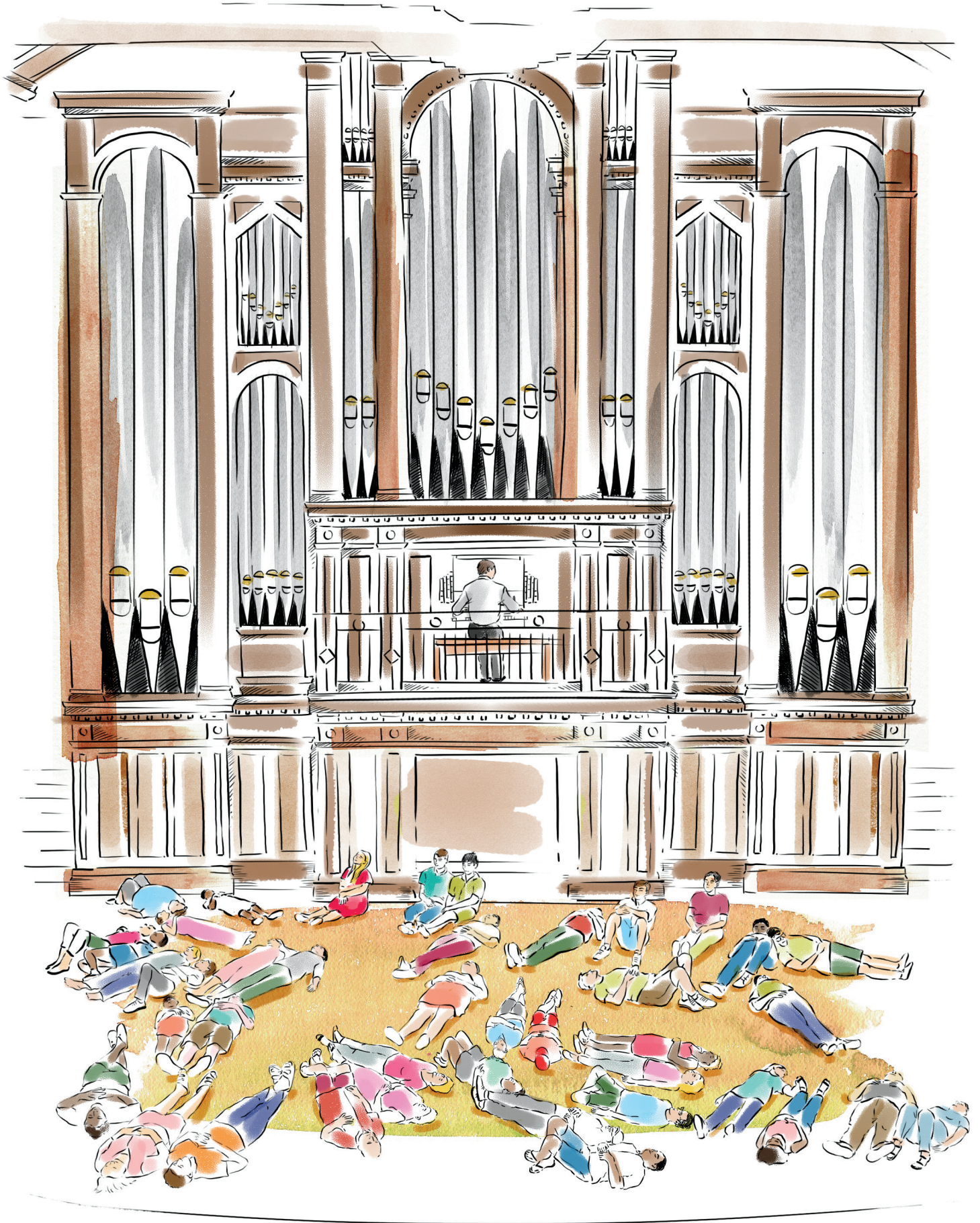
An Organ Story

Oberlin's many and diverse organs let students put their mettle to the pedal.

BY HELEN S. PAXTON '73

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAY VAN MILLINGEN

If you're lucky enough to score a backstage tour of Finney Chapel's mighty Fisk organ (and you're OK with climbing ladders), you will begin to unravel the mysteries of pipe organs—how they work, the amazing range of sounds they produce, and why they seem to have an effect on the listener unlike any other instrument. ▶





Warner Concert Hall's 1974 Flentrop (above) was built by the Dutch firm known worldwide for the finest instruments to interpret the works of Bach and his contemporaries.

Finney Chapel is home to the largest instrument on campus (previous page) and to the Friday Night Organ Pump.

Pipe organs have been around since the third century BCE, when Ctesibius of Alexandria invented the hydraulis, a type of water organ. Their history is wide-ranging and complex, and the pipe organ community is as diverse as the instruments. That community has found a fertile home for organ scholarship and performance in “a mystical place in the Midwest”—which is how Jonathan Moyer ’12 (Artist Diploma), the David S. Boe Associate Professor of Organ at the conservatory and chair of the Organ Department, describes the town of Oberlin.

“You can walk around Tappan Square and through time and space and places; you would have to get on a plane to Europe and travel around different cities to see and touch and hear all the unique instruments that we have here,” says David Kazimir ’99, curator of organs at Oberlin. Kazimir oversees the care of 32 organs, maintaining tuning and order among the keyboards and the mechanical actions that send

air into more than 14,000 pipes (ranging from a half-inch to 32 feet long) on and around campus.

Oberlin’s prominence in the organ world had its beginnings in the mid-19th century, when students were taught on organs at First Congregational and Second Congregational churches (now united as First Church). From then on, as interest in organ literature and performance boomed in the U.S. and Europe, the conservatory began acquiring instruments. By 1920 the world’s largest organ department had five teachers, 125 students, and multiple practice and performance instruments. Today’s Oberlin organists have it even better, with so many instruments available to explore that Kazimir calls the collection “a living organ encyclopedia” and a “Disney World for organists.”

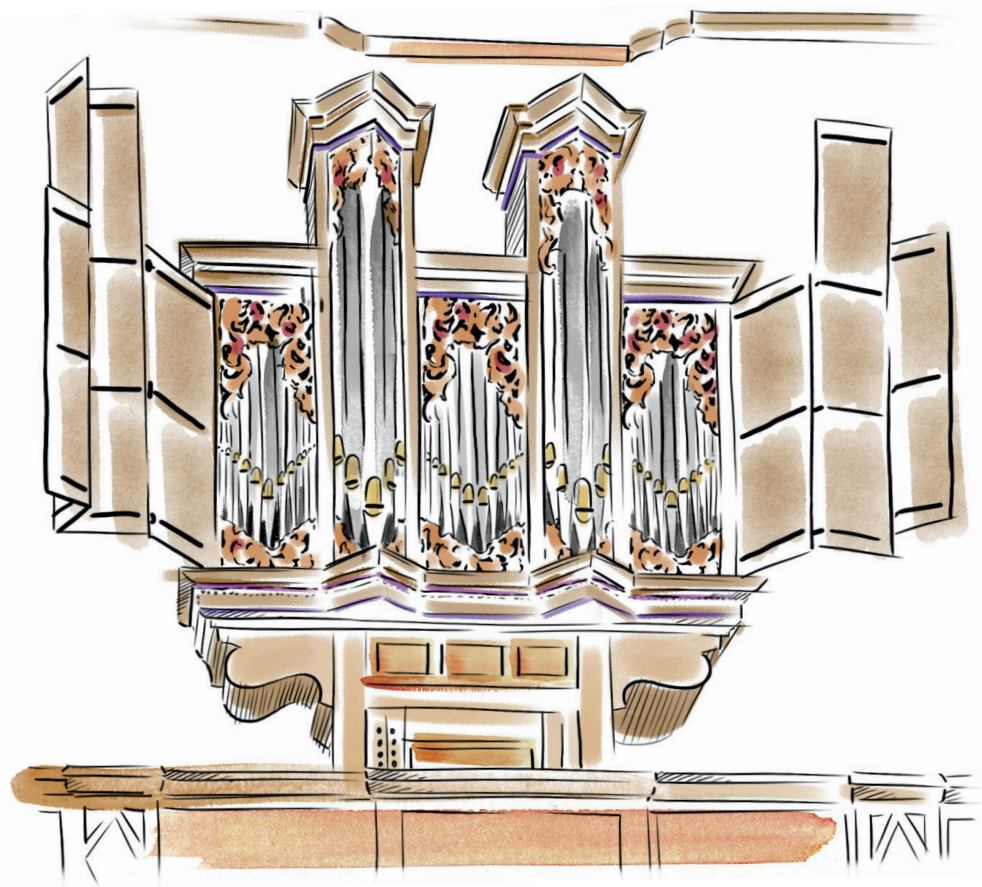
Warner Concert Hall hosts two distinctive organs. The 1974 Flentrop at the front of the hall was built by the Dutch firm known worldwide for the finest instruments to interpret the works

of Bach and his contemporaries. At the back of the hall is an elaborate and unique (in the U.S.) Spanish Baroque-style organ built by American builder Greg Harrold in 1988 that has the unusual feature of hand-powered bellows and multiple sets of impressive horizontal reed stops.

A walk back to the practice rooms in Robertson Hall reveals many fine instruments available 16 hours a day to organ majors, minors, and any other student interested in studying the pipe organ. Twelve practice organs include five Flentrops, three Holtkamps, two Noacks, a Brombaugh, and a Guilbault-Thérien. Faculty and students also make use of three studio instruments in Bibbins Hall built by Flentrop and Fritts-Richards.

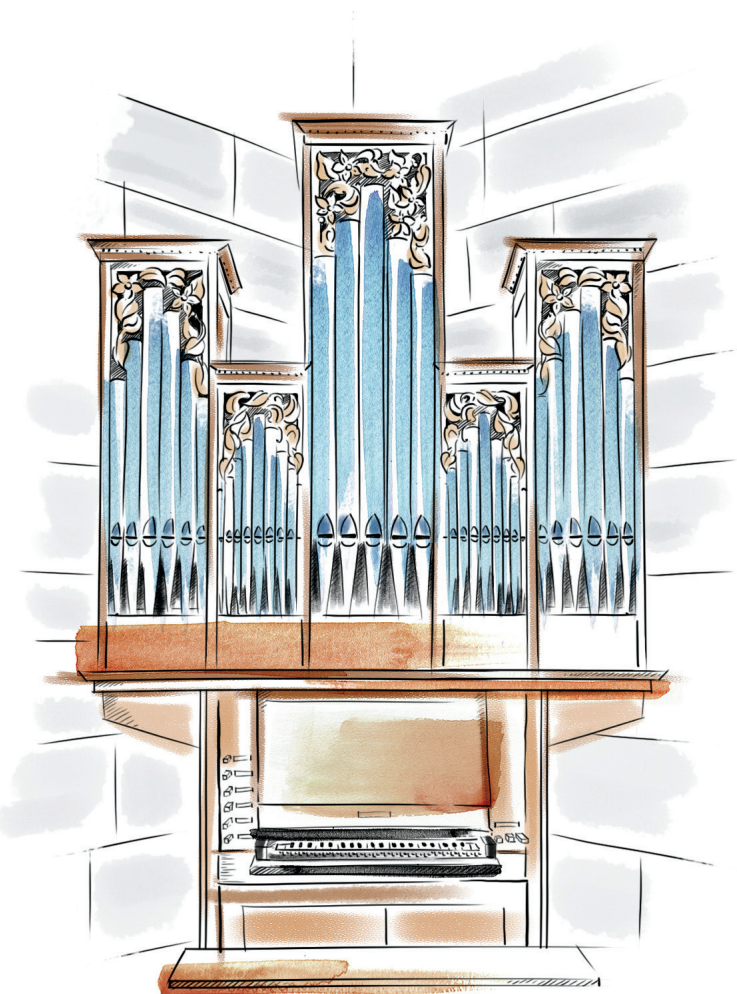
Finney Chapel is home to the largest instrument on campus. Inspired by the grand French Romantic period in organ building and composition and built in 2001 by the renowned firm Fisk of Gloucester, Massachusetts, the Opus 116 was made possible by major support from the estate of Kay Africa of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It offers a “sumptuous tapestry of sound,” according to Moyer, and brings to mind why so many refer to pipe organs as “the king of instruments.”

Elsewhere on campus, Fairchild Chapel’s two Brombaugh organs offer a view of the very distant past of organ construction. The Mary McIntosh Bridge Organ, built in 1981 and installed in the chapel gallery, celebrates the late Renaissance organ-building traditions and practice of early 17th-century North German instruments. Moyer, always eager to provide historical context, praises Fairchild’s instruments for their “window onto the past.” The gallery organ offers visual as well as aural pleasures, with elaborate case carvings depicting fiddles, drums, bagpipes, and gargoyles playing Renaissance wind instruments. The organ at the front of the chapel was



The Mary McIntosh Bridge Organ (right) celebrates the late Renaissance organ-building traditions and practice of early 17th-century North German instruments.

The organ at the front of Fairchild Chapel (below) was commissioned for the home of David Boe.



commissioned for the home of David Boe, the late professor of organ and former dean of the conservatory. He and wife Sigrid Boe graciously gifted the organ to Oberlin in 2012.

Peace Community Church on East Lorain Street is home to the Bozeman-Gibson organ, a modern evocation of the existing organ built by Gottfried Silbermann in 1741 in Großhartmannsdorf, Germany. After a long repair period following flood damage, the organ was purchased by the conservatory and dedicated and renamed for David and Sigrid Boe on the occasion of David's 75th birthday.

LEARNING THE INSTRUMENT

For many musicians who decide to pursue organ, keyboard study begins at the piano. Having basic piano ability is a plus when one is later confronted with up to three keyboards (also called manuals), hand-operated stops, foot pedals, and a completely different approach to how the fingers touch the keyboard.

While the piano is essentially a percussion instrument—keys are struck, the mechanical action comes into play, the hammers hit strings, and the sound appears and then immediately begins to die—the pipe organ, while sharing a keyboard, is truly a wind instrument. Once keys are struck, the mechanical action comes into play, wind is released into the pipes, and the sound continues until the keys are released. As Celina Kobetitsch '18 puts it, “the intricacies of touch are so very different.”

At Oberlin, organ majors do more than learn to perfect their playing skills. “You can't be an organist in Oberlin without being drawn to the history and the science of how organs work,” says Kazimir. A two-semester course requirement, Organ Literature, History, and Design, covers the complex workings of the variety of organs around town. A comparison? What if pianists had to learn the mechanics of tuning and repair of their instrument, and drivers had to learn auto

mechanics? When organists become music directors in a church or synagogue, as they often do, and tuning or repair is needed, most likely they will need to do the work themselves, due to the scarcity of organ technicians.

The easy access to 32 instruments in a full range of sizes and styles is ultimately what draws interest from around the world to northeastern Ohio. “The collection here is like a grand museum of organs where one can get a profound understanding of the history and development of these instruments, over four centuries, and encompassing styles from Spain to France to the Netherlands, Germany, and the U.S.,” says Moyer.

SPEAKING PERSONALLY

Organists often report being caught by a spell when first encountering the instrument. Kobetitsch, currently a Fulbright scholar in Leipzig, Germany, happened upon a Bach organ concert while on a college tour in Montreal. Bewitched, she quickly knew that she wanted to learn organ alongside piano. Soon after, she was taken with the “unique charm” of Oberlin, where she was drawn into the history and repertoire surrounding the French organ revival of the 19th century. After time spent in France, where she discovered little-known masterworks by 20th-century female composers, she is now expanding her knowledge of German organ repertoire in the city that was home to Bach and Mendelssohn’s legendary careers.

Christa Rakich ’75 grew up in a family of church-goers, studied piano from age 5, and speaks of “love at first sight” when first encountering the “multiple keyboards, flashing lights, and pipes.” While practicing piano, she would frequently imagine she was playing organ and began lessons at age 16. At Oberlin

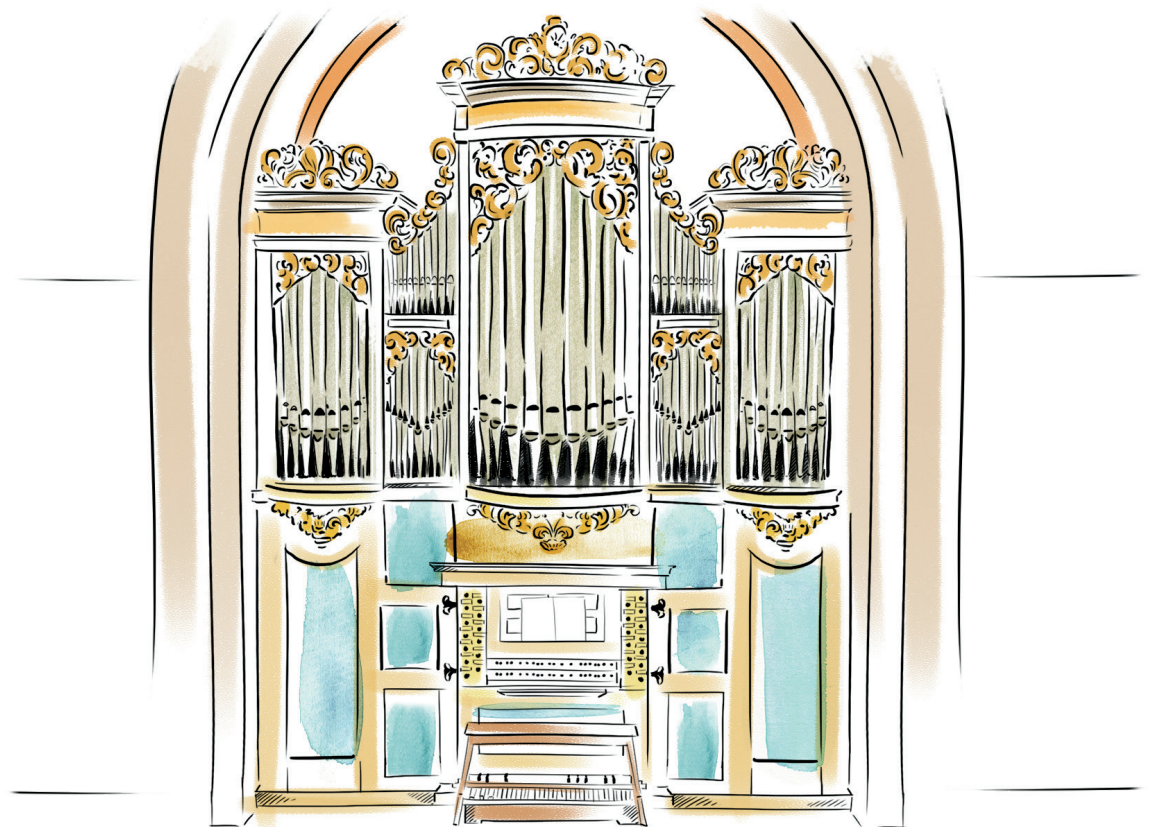
she earned double degrees in organ and German, and after graduate school she launched her teaching and performing career. Eventually Rakich was drawn back to Oberlin, where she is now a visiting professor of organ, teaching not only majors but also “surprisingly many piano-playing college students” who find themselves unexpectedly intrigued by the mysteries of pipe organs.

Alcee Chriss III ’15, the first-prize winner of the 2017 Canadian International Organ Competition in Montreal (known as “the Olympics of organ competitions”), says the possibilities of the instrument captured him at a young age. Growing up in a family surrounded by music—mostly at church with gospel, jazz, and classical—he frequently joined his parents in watching a popular television program, *The Hour of Power*. Developing an “obsession with the mystery of a really powerful

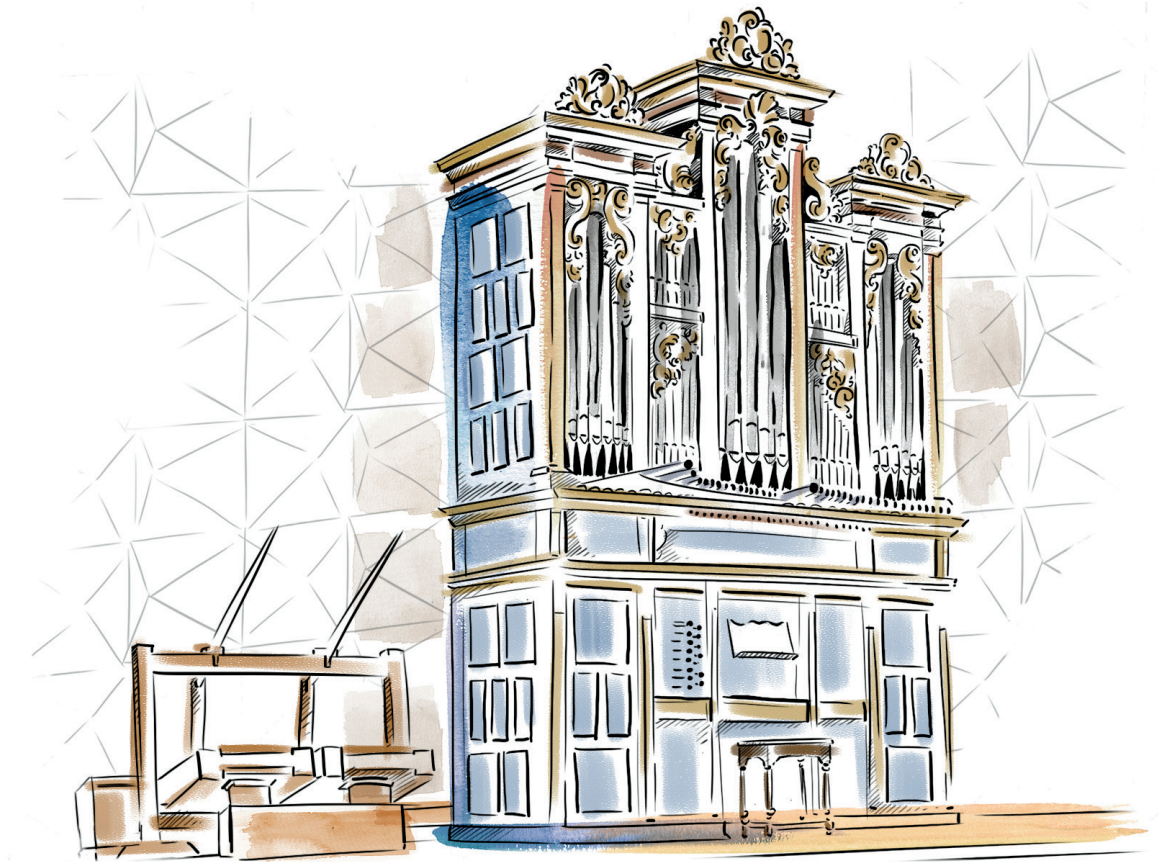
instrument,” he sought out an organ teacher, quickly took to the instrument, and attended Oberlin’s summer organ academy as a high school student. His time at Oberlin, playing the Fisk, the Flentrop (“a friggin’ amazing instrument and so hard to play!”), and more, set him on his path as a performer with an unusually broad repertoire. These days, Chriss is busy as university organist and artist in residence at Wesleyan University, where he also gives lessons and teaches courses in organ history and performance. Always passionate, Chriss suggests organists continue “fighting to be relevant” and join him in “screaming to the heavens that the organ is a great instrument!”

Jonathan Moyer also grew up in a musical and religious family. An undergraduate piano major, he came under the spell of the organ as a graduate student at the Peabody Institute

Peace Community Church is home to the Bozeman-Gibson organ.



At the back of Warner Concert Hall is an elaborate and unique (in the U.S.) Spanish Baroque-style organ that has the unusual feature of hand-powered bellows and multiple sets of impressive horizontal reed stops.



in Baltimore, leading to further study in Europe and at Oberlin, where he was awarded an Artist Diploma in organ in 2012. “Organ music is the gateway into the cultural history of ourselves,” says Moyer, while explaining his intertwined loves of music and history, honed over years of research and travel. When asked about his favorite Oberlin instrument, he demurs. “Organs have personalities,” he says, “when you get to know them, you feel at home.”

COMPOSING FOR THE ORGAN

Oberlin isn’t just a place for training young organists—it’s also been an inspiration for composers. Pulitzer Prize-winning composer George Walker ’41, who graduated at age 18 with highest conservatory honors, was the organist at Oberlin’s Graduate School of Theology, and over a long career wrote a number of organ pieces, including *Spires*, commissioned by the American Guild of Organists in 1998. And among works by Christopher Rouse ’71, also a Pulitzer winner, is his 2014 Organ Concerto—commissioned jointly and premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the National Symphony.

Organ composers often cite free improvisation as a starting point for their written pieces. Bálint Karosi ’07 is a celebrated improviser, a leading Bach

interpreter, and prolific composer. Many published works for liturgical and secular settings by Calvin Talyor ’70, David Hurd ’71, and Angela Kraft Cross ’80 are in wide circulation, and current faculty members Moyer and Rakich frequently perform their own compositions. Robert Sirota ’71 has written many works for organ, often performed by his wife, Victoria Ressemeyer Sirota ’71. The American Guild of Organists commissioned Sirota’s *In the Fullness of Time* for the 2000 inauguration of the Fisk organ at Benaroya Hall, home of the Seattle Symphony. The work had its Oberlin premiere at the inauguration concert for Finney Chapel’s Kay Africa Memorial Organ in September 2001.

AND FOR THE BEST WAY TO REACH NEW FANS?

...there is the Friday Night Organ Pump. Older alumni will be envious to learn that this now-solid tradition is

approaching its 30th year. Instead of the Friday-night identity crisis typical for some Obies of the ’60s and ’70s, it’s now possible to lose one’s identity for a couple of hours by letting the mighty sounds of Finney’s great organ take over.

The pump was born in 1992 as a line of students waited for post-midnight free admission to the ’Sco in Wilder Hall (that’s short for Dionysus Disco). Two organ students, Erik Suter ’95 and Michael Lizotte ’93, found a captive audience in that line and invited the group into Finney Chapel for an impromptu concert. The midnight Organ Pump now counts as an infamous and uniquely Oberlin entertainment.

One Friday every month, students and others pile into Finney, and organ students take turns at the keyboards. “Some of the greatest and wildest organ repertoire” is heard, notes Kobetitsch. This crazy-quilt concert has also presented

Oberlin Campus Safety blatter reports sung in Anglican chant, spontaneous skits, organist Q&As, pop song arrangements, costumes, and candy, making the massive instrument a little more accessible and a little less grandiose. As the event comes to a close, the audience floods onto the stage for a lie-down and the chance to hear and feel the thundering sounds and vibrations of the Fisk, performed at full throttle.

Reactions to Organ Pump have been varied, but nearly always enthusiastic. “Most of the time it was a mess,” says Chriss, not disapprovingly. Kazimir describes it differently: “Off Broadway meets Sunday-morning church.” ■

SEE A VIDEO TOUR OF THE ORGANS OF OBERLIN AT GO.OBERLIN.EDU/OBERLIN-ORGANS

HELEN SIVE PAXTON ’73, A COLLEGE MUSIC MAJOR, ONCE VENTURED INTO AN ORGAN PRACTICE ROOM AT ROBERTSON HALL AND HAS REMAINED INTIMIDATED BY THE “KING OF INSTRUMENTS” EVER SINCE.

Class Notes



CYCLES OF HISTORY This photo appeared in the 1955 *Hi-O-Hi* yearbook under the heading "Bicycles Symbolize Casual Atmosphere." As a student four decades later, Gary Shteyngart '95 saw the bikes in a different light. In his memoir *Little Failure*, he wrote that Oberlin students tend to think of their bikes "as extensions of themselves, one of the few objects they may fully possess without ideological heartache."

1960s

1960

David Bradford's new book, *CONNECT: Building Exceptional Relationships with Family, Friends, and Colleagues* (Random House), is based on the Stanford Business School course Interpersonal Dynamics, affectionately known as "Touchy Feely." It includes the input of thousands of MBA students and executives whose lives were changed by the course. [w] connectandrelate.com

1962

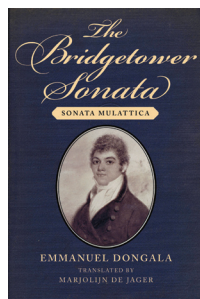
David Eberhardt's book *For All the Saints—A Protest Primer* is now in its fifth printing. It touches on his experience as a member of the Baltimore Four, who were convicted and imprisoned for pouring blood on draft files on October 27, 1967. Dave has published three books of poetry: *The Tree Calendar*, *Blue Running Lights*, and *Poems from the Website*, *Poetry in Baltimore*. [e] mozela9@comcast.net ■ Striving to make sense of today's political turmoil, **James Payne** has published *The Big Government We Love to Hate: Exploring the Roots of Political Malaise* (Lytton). James has taught at Yale, Wesleyan, Johns Hopkins, and Texas A&M and has written 23 books covering congress, the tax system, foreign policy, and other topics. He wrote his first book, *Labor and Politics in Peru* (Yale, 1965), during Oberlin's Junior Year Abroad program, when he went to Peru in 1961 and studied the labor movement. Artist and educator ■ **Anne Shaver-Crandell** has been creating works with oil sticks, which she describes as "a welcome respite to anyone feeling constrained by current circumstances of relative confinement." Two of Anne's monotypes, *Rattitude* and *Brindle Rat*, were included in the Salmagundi Club Annual Black and White Exhibition in New York, both of which were created during a workshop at the club. Her works also appeared in a solo exhibition at the Mulberry Street Branch of the New York Public Library. Anne recently relaunched her website with a new look. [w] www.annieshavercrandell-artist.com

1965

Emmanuel Dongala's new historical novel, *The Bridgetower Sonata: Sonata Mulattica*



Shaver-Crandell '62 (left), Springer '70 (below)



Dongala '65

(Schaffner Press), tells the story of George Bridgewater, the biracial violin prodigy who befriended Beethoven and inspired a work by him. Emmanuel has worked as a teacher and school administrator in the Congo, where he was raised, and has also lived in France. He is now back in the United States, where he taught chemistry for a time at Bard College at Simon's Rock. He writes in French, and his works have been translated into a dozen languages. ■ **Anita Fahrni-Minear**'s second book, *Munkhsuld's Move*, was distributed to nearly 10,000 ninth-graders in Mongolia. It is based on two decades of working with residents of Mongolia and reflects ongoing problems including discrimination, corruption, environmental destruction, antiquated

teaching methodology, and alcoholism. The stories are intended to encourage reading and initiate discussion.

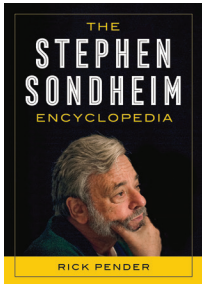
1970s

1970

With the hope of planning a reunion in the upcoming year, **Connie Springer** is seeking information about the students who participated in Oberlin College's first Hebrew House during the Winter Term of 1969 and is hoping for help identifying the people in the group photo taken then. If you can help, email her. [e] larkspur@fuse.net

1971

Edward Hartfield was nominated to serve on the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) Federal Service Impasses Panel. Also nominated to serve on the panel, which resolves disputes between federal agencies and unions representing federal employees,



Pender '71

was Joseph Slater '83. ■ **Rick Pender's** *The Stephen Sondheim Encyclopedia* (Rowman & Littlefield) is a 600-page volume about the composer and lyricist, who remains productive at age 91. Rick is a past chair of the American Theatre Critics Association and past editor of the quarterly magazine *The Sondheim Review*. He has been a theater critic in Cincinnati since 1986, writing principally for *Cincinnati CityBeat*. He is also the author of *100 Things to Do in Cincinnati Before You Die* (2016, 2019) and *Oldest Cincinnati* (2021), which was released on the same day as his Sondheim book. [w] www.RickPenderWrites.com

1973

Ruth Hoberman's "Sad Women: A Look 2 Essay on Anita Brookner" appeared in the spring 2021 issue of *Ploughshares*. Ruth is an emerita professor of English at Eastern Illinois University. She has published widely on late-19th- and 20th-century British literature. Her most recent book, *Museum Trouble: Edwardian Literature and the Emergence of Modernism* (University of Virginia Press), was published in 2011.

1977

Carl Thiermann retired this year after spending 44 years in K-12 education, including the last two decades as head of the upper school at the Head-Royce School in Oakland, Calif. "I hold dear the memory of Professor Booker Peek critiquing my student teaching (without mercy) as I pretended to know what I was doing at Elyria High School in 1976," Carl writes.

1980s

1981

Neil Farrell gave up the gigging life in New York City for "suburban dadhood" in Allentown, Pa., in 2009, but he remains active musically while working in a nonmusical job, driving forklifts and bouncing between multiple roles for Apple and Geodis. Neil contributes musically

each week to his church's Zoom services. [e] tenpualto@hotmail.com

1983

Joseph Slater was nominated to serve on the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) Federal Service Impasses Panel. Also nominated to serve on the panel, which resolves disputes between federal agencies and unions representing federal employees, was Edward Hartfield '72. ■ Violinist **Lisa Grodin** performs with the Grammy-nominated ensemble El Mundo, which released the recording *Archivo de Guatemala: Music from the Guatemala City Cathedral Archive* this year on Naxos. Lisa also plays viola and violin with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Voices of Music, and many other ensembles, and serves as Philharmonia's director of education and music director for the Junior Bach Festival. She is a longtime faculty member at the Crowden School.

1984

Yuji Nozue is enjoying retirement in his hometown of Shizuoka, Japan, following what he calls "an unremarkable career in finance and teaching in places like London and Tokyo." He now spends his time gardening, reading, and looking after his elderly parents. He reports he is "still confused as ever and is not sure about himself," but has lots of fond memories from his college days and his lacrosse team—and he notes in passing that his body weight remains unchanged at 110 pounds. ■ Conductor **Robert Spano** was named music director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, where he has served as principal guest conductor since 2019. His initial three-year term begins with the 2022-23 season. Robert has been music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra since 2001. He begins his new term with 16 months as music director designate, during which time he will oversee the orchestra's transition out of the pandemic.

1985

Professor of Mathematics **Robert Bosch** coedited the Proceedings of the Bridges 2020 Conference, which was scheduled for Helsinki, Finland, but took place virtually in response to the pandemic. The proceedings include a paper by Robert and Aaron Kreiner '19 on



Martinsek '85



Schorr '85

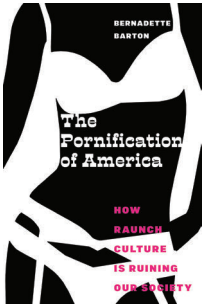
"Domino Steganography," and a paper by Aaron on "Checkerboard Quadrilateral Mosaics." ■ **Paula Howell-Newberry** started a new opera company, Rainbow Opera Enterprises. [e] RainbowOperaEnterprises@gmail.com ■ **Amanda Martinsek** of the Cleveland firm Ulmer & Berne was named to *The American Lawyer's* list of Midwest Trailblazers. Amanda's practice focuses on complex class actions, shareholder derivative claims, product liability suits, and other corporate matters. ■ **Daniel Schorr's** first novel, *A Brief History of Kate Parker*, follows the life of an American woman between the ages of 18 and 28 and includes cover art by Hannah Schorr '23. Daniel lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., and has taught in public school for more than three decades. The book is available through Book Baby, www.bookbaby.com.

1987

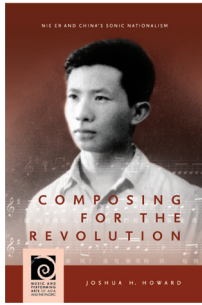
Gillian Burlingham was named a public sector business rep for IBEW Local 46, representing electricians in the Seattle area. The new role follows 13 years as a construction electrician building hospitals, light rail systems, research facilities, and more. "I miss working with the tools, but not how hard the work is on my body," Gillian says, adding, "My wife Sariya [left in photo] and daughter Amina [center] keep me grounded." She looks forward to hearing from old friends. [e] gillianxb@gmail.com ■ "The laundry bag I brought to Oberlin in fall of '83 has retired after 38 years of service," **Eva Schlesinger** reports. "Long live my laundry bag!"

1988

Bernadette Barton has completed the book *The Pornification of America: How Raunch Culture is Ruining America* (NYU Press),

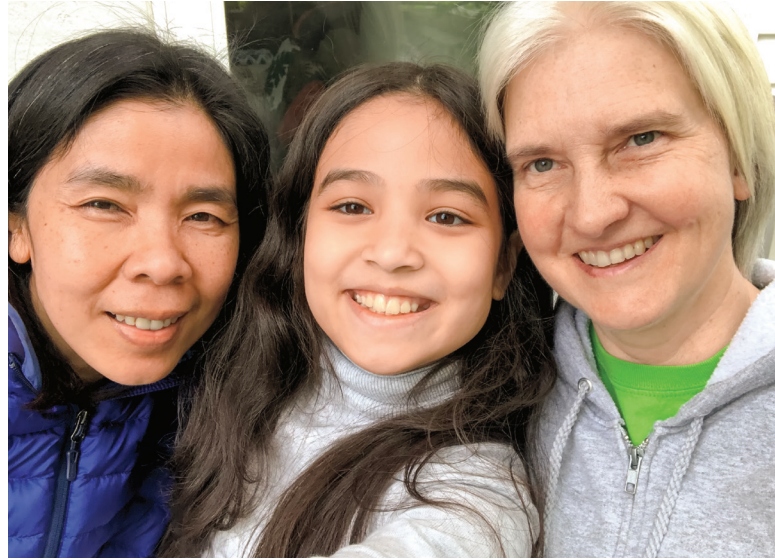


Barton '88



Howard '88

which was included in the *New York Times* New & Noteworthy books section and described as “zippy and well-illustrated.” She is a professor of sociology and director of gender studies at Morehead State University, and she lives in Lexington, Ky., with her wife of 23 years, three cats, and a dog. [w] www.fromthesquare.org/the-pornification-of-america ■ **Joshua Howard**, who teaches Chinese history and East Asian studies at the University of Mississippi, has written a new book about the radical composer Nie Er: *Composing for the Revolution: Nie Er and China's Sonic Nationalism*. ■ **John Kodachi** is an attorney who competed on season 13 of *American Ninja Warrior*, all of which likely explains his nickname “Legal Eagle Ninja.” At age 55, John was older than most other competitors. “Several people assumed that I was the parent of a ninja,” he writes. “It was a great experience that I hope to repeat next year.” He stresses the importance of exercise, especially for older Obies. “There’s a simple rule to remember: Use it or lose it.”



Clockwise from left: Burlingham '87, Kodachi '88, Schlesingler '87



1990s

1990

James Davis, a professor of English at Brooklyn College, was elected the president of the Professional Staff Congress, the union representing 30,000 City University of New York (CUNY) faculty and staff, a role he takes over from **Barbara Bowen '77**, who served the union for two decades. James will continue pursuing the union’s biggest project: the New Deal for CUNY, which “aims to reverse the steady disinvestment in CUNY, bring back free tuition, create pay parity for adjuncts, and establish minimum ratios of advisors and mental health staff for students.” After a year sabbatical, Barbara will return to her position

in the English department at Queens College. Besides the leadership position, James and Barbara share additional Oberlin history: both started as chemistry majors, and both were convinced by Professor David Young that an English major was their way to connect not only with history but also the political struggles of the moment.

1993

Jim Cotelingam was named the Cleveland Clinic chief strategy officer. He leads the enterprise strategy office team, which manages market intelligence and analytics; enterprise strategy development and major strategic initiative implementation; and strategic transactions, such as mergers and

acquisitions, affiliations, and service agreements for the health system.

1994

Jennifer Sung was nominated to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit by President Joe Biden, part of Biden’s fifth slate of federal judicial nominees. Jennifer’s private practice specialized in labor, employment, and constitutional law. She represented labor organizations and employees in arbitrations, administrative proceedings, and civil litigation in state and federal courts. She was a law clerk for Judge Betty Binns Fletcher on the 9th Circuit appeals court from 2004 to 2005. Before law school at Yale, she was a union organizer for the Service Employees International Union.



MAKING A REAL IMPACT

As I close my term as Alumni Association president, I reflect on how we can make a real impact for current Oberlin students. During the pandemic, we quickly launched an ambitious internship program for sophomores and juniors who weren't able to have a normal academic year. We are now looking to continue and expand this as Oberlin considers the new normal. We hope to give every Oberlin student the opportunity for a high-quality internship experience.

We are also expanding what we can do for fellow alumni who are changing careers, looking to move, or are otherwise back on the market. We really want to harness the power of direct alumni-to-alumni and alumni-to-student connections, allowing us to use informal networking while the college enhances formal campus-based career programs. Patty Stubel '09 serves as our career liaison, and she coordinates a team committed to make these new programs a reality.

I write my final column as president in pretty much the same boat as my first column in May 2020. There's a pandemic. We see signs of hope, but we continue to worry. So many of us are working hard to make things better in all the ways we can. We are starting to think about what happens when we get back to normal. And we have had some terrific success along the way.

We have worked to expand virtual programming in ways that will show benefits even after the pandemic is over. Being able to stream a conservatory concert or hear a great colloquium speaker sponsored by an academic department is pretty amazing. Regional clubs can now host book clubs and other events that can be attended by people all over the world. While we can't wait to return to campus for "real" Commencement/Reunion Weekend, it was exciting to see the range of virtual programming we had during Virtual Reunion Weekend.

As my term nears its end, I welcome Young Kim '84 as our incoming Alumni Association president. He has already been working to better frame the efforts of the association across our different activities and subcommunities into a larger whole, and to vigorously build connections among alumni and to Oberlin.

As past-president, I'll remain active, since I love Oberlin and want to stay connected to current students and the alumni. I'll help Young and the new members of the Alumni Leadership Council, and I'll also keep working to connect Oberlin students with opportunities beyond the campus. New alumni need our help in starting their careers, but—just as importantly—the world needs them.

Scott Alberts '94
President, Oberlin Alumni Association

1995

Beth Sabo Novik recently performed in the eighth Matthew M. Neugroschel Annual Jewish Storytelling Festival, which she cofounded and coproduces in Saratoga Springs N.Y. Also taking part were **Sylvia Bloom '93** and **Shawn Banner '81**. Obies in attendance included **Carol Silverman-Kurtz '82**, **Fumi Murakami '81**, and **Tim Zimmerman '81**. The festival is organized through Temple Sinai in Saratoga Springs, where Beth and Shawn teach religious school and Sylvia is education director. ■ Composer **David Serkin Ludwig** teamed up with poet Katie Ford on the monodrama *The Anchoress*, a rumination on asceticism, solitude, and the female experience. Written in 2018, it was brought to life by soprano Hyunah Yu, PRISM Quartet, and Piffaro the Renaissance Band, in a release produced by PRISM's XAS label. David holds positions and residencies with nearly two dozen orchestras and music festivals in the U.S. and abroad.

1998

Michelle Chang served as the editor on two recent documentary films. *Down a Dark Stairwell* won several jury awards on the festival circuit and premiered on the PBS series *Independent Lens* in April 2021. *When Claude Got Shot* premiered at the SXSW film festival in March 2021. ■ **Cathy Park Hong**, author of *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*, was selected to be one of *TIME* magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2021.

1999

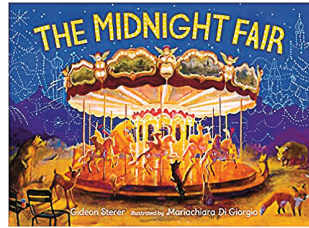
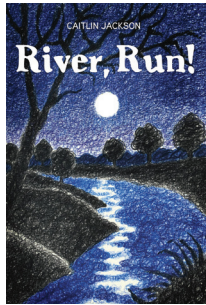
Tiffanie Luckett was appointed to the board of College Guild, which serves incarcerated people seeking to enrich their lives through education and mutual respect.

2000s

2000



Sarah Freeman has been appointed director of exhibitions of the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, overseeing the artistic and curatorial facets of the museum's contemporary art exhibitions. She will also



From left to right: Moon '03, Jackson '07, Kaplan '07, Sterer '11, Dame '16

continue to manage the production of those exhibitions, which she has done as museum exhibitions manager since 2015. Sarah was the public education manager at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York, and held roles at Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, the Lighthouse Centre for Architecture and Design in Glasgow, and the Center for Arts Education in New York.

2001



Mandy Tuong was elected to Minnesota Public Radio's board of trustees. Mandy is president and CEO of Thrivent Charitable Impact & Investing. She

previously served as the organization's senior VP and general counsel.

2003

Sex educator and author **Allison Moon**'s new book, *Getting It*, is billed as an "empowering guide to casual sex and hooking up." Allison previously authored *Girl Sex 101*.

2007

Caitlin Jackson's second book of poetry, *River, Run!* (Atmosphere Press), explores themes of femininity embedded in myth. The book's publicity invites readers to "Enter into a world of magic and contradictions, where distress settles down uneasily alongside solace and women rise out of their own ashes, power streaming from their fingertips." ■ YA novelist **Maxine Kaplan** published *Wench* (Abrams), her fantasy debut, earlier this year. The book tells the tale of Tanya, a "tavern wench" at the Smiling Snake in the fantastical country of Lode, and her adventure-filled quest to petition Lode's queen to grant her title to the tavern. "The root concept of an adventuring

barmaid in a feminist fantasy world will be enough to pull readers in, and Tanya's energy and determination will win them over along the way," writes *Booklist*.

2010s

2010

Los Angeles artist **Arden Surdam**, a specialist in sculpture and photography, was featured in the two-person exhibition "Ligature," a site-specific installation in a former New York fort known as the Ordnance. Pictured is the 2021 piece from the exhibition, "Horseshoe Hands."

2011

Gideon Sterer created *The Midnight Fair*, a wordless picture book that follows the exploits of animals who venture out of the woods and into the fairgrounds at night. Gideon's next work, *The Christmas Owl: Based on the True Story of a Little Owl Named Rockefeller*, was published this fall.

2012

Emily Thebaut produced an animated dog opera called *Pepito*, which features tenor **Joshua Blue '14** and tells the story of a couple's



Surdam '10

plans to adopt a puppy. An initially planned live performance was adapted to a virtual setting—and specifically animation—and was presented by New Opera West, the L.A.-based nonprofit opera company Emily founded and at which she serves as executive director. It can be viewed on the company's website. [w] www.newoperawest.org/pepito-animated-dog-opera

2016

Saxophonist **Max Bessesen** was one of four musicians selected for the Luminarts Jazz Fellowship, which allowed Max to record in New Jersey in late May. He then returned to Denver for more studio work—this time supported in part by the Joey Pearlman Original Music Project, founded in honor of Max's late friend, who died unexpectedly early this year. "As we begin to gather more often and resume something more like normal life, I hope that we will remember the people who have left us during this difficult year and live our lives better for them," says Max. Last year, Max was awarded a "Pathways to Jazz" grant from the Boulder County Arts Alliance for his project "Things to Come," which reinterprets essential jazz works from the 1970s. ■ **Hazel Crampton-Hays** was named press secretary to New York Governor Kathy Hochul in September. She was most recently press secretary to New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer. ■ **Amanda Dame** released her debut classical album, *Traditions Reimagined*, with the flute and percussion ensemble Duo Sila. A freelance performer, Amanda also teaches flute privately and through Sheppard Pratt Health System.

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“Our society needs institutions like Oberlin.”

SUSAN WEFALD '78

OBERLIN
COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Susan Wefald has spent her entire career working for social change, and she appreciates the foundation that Oberlin provided. “At Oberlin, students learn how to think critically, and many find inspiration to change the world for the better.” Today she is a director at Community Change, which aims to build the power of people directly impacted by structural inequities through grassroots organizing.

After spending most of her adult life in New York City, Susan now lives with her husband on Peaks Island off the coast of Maine, just a few doors down from a fellow alumnus who has been a friend for decades.

Reflecting on her time on campus, she recalls, “Oberlin gave me the opportunity to connect with other Asian Americans, which I hadn’t been able to do while growing up in the ’50s and ’60s in suburban Maryland.” On campus, she became a leader of the Asian American Alliance and was involved in efforts aimed at convincing Oberlin to divest from South Africa.

Susan’s appreciation for her alma mater led her to leave funds to the college through her estate. “When I was doing my will recently, I knew I wanted to leave money to Oberlin. I haven’t agreed with every decision the college has made, but it is important to me that the institution continues to be there for future generations.”

Many of our supporters find that they can make unexpectedly generous gifts from assets they will leave behind. These contributions can come from stocks, retirement funds, savings accounts, donor-advised funds, or other sources.

With an abundance of initiatives and projects happening at Oberlin, you have numerous opportunities to impact the future of the college and the conservatory. Approaching its 190th year, Oberlin is reshaping its physical campus to reduce carbon usage; developing diversity, equity, and inclusion practices that will inform all of our activities; and unveiling courses of study in business, global health, journalism, and piano pedagogy.

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Please contact Alan Goldman at the Office of Gift Planning at (440) 775-8599 or gift.planning@oberlin.edu.

Losses

Faculty

Thomas Russell Whitaker '49 was a professor of literature whose long career began with 12 years on the faculty at Oberlin College and included stints at Goddard College, the University of Iowa, and Yale University, where he taught English and theater from 1975 until his retirement in 1995. He earned an MA from Yale University in 1950 and a PhD in English literature three years later—more than 20 years prior to his eventual return as a faculty member. Dr. Whitaker published widely in the fields of poetry and drama, including the books *Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History* and *Fields of Play in Modern Drama*. He was awarded the Seton Elm-Ivy Award from the City of New Haven and Yale University in 2005, as well as the Harbison Award for Gifted Teaching from the Danforth Foundation in 1972. Dr. Whitaker died December 24, 2020. He leaves his third wife, Ann; four children; and a granddaughter. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Dorothy, and he was married to Joan Horwitt from 1999 to 2002. ■ Six years after graduating from Oberlin Conservatory, **Gene Young '60** returned to his alma mater to teach trumpet. By the time he moved on from Oberlin 13 years later, his impact on students had spread beyond the brass section. He left to indulge his passion for conducting—first at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, then at the Peabody Institute, where his love of new music found a vehicle in the Peabody Camerata, the ensemble he founded in 1987 and directed for many years. As a performer, Mr. Young began his career with the New Orleans Philharmonic, later serving as principal trumpet of the St. Louis Sinfonietta, the Mobile (Alabama) Symphony Orchestra, and the American Wind Symphony Orchestra. He authored a well-respected book on trumpet pedagogy, *Embouchure Enlightenment* (Tromba Publications), in addition to a tome titled *The Trumpets of Edgard Varèse* (E.C. Kerby). Mr. Young died June 19, 2018. He is survived by his second wife, Linda Surridge, and his children. He was previously married to Elizabeth Esterquest '60.

1938

Dorothy Hayford Watkins began her career in higher education administration, including a stint in 1943 and 1944 as assistant dean for

women at Oberlin. She earned an MA in guidance counseling from Syracuse University and served as assistant to the dean at the Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham College) and was also a teacher of deaf children at the University of Pennsylvania and the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Ms. Watkins died January 23, 2016, leaving her children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

1939

Hubert C. Ashman dedicated 35 years to practicing internal medicine at Jackson Clinic in Madison, Wis., in addition to his role on the staff of Methodist Hospital and as a clinical assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin Medical School. He completed his medical training at Louisiana State University. Dr. Ashman died April 11, 2021, leaving four children, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

1944

Alice Lyons Eckardt earned a master's degree from Lehigh University 22 years after graduating from Oberlin. She was a leader in the field of Jewish studies who founded the program at Lehigh and taught there from 1972 to 1987. In 1979 she was hand-picked by writer and activist Elie Wiesel to serve as a special consultant to the President's Commission on the Holocaust and was special advisor to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in D.C. She authored three books on Israel and the Holocaust with her husband, A. Roy Eckardt; she also wrote more than 200 scholarly articles and delivered talks throughout her career. "It's shocking to realize that a large proportion of America's younger generations do not know the terrible history of the Holocaust," she said shortly before her death. "Students ought to know what dreadful things have been done, particularly to minorities whether they are religious or racial." Ms. Eckardt died June 29, 2020, leaving two children and four grandchildren.

1945

A descendant of Oberlin College cofounder Philo Penfield Stewart, **Martha Atwater** was one of many in her family to attend Oberlin. She was born in China, where her father taught at a medical school, and she relocated to the U.S. as a young child. She worked for

many years at a publishing company in Hartford, Conn., and was active with her church. In 1986 she returned to China as part of an Oberlin Shansi alumni group. Ms. Atwater died January 4, 2021. She was predeceased by her husband, John B. Duncan, and is survived by six children, including Margaret Duncan Shearer '69 and daughter-in-law Rebecca Lindell '87; many grandchildren, including Katharine Lyons O'Malley '01 and Janice McMillan Lam '09; and numerous great-grandchildren. She is also survived by sister Caroline Atwater Leonard '42 and brother John Atwater '51.

1946

Jean Reitsman France was a specialist in the architectural history of Rochester, N.Y., and an authority on the arts and crafts movement in America. She taught for 28 years at the University of Rochester, including courses on American architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright, and historic preservation. She completed a master's degree at Oberlin and married Robert Rinehart France in 1948. Together they relocated to Princeton, N.J., and later Rochester. She played pivotal roles with the Landmark Society of Western New York for more than 55 years, was a founding member and trustee of Historic Pittsford from 1970 to 2014, and worked with the University of Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery for many years. Ms. France died February 3, 2021, leaving two daughters, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1948

Brynild Anderson de Veciana was a world traveler who began her career with the U.S. Foreign Service in Norway and Spain, where she met her eventual husband, Antonio de Veciana. She lived in Paris, Montevideo, Uruguay, and Mexico City before returning to the U.S. in 1982 and settling in San Francisco and later Virginia Beach, Va. Ms. Veciana died August 19, 2020. She is survived by a daughter, a son, and two granddaughters. She was preceded in death by her former husband and their youngest daughter. ■ **Vera Mallary** completed her bachelor's degree at the University of Delaware and worked for many years in foster care for Allegheny County, Pa. She married Jack Hillary Smith in 1946, and together they had three children. Ms. Mallary died September 6, 2020, following the death of her first husband and

two of their children. She is survived by a daughter, three stepchildren, and her second husband, R. Dewitt Mallary, whom she married in 1994.

1949

Harold B. Wright Jr. enjoyed a 40-year career with the YMCA, including executive roles in West Roxbury, Mass., and Hartford, Conn. He served as a U.S. Navy pilot during WWII. Mr. Wright died January 17, 2021. He is survived by his wife, Jane Gray '47, and their five sons, including Bruce '73 and David '76. He also leaves eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

1950

Herschel Strauss Shohan transitioned from a career in advertising to academia, teaching English at Hunter College, Ohio Wesleyan, and North Adams State College. He began his own graduate studies at Harvard Law School before being drafted into the U.S. Marines, serving for two years in Edenton, N.C. He completed an MA in English at Columbia University and returned years later to earn a PhD in 17th-century literature. In retirement, he cofounded Playwrights in Progress, an organization dedicated to the staging of readings and productions of western Massachusetts playwrights. Dr. Shohan died January 4, 2021. He is survived by Jane Smithwick, his wife of 57 years; a daughter and son; and two granddaughters.

1952

Edmund Merriman Wise Jr. was a professor and researcher at Tufts University School of Medicine before becoming a research scientist with the pharmaceutical firm Burroughs Wellcome, where he worked for 20 years. He served in naval hospitals on the East Coast before attending Harvard Medical School. Dr. Wise died December 1, 2020, leaving his wife of 68 years, Cynthia Wise '52; a daughter and son; and five grandchildren.

1953

Rollin DeVere II was a language teacher and track and field coach at University School in Cleveland who enjoyed writing for and performing in productions of the Chagrin Valley Little Theatre in his native Chagrin Falls, Ohio. He died January 21, 2021, leaving his wife, their children, and grandchildren, as well as niece Adrienne Antoine '02.

1954

Clair A. Cripe was a lawyer for the federal government, serving in the U.S. Navy's Judge Advocate General's Corps, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Prisons, from which he retired as general counsel in 1990. He studied at Harvard Law School and attended the U.S. Navy's Officer Candidate School en route to a JAG commission. While in Washington, he also taught corrections law at George Washington University for 15 years and authored the college-level textbook *Legal Aspects of Corrections Management*. He was an active member of the Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church in Kensington, Md., and was ordained a ruling elder of the church. Mr. Cripe died November 11, 2020. He was predeceased by his wife, Anne Suter, and is survived by two daughters and four grandchildren.

1955

Dorothy Birge Keller was raised by missionaries and grew into her own life as a missionary in her childhood home of Istanbul. At age 12, she swam across the Bosphorus Strait from Europe to Asia—the first of numerous times she would accomplish the feat. She married Robert Samuel Keller in 1955, and together they settled in Turkey to teach at a mission school before eventually returning to the U.S. in 1964 to raise their four children. She earned an MA in linguistics from the University of Michigan and an MSW, MPA, and PhD in social work from Ohio State University, and she taught social work at Manchester College for 18 years. After retiring from teaching, she and her husband directed a college exchange program involving schools in Japan, China, and India, and they returned to live in Turkey once again from 2000 to 2004. Dr. Keller died February 20, 2021. She is survived by her husband and their children, eight grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter. ■ **Richard Newell Cooper** was an internationally known economist, an advisor to Democratic presidents from Kennedy to Clinton, and a 40-year faculty member at Harvard University. He completed a PhD at Harvard and by age 26 became a senior staff economist at the Council of Economic Advisors. Dr. Cooper taught economics at Harvard from 1981 to 2020, following an appointment at Yale University from 1966 to

1977. Other roles included undersecretary of state for economic affairs during the Carter administration; chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston; chair of the National Intelligence Council under Clinton; and membership in the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Brookings Panel on Economic Activity, and the Aspen Strategy Group. "Rosalynn and I are saddened by the passing of Richard Cooper," President Jimmy Carter said in a statement. "I could always rely on his friendship and diplomatic understanding. I remain grateful for his key advice on the economic dimensions of the Camp David Accords and the major role he played in the G7 summits." Dr. Cooper died December 23, 2020. He leaves his wife, Jin, and their son and daughter. He is also survived by his first wife, Carolyn Cooper '56; their son, Mark '85, and daughter, Laura '83; and a granddaughter.

1957

Arlene Storer began her career as a cryptographer for the National Security Agency at Fort Meade. She traveled across the U.S. and abroad for many years, teaching for a time at the American School in Beirut. She earned two master's degrees and devoted several years to teaching high school history and serving as a guidance counselor. She was honored by Gloucester County, N.J., in 2007 for her years of volunteer service. Ms. Storer was preceded in death by her husband, Robert T. Storer, with whom she had two children. She also leaves two grandchildren.

1958

Albert Gleaves Cohen was a minister and activist who attended the U.S. Naval Academy and served for six years before attending the Oberlin College Graduate School of Theology. He began his career operating a United Church of Christ youth program in Southern California before focusing on campus ministry at California State University's Fullerton and Los Angeles campuses. In 1996, Mr. Cohen became executive director of the Southern California Ecumenical Council, which he served until his retirement in his mid-80s. Throughout his career, he believed in making "good trouble": attending peace marches, organizing protests, coordinating voter registration, and advocating for the environment. He was married first to Ann Appley, with whom he had four children, and

MEMORIAL MINUTE

Norman C. Craig, 1931-2021



How much can one squeeze into an Oberlin lifetime? The life of Norman Craig, who died in March, provides a practical upper limit. Born in Washington, D.C., into a scientific family, he graduated from Oberlin in 1953 at the top of his class. He returned to Oberlin in 1957 following a PhD at Harvard. In the next 63 years—with high purpose and single-mindedness—he built a career of unparalleled achievement. In his colossal vita you will find a long list of awards (any one of them dazzling), an overstuffed portfolio of courses (full of innovation and expanse), a jaw-dropping number of publications (most with student coauthors), and extraordinary service to the college and his profession. Called “Mr. Craig” by his students, “Mr. Learning-and-Labor” would have been more apt.

Above all, he prized students, and generations of alumni know it. He kept in touch with legions of them. In the classroom, he drove them hard but was always there, and he honored them with warmth, kindness, and encouragement. His classes were models of clarity, insight,

rigor, and full of demonstrations. In the lab, youngsters a quarter his age couldn’t keep up. His love of thermodynamics led him to write *Entropy Analysis*, which has introduced Oberlin students to the subject for a half-century. Long before memes, Norm found clever, memorable ways to make chemistry stick. What student doesn’t remember the one about seeking a Russian spy and how chemists stir in three dimensions? Under his leadership—by example—the Oberlin chemistry department developed a national reputation for excellence, which became a calling card for its graduates.

Norm was a man of his time. The magnificent sweep of science since WWII saw the rise of scientific computing and molecular spectroscopy, and he seized them both for his scholarship. He performed world-class research in rotational and vibrational spectroscopy of small organic molecules, recording many firsts along the way. Guided by grit and curiosity, time and again he sailed the seas of fresh lab disasters to discover a land of results. “Damn the loose ends, full speed ahead!”

An experimentalist at heart, he preferred the lab. He could often be found tending to mundane details, such as refilling the traps in his vacuum lines with liquid nitrogen. He took mischievous delight in disproving those who said, “You can’t do that with undergraduates.” Just ask the scores of student collaborators in seven decades of high adventure. His excellence in teaching and research inspired all to greater heights and helped launch numerous careers.

He was one of the finest chemists at Oberlin. That’s a heavy claim—seeing as the likes of Frank Fanning Jewett, Charles Martin Hall, and Harry Holmes hung their shingles here—but one to which his peers agree. It is rumored that Norm missed an exam as a student, or that he got tenure in two years, or that

he was a skilled glassblower, or that harmless molten gallium once oozed down his pant leg. They are all true. Combine one part phenomenal recall, one part loyal alum, one part chemist, and you have a man who can recite, on the spot, the roster of trustees going back years or histories of countless alumni, give you 10 reasons why all roads lead to Oberlin, and wax scientific about aluminum or fluorine or any other element. He loved Oberlin; and that love shone in the way he lived its ideals, his reverence for its history, selfless service to every corner of the college, long association with Oberlin Shansi, and inveterate fundraising.

Norm retired in 2000, but he hardly slowed down. He continued to work with students and teach on occasion. Via multiple collaborations, he created a new body of work to determine semiexperimental equilibrium structures, combining cutting-edge computing and ultrahigh resolution spectroscopy.

Custodians, presidents, prospies, alumni, junior faculty, glitterati, and everyone in between, all got his same respectful attention. This surprised many who did not expect it. He was a man of deep faith. Norm and his wife Ann have been fixtures of the Oberlin community and First Church. They have also been generous supporters of the arts and political causes. He was a big baseball fan and an avid sailor. Students and colleagues who raced with him on his boat on Lake Erie vouch for his fierce competitiveness.

Norm was a humble giant, proud Oberlinian, fearless scientist, family man, citizen activist, and mensch. With his passing, Oberlin has lost a champion. We shall not see the likes of him again. Oberlin misses him.

Manish Mehta
Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry

later to Faith Annette Sand, with whom he raised two children. Mr. Cohen died March 31, 2021. He had five stepchildren from his second marriage and is survived by 14 grandchildren. ■ A Jewish native of Austria who was forced to flee the country with her family prior to WWII, **Hanna Elisabeth Bergmann Weston** became a teacher and lawyer who was active in social causes. She married Burns Weston '56, with whom she had two children. She held a master's degree in history from Columbia and taught at Kirkwood Community College for 31 years, during which time she completed a law degree at the University of Iowa and operated a private practice with her second husband, Charles H. Nadler, for 20 years. From 1972 to 1988, she served as Iowa's delegate to the national board of the American Civil Liberties Union, and she was named Iowa Civil Libertarian of the Year in 2003. In retirement she taught business law and economics. Ms. Weston died January 21, 2021, leaving her second husband, two children, and four grandchildren.

1959

Tom Clark operated a psychotherapy practice in Berkeley, Calif., for 45 years. Following two years in the U.S. Army, he completed his undergraduate education at San Francisco State University and a master's degree in social work at U.C. Berkeley. Early in his career, he served for four years as clinical director at Oakland Planned Parenthood before opening his private practice. He loved classical music and took an avid interest in music history. Mr. Clark died February 7, 2020, leaving his wife, Johanna, two sons, and four grandchildren. ■ **Robert M. Kennedy** was a physician who devoted 33 years to Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in San Francisco, where he was a specialist in the treatment of kidney disease and a pivotal figure in the establishment of the Kaiser Outpatient Dialysis Center. He attended medical school at the University of Illinois. Dr. Kennedy died November 27, 2019. He leaves Dawn, his wife of 60 years; their two daughters; and four grandchildren.

1960

Suzannah Chandler was the founding executive director of Search and Care, through which she served New York City's elderly population for nearly 34 years.

1961

Murray Allen Tucker was a longtime professor and government economist. He completed a PhD in economics at the University of Pittsburgh and served on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin and later at Florida State University. He concluded his career as an economist with the IRS, where he specialized in pharmaceutical companies. In retirement he authored two books: *Screamer: The Forgotten Voices of the Pittsburgh Steelers*, a broadcast history of his father, Joe Tucker; and the novel *The Journeys of Brothers*, partially based on his family's immigration story. Dr. Tucker died October 27, 2020, leaving his wife, JoAnne; two daughters; and three grandchildren.

1963

Virginia (Ginny) Woodcock Eisenstein was one of seven women in her class at Yale Law School. She was the second woman to practice law in Centre County Pennsylvania, representing her local newspaper, the American Philatelic Society, the Women's Resource Center, the local airport authority, and private clients in a variety of civil matters. She served as president of the local hospital board, the Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Centre Chamber Orchestra, and the local chapter of Altrusa International. Ms. Eisenstein lived with pancreatic cancer for 23 months and refused all conventional treatment, took charge of her care from diagnosis on, wrote most of her obituary, and planned her graveside service. She died August 6, 2020, leaving her husband, James Eisenstein '62; three children; and eight grandchildren, including Laura '23 and Robby '24. ■ **Linda MacLaren** died December 3, 2019.

1964

David Michael Carrow was an artist and sculptor who served as an administrator at the Johnson Atelier Technical Institute of Sculpture in Hamilton, N.J., for 23 years, playing a key role in the institution's growth. He also worked as a consultant and fabricator for sculptor Melvin Edwards. As a young man, he served as a U.S. Navy assistant navigator on the *U.S.S. Pitkin County* in the western Pacific during the Vietnam War. He completed his BA at Columbia; studied drawing, painting, sculpture, and art history at the New York Studio School; and earned

an MFA from the University of North Carolina. Mr. Carrow died August 8, 2020. He leaves his wife, artist Michelle Post, as well as a daughter, son, stepdaughter, stepson, and three granddaughters.

1965

David F. Evans III was a teacher of voice at St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Texas Christian University, and the State University of New York at Fredonia, from which he retired in 1999. He earned a diploma from the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, in addition to master's and doctoral degrees in music from West Virginia University. He conducted the choirs of Trinity Episcopal Church in Buffalo, SUNY Fredonia, and the Outer Banks Chorus for many years. As a performer, he is best known for his roles as Rudolfo in Puccini's *La Bohème*, Tamino in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, and for Handel's *Messiah* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Dr. Evans died April 5, 2021, leaving his wife, Dorlene Custer Evans; a daughter and son; and two grandchildren. ■ **Joan Gilbert** was a professor of piano and chamber music at the University of Memphis for more than 35 years and an avid performer who founded several piano trios, with which she toured the United States and Europe. Also a violinist, she played many recording sessions in Memphis studios in the 1960s and 1970s, appearing on numerous hits of the era, including Isaac Hayes' "Shaft" and Elvis Presley's "In the Ghetto." She earned a master's degree from the Juilliard School and also attended schools in Italy. Ms. Gilbert died January 10, 2021.

1966

Samuel Ayers Sherer was an attorney and policy analyst who served as a senior fellow at the Climate Institute, the Washington, D.C., nonprofit he helped found and for which he worked for 24 years. He took part in a wide range of studies and initiatives, from land-use planning and minority business development to climate issues, and the impact of his work was felt in Indonesia, Egypt, and some two dozen other nations. Mr. Sherer was also a partner in the Washington law firm of Topping, Sherer and Mitchell from 1977 to 1986. He completed graduate degrees at Harvard Law School and MIT. He died January 18, 2021, following the death of his wife, Dewi Sherer.

1968

Kenneth Kusmer was a professor of urban and African American history at Temple University, in addition to roles as a professor of American history at the University of Göttingen (Germany) and a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Genoa and the University of Roma Tre (Italy). He completed a PhD at the University of Chicago and earned acclaim for his numerous publications, including the book *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930* and the monograph *Down and Out, On the Road: The Homeless in American History*. Dr. Kusmer died in November 2020.

1969

Albert Stanziano Jr. was a concert pianist and educator who toured Europe for many years before returning to his native New Jersey to teach piano and coach opera vocalists. He completed a master's degree at the Juilliard School and was a founding member of the Ariadne Trio. In his final decade, he worked with students at the West Point Military Academy in the Department of Foreign Languages: Piano and Voice Mentorship Program, which he co-created. Mr. Stanziano died April 18, 2021.

1971

Bass-baritone **Joseph C. McKee** performed principal roles with the New York City Opera for 16 seasons and with many regional operas and orchestras. A veteran of the U.S. Army Chorus, he was a specialist in lieder and presented recitals across the U.S. and Europe. At home in New Jersey, he taught voice classes and performed as soloist in the choir of Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church. Mr. McKee died February 13, 2020. ■ **David Joseph Rempel Smucker** was a theology scholar who worked for 22 years as a researcher and editor of *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*, the quarterly journal of the Mennonite Historical Society in Lancaster, Pa. He earned a master's degree from Hartford Seminary and a PhD in Christian church history and American religion from Boston University. He married Judith Rempel in 1984, and together they relocated to Basel, Switzerland, where he conducted genealogical research. They moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 2012. Dr. Smucker died March 12, 2021, leaving his wife of 37 years, two children, and two grandchildren.

1977

Michael Henry Barr died January 21, 2020, leaving many loved ones. ■ **Joyce Ann Broadus-Lewis** was a family physician for nearly 30 years, serving the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School for at-risk youth, the South Carolina Department of Disability Services, and the Department of Defense in Fort Jackson, where she was named chief medical officer in 2012, shortly before suffering a brain aneurysm that altered the course of her career. At Oberlin, she cofounded the local chapter of the National Black Science Student Organization and taught a course for pre-med students. She continued her education at George Washington Medical School and completed her specialty training in Rochester, N.Y. She married Jefferson Lewis in 1985, and together they had two sons. Dr. Broadus-Lewis died March 28, 2021, leaving her sons. Gifts in her honor may be made to the Shirley Graham Du Bois Africana Studies Department Endowed Fund at Oberlin College.

1978

Bridgette A. Barry was a professor of chemistry and biochemistry at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She earned a PhD in chemistry from UC Berkeley and completed her postdoctoral training at Michigan State before accepting her first faculty position, at the University of Minnesota. An active member of the Georgia Tech faculty until the time of her death, she was a fellow of the American Chemical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Barry died January 20, 2021, leaving her husband of 36 years, Peter Dardi.

1979

Michael Morgan was the music director of the Oakland Symphony and a lifelong believer in the power of music to elevate communities. Over the course of 30 years in the Bay Area, he relished the dual nature of his role: to facilitate compelling performances of a broad range of repertoire—especially the music of marginalized cultures—and to ensure that his orchestra reached out to its community at every turn. “Being a classical musician, being a conductor, being Black, being gay—all of these things put you on the outside, and each one puts you a little further out than the last one,” he told *Georgia Voice* in 2013. “So you get accustomed to constructing your own

world because there are not a lot of clear paths to follow and not a lot of people that are just like you.” Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Mr. Morgan came under the tutelage of Leonard Bernstein through summers spent at Tanglewood. He catapulted into the spotlight in 1980 by winning the Hans Swarowsky Conducting Competition in Vienna. His numerous early roles included assistant conductor with the Chicago Symphony—where he became the first Black conductor ever appointed to a title position—and the St. Louis Symphony. After settling in Oakland, he served as artistic director of the Oakland Youth Orchestra and for 16 years as music director of the Sacramento Philharmonic and Sacramento Opera. Despite his outward resilience and charisma, Mr. Morgan suffered from chronic kidney disease since 1989. He died August 20, 2021, leaving many loved ones.

1984

Maria Sanders excelled in multiple positions with the city of El Cerrito, Calif., initially as an environmental analyst and for the final five years of her career as operations and environmental services manager. She led the city's climate-protection and energy-efficiency efforts and improved its parks, facilities, and infrastructure. Ms. Sanders died February 27, 2021.

1992

Jessica Ella Engelman, a longtime editor at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School, died February 23, 2021, leaving many loved ones.

1997

Maria Black was an expert in website development at the Stanford School of Medicine. Her work most recently included the design of a database used to connect medical researchers with potential funding opportunities. She earned a master's degree in information science at Indiana University's School of Library and Information Science, and worked as a freelancer for a number of years. She enjoyed traveling with her husband Jordan, who survives her.

2006

Jami Creason died October 26, 2016, leaving many loving friends and family members.

“Eric Bogosian, Kelly AuCoin, and Corey Stoll in one episode! Oberlin Trifecta for the win! #billions”

Tweet from **Matthew Stoecker '90** referring to the Showtime series *Billions*, which features AuCoin '89 as season five series regular “Dollar” Bill Stearn, Bogosian '76 as guest star, and Stoll '98 in a recurring role (series regular for season six)

“I annotated the hell out of *Minor Feelings*—it’s the kind of book you want to dog-ear and underline. Reading it was such a crazy feeling: I felt so seen that I couldn’t believe that this book existed. And it’s become even more painfully relevant in a year in which anti-Asian violence, which has always existed in America, has spiked so aggressively, putting our communities on high alert and searching for solidarity.”

Comedian, writer, and actor **Ali Wong**, writing her appreciation of Cathy Park Hong '98 in *TIME* magazine’s “The World’s 100 Most Influential People”

“I think I felt like when I went to Oberlin, it was like someone gave me all this ammo knowledge-wise. I was learning and I was writing these kind of terrible little college poems before I started taking Africana Studies classes and was, like, ‘Oh, there’s something to write about. And there’s a lineage of people writing about it.’ And I think that’s when my ‘research’ started taking off. So I had all this Black history of the world, so to speak, which had been denied to me through my upbringing.”

Whiting Award-winning poet **Xandria Phillips '14**, author of the poetry collection *Hull* and the chapbook *Reasons For Smoking*, quoted in the *Pittsburgh City Paper* on August 25, 2021

“Once again Oberlin is in the forefront of social advances which spread years later to much of the nation and even the world.”

From a September 1971 editorial in the *Elyria Chronicle-Telegram*, in reference to the town of Oberlin’s ordinance making it illegal to sell or possess non-returnable glass or metal beverage containers

“I’m here. Who want me?”

Max Schiewe-Weliky '25, announcing on Instagram his arrival at Oberlin with a photo of him lounging on the grass taken by his father, Jim Weliky '84

“There was a big contention during the granola maker election today...”

“about whether or not to have an election?”

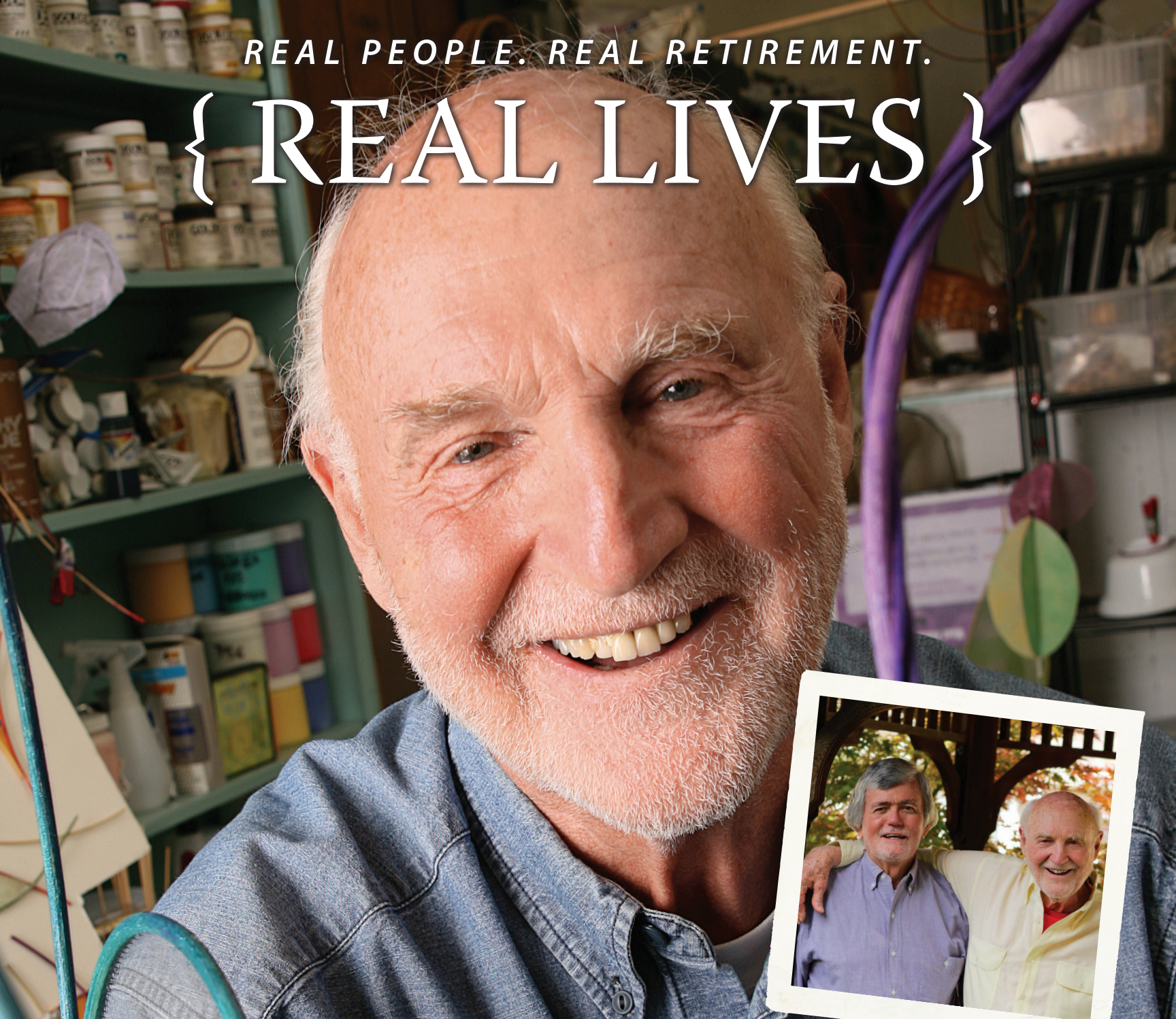
Kisa Iacona '25, who eats at Pyle Inn co-op, in consecutive text messages to her mother, Nicole Richter '88 (who then posted them to Facebook)

“I took econ 101 with [Emeritus Professor of Economics] Bob Piron. He was just such an awesome teacher. Oh, I loved him. It was funny and challenging, and I just loved it. I loved every minute of it. I think I actually got a B in his class, but I loved the material.”

2021 Nobel Prize in Economics winner **Joshua Angrist '82** (see p. 6 of this magazine), in the October 15, 2021, issue of the *Oberlin Review*

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{ REAL LIVES }



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BEN SINCLAIR '06