

TOUCH ME

**THE ALLEN MEMORIAL ART MUSEUM
EMBRACES DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS | PAGE 18**

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SHEEP MAY SAFELY MOW

In May, some 70 sheep from Old Slate Farm in Knox County, Ohio, arrived at the fenced land north of campus that contains the institution's 2.7 megawatt solar array. They grazed through mid-June, munching and stomping grass in a move aimed at alleviating the need for costly and painstaking mowing of the site.

PHOTO BY JACOB STRAUSS

ON THE COVER

Yoko Ono

TOUCH ME (cropped view), 2007

Die-cut plexiglass on canvas

PHOTO BY TANYA ROSEN-JONES '97







Where Progress Really Happens

WHEN FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA SPOKE TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF OBERLIN College and Conservatory in 2015, she encouraged students to embrace Oberlin’s history and run to the “noise”—those challenging, contentious situations that threaten to divide us.

Why? As she put it, “Because so often, throughout our history, those have been the places where progress really happens—the places where minds are changed, lives transformed, where our great American story unfolds.”

This advice—and the college’s long legacy of service and social justice—has inspired a new podcast, *Running to the Noise*, which I’m thrilled to be hosting.

As the first college in America to officially embrace the admission of Black students and the first coed school to grant bachelor’s degrees to women, Oberlin has been a leader in shaping necessary change since our founding days.

So we’ve been running to the noise for years, which is why I thought that was an apt title for the podcast—and because that’s exactly what we’ll do in each episode. Our goal is to learn together as we tackle the tough topics, sprinkling in some laughter for good measure.

In the debut episode, “Using Your Platform for Good,” I spoke with my friend Ed Helms ’96, an actor-comedian-musician who is a member of Oberlin’s Board of Trustees.

We covered a lot of ground, including his work diversifying the writers’ room for his show *Rutherford Falls*; his activism around making elections fairer; and how to use your platform to change the world.

I suggested that we all have an obligation to try to make positive change. Ed agreed with me but added the caveat that “we also need to have grace for the different ways and levels that people are capable of contributing to making the world a better place.”

“A lot of people in the world are barely able to take care of themselves and their families, let alone take on the larger cultural or even existential problems that the world is facing right now,” he continued. “If you’ve got the bandwidth, jump in and help out—and it can be in the smallest ways too.”

I loved his answer because he’s so right. Not everybody has this incredible platform like Ed does, but that’s OK. We can take our slice of the sidewalk—even a little slice of it—and make it better.

The *Running to the Noise* episode with Ed is available now wherever you get your podcasts. In the future, I’ll have conversations with U.S. diplomat and former longtime president of the Council on Foreign Relations Richard Haass ’73, famed operatic mezzo-soprano and educator Denyce Graves ’85, and others. Look for a new episode on the final Thursday of each month.

CARMEN TWILLIE AMBAR
President, Oberlin College and Conservatory

Oberlin

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IN PRAISE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Dear Friends, I would like to share these thoughts that I wrote to my dad in 1966, when I was studying at Oberlin, in response to his letter asking me why I wasn't yet pursuing a vocation, instead of engaging in liberal arts. I believe my response to him is as relevant today as it was then.

"Though you, Dad, will defend the idea of a liberal education to the death—intellectually—it's still something that doesn't have a great deal of meaning to you emotionally. I think the reason is that one doesn't really get this orientation in high school, and you only got a taste of it in engineering. Please, don't get me wrong—I completely respect engineering, and science in general. It's a vital need and one that takes an alert mind to keep up with and master. But this specialized, exacting kind of skill is just not the orientation here, nor is the one I'm seeking, or else I never would have come here.

"I can take this further, and say that my major concern here is not acquiring the skills or the training that will put a vocation in my lap. Yes, having a vocation is my ultimate goal. But first, there are so many things that I have to learn about what really goes on in this world, among people who have looked at, analyzed, written poetry about it, rejected, accepted, and loved it, worshiped the meaning of it—and so much more! The world is so much wider for me than [it was] when I was in high school, not narrower. It's not the black and white photograph it was for me then, but it's slowly becoming a motion picture with color and sound!

"How can I communicate this to you, Mom and Dad? This is the time for me of searching, of wondering, of questioning—something I'm sure you went through at 19, whether or not in college. It's just that college gives me a chance to find out how other people have met

these same questions, so I don't have to do it alone, in a vacuum. There's no exhausting the questions, and there's no arriving at any final answers. But there is a continuous joy and excitement in the pursuit. We are continually thankful that God has given man the capability of getting down to the basic questions, even those of his own existence."

Needless to say, Dad kept paying the bills and I graduated in 1968, going on to earn a master's degree in speech and language pathology from the University of Minnesota, and a fulfilling career in the field spanning over 50 years. Thanks for this opportunity to show my appreciation for the Oberlin experience.

TAWN REYNOLDS FEENEY '68
Conesus, N.Y.

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ICE ESCAPADES

Winters could be brutal in NE Ohio. But my fondest tradition took place on cold, snowy nights after midnight. My roommate and I would grab our ice skates and as the campus slept, we would head over to the ice skating rink, climb over the chain-link fence, and skate to the dim (ineffective) security lights as snow gently fell. Silence, but the steady swoosh of our skates pushing off against the ice. Magic. We would skate each night for as long as we could, until the cold brutal winter weather sent us back to our warm dorm room.

DAVID LEWIS '78
Bainbridge Island, Wash.

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TEAMWORK WORKS

One of my most joyous memories of Oberlin was playing volleyball behind Keep Co-op in fall and spring. It was not only great exercise and fun, it was where I and others practiced Oberlin values. We never kept score and, as a result, everyone felt encouraged to take chances. When anyone on either team executed a skillful move, everyone cheered. I made friends playing volleyball; I fell in love; I grew. When the space for the volleyball court was paved over for an expanded parking lot, I grieved. I still do. If Oberlin is looking for simple ways to encourage student interaction and joy, they'll make space for that volleyball area again.

RICH ORLOFF '73
New York, N.Y.

CORRECTIONS: Due to an editing error, a class note for Mary Ellen Spencer Goree '82 (Spring 2023 *OAM*) omitted her maiden name and referred to her as Mary rather than Mary Ellen. We apologize for the errors.

Additionally, we were mistaken when we stated the following on page 38 of the Winter 2023 issue of *OAM*: "Women's varsity teams competed for the first time in 1977." Our subsequent correction in the Spring 2023 *OAM* was also incorrect: "The first official women's varsity games at Oberlin were contested in the 1977-78 academic year, although various unsanctioned intercollegiate competitions also took place in years prior." We regret and apologize for the errors.

Further discussion and research conducted in conjunction with various college departments, alums, and newspaper archives led to the discovery of records showing sanctioned intercollegiate games in the early 1970s involving women's basketball, lacrosse, volleyball, track and field, swimming and diving, and field hockey teams. Furthermore, the 1973-74 Oberlin College academic catalog lists the following as women's varsity sports: basketball, fencing, swimming, field hockey, and cross country. In other words, shortly after the passage of Title IX—a 1972 federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex that led to the rise in women's college athletic programs—Oberlin offered female student-athletes varsity opportunities.

Still, the women who competed in sports at Oberlin both before and after the passage of Title IX navigated numerous challenges, including egregious budget inequities, and blatant sexism and disrespect. Despite these obstacles, these athletes persevered and paved the way for subsequent generations of Oberlin students, and we acknowledge and appreciate the abundance of athletic opportunities that now exist thanks to them.

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Send letters to Oberlin Alumni Magazine, 247 W. Lorain St., Suite C, Oberlin, OH 44074; 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





HATS OFF! On a beautiful spring day, Oberlin held commencement for the class of 2023. During the May 22 ceremony, four people earned honorary degrees: award-winning epidemiologist Christl Donnelly '88, Tony Award-winning lighting designer Natasha Katz '81, activist and Olympic gold medalist Tommie Smith, and Africatown leader and activist Joe Womack. Additionally, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Richard Powers addressed graduates with a witty, profound, and inspirational speech. "Graduates, I stand here looking out on you, my changing past, while you are backing up into your still-hidden future," he said. "Oberlin Class of 2023, it's time to become invincible." For complete coverage, visit: oberlin.edu/commencement.





ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT

Rhiannon Giddens '00 Wins Pulitzer Prize

Multifaceted musician Rhiannon Giddens '00 and composer Michael Abels won the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Music for their opera *Omar*. The work, which premiered May 27, 2022, at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, is based on the autobiography of the West Africa-born Muslim scholar Omar ibn Said, who was sold into slavery in 1807. Giddens wrote the libretto for *Omar*, which is described on the Pulitzer website as “a musical

work that respectfully represents African as well as African American traditions, expanding the language of the operatic form while conveying the humanity of those condemned to bondage.” The premiere was conducted by John Kennedy '82, a conservatory alum and the festival's resident conductor and director of orchestral activities. Giddens also recently released a new solo album, *You're the One*; see review on page 17.

GREAT PERFORMANCES

Oberlin Artist Recital Series Returns

Oberlin's Artist Recital Series has presented celebrated musical artists since 1878. That legacy continues with the latest lineup of brilliant performers and ensembles, whose music encompasses classical, gospel, jazz, and world music. The 2023-24 series kicked off on September 22 with a farewell concert from the Emerson String Quartet (pictured below), as the group is retiring after nearly five decades of performing together.

This season's concerts include: the quintet **Seraph Brass** (October 13), pianist **Jeremy Denk '90** (November 30), gospel choir **Trey McLaughlin and the Sounds of Zamar** (February 10, 2024), jazz bandleaders and composers **Artemis** (March 13, 2024), and **Silkroad Ensemble: Uplifted Voices**, a performance of folk and ancestral music (April 26, 2024).

All programs in the series take place at Finney Chapel with a bonus March 7 concert featuring **Imani Winds** held in the conservatory's Warner Concert Hall.

For information on tickets and performances, visit: oberlin.edu/ars.



PREVIOUS SPREAD: MIKE CRUPI, SCOTT SHAW; THIS PAGE: EBRU YILDIZ, ABE FRATO



STUDENT HONORS

Alli Roshni Wins 2023 Nexial Prize

Alli Roshni '23 is the winner of Oberlin's 2023 Nexial Prize, a \$50,000 cash award presented to an outstanding science student with aspirations for interdisciplinary research. In summer 2023, she began a year working with patients, practitioners, researchers, and grassroots organizations in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Indonesia in the battle against pediatric HIV and AIDS.

"I have been passionate about social justice for as long as I can remember, but it was at Oberlin that I learned how impossible it is to address the problems of our world without unwrapping the underlying socioeconomic

and cultural contexts that have caused them," Roshni, a biology and economics major from Delhi, India, wrote in an essay for the Nexial Prize.

At Oberlin, Roshni completed research on the effects of epidemic obesity on heart disease; racial disparities in heart transplant and homeownership rates, remittance payments, and tuberculosis infections among migrant workers in India and the U.S.; environmentally derived cancers; measuring and anticipating climate patterns; learning outcomes among low-income students; and food insecurity.

PRESTIGIOUS PRIZE

Courtney Bryan '04 Awarded 2023 MacArthur Fellowship



Composer and pianist Courtney Bryan, a 2004 graduate of Oberlin Conservatory whose works explore the African American experience through a range of musical and sociopolitical influences, has been awarded a MacArthur Fellowship for 2023, one of the nation's most prestigious and lucrative honors. "The honor of MacArthur is an affirmation of one pursuing one's own path," Bryan said from the American Academy in Rome, where she is completing work made possible by a Rome Prize awarded in 2019. "I feel affirmed and I feel grateful for my family, community, teachers, and collaborators who have helped me grow to who I am today." For more on Bryan's award, visit: go.oberlin.edu/courtney-bryan-macarthur.

FACULTY AWARDS

Gary Bartz Named a 2024 Jazz Master

Gary Bartz, Oberlin's Grammy Award-winning professor of jazz saxophone and a vital link to generations of jazz greats, has secured a claim to greatness all his own: He was named a 2024 Jazz Master by the National Endowment for the Arts, the nation's highest honor conferred upon jazz

musicians. A member of the Oberlin jazz faculty since 2001, Bartz is a prolific recording artist and the second Oberlin jazz faculty member to earn the accolade in the past three years: Billy Hart, associate professor of jazz drumming, was named a 2022 Jazz Master.



GREEN THOUGHTS

Sustainability by the Numbers

Over the summer, Oberlin drilled its first geothermal well—the first major step of a four-year project to convert the college’s century-old, fossil fuel-based heating system to one using eco-friendly geothermal technology. The new energy system will circulate hot water and chilled water through a network of underground pipes to distribute energy to buildings for heating and cooling spaces and for domestic hot water. By the numbers:

850
geothermal wells

69,300
feet of underground connective pipe

600
depth of underground wells, in feet

49
campus buildings connected to geothermal energy

30%
reduction in campus energy consumption

5 Million
gallons of water use reduced annually

11
newly air-conditioned buildings

100%
amount of Oberlin campus that will be carbon-neutral by the project’s end

CAMPUS NEWS

Work Begins on New Residence Hall

In July, workers began site preparation for a new residence hall on Woodland Street across from the Science Center. The technologically advanced structure will consist of four floors, 370-plus student beds in a mix of single and quad units, and more than 120,000 square feet of total space. It will feature student lounges, a

community kitchen, laundry facilities, a multipurpose classroom, music practice rooms, acres of green space, and convenient access to athletic facilities, the North Quad, and points south to Wilder Hall and beyond. The project, which broke ground in late September, is slated to be completed in the fall of 2025.



BOOKWORMS, UNITE! *The Reading Girl* has some new company outside Mudd. In July, workers installed *Oberlin Reader*, created by Oberlin-based, European-trained stone carver Nicholas Fairplay. Made from Indiana limestone, the statue features a pair of sneaker-clad feet poking out of a womb chair, as well as an inspirational quote: “Read to learn, read to enjoy, read to forget, read to remember, read to know others, read to find yourself.”

CURRICULUM INNOVATION

First Class

The new semester is in full swing, and along with the usual mix of cornerstone courses, Obies have an abundance of new courses to take in the 2023-24 school year. Here are a few of our favorites:

I'm That Gworl: The Intersection of Black Women and Queerness in Hip-Hop | Science, Technology, and Magic in Islamic Art | The Wild West, the New West, and the Weird West | Great Lakes Hydrology | Once Upon a Time: Gender, Nation, and Childhood in Grimms' Fairy Tales | Rap the Disco, Punk the Queen: Music of the 1970s | Introduction to Sociology: Swallowing the Red Pill | Black to the Future: Speculative Young Adult Fiction | Running from Bears: The Neuroscience of Survival | Manga and Anime in Cross-Cultural Contexts | Artificial Intelligence and the End of the World | Beyond Indiana Jones: The History, Politics, and Culture of Archaeology

INTRODUCING

RUNNING TO THE NOISE

A new podcast with

**PRESIDENT
CARMEN
TWILLIE AMBAR**



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Thought Process



MEET & GREET

Music to Her Ears

BY ERICH BURNETT

Your new magazine editor brings an unapologetic love of '80s rock—and an incurable passion for storytelling.

Annie Zaleski wrote the book on Duran Duran. No *really*. A longtime music journalist and native of Northeast Ohio, Zaleski chronicled the English rockers through *Duran Duran's Rio* as part of the influential 33 1/3 book series, which is dedicated to seminal albums released throughout history.

It's one of numerous rock volumes penned by Zaleski, who has also written books about Lady Gaga, Pink, and Christmas music. She has also lent her talents to a host of newspapers, magazines, and online publications—among them *Rolling Stone*, NPR, *The Guardian*, *Salon*, and *Billboard*—as well as the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. She's appeared as a guest expert on NPR stations, SiriusXM, and the BBC—and even co-hosted a podcast series for Cleveland Clinic, seamlessly stretching beyond the bounds of the musical world.

In March, Zaleski assumed the role of senior writer and magazine editor in the Office of Communications, where she shapes coverage of Oberlin's alumni community. We caught up with the Harvard grad to learn how the gig's going so far.

First things first: Who's your favorite artist of all time—and your favorite artist you never got to interview?

My all-time favorite artist is R.E.M.—if you see an Ohio car with a DRIVER8 license plate, that's me—with Duran Duran (of course) coming in a close second. In general, I'm a big fan of everything '70s, '80s, and '90s pop and rock, with a soft spot for British music. On the weekends, one of my favorite things to do is listen to reruns of Casey Kasem's *American Top 40*.

I've been lucky enough to interview tons of rock stars (ask me sometime about how awesome Geddy Lee, Johnny Marr, Alice Cooper, and Björk are), but while I absolutely love David Bowie, I was never able to interview him. I put in a request back in the

early 2000s in conjunction with one of his last tours, but alas, it wasn't meant to be.

How does your background in music and journalism help you in your role on campus?

As a journalist, my work is driven by critical thinking, a sense of curiosity, a commitment to research/fact-checking, and thoughtful questions. All of these skills are crucial to my job as a magazine editor and writer. They help me both discover and tease out interesting stories about the Oberlin community.

Although most of my forward-facing writing is about music, in recent years I've diversified what I write about to include topics like economic development, health care, business, and collectibles.

(Fitting, since I am happiest when crate-digging in a record store!) Writing about topics outside of my usual niche also helps me be more versatile—and keep an open mind.

Writing about music—and interviewing famous musicians—certainly keeps you on your toes, because these things have helped me become a better listener and conversationalist. In addition to writing about popular music, I played the flute for eight years growing up, so I have a strong foundation in music theory and classical performance.

I wasn't necessarily expecting to find a job that fit with my eclectic background—and I've sometimes felt at other jobs that my background in music journalism has been a detriment—but at

Oberlin I've felt that both of these things are assets.

What was your impression of Oberlin prior to joining the staff—and what has surprised you most since getting here?

I had been to Oberlin multiple times for concerts (shout out to the Breeders at the 'Sco!) and had spoken about my work in several classes, so I already had a positive impression of Oberlin, particularly as it pertains to the students: They asked good questions, were engaged and inquisitive, and took their assignments seriously. What's been a wonderful surprise is starting to meet faculty and discover how passionate they are about their own specialties—and how deeply they care about helping Oberlin students learn and grow, even long after these students have graduated. It's the kind of college experience I wish I had—and it's frankly so inspiring to hear from staff, students, and alums alike.

What's your favorite thing about campus so far?

Maybe it's cheesy, but I truly love the moment in my commute when I'm nearly to my office and have finally reached the campus and can see the Allen Memorial Art Museum and Tappan Square. It's actually calming, which is a nice way to start what's inevitably a full day.

STANDING OVATION

Lighting the Way

BY MAURA JOHNSTON

Tony Award-winning lighting designer Natasha Katz '81 first found her spark at Oberlin.

At the 76th Tony Awards, Natasha Katz '81 faced a formidable opponent—herself. The lighting designer, who received an honorary doctorate of fine arts at Oberlin's 2023 commencement ceremony, was nominated twice in the Best Lighting Design of a Musical category for her work on the adaptation of *Some Like It Hot* and the revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*.

This wasn't the first time Katz faced off against herself: In 2012 she was nominated for Best Lighting Design of a Musical for her work on the love story *Once* and the revival of Sondheim's nostalgia trip *Follies*. That year, she won for *Once*—and at the June 11, 2023, ceremony, she won for *Sweeney Todd*, bringing her total of Tonys won to eight. Overall, Katz has designed the lighting for more than 60 Broadway productions, including *Springsteen on Broadway*, *Frozen*, and the inaugural *Beauty and the Beast*.

Katz became entranced by Broadway at an early age. "My parents took me to the theater all the time," she says from her home in her native New York. "My mother always said I was born to work in the theater, and then my graduation present from high school was eight shows in a week." Katz was drawn to Oberlin by the school's progressive atmosphere and liberal arts foundation, as well as the town's contrast to New York's metropolitan bustle. But after arriving on campus, she initially kept theater as her "own private, happy thing" and wound up majoring in French instead.

Her introduction to the school's theater department came via the History of Western Theatre course with Roger Copeland. The class opened her eyes to the work behind the spectacles that had dazzled her as a youth. "Until I got to Oberlin, I didn't even know what a stage manager did," she recalls. "I didn't know how a show was put on." She eventually began working in the scene shop, and a student director asked her to light a production of Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*. "I thought, 'Oh, this is kind of fun,'" she says. "I didn't even know what lighting was."

Taking a class in lighting led to her spending a semester in New York through the Great Lakes College Association. There, she met lighting designer Roger Morgan, who quickly became her mentor. "Roger took me everywhere," she says. "I was in every single meeting with him, so I started to understand a little bit about what the business was. I tell people that I became a lighting designer through on-the-job training."



Natasha Katz accepts her Tony Award for *Sweeney Todd* at the June 11, 2023, ceremony.

She remained in New York and "kept getting work and getting work and getting work," she says, leading to her taking a leave of absence from Oberlin and jumping right into her career. Katz has watched the discipline of lighting evolve over the last four decades, from the then-cutting-edge computerized boards of her early work to the robotic spotlights that open more of the stage to today's productions. But her approach to lighting is directly connected to her time at Oberlin in the 1970s. Back then, she was encouraged to think of art as a series of interconnected disciplines as a student in Oberlin's Inter-Arts Program.

Lighting is, of course, key to seeing anything—and Katz takes every aspect of a production into consideration when she's designing a lighting setup. Whether it's an elaborate one, like Disney's 1990s reimagining of *Beauty and the Beast*, or a single-performer venture like *Springsteen on Broadway*, she digs into a production's details, all the way down to the fabric and materials used in the costumes and sets. But figuring out the vagaries of a set's fundamentals is just the first step—then there's navigating the sometimes-copacetic, sometimes-conflicting visions of the director, the set designer, and other people who might be invested in the meaning and look of what's on stage.

"The lighting designer has to take all these aspects and pull them together," she says. "If you pull that all the way back to Inter-Arts, it's the same thing."

MAURA JOHNSTON IS A WRITER AND EDITOR WHO TEACHES AT BOSTON COLLEGE.



Zhu and Marx

PROBLEM SOLVER

The Course That Changed Everything

BY KATE BECKER '01

Music and math brought Alina Zhu '23 to Oberlin. An irresistible challenge defined her final year on campus.

It all started with a single sentence in a math book, a cursory comment about a proof. The odd thing was, the proof itself was missing.

Alina Zhu '23, combing through the book in search of a topic for her honors thesis, made a mental note to ask her thesis advisor, Associate Professor of Mathematics Chris Marx, what the book's author was getting at.

"It was sort of a side comment. She was confused by this sentence," Marx recalls.

But in math—and probably outside of math too—confusion is often a good place to start.

Zhu came to Oberlin with plans to study music composition and math. The music part was for love: She played and composed for piano. The math was more practical: It seemed like good preparation for a career in finance. Plus, she loved the connections between music and math. In high school at YK Pao School in Shanghai, she had studied how each instrument's distinctive timbre results from a multiplicity of interwoven sound wave frequencies. She was fascinated by the idea that you could use math to unbraided those sound frequencies and reveal a unique mathematical expression for the sound of a piano, a viola, a human voice—anything really.

Math could untangle music. It could further a career. It was, she thought, a useful tool. But in the fall of 2021, she took a math course that changed her entire perspective on the field.

The class was Math 301: Foundations of Analysis, with Professor Marx. Every math major is required to take it, and it marked an inflection point in the way Zhu experienced

math. Instead of what she had been used to—calculations—the focus became *proving things*: constructing an argument step by step, making it elegant and airtight. The class was tough—the toughest Zhu had ever taken—but that was part of the appeal. "I like complicated and hard, abstract things," she says.

She also liked that Marx acknowledged how difficult the work was, giving the class permission to get stuck, to get confused, and to wrestle through problems together. "He would encourage us and say, 'This is how researching math works,'" Zhu recalls. *If this is math research*, she thought, *this is what I want to do*.

The next fall, Zhu returned to Oberlin and began work on an honors thesis with Marx. Her goal was to prepare for graduate school in math—math for its own sake, not as a stepping-stone to some other career. That's when she encountered the sentence that would spark her thesis research.

When $n=1$, the idea behind the proof is that you integrate the distribution many times until you

obtain a continuous function.

The sentence referred to the structure theorem, which forges a key coupling between math and physics. Physicists see the world in terms of change. They have equations to describe the change in the position and direction of a planet, the temperature of a gas particle, the force of an electromagnetic field, and so on. These equations are built on math—a specific tool from calculus called the derivative.

But derivatives can't explain all physics fundamentals. For example, to describe the density of a point particle, an infinitely small abstraction that can stand in for real masses and charges, physicists instead use the delta function—a mathematical expression that spikes to infinity at a single point and doesn't have a derivative. In mathematics, the delta function is also known as a distribution.

So where does the structure theorem come in? Developed by mathematicians in the middle of the 20th century, this theorem rests on the realization that you can represent distributions using the mathematical *opposite* of derivatives—integrals. The structure theorem has been proven many times, in many ways, but the comment that caught Zhu's attention hinted at a completely different way to prove that it works.

The new proof would actually be three different proofs—one for each of three different types of distribution. Zhu found that the approach that worked for the first class of distributions broke down in places when applied to the second—but she found workarounds, and bit by bit, she inched her way through proofs for all three classes. Her work was honored with the Rebecca C. Orr Memorial Prize, awarded annually to a graduating Oberlin mathematics major. She will graduate this winter with highest honors in Mathematics and plans to study math in graduate school.

She is still fascinated by the deep relationship between math and music. “But now I see it going in a different direction,” she says. After all, in math, there is always more than one way to solve a problem.

As Marx puts it: “There really can be very, very different routes that you can take, and all of these can be correct.”

KATE BECKER IS A FREELANCE WRITER BASED IN MASSACHUSETTS. SHE EARNED A DEGREE IN PHYSICS FROM OBERLIN IN 2001.



As an international student, **Nevaan Bawa '24** initially was drawn to Oberlin for its small class sizes and world-renowned liberal arts education. He quickly found his home away from home by joining a diverse set of student organizations and developed a passion for research—rooted in the study of Asian American mental health and critical consciousness with a strong emphasis on social justice.

Through his research, Nevaan formed close relationships with professors who have shaped his Oberlin experience. “The personal interactions and care that my professors have taken in getting to know me has led to a fuller, deeper learning experience overall,” he says. “I have grown to love academics in a way I had not previously thought possible. I’m so grateful to be an Obie.”

Oberlin is able to continue offering incredible educational opportunities to students like Nevaan thanks to the support of alumni, parents, and friends. Scholarships, funding for research, and stipends for internships are all made possible because thoughtful and generous donors like you have made contributions to the Annual Fund. Please consider helping to provide an exceptional education for future Obies by making a gift today!

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RECIPE

For Sake's Sake

BY HANNA RASKIN '98

Jamie Graves fell in love with the world of Japanese beverages. He'd love to tell you why.

When *New York Times* wine critic Eric Asimov recently wanted to write about sake, he rang up Jamie Graves.

Graves, a 2002 Oberlin grad who's managed wholesaler Skurnik Wines' Japanese beverage division since launching the division in 2017, answered Asimov's questions. But there was more he wanted to tell the journalist about the mind-boggling growth of fermented rice-based alcohol; for example, the U.S. now imports twice as much Japanese sake as it did a decade ago.

"Through my discussions with him it was clear that I had originally been thinking too small," Asimov says of the modest inquiry, which blossomed into a splashy full-page article. "Jamie is a superb advocate for the beauty of sake, not because his job is to sell it, but because he believes in it."

Officially, Graves' day job involves supervising the logistics of warehousing and legalities of labels, but his overarching mission is to find and share stories that illuminate the subtleties of the Japanese drink landscape. He first discovered his passion while attending trade shows as a manager of high-end restaurants in New York City: Using his Japanese language skills, he learned the sake industry was less corporate and conservative than he'd imagined.

"It's a big extended community, where everyone knows each other and they're not trying to tear each other down," he says of



Japan's network of producers, which includes many family-owned brands. "They're really challenging themselves and each other to be better. That's what drew me into it."

Considering Graves' attraction to casual collectivism, it's hardly surprising he chose Oberlin because he wanted to belong to a co-op. He was a member of both Keep and Harkness and served on the Oberlin Student Cooperative Association (OSCA) board. Like most co-op cooks, he specialized in curries, beans, and rice, but in a portent of him becoming the only American in the 2014 finals of the Sake Service Institute's World Sake Sommelier Competition, Graves "spent a lot of time and care seasoning and salting."

Although Japanese would later become central to his career, Graves decided against majoring in East Asian studies at Oberlin because he didn't want

to fuss with the language requirement. (Instead, he majored in history.) But his interest in Japanese culture—sparked by playing Nintendo games as a kid in Connecticut and stoked by hearing the Osakan experimental rock band the Boredoms—was nurtured by Ron DiCenzo, a professor of history and East Asian studies who offered his students "an unromantic view of Japan. He painted it as a real place."

After graduation, Graves took a teaching job in Japan, followed by several more years in the country as a restaurant cook, before moving back to New York.

These days, he visits Japan about once a year. Lately, he's taken a particular interest in shochu, the relatively low-alcohol distillate that outsells sake in Japan. "It's just delicious and has so much variation and history," he says. He'd love to tell you more about it.

Miso Marinated Cream Cheese

Jamie Graves admits that miso-marinated cream cheese "may seem like an odd choice and not very Japanese," but he adds that it's now a staple at many sake bars. The secret is science: The main acid compound in sake is lactic acid, which accounts for its characteristic creaminess. Graves adds that sake is "a shockingly good pairing" for cheese and dairy.

Ingredients

- 2** tablespoons mirin (rice wine)
- ¼** cup (60 ml) miso, preferably sweet white miso
- 1** block (8 oz) cream cheese

Directions

Heat mirin in a pan and bring to a boil. Remove pan from heat and allow mirin to cool.

Once the mirin has cooled, whisk in the miso until mixed completely.

Ladle half of the mirin mixture into a small glass or plastic container large enough to accommodate the uncut block of cream cheese. Place the cream cheese on top of the liquid, then ladle the rest of the mixture over it.

Seal the container with plastic wrap or fitted lid and refrigerate. Marinate for 3-5 days.

When ready to serve, scrape off the miso mixture and save it for use in miso soup.

As long as it's properly refrigerated, the cream cheese will keep for weeks.

How to Serve

Serve on crackers or with chopsticks and condiments such as shiso leaves or mint. But "given the intensity of its flavor," Graves advises serving miso-marinated cream cheese in very small portions.



SCHOOL'S IN FOR SUMMER

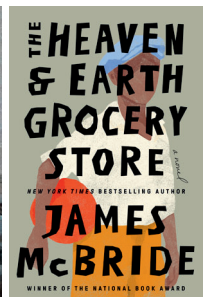
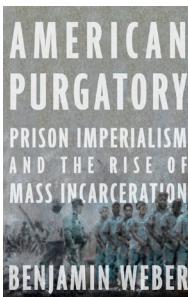
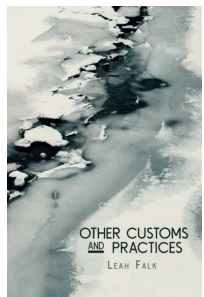
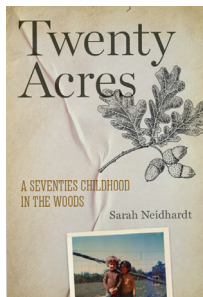
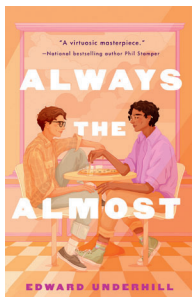
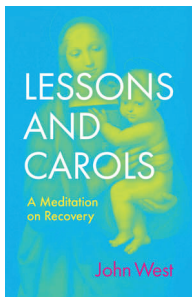
During summer 2023, Oberlin students traveled abroad for two four-week courses that focused squarely on experiential learning. Assistant Professor of Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies Vladimir Ivantsov and German and Russian lecturer Olesya Ivantsova co-taught Georgia: The Crossroad of Civilizations in the capital of Tbilisi, where students taught English to refugees from Ukraine. Meanwhile, Associate Professor of French and Cinema Studies Grace An and Associate Professor of History Ellen Wurtzel co-led the French language immersion course *Discovering Champagne: The World in a Glass*. Students spent time in Champagne learning about the culture and history behind the drink *and* the region.



COURTESY OF IVANTSOV, IVANTSOVA, AN, AND WURTZEL

RECENT RELEASES

Sound and Vision

**Books****MEMOIR****Lessons and Carols: A Meditation on Recovery****John West '12**
EERDMANS

In a book that upends expectations of how memoirs are structured, *Wall Street Journal* data journalist John West considers how loss and joy intertwine. In high school and college, he developed a dependence on alcohol that landed him in rehab and a halfway house, and he watched friends lose their battles with substance use disorder. Using brief, lyrical passages that crisscross time, West invokes music, religion, and philosophy to honor old companions and his own experience of parenting a new baby: “Fear and love knot together. When I pull on one, I tighten the other.” —Karen Sandstrom

YA FICTION**Always the Almost**
Edward Underhill '09WEDNESDAY BOOKS
This buoyant, warm-

hearted young adult novel from writer and composer Edward Underhill centers on 16-year-old Miles Jacobson, a competitive pianist and a high school kid in Wisconsin negotiating life after having just come out as trans. His romance with the star football player has fizzled out, and Miles just wants his boyfriend back—and to beat a rival pianist in a big competition. Then Miles develops an attraction to the new kid in town, and complications ensue. *Always the Almost* earned a coveted starred review in *Publishers Weekly*. —KS

MEMOIR**Twenty Acres: A Seventies Childhood in the Woods****Sarah Neidhardt '99**
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

In 1973, Sarah Neidhardt’s parents traded upper-class living in California for life in the Arkansas Ozarks. There, the adults chased a back-to-the-land ideal—chopping wood, building shelter, raising their own

food, and sowing a marijuana patch—and provided Neidhardt a childhood filled with the exploration of nature. “My world was turning on one leaf, bug, conversation and toy at a time, like lights coming on at dusk,” she writes. Neidhardt girds this gorgeously written memoir, which includes a connection to (and blurb from) David Orr, Oberlin’s Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics Emeritus, with research, meaning the book examines both the magical memories and the long-range impact of choosing poverty. —KS

POETRY**Other Customs and Practices****Leah Falk '07**
GLASS LYRE

In the early 20th century, Russian writer, playwright, and ethnographer S. An-sky developed more than 2,000 questions to explore and document the customs of Jews living in the Pale of Settlement in Imperial

Russia. Leah Falk uses selections from his questionnaire to build an exquisite collection about motherhood and Jewish ancestry. In one poem titled after a question regarding customs around pregnancy, Falk writes of a conversation about eating with the hope of protecting the fetus—“Each bite a brick in some structure she believed would keep me, fort of fiber and starch.” The poems here grow richer with every reading. —KS

NONFICTION**American Purgatory: Prison Imperialism and the Rise of Mass Incarceration****Benjamin D. Weber '07**

THE NEW PRESS

In Catholicism, purgatory is where the dead expiate their sins before rising to heaven. In Benjamin Weber’s *American Purgatory*, purgatory is the system of incarceration that has gone on throughout U.S. history in service of colonial ambitions. A scholar at the University of California, Davis,

Weber explores the history of the government’s regulation of crime abroad and connects it to today’s domestic system of mass incarceration. “Usually treated as distinct areas, penology and foreign policy actually share a set of foundational theories,” Weber writes. Examining how these policies were developed and implemented, he adds, is “essential to understanding prison imperialism’s long career.” —KS

FICTION**The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store****James McBride '79**

RIVERHEAD BOOKS

National Book Award winner James McBride has received extensive plaudits for his new book, *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, with NPR’s *Fresh Air* calling it “one of the best novels I’ve read this year.” The praise is well-deserved: Already a *New York Times* Best Seller, the spellbinding novel tells the stories of the residents of Chicken



Hill, a Pennsylvania neighborhood where Jewish, Black, and immigrant families have settled. McBride's rich prose and detailed character development create the kind of vivid universe you don't want to leave; additionally, the novel's thought-provoking social critiques also linger long after the book ends. —Annie Zaleski

Albums

You're the One Rhiannon Giddens '00

NONESUCH

On the heels of winning a Pulitzer Prize for the opera *Omar*, Rhiannon Giddens continues to be on a hot streak with her first album of all original songs. *You're the One* reflects her expansive musical background, touching on rootsy fare ("Yet to Be," featuring Jason Isbell), jazz ("Who Are You Dreaming Of"), and soul ("Wrong Kind of Right"). Lyrically, the album has no shortage of affecting moments—including "Another Wasted Life," an incisive critique of the criminal justice system inspired

by Kalief Browder, the New York City teenager who died by suicide in the wake of incarceration at Rikers Island. —AZ

ANIMALS

Kassa Overall '05

WARP

Producer-drummer Kassa Overall has had a banner 2023: an appearance on NPR's Tiny Desk, lavish praise in the *New York Times*, and touring as the opening act for hip-hop icons Digable Planets. His third album, *ANIMALS*, the first for acclaimed label Warp Records, represents a victory lap. Collaborating with musicians such as Shabazz Palaces' Ishmael Butler, Laura Mvula, and Vijay Iyer, Overall applies his singular production approach to an adventurous collection that combines jazz and hip-hop in thrilling ways. —AZ

Black Cat Back Stage Poppy Patica

HOUSE OF JOY

Founded by Peter Hartmann '14, Washington, D.C.'s Poppy

Patika—their name comes from a pastry sold in Ohio—favors the element of surprise on their debut album, *Black Cat Back Stage*. Each song boasts a slightly different variation on slanted guitars, zippy keyboards, and off-kilter harmonies, highlighted by torchy indie rock ("Band Aid") and quirky 1980s power-pop ("Awful Sound"). Fans of Pavement and the Apples in Stereo will find much to enjoy here. —AZ

Distance of the Moon

Nora Stanley '18 & Benny Bock '19

COLORFIELD RECORDS

Saxophonist Nora Stanley and keyboardist Benny Bock have been musical collaborators for almost a decade—starting in high school, continuing on through the conservatory, and now culminating in their stellar first duo record. *Distance of the Moon* reflects the pair's musical versatility—among other instruments, the album features pump organ, prepared piano, and an Oberheim Four Voice

synthesizer—and effortless chemistry. With accompaniment from an impressive slate of guest musicians, Stanley and Bock craft mellow instrumentals that brim with subtle emotion. —AZ

Podcasts/Radio

The Divided Dial

Katie Thornton '18

Katie Thornton won a Peabody Award for her limited-run podcast series *The Divided Dial*. Published with the support of the WNYC program *On the Media*, the deeply reported, engaging podcast chronicles the formation and rise of the Christian, conservative multimedia company Salem Media Group—and the company's far-reaching influence on U.S. talk radio and politics. (wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/divided-dial) —AZ

Pipedreams

Michael Barone '68

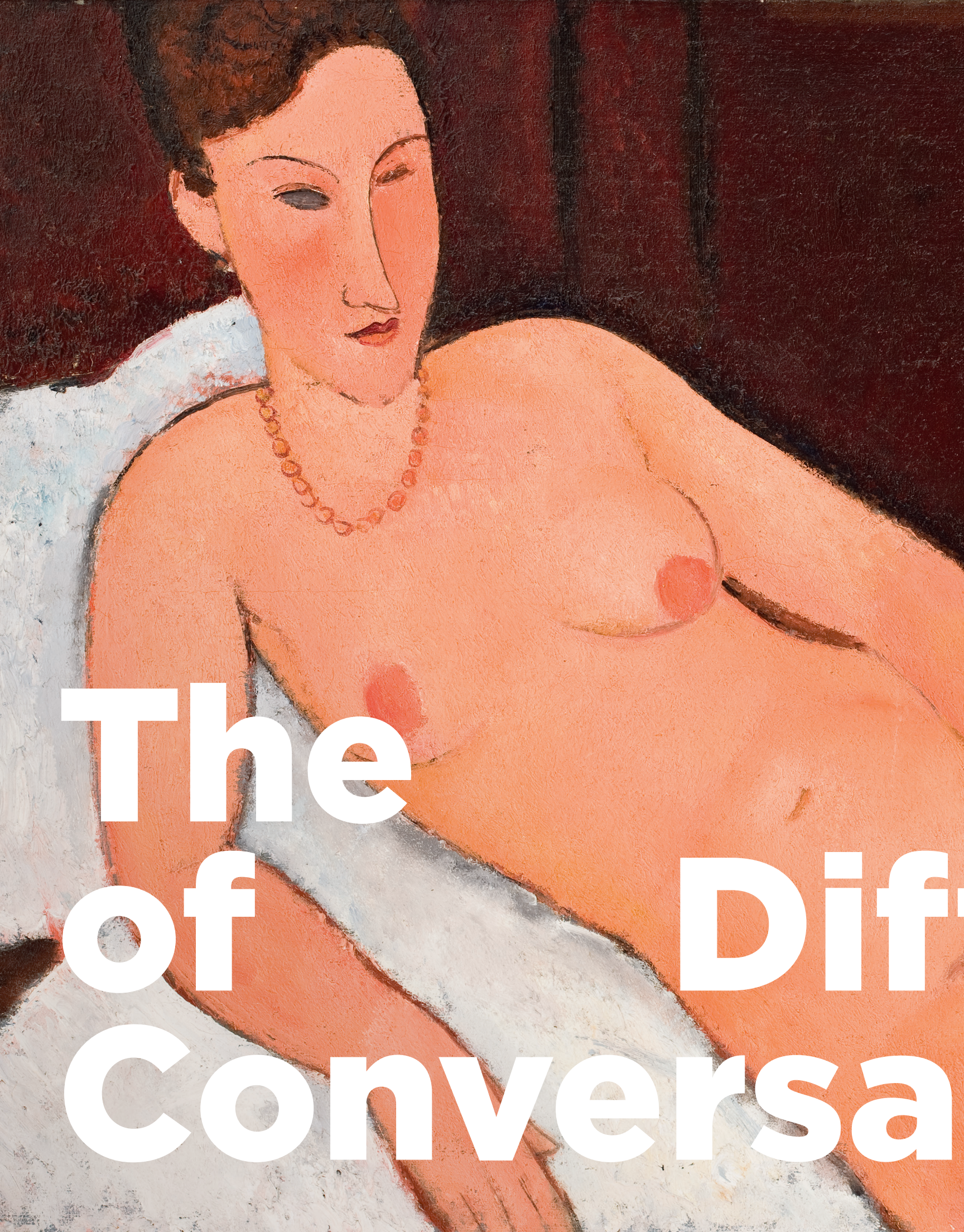
This year marks the 40th anniversary of continuous weekly national broadcasts for *Pipedreams*, the only

weekly radio program celebrating the pipe organ that's distributed across the U.S. Host and senior executive producer Michael Barone waxes enthusiastic about organ works and performances, in addition to interviewing composers, organists, and organ builders and highlighting fascinating historic instruments. (pipedreams.org) —AZ

Off the Charts: Examining the Health Equity Emergency

Steven Jackson, MD '98

An award-winning podcast that launched its fourth season in early September, *Off the Charts* discusses a wide variety of diversity and health equity issues through interviews with health care experts and community members. Co-hosts and physicians Steven Jackson and Kari Haley are thorough and engaging conversationalists, resulting in information-packed episodes. (healthpartners.com/about/equity-inclusion-anti-racism/off-the-charts-podcast) —AZ



**The
of Dif
Conversa**



Art difficult questions

The museum world is known for posing big questions. The Allen Memorial Art Museum has a plan for addressing them.

By Annie Zaleski

The Northwest Ambulatory boasts an unremarkable name but a most ambitious mission. Tucked just inside the entrance of the Allen Memorial Art Museum, past a tidy display of postcards and T-shirts, the ambulatory is a tiny space custom-made for exploring big ideas. Until the late days of summer, visitors who happened upon it were greeted by the question *Where Is Consent in Art (Museums)?* in large text that popped off the plum-colored wall. On the opposite wall were two additional provocative questions:

Does beholding an image of desire or sexual violence implicate us in that image's power dynamics?

When a figure looks directly at us—as if to acknowledge our presence—how do we look back?

They are guiding themes of an exhibition whose run has concluded but whose impact continues to be felt. It included works spanning from ancient times to the present day: a carved Roman Pentelic marble sculpture, a detailed woodcut, a dye sublimation print on aluminum. Each is striking on its own: a 2007 Yoko Ono work titled *Touch Me* consists of nothing more than the titular phrase die-cut into plexiglass on a stark white canvas; Mickalene



On display between January 27-August 22, 2023, *Where Is Consent in Art (Museums)?* was the kind of perspective-altering show that's typical for the Allen.



From left: Andria Derstine, Hannah Wirta Kinney, and Sam Adams

Thomas' *You're Gonna Give Me the Love I Need* (2010) is a collage on handmade paper with accents of glitter and cloth appliqué.

The exhibition's labels add intriguing context. The one for Thomas' piece, which depicts a Black woman reclining on a colorful backdrop that mixes and matches patterns and textures, reads: "As a queer, Black woman depicting another Black woman, Thomas offers us a chance to consider how bias and privilege inform the way we look at reclining nudes. The declarative title, combined with the sitter's direct gaze, signals that she is a willing and active participant in the internal dynamics of this scene."

Where Is Consent? is a perspective-altering show, and it's typical for the Northwest Ambulatory. Since September 2020, the space has offered three additional exhibitions: one addressing racism (*How Can Museum Labels Be Anti-Racist?*), another on cultural property (*DIS/POSSESSION*), and a third on Indigenous American objects (*Divergent Paths*).

"While every exhibition at a museum is designed to foster learning and conversation, these four were specifically designed to be more experimental in nature, looking at big topics in more questioning ways," says Andria Derstine, John G.W. Cowles Director of the museum.

The inquisitive spirit is nothing new for the Allen, which has long strived to launch diverse exhibitions that engage with timely topics, often through the prism of contemporary art. It's a commitment that, according to Derstine, increased notably under Charles Parkhurst, director from 1949 to 1962, a period when the series *Three Young Americans*, which started in 1951, led to early-career artists coming to Oberlin, securing the Allen's reputation as a launching

pad for new work and new ideas. Groundbreaking exhibitions continued in the years that followed, including 1970's *Art in the Mind* from Athena Tacha '61 and curator Bill Olander's *Art and Social Change* (1983) and *Women and the Media* (1984).

Today, the legacy includes exhibitions covering sustainability (2021's *Green Japan*:



**AS CURATORS,
WE DON'T
HAVE ALL THE
ANSWERS.
YOU HAVE THE
CONVERSATIONS
THAT YOU
WANT TO HAVE
IN THAT SPACE.**



Images of Sustainable Living in Japanese Prints) and race, gender, and violence, including *Wildfire Test Pit* (2016) and *Counternarratives* (2018), which dealt with reporting on race and violence and which was shown on the façades of the Allen and Mudd Center.

But for all the generations of forward-thinking art, the Allen had never embarked on anything quite like this.

RETHINKING COLLECTIONS

The summer of 2020 found institutions of every kind finally reckoning with racial justice. Museums, in particular, confronted long-simmering issues related to the provenance of works in their collections—including by placing greater emphasis on researching Indigenous American art—and reexamined ways of discussing polarizing works.

The Allen also reimagined how to engage with current events through the lens of its permanent collection. But it also looked inward at its own practices to see what could be improved.

"I've heard from a number of students that the museum is this very problematic space where they see colonial-Euro-American values being reified," says Sam Adams, the Ellen Johnson '33 Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. "That is true—and that's what makes it an exciting field to work in because we have the potential to undermine and to expand those narratives."

To start, Alexandra Letvin, the Allen's then-assistant curator of European and American art, wanted to explore whether museum labels—the context-rich text included alongside works of art—could be anti-racist, a term used to describe actively identifying and standing against racism. That inquiry started with a series of questions, recalls Curator of Academic Programs Hannah Wirta Kinney: "What would those labels look like? What kind of information would you need to include in a label to make it anti-racist? How would the language change?"

Using two American paintings as test cases—Severin Roesen's *Still Life with Fruit* (1855) and Thomas Satterwhite Noble's *The Present* (1865)—Letvin wrote three different



labels, which were then switched in and out over time. The goal was to illustrate that the text was subjective with interpretations often hinging on the writer's perspective and background. In other words, the Allen aimed to show that there are many ways to tell a story about one painting.

The labels for *Where Is Consent?* reflected this thoughtful approach. Each one concluded with a thought-provoking question that encouraged visitors to ponder what they saw. As Kinney puts it: "How do we think about how we write about these myths? Do we lead with what the myth is about—like the rebirth of spring and seeds? Or do we say that these images also reinforce patriarchal cultures in early modern Italy? And do we talk about the power of the gaze in reclining nudes and think about those power dynamics?"

FINDING THE WORDS

In recent years, museums and other institutions increasingly have taken up the task of crafting land acknowledgments: statements,

often read before events, that recognize the Indigenous communities that previously lived on the land where a particular building now stands. Unsurprisingly, the Allen researched and drafted a land acknowledgment of its own.

For Kinney and her colleagues, the process surfaced more questions than answers—related to their approach to labels, but also how they write about American works of art and even care for items in the collection. "What does it mean to acknowledge Indigenous peoples, and how does that transform what we do?" Kinney remembers thinking.

Faced with similar conundrums, museums often set about a path of figuring out the answers on their own and launching an exhibition, then telling visitors what they should know. But as plans came together for the experimental exhibiton *DIS/POSSESSION*, the Allen sought to understand what the proposed images meant to people of diverse backgrounds.

To make this happen, Kinney collaborated closely with Letvin, who is now a curator of

Frederick E. Cohen's 1857 painting *Bentley Simons Runyan Family* offered a way for the Allen to talk about settler colonialism.

European art at the Princeton University Art Museum. "We decided we were going to use that space for a full-year project, really probing the meaning of a land acknowledgment," Kinney says. "We decided, 'These are all the things that we don't know and the things that we are not sure about that we don't have the words for yet.' We wanted this to be a conversation about how we find the words that we should have."

They selected a small number of works that would lend themselves to conversation, including a 19th-century landscape-style photo of the Yosemite Valley by Carleton Watkins and Andy Warhol's 1986 pop art rendering of *Sitting Bull*. Of particular interest locally, however, was an 1857

painting by Frederick E. Cohen, *Bentley Simons Runyan Family*, depicting a well-appointed family from Mansfield, Ohio, standing in front of their equally luxurious house on a vast swath of land.

Looks can be deceiving, however. “We realized through research that although the painting presents the family as if they are standing in this land that was recently cleared for them, their house actually was in the middle of Mansfield and surrounded by other houses,” Kinney says. “For us, this became this great way to talk about settler colonialism. How could we tell the story of Ohio—a very local story, an *Oberlin* story—even through this painting?”

Throughout the year that followed, *DIS/POSSESSION* fueled discussion from visiting classes and from collaborations with groups like Barefoot Dialogue, a student-led program presented by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life. “For us, this was an important act of handing over authority,” Kinney says. “As curators, we don’t have all the answers. You have the conversations that you want to have in that space.”

Programming around *DIS/POSSESSION* culminated in a panel called “Acknowledging the Land,” which convened faculty, staff, and members of the community to discuss what it means to acknowledge the land from different perspectives. Coleading the discussion was Sundance '92, a Muskogee Nation member who is executive director of the Cleveland American Indian Movement and business coordinator for the Oberlin Student Cooperative Association. He was joined by photographer Joella Byron-Dixon, a reconnected descendant of the Kanien'kehá:ka Haudenosaunee (or Mohawk Iroquois) people and cofounder of the Indigenous Peoples' Day Committee of Oberlin.

“Every student in the room was there with intent,” remembers Byron-Dixon. “It wasn’t like *My professor told me I had to come for this class or I get extra credit if I’m here*. I could see them diligently writing notes and asking questions.” One such question focused on whether acknowledgments are enough. It provided Byron-Dixon a chance to share her own family’s experience.

“My great-grandmother was separated from her family and from her traditions and made to feel ashamed of who she was,” she says. “She lied to people and told people that she was Greek and that her son was Greek because that was easier. So my family is very much reconnecting to our traditions, to our stories, to our dances.”

Byron-Dixon compares land

Illuminating the Intangible

In late August 2023, the Allen opened a new exhibition in the Northwest Ambulatory space. Unlike *Where Is Consent in Art (Museums)?, Picturing the Intangible: Oberlin Looks at Dawoud Bey’s ‘Night Coming Tenderly, Black’* features just one work: a photograph by Bey—*Untitled #24 (At Lake Erie)*. It is part of a series exploring the Underground Railroad, its history in Northeast Ohio, and “the myth versus the reality of those places,” says curator Hannah Wirta Kinney.

The exhibition was crafted through collaborations with campus and community groups. The Oberlin Heritage Center contributed text written by a self-emancipated person who settled in Oberlin. There’s also the story of a local woman whose great-great-great-grandfather self-emancipated and a recording of the Oberlin Gospel Choir singing the spiritual “Wade in the Water.”

The photograph is complemented by the sound of Imani Joseph '24 reading the text of Langston Hughes’ poem “Dream Variations,” from which Bey’s series takes its name. Associate Professor of Creative Writing Chanda Feldman shared insights into the text.

“We had this really



great conversation where we deconstructed how to look at this poem on its own,” Feldman says. “They wanted to discuss how Hughes’ poem might resonate with Dawoud Bey as he’s creating the series and what someone like me, a poet, might see in that poem and its relationship to the photographs. Likewise, I had questions for them because I’m very interested in that series.”

The conversation included discussion of the poem’s structure, themes, and language, but also how people viewing the photograph bring their own perspectives to interpretation. “At least as I see it, one of the key relationships in the poem and in Dawoud Bey’s work is a positive interpretation of night,” Feldman notes. “[It’s] thinking about night as a protective force and not necessarily a frightening force.

“But that photograph and Hughes’ poem both flip on its head the idea of black as something negative, right?” Feldman continues. “Night isn’t a void. There’s a palpable presence sheltered in the darkness.”

Students taking Feldman’s fall 2023 class Poetry: Travel, Mobility, and Movement will visit the exhibition and complete an assignment rooted in *ekphrasis*, a type of writing specifically about visual art.

To Kinney, these varied perspectives speak to the museum’s approach. “For us, the community aspect of this is not only these different voices, but that it’s all really tied into Oberlin as a place and connecting town and gown. We are on the corner of those two worlds—of serving the broader community of Oberlin, but also the student and college population.”

acknowledgments to the reconnection process, but notes that acknowledgments are merely the first step in an ongoing process. In fact, she likens land acknowledgments to dedications.

“It’s definitely not just a one-and-done thing, where you have this beautifully written land acknowledgment [and that’s it]. It can’t be the one and only step in acknowledging traditions and acknowledging Indigenous peoples and the people who were here before us.”

ENDING THE CYCLE OF HARM

The Allen has taken this message to heart, in part by further strengthening the links between museum education, curation, and the Oberlin community—an approach enshrined in the core tenets of the museum’s new strategic plan, which was enacted in January.

This multifaceted approach played out in *Where Is Consent in Art (Museums)?*, which opened that same month. For starters, the exhibition grew out of several campus initiatives, among them the student-led PRSM (Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct) program, which works with the Title IX office to offer consent training and bystander intervention for first-year and transfer students. Sam Adams’ curation and scholarly work frequently explores gender, sexuality, and the body.

Prior to curating *Where Is Consent?*, Kinney and Adams convened a focus group of several PRSM trainers who examined around 15 works being considered for the exhibition. Their insights were invaluable to determining the final selections and the ways in which the exhibition ultimately was framed, Adams says.

“Something that will really stick with me is that they cautioned us against binaries: active/passive, male/female, perpetrator/victim. And so we found words that complicate that notion.”

To Adams, being more intentional about exhibitions—and how to talk about works on display—often has more to do with overall power dynamics than gender roles.

“There are so many images of sexual assault that appear throughout art history,” they say. “We [often] put these things on view, and we talk about the mythological importance or the style, the formal elements. To me, that perpetuates rape culture. It perpetuates a harm that was originally done to this model by this artist.”

Adams cites Amedeo Modigliani’s 1917 painting *Nude with Coral Necklace*, which depicts an unclothed woman reclining on a chair and touching herself. Through a modern



You're Gonna Give Me the Love I Need (2010) by Mickalene Thomas invites consideration of bias and privilege as they relate to depictions of reclining nudes.

lens, the painting (part of the Allen’s permanent collection) can be interpreted as representing unbalanced power dynamics: a “powerful, white, cisgender male artist in his studio who has paid a really poor, most likely very hungry model to lie nude in front of him,” Adams says. “She’s probably cold. She’s probably uncomfortable. She’s being exploited, in a way.”

The Allen isn’t the only place grappling with these ideas. “Museums are facing questions of what we do with historic material—or even contemporary material—that we look at with different eyes today than we might have even 10 years ago,” Kinney says. “How do we think about the potential harm that it might cause to certain viewers—especially on a college campus?”

Students are also thinking about these topics. A first-year seminar used the Allen to examine how cancel culture plays out in museums. “I thought the students would be like *Put all this stuff in the basement. We can’t have this stuff here. Sell it*,” Kinney says. “But they were so nuanced in how they thought about how the medium of a work of art might influence how you think about consent.”

During Consent Month in April, the museum hosted weekly student-led discussions at the experimental space. Adams was impressed by the thoughtfulness students brought to topics around sex and consent, including when these discussions expanded to include museum visitors who may otherwise have no ties to campus.

“In those cases, it was really exciting

because they’re like, ‘This is a student-led program about a really adult topic that is being handled with a world-class collection of art and a really high level of sophistication,’” Adams says. “The consent exhibition—I just learned so much from students.”

The support runs both ways. When PRSM reached out across campus about planning Consent Month events, trainers Vanessa Baker ’23 and Peter Fray-Witzer ’24 found an eager collaborative partner in the Allen. They developed a curator-led viewing of the exhibition followed by small-group discussions about broader topics in art.

This balance of formal and informal was deliberate, Fray-Witzer says. “I think this is particularly poignant when you have a group of people who are around the same age living together on a college campus, who are then able to make connections between what they’re seeing in campus culture as well. This exhibition is a really good example of pulling all of these really different art pieces from different eras, sensibilities, and mediums and putting them together for this common goal and conversation.”

Fray-Witzer, a comparative literature major from Lexington, Massachusetts, credits

Oberlin for deepening his perspective on museum curation and exhibitions. He cites an art history class, taught by Associate Professor of African and Black Atlantic Art History Matthew Rarey, for which a final project required students to plan every detail of an exhibition—from wall color to placement of the artworks.

This thoughtfulness carried over to PRSM's Consent Month events. "Peter brought in this really nice element of thinking about art as a way in which we understand the world," Baker says. "Art, in a lot of ways, reestablishes and reinforces and reconfirms everything that we're taught in media or by our families. And so he really emphasized that it was important to think about consent in art because it's just another way that we learn about consent."

Baker, who majored in politics and comparative American studies, initially visited the Allen as part of the first-year seminar James Baldwin's America. The class viewed an exhibition on the slave trade, *Afterlives of the Black Atlantic*, then wrote about one of the works they saw.

The experience shifted Baker's perspective on the possibilities inherent to museums, a revelation she attributes in no small part to Kinney making art accessible. "I always thought of art museums as places where people with knowledge understand—and people who don't just look at art," she says. "But to think that I have knowledge and can

apply that to the things I see—it was revolutionary for me."

EXPANDING INFLUENCE

In July 2022, the Allen opened an exhibition—*Objects of Encounter: American Myths of Place*—informed by the work that started with *DIS/POSSESSION*. It involved rewriting labels for objects in the American collection, Kinney says, "but also digging into our Indigenous collection in different ways."

The speakers who took part in "Acknowledging the Land" have coalesced into a new working group that's focused on developing a land acknowledgment for Oberlin College and Conservatory. "What's exciting about that project is how the museum could become a catalyst for conversations across campus between faculty and staff and different departments," Kinney says. Fittingly, a 2023 Winter Term project called *Stories of Indigenous Oberlin*, led by Sundance and ethnomusicology professor Jennifer Fraser, brought together the campus and community to share Indigenous peoples' stories of "survival" (survival and resilience) in and through Oberlin.

All of this dovetails with Byron-Dixon's observation that Oberlin students have become more interested in Indigenous Peoples' Day Committee programming and events. In the past year, the committee had its largest group of student volunteers ever.

At the Allen, meanwhile, the work also

continues. Adams sat on the thesis committee of Ursula Hudak '23, an art history major whose research took a second look at (among other things) Modigliani's *Nude with Coral Necklace*. When the painting went back on display over the summer, its accompanying label reflected a much different perspective—one informed by a co-rewrite with Hudak. "It won't concentrate on Modigliani or his brilliance or his brushwork," Adams says. "It will concentrate on the model and her experience, which was discovered through original research that the student did. It revealed something about who this person is—and how her body was considered by this artist."

Fray-Witzer also hopes that PRSM can carry forward its Consent Month collaboration. "No matter what the Allen has on display at the moment, the event is very applicable to a wide range of art," he says. "The exhibition definitely provided the impetus for discussing topics related to consent, but there are so many representations of bodies and personhood in any museum that you walk into."

With its commitment to collaboration and dialogue, the Allen is reinforcing the message that art is more than an object on a wall. It's ever-evolving—and it takes on new dimensions as subsequent generations of students and community members engage in transformative conversations and view the same works with fresh eyes and fresh perspectives. ■

A Note from Oberlin

In September, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg Jr. obtained warrants authorizing the seizure of drawings by Austrian artist Egon Schiele (1890-1918) from the Art Institute of Chicago, the Carnegie Museum of Art, and the Allen Memorial Art Museum.

The D.A.'s Office contends that the Nazi regime stole the drawings from Fritz Grünbaum, a well-known Austrian-Jewish cabaret performer and art collector killed at the Dachau concentration camp

in 1941. Prosecutors say the works rightly belong to Grünbaum's heirs.

Oberlin College purchased Schiele's drawing *Girl with Black Hair* in 1958. When questions relating to the artwork's provenance came to light in the years that followed, Oberlin invested significant resources researching the history of its sale and purchase and concluded it had been lawfully acquired.

The artwork was bought for the Allen by Charles Parkhurst, director of the



museum from 1949 to 1962. As one of the "Monuments Men," he was celebrated for

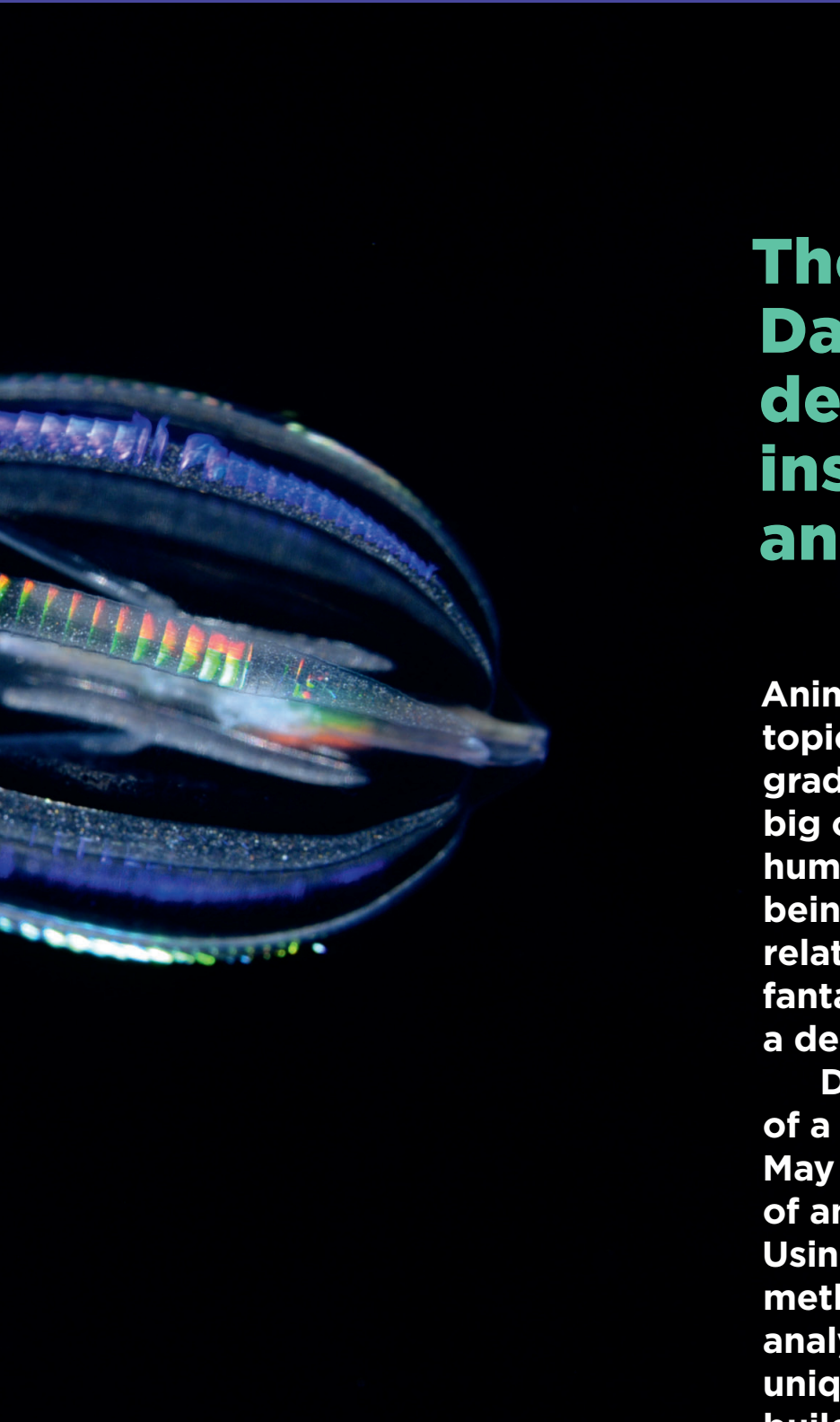
tracking down and returning art looted by Nazis in WWII. It is inconceivable that Parkhurst would have knowingly purchased any artwork that he believed might have been stolen.

The Manhattan D.A.'s Office, through its ongoing investigation, nonetheless has raised questions about the ownership of *Girl with Black Hair*. As a result, Oberlin College is voluntarily returning the drawing. We hope this will provide some measure of closure to the family of Fritz Grünbaum.



**MY
COUSIN
THE
COMB
JELLY**

BY ANNIE ZALESKI



The research of Darrin Schultz '13 deepens our insights into animal evolution.

Animal evolution is one of those major topics you probably learned about in grade-school science class. And it's a big one to consider: How is it that humans are related to all other living beings on Earth? Not just our obvious relatives like primates, but also the fantastical creatures you might find in a deep ocean dive?

Darrin Schultz '13, the lead author of a paper published in *Nature* in May 2023, is taking our understanding of animal evolution even deeper. Using cutting-edge DNA sequencing methods, Schultz and his team analyzed various animal genomes—the unique set of genes that serve as the building blocks of life. Their research concluded that comb jellies—tiny, oval-shaped marine invertebrates known for their iridescent rainbow sheen—are the likely sibling group (in genetic terms, the oldest relation) of all animals. >

Their findings offer implications for our understanding of how animals are related to one another—and when they started to become more complex.

“There are a lot of new things that we’re really excited to share with other evolutionary biologists,” Schultz says via Zoom from Austria, where he’s a postdoctoral researcher in the University of Vienna’s department of neuroscience and developmental biology. “This paper generates a lot of new hypotheses.”

For decades, scientists thought that sponges—superficially simple organisms that lack neurons and muscles—were the sibling group of all animals. This meant sponges had split off onto their own unique evolutionary path before other animal species. However, a groundbreaking 2008 study sparked debate within the scientific community by proposing that ctenophores—also called comb jellies—were the sibling group, not sponges.

Scientists discussed this finding for years, hampered by a lack of available methodologies to determine the right answer. “When DNA sequencing technologies developed, all the protocols were optimized for sequencing human genomes,” Schultz explains. “I had to figure out how to make this information work for ctenophores and sponges.”

In the last decade, these advancements gave scientists access to more comprehensive and precise information about genetic material. Schultz had access to the latest genomics research and discoveries because he was getting his PhD jointly at Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute and in the genomics department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The latter has a rich legacy, as it was the department



that first assembled the human genome. Schultz also studied with pioneering UC Santa Cruz biomolecular engineering professor Ed Green, a significant contributor to the Nobel Prize-winning work related to subsequent sequencing of the Neanderthal genome.

In his research, Schultz ultimately applied existing DNA sequencing technologies and new analysis techniques to organisms people hadn’t studied before. This enabled him to examine these genomes at the chromosome level. “In the past, when people said they sequenced the genome, they had little bits of pieces of DNA,” he says. “Think of it like if you took a book and tore all the pages out. You would have individual pages, but you wouldn’t know the order that they went in to make a chapter. But chromosome-scale is where you have the whole book, front to back, and you know the order that the pages go in.”

This level of detail unlocked incredible insights. “Comparing the chromosome-scale genomes—the full stories—allowed us to figure out what events happened in the past,” Schultz says. “We came up with methods to look at how pieces of DNA would fuse together and become mixed over time—and determined how that information could tell us how animals and other organisms are related to one another. People haven’t done that before for this specific type of genomic change that we looked at.”

Why are these findings so exciting? For starters, they change our understanding of the timing of animal evolution—more precisely, the evolution of animal-specific characteristics such as neurons, muscles, and genome organization. “This study tells us that the first neuron perhaps existed hundreds of millions of years earlier than it would have if sponges were the sister group of

“It’s like the longest game of telephone—or it’s the best handed-down story of all time.”

Left: In his research, Darrin Schultz applied existing DNA sequencing technologies and new analysis techniques to organisms people hadn't studied before.

Previous spread: California sea gooseberry (*Hormiphora californensis*) photographed in the laboratory.

all animals,” Schultz says. “Maybe neurons were in things that were living in the ocean 700 million years ago.”

Schultz's team also discovered that certain groups of linked genes were found on the same chromosomes in animals and close relations, like unicellular organisms. Incredibly, the genes' location stayed the same—even as genes were passed down across the generations and as the chromosomal lineages of organisms and

animals evolved independently from each other. “The common ancestor of the unicellular organisms and animals existed about a billion years ago,” Schultz explains, “which means that the genes we see linked together today existed on the same chromosome in that ancestor about a billion years ago.”

“It's like the longest game of telephone—or it's the best handed-down story of all time.”

Schultz's interest in studying DNA dates to his time at Oberlin. As a biology major, he cultivated his skills by pursuing research with two professors: Marta Laskowski, who studies plant root development, and Mike Moore, whose work involves plant evolutionary diversity.

“In Marta's lab, everything that I did was centered around learning some technique with manipulating DNA,” Schultz says. “In Mike's lab, I learned how DNA can tell us about how things are related.” This culminated in a senior thesis project with former professor Adam Haberman about the conservation of genes over hundreds of millions of years of evolution.

A decade later, Schultz calls his time at Oberlin critical to his

development as a scientist—in no small part because the approach to research encouraged independence and a collaborative spirit. “The professors are really passionate about making sure that students have chances to learn,” he says. “And they have the time to spend with the students. You have these brilliant people be your advisors in a way that you wouldn't get in most other places around the world. Their guidance outside of the lab and their willingness to foster creativity, inquisitiveness, and the drive for knowledge was really inspiring. It made me really push myself to learn.”

Upon graduating, Schultz earned a Fulbright to study bioluminescent organisms and their DNA at Nagoya University in Japan. He continued his studies in Russia and earned a prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. As his career progressed, he discovered that it wasn't just his Oberlin lab work that helped him become a better scientist.

A native of nearby Vermilion, Ohio, Schultz initially chose Oberlin to indulge his many interests outside of

science—including art, music, and history. Accordingly, he pursued minors in chemistry and East Asian studies. “It ended up being the perfect place for me,” he says, “because I had a lot of freedom to explore all the intellectual pursuits that I wanted.”

Schultz's Oberlin language studies paid off when he sought a Fulbright, which required him to complete his application in both English and Japanese. Over time, his broad skill set and varied interests also helped with research—like the ways he could apply the artistic skills he's cultivated over the years to draw figures and take photos.

“Everything that you learn outside of your field comes together at some point,” he says. “And that's how you can make big discoveries and do things that other people haven't been able to do.”

Schultz hopes his research will lead to even greater things. The amount—and quality—of genomes published in the recent study are an invaluable resource for the evolutionary biology community. “There aren't many high-quality genomes of animals that are closely related to humans, worms, and arthropods—for example, of jellyfish, corals, sponges, ctenophores, and flat animals, or placozoans,” Schultz says. “The more genomes we sequence of things that are alive today, it gives us a clearer picture of what the ancestral genome was like a billion years ago.”

Sequencing more organisms is certainly on the plate. But Schultz's research has also brought up additional intriguing questions to ponder. Why are the genes on animals still linked together after all this time—and how have they stayed connected for so long?

“There's a question of whether they have stayed linked together for so long because they're functionally linked—so if they were split up, the animal might die, or it might not pass its genes on,” he says. “Or maybe it's due to random chance. That's the next big question to ask of this finding.” ■



A lobed comb jelly (*Bolinopsis microptera*) observed by MBARI's remotely operated vehicle (ROV) *Doc Ricketts* offshore of Central California at a depth of approximately 1,360 meters.

FRESH

PER-

SPEC-

TIVES

**OBERLIN'S
NEWLY
TENURED
FACULTY
SHARE WHAT
THEY'VE BEEN
LEARNING.**

In June 2023, Oberlin awarded tenure to 13 faculty members across the college and conservatory. Because this group represents diverse areas of study, we asked them: What's the most surprising or interesting thing you've discovered in your research? (Conservatory faculty also had the option to consider the question through the lens of performance.) Their answers ended up being fascinating, thoughtful, intellectually surprising, and uniformly illuminating—qualities that happen to be hallmarks of an Oberlin education as well. —*Annie Zaleski*



▲ EMILIA BACHRACH

Religion and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (GSFS)

As an ethnographer, my conversation partners and I become engaged in many aspects of each other's everyday lives. Last summer, I brought my baby with me to India while I interviewed a group of Hindu ascetic/renunciant women at their temple-residence. Broadly speaking, I am interested in how these women's community leadership in relationship to their guru, a married woman, helps us to rethink the function of Indian ascetic practices. Since my child was with me, many of our conversations turned to matters I hadn't planned on discussing—such as childrearing and breastfeeding—thereby fundamentally changing the trajectory of my research.



▲ MAGGIE BREHM

Economics
I have some interesting research on the Adoption Tax Credit, a federal credit introduced in 1997 to promote foster care adoptions. In 2010 and 2011, the roughly \$13,000 credit was made much more generous by becoming

refundable, so taxpayers receive credit in excess of their tax liability as a cash refund. I found a very large increase in foster care adoptions just before the credit became nonrefundable again at the end of 2011. The tax credit likely affected both the decision to adopt as well as the timing of adoption.

▼ PAUL BREHM

Economics
One of the more interesting things I have learned relates to backup electric generators and batteries. We find that in response to power outages in California, households that depend on reliable electricity purchase backups. As a result, it may maximize social welfare to decrease public investment in a reliable electricity supply. Surprisingly, low-income households may benefit from this, as they value the reduction in their utility bills more than they value the reliability that is no longer being provided.



▲ KJ CERANKOWSKI

Comparative American Studies and GSFS

As someone who is more philosophically and theoretically oriented, I would say the most interesting thing I've discovered in my research is about the process of research itself. To practice research is to grow and deepen knowledge; it is to recognize learning as something that shapes who I am in the world and what I imagine to be possible. My research—in feminist, queer, and trans studies, in trauma theory and ecocriticism—has led me to embrace study as a way of

moving toward more just worlds with deep ethics of care for self, others, and the whole ecosystems we inhabit.



▲ KIRSTEN DOCTER

Viola and Chamber Music
I remember my first series of concerts after leaving college. Repeating the same program night after night made me realize the vital importance of live performance as part of the interpretive process. Now, as I learn new pieces of music—older works that are new to me or recently composed works—they provide new insights to the music I have been playing for years.





▲ CHANDA FELDMAN

Creative Writing

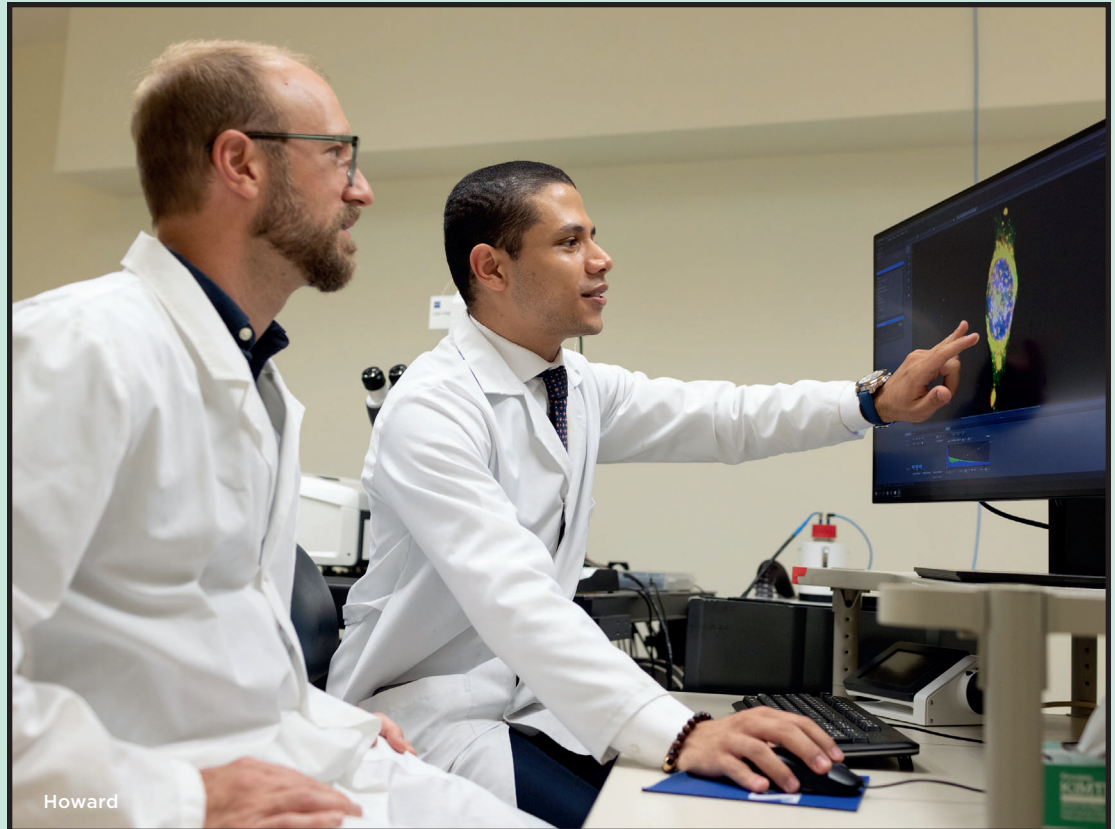
I follow the writing. I might have an idea, an image, or memory that I want to explore further and wonder, “Why is that pulling my attention?” After I start writing, sometimes I run into a roadblock or curiosity that requires research. Not necessarily formal research in a classic academic sense. I don’t often think, “I have a hypothesis, and this is what I predict.” I’m gathering information that hopefully sparks more creative development. Sometimes researched information is directly incorporated into the poem; I might have a fact or a piece of history that gets integrated into the work. Sometimes it’s just background. At other times, it leads me to approach a piece I’m working on in a completely different way.



▲ SERGIO GUTIÉRREZ NEGRÓN

Hispanic Studies

When researching, I’m always surprised by the blindness and misanthropy of the economic imagination of the 19th century. In Mexico, for example, most post-independence authors (1821-50) of economic texts or



legislation were so obsessed with “universal” notions of development that they were incapable of seeing the country for what it was: a society composed, in its majority, of agrarian Indigenous communities; peasants and artisans of Indian, mestizo, and white extraction; and legions of unpaid soldiers, all of whom labored without respite with the hope not of leading the nation into a future of economic progress, but of simply making do.

▲ CHRIS HOWARD
Neuroscience

The most surprising and exciting thing I have discovered is the depth of work we have been able to conduct with only undergraduate researchers leading experiments. With Oberlin students, we have designed experiments using optogenetics (control of neuron activity using laser light), fiber photometry (recording neuron

activity with light), and other advanced techniques typically reserved for graduate programs. In this context, our most exciting scientific finding is a new function of a brain region (striatal “patches”) whose role in behavior has been debated for over 50 years.



▲ DMITRY KOUZOV
Cello

One of the most interesting and always surprising discoveries in my work as a performer is how amazingly different an interpretation of even a very familiar music text can be, depending on whom I’m performing it with. It makes my job so interesting!



▲ BRYAN PARKHURST
Music Theory

A lot of my writing has been about philosophical and music-theoretical system-builders—people like Schenker, Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Langer. Lately I have come to see, with some chagrin, that there is a point of diminishing marginal returns as one tries to acquire an increasingly comprehensive and increasingly nuanced mastery of gigantic, unmanageably elaborate systems of thought. I don’t know whether that itself is a philosophical insight or just a piece of psychological common sense. But either way, I’m glad

it finally occurred to me. I think I will probably stop looking for philosophical Everests to climb and focus more on plain ideas, plainly expressed.



▲ WILL PARSONS
Chemistry

While the annotation of the human genome was completed nearly two decades ago, our corresponding understanding of the proteins encoded by the genome is still at an early stage. My lab studies a particular subset of proteins called rhomboid intramembrane proteases. These proteins have been implicated in important physiological processes and diseases, including cancer and type 2 diabetes, but our understanding of their functions at the molecular level is still quite limited. My lab is developing chemical tools that can empower biological studies of these proteins and provide insight into the potential of rhomboid intramembrane proteases to serve as therapeutic targets.



▲ SAM TAGGART
Computer Science

My research deals with the economics of consumer data. I model the way firms use data and the way consumers respond

to being tracked. Consumer data can be used in a fine-grained way, to make individualized product recommendations, offer coupons, or set prices. A theme that keeps arising from the theoretical models I study is that it's often actually in a company's interest to be transparent about the way they use data. It might seem more "strategic" to play close to the chest, but consumer distrust can hurt a company's bottom line in surprising ways.

▼ SARA VEROSKY
Psychology

My research investigates human face perception: It looks at how we form impressions of other people based on facial appearance and how becoming familiar with people changes the way we process their faces. One thing that has stood out to me is how differently familiar faces are treated from unfamiliar faces. Familiar faces

“I think I will probably stop looking for philosophical Everests to climb and focus more on plain ideas, plainly expressed.”

reach visual awareness more quickly, they lead to different neural responses, and people are able to bring to mind emotional

associations with familiar faces within a fraction of a second, sometimes without even consciously recognizing them. ■



THE VAGINA



BY
JEFF HAGAN '86

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
KELLI LADERER

DIALOGUES



**DESPITE ITS
CHEEKY NAME,
TIGHT LIPPED
HAS SERIOUS
PLANS TO ADDRESS
VULVOVAGINAL
Pain.** ↓

NOA FLEISCHACKER '15 CARES more about the vaginal pain and discomfort she and others have felt than she cares about anyone's comfort level in discussing it. In fact, she's quite public about her privates. "If you Google me," she says, speaking over video from a coffee shop, "it's all 'Noa and her vagina.'"

Fleischacker is a cofounder (along with Sarah Minion '17) of Tight Lipped, an organization created to call attention to chronic vulvovaginal pain—an umbrella term to describe conditions that can cause things such as vulvar burning and itching, UTI-like symptoms, and pain when sitting. Using the grassroots community organizing skills they first honed as students at Oberlin, Fleischacker and Minion are working with universities, doctors, health care experts, and even government officials to ensure the medical community takes these conditions—and the patients who live with them—more seriously.

"Everything that we do is in service to grassroots organizing," Fleischacker says. "How do we actually make changes to hospital systems, research funding, and treatment options? These are all deeper systemic issues. Some of the organizations and people who have worked on this before us are creating support

groups. But we're explicitly like, 'Yes, we want to build community and support each other—and none of this is going to change until we make deeper systemic change.'"

Tight Lipped arose out of Fleischacker and Minion's own personal experiences with chronic vulvovaginal pain, which they also describe using the term pelvic floor dysfunction. "I went through all of Oberlin, not even really thinking or knowing that I had a vulvovaginal pain condition," Fleischacker, who majored in anthropology, says. "I didn't know that was a real thing, even though I took SexCo [the sexual information course offered by Oberlin's student-run Experimental College program, or ExCo] and learned all of the things that they never taught you in high school. But no one ever talked about this."

Several years later, Fleischacker finally sought medical care for her pain. "As I went through the medical system and started going—as many, many people with these conditions do—from doctor to doctor to doctor and being dismissed, being told, 'It's all in your head,' I got more and more frustrated and started being more open about my experience and started talking to friends and family members. And every time I talked to someone, it turned out either they knew someone or they themselves had a similar condition."

In May 2019, Tight Lipped launched a podcast, settling on an approach based around storytelling so people could share experiences and build community. A month later, they held a workshop in Chicago, followed in November by one in New York in the waiting room of a vulvovaginal pain clinic. Building on the podcast's premise, the in-person gatherings were a place for those with similar experiences to share stories and brainstorm ways to address the challenges they were facing, particularly in terms of difficulty accessing care and insurance coverage.

When Fleischacker checked the RSVP list for New York, the first name she saw was Sarah Minion, whom she had known at Oberlin through their Old Barrows Co-op. Minion, a double major in comparative American studies and politics, was also curious why vulvovaginal pain conditions never came up when she took SexCo. "I was open about it with friends, but I didn't have the language, and so it felt like a personal problem," Minion says, noting she connected with two others at Oberlin also

“
**I STARTED
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KNOWN SOME
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”

dealing with the same kind of pain. “I remember sitting in Slow Train [coffeehouse] and none of us really having the words.”

Minion realized how common her experience was at the workshop, which drew a dozen people, including three Oberlin alums. “When I had first gotten diagnosed, I had seen the statistic of 1 in 4—but I hadn’t internalized that until sitting in that room,” she says. “I started wondering why, if this is so common, how have I known some of these people for six years—including Noa, who was one of my close friends in Oberlin—and never talked about it?”

In fall 2020, Tight Lipped released an 80-page zine featuring articles, poetry, and artwork from 50 contributors. Called *Opening Up*, it had a similar effect: At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tight Lipped began hosting virtual events—some with more than 100 participants—during which the zine’s authors and others would share their experiences. For some, “it was the first time they’d ever even seen someone else who has a pelvic pain condition,” Fleischacker says.

“Many people started the call with their videos off and then slowly turned them on as they got more comfortable.”

As Tight Lipped continued its community-building events—in addition to New York City, they’ve hosted in-person programs in San Diego; Chicago; Los Angeles; New Haven; and Washington, D.C.—it also launched a grassroots campaign targeting gaps in the education that future OB/GYNs receive in residency programs. The goal was to ensure these programs provide training on common chronic vulvovaginal and pelvic pain conditions. “It’s really a matter of chance or luck if you happen to go to a program where there’s someone who actually has some expertise and knows how to diagnose and treat these conditions,” Fleischacker says. “Learning about vulvar, vaginal, and pelvic pain generally isn’t a part of the core curriculum.”

This campaign has already led to the pair linking up with the Yale School of Medicine to facilitate presentations to OB/GYN residents led by various speakers, including patients sharing perspectives about living with chronic vulvovaginal pain. Tight Lipped also formed a related medical advisory board with leaders in the field of vaginal and pelvic health—a group that includes obstetricians and gynecologists, pelvic floor specialists, and physical therapists. Fittingly, some of these members



Fleischacker (left) and Minion with a copy of *Opening Up*, the 80-page zine they released in 2020.

are also working on changes to residency programs. “We’re not trying to reinvent the wheel; we’re trying to say making change is doable,” Minion says. “And it’s time that we do it.”

This patient-led organizing and advocacy, Fleischacker says, was a rousing success. Now Tight Lipped and Yale are collaborating to develop and pilot a new elective curriculum on vulvovaginal and pelvic pain set to debut in January 2024. It could represent the start of broader systemic changes: Ultimately, their goal is to implement baseline national standards of competency, so all OB/GYNs leave their programs with comprehensive knowledge about vaginal and pelvic pain and related conditions—how to diagnose them, provide basic treatment, and refer patients. “We want every single gynecologist who is graduating from a residency program to have learned how to examine a vulva—not just [conduct] a pelvic exam,” Minion says.

Further down the line, Fleischacker and Minion also hope Tight Lipped will address inequities in the medical system. Accordingly, they’re participating in a working group charged with drafting a women’s health implementation plan for New York City, one of several such health-related initiatives directed by Mayor Eric Adams. “There are enormous racial and economic disparities in who is getting diagnosed and treated,”

Fleischacker says. “A lot of people who are joining us are people who are the most privileged, because the people who are getting diagnosed are the people who are able to go and see, like, 10, 12, 15 doctors or pay out of pocket if their insurance doesn’t cover something. So a huge priority for us in the OB/GYN and residency campaign is around this: How do we close this gap and increase access to care for everyone?”

With the second season of its podcast in the books and communities taking shape in New Haven, Los Angeles, San Diego, and New York City, Tight Lipped is proof that the combination of grassroots organizing and education has the power to destigmatize. “As much as a pap smear is normalized, it should be normalized that a lot of people have a chronic pelvic pain condition,” Minion says. “When you’re learning about sex ed in school, you should be told, ‘If it hurts you to put a tampon in, then you might have one of these conditions, and here’s what you can do,’ so that people don’t go for decades without a diagnosis.” ■

Learn more about Tight Lipped at www.tightlipped.org.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY ANNIE ZALESKI. JEFF HAGAN '86 IS THE FORMER EDITOR OF THE OBERLIN ALUMNI MAGAZINE.

Class Notes



BOTTOMS UP: For decades, Homecoming at Oberlin included an annual dorm-decorating contest, with the winner announced at halftime of the football game. No word on the winning dorm in 1943, but the residents of Gray Gables raised a glass to downing Wooster. It worked: Oberlin won 46-0.

1950s

1951

Israel Avnion (known as Samuel Feinstein while at Oberlin) is 95 and shares that he's thrilled to be still playing multiple musical instruments for the regular days and Jewish holy days at his senior citizens home in Tiv'on, Israel, a charming garden community halfway between Haifa and Nazareth. If asked, he'll also teach alums (including **Josh Shuman '86**) the official Oberlin College song.

"My Oberlin banner and doll ornament are still in my apartment, but my claim to fame was being in the same conservatory class with composer **John Kander** of *Cabaret* fame," he says. "Aside from chamber music playing, my unforgettable music experience was singing in the Oberlin a cappella choir. I'm still a basso profundo ready to sing 'Ol' Man River' at the drop of a hat." Avnion notes that, in the summer of 1954, he studied viola in Aspen with the famous William Primrose and, by an amazing stroke of good luck, also played bass violin with the festival orchestra—"a

godsend to pay for my room and board."

After a 1953 pilot visit to Israel, he returned to live there in 1958 after meeting his Dutch wife, Esther, a Holocaust survivor. In 1961, the couple moved from Jerusalem to Tiv'on. "Decades later, Esther's multiple myeloma created an unexpected crisis, for we decided to move to a senior citizens home, but we enjoyed a happy marriage of 54 years until she died over a decade ago. We've been blessed with three children and nine grandchildren who are themselves providing great-grandchildren."

Although his musical programs forced



him to put aside athletics except for biking and playing tuba in the marching band, Israel notes he realized his dream of mountaineering by climbing the highest 14,000-footers in Colorado, the California Sierras, and the more challenging Alpine peaks of the Matterhorn at age 33 and a final time at age 66.

1952

Lawrence Siddall shares news of his first piece of fiction, *A Boston Love Story* (Pelham Springs Press). Started in 2019 when he was 89, the novel follows the relationship between college textbook editor Luke and museum curator Rosa, who find their partnership changed (and challenged) by Luke's life-altering bicycle accident. Lawrence spent three years writing the book, much of it during the initial stages of the pandemic. "During the long hours of COVID isolation, my characters, who had become very real, kept me company," he writes in the preface. *A Boston Love Story* is available at amherstbooks.com.

1956

On April 22, 2023, composer **Anne Dinsmore Phillips** presented *What Are We Doing to Our World?* at St. Paul and St. Andrew United Methodist Church in New York City. Billed as "a stirring celebration of creation and a statement of concern for our planet," the show musically incorporated the works of writers Hildegard of Bingen, Mark Twain, John Muir, Chief Seattle, and Madeleine L'Engle via genres such as jazz, Latin, gospel, and choral music. Anne is also



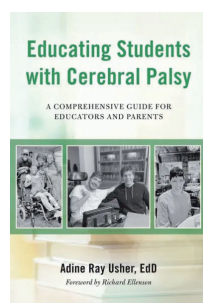
the creator of an annual Christmas show, *Bending Towards the Light ... a Jazz Nativity*.

1959

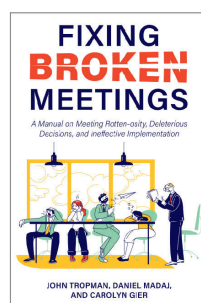
Don DuPont retired from the Chappaqua (N.Y.) public school district in 2007 after 37 years of service as a music teacher. Prior to his teaching career, he was a professional trombone player who was a member of the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra and *The Ed Sullivan Show* band, and a performer with major big band-era groups including Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, and Guy Lombardo. Today, he continues to impart his love of swing, jive, and Latin music as the namesake leader of the Don DuPont Big Band in Chappaqua.

1960s

1961



Usher '61



Tropman '61

Adine Ray Usher published a book, *Educating Students with Cerebral Palsy: A Comprehensive Guide for Educators and Parents* (Small Batch Books). ■ **John Tropman's** new book is called *Fixing Broken Meetings* (Cognella Academic Publishing). Coauthored with Dan Madaj and Carolyn Gier, the collection is "an anthology of 50-plus articles on meetings, many of them humorous with no actual articles," John says. "Instead, we have summarized them

and given a web source for them. It is sort of a breakthrough format with a cute cover."

1963



Dave Humphreys

continues to give back to his hometown of Downers Grove, Ill. A member of the Downers Grove Rotary Club, he helps lead one of the organization's most popular programs, Rotary GroveFest, particularly by booking talent and managing the stage, sound, and lighting at the event's entertainment stage. He is also a community liaison for the First Congregational United Church of Christ, where he is a longtime member, and has been a trustee of the Downers Grove Public Library for more than 20 years.

1964

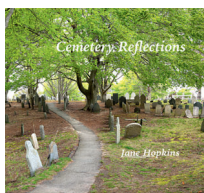
Sally Verburg Livengood married David Mendenhall on October 20, 2020. The couple met online and decided to tie the knot after 600 pages of emails and David's visits to Kansas City. A judge whom Sally has known since the 1950s presided over the ceremony, which was limited to no more than 10 guests due to COVID-19 restrictions. The newlyweds drove to Springfield, Mo., the next day "with a moving truck and two cars in our own little parade," Sally says, adding that the couple moved there to be closer to David's family. "We are both now feeling our ages, as we live in a new residence for each of us, a villa meant for people over age 55. I attend two churches to include David's Baptist church as well as my Episcopalian church. It is a good life for us here." ■ **John Poole** published *Advanced Tactics in America* (Posterity Press), a book in which he "describes and compares regular and irregular as well as historical and modern concepts of war," according to the foreword.

1965

Barbara Geary Henzel and **Katy Wechsler Dawley** and a group of friends who matriculated with the Class of 1965—**Jeanne Baker, Karen Connors Fuson, Jennifer Johnson Firestone, Dr. Mary Krueger Williams, Dr. Carolyn Barley Britton, Mae Janny Brown Sterrett, Marcia Bravo, and Muriel Hamilton**—write

in to share fond memories of friend and roommate **Carroll McClure Lewin**, who died in October 2022 (see Losses). “An honors student in anthropology, she was one of the smartest women we knew and the most organized. In her last semester senior year, as soon as she received her syllabi, Carroll saw she had her honors thesis and two major seminar papers to write. She basically moved into the ‘libe,’ a.k.a. the library. When she emerged three weeks later all her papers were written, and she asked, ‘What will I do for the rest of the semester?’ Carroll was a warm, thoughtful, generous, and caring friend. We were lucky to share dorms, dining rooms, and classes with Carroll during the years each of us lived with her at Oberlin. She is missed.”

1966



Photographer and social worker **Jane Eveleth Hopkins** published *Cemetery Reflections* (Headstone Press), an empathetic

exploration of grief and death through four centuries of American cemeteries. The book, which integrates prose, photography, and historic poetry, arose after Jane started visiting cemeteries as part of the grief process after the death of her daughter’s beloved Oberlin classmate.

[w] cemeteryreflections.com

1967



Rosenberg '67

Joel Rosenberg, conductor of the American West Symphony and Paradigm Chamber Orchestra, has received the 2023 Utah Governor’s Mansion Award in the Arts. ■ **Lillian (Lynk)**

Fleming plans to attend *On the Road to Find Out*, the art show of her former roommate, **Elizabeth (Hatton) Darrow**. Held at the Bloom Gallery in Wilmington, N.C., the show features Elizabeth’s “figurative work and abstract expressionist works,” according to the event page.

1970s

1970

Thomas Remington’s latest book, *The Returns to Power: A Political Theory of Economic Inequality* (Oxford University Press), examines the rise of extreme economic inequality in the United States since the late 1970s by drawing on Russian, Chinese, and German-language sources and the latest scholarship in economics and political science. Thomas is a visiting professor of government at Harvard University and Goodrich C. White Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Emory University and the author of a number of books and articles.

1971

In 2022, **Dr. John F. Strauss** published the dual-language biography *Dr. Wilhelm Strauss, Pediatrician: A 20th Century Odyssey* (Verlag Berger), which chronicles the life of the pediatrician starting in his childhood in Prague and on through his late Hapsburg monarchy medical education in Vienna “to his practice of social medicine in Wiener Neustadt during the Julius Tandler era” before continuing with “the painful disruptions of the ‘Anschluss’ and his forced exile in Baghdad, and conclud[ing] unexpectedly in New York state.” John is a professor of music at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where he has taught piano and served in college administration since 1975. ■ **David Dickinson** retired from Vanderbilt University in December 2021 and is now an emeritus faculty member. He ended his academic career on a high note with the release of two books: *From Words to Wisdom*, a teacher-oriented guide to



Stanton '71

expanding student opportunities to use the type of language required for academic success, and *Connecting Through Talk*, which describes programs to help parents enrich their children’s language development. David lives in Durham, N.C., and is leading political engagement efforts in his retirement community. ■ **Chris Stanton** reports he had a “wonderful and long-overdue reunion” in Portland, Ore., with **Denny Lawton, Gretchen Lawton, and Laura Ashkin '73**. “Nothing so dear as old friends.”

1972

Ted Simon is celebrating 30 years of broadcasting as the cohost of the nationally syndicated radio program and podcast *Messianic Minutes*. Ted began his on-air career and developed his love for radio in Oberlin as a substitute host for Steve Niederhouser’s bluegrass midnight show, which included classic bluegrass and live on-air performances. He lives in Westminster, Md., and would enjoy hearing from Oberlin classmates.

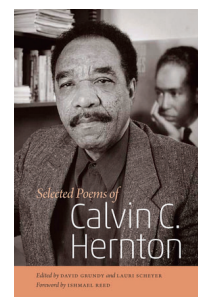
1973

Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian writes: “Attempting to defy the odds and contradict the stereotypes and jokes about old people being basically pathetic, I decided to ride my bike to my 50th Oberlin reunion. Starting in Syracuse, N.Y., I cycled for eight days and arrived in Oberlin in time for the reunion. I almost ran over two snakes, got lost in Buffalo and Cleveland, pushed my bike up only one hill, cursed the headwinds, and did not crash or fall off my bike once. I burst into tears upon arriving on my bike—tired and happy—at Tappan Square.”

1974



Elias '74



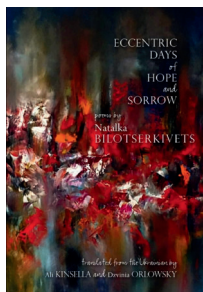
Scheyer '74

Gerald Elias has self-published a collection of “30 gripping short mysteries” called *It’s a*

Crime! That's just the latest accomplishment in a year that started with the release of his *Murder at the Royal Albert: A Daniel Jacobus Mystery* (Level Best Books); the short story "A Scarab for Normandy," included in the anthology *Coolest American Stories 2023*; and the short story "Last Night," appearing in *Crimeucopia—One More Thing to Worry About*. Gerald has also participated in several author events throughout 2023. ■

Lauri Scheyer served as coeditor of *Selected Poems of Calvin C. Hernton* (Wesleyan University Press), the first full-length compilation of poetry from the legendary Oberlin professor and renowned Black studies scholar. In an early review, *Publishers Weekly* called the retrospective a "necessary volume [that] contextualizes and celebrates a complicated and visionary poet's work." Lauri notes that Oberlin College Archives provided the cover art, and **Herman Beavers '81** and **Tsitsi Jaji '98** contributed book jacket blurbs.

1975



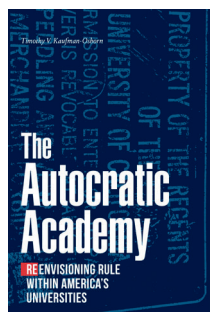
Orlovsky '75



Cobb '75

Mary Cobb recently published a new textbook, *Keyboard Skills for Choral Musicians*, which is available via lulu.com. After graduating from the Oberlin Conservatory, she received a master's in performance from the Manhattan School of Music and taught piano at the State University of New York at Fredonia from 1999 to 2018 while doing freelance work in New York City. Mary is retired yet remains active professionally. ■ *Eccentric Days of Hope and Sorrow* (Lost Horse Press), a collection of poems by Natalka Bilotserkivets that was co-translated from Ukrainian by **Dzvinya Orlovsky**, received the 2022 American Association for Ukrainian Studies (AAUS) Translation Award. It was also a finalist for the 2022 Griffin International Poetry Prize.

1976



Kaufman-Osborn '76

MusArt, a biographical documentary film produced by musician-artist **Randall Vemer**, picked up multiple wins at film festivals around the world, including Best Original Score at the Cine Paris Film Festival and Madrid International Short Film Festival. The film features 40 oil paintings of musicians from around the world by Randall, who was formerly principal viola of the Oregon Symphony and Opera. The film comes paired with a companion book of Randall's paintings paired with Haiku poetry and an art exhibit in Portland, Ore., featuring labels with QR codes so viewers can listen to the musicians depicted in the paintings. ■ **Timothy Kaufman-Osborn** (formerly Osborn) retired from Whitman College in 2020 after nearly four decades of teaching. Since that time, in order of importance, he secured his scuba diving certification; returned to the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington; and published a book titled *The Autocratic Academy: Reenvisioning Rule within America's Universities*. He remains very much in love with his Oberlin



Kaufman-Osborn '76

sweetheart, **Sharon Kaufman-Osborn**.

Their two children and four grandchildren live in the Denver area—and Timothy notes that perhaps he and Sharon will move there as well. ■ **Sharon Kaufman-Osborn** (formerly Kaufman) happily retired in June 2019 from the Whitman College Counseling Center in Walla Walla, Wash., after more than 35 years of counseling, training, and leading interpersonal and affinity groups. With her Burton Hall love, **Timothy Kaufman-Osborn**, she navigated the pandemic by swimming a mile five days a week and creating art (broken china assemblages and photography) that's shown and sold locally. Sharon also enjoys traveling domestically and abroad to see family and friends—including Obies **Julie Graves**, **Sharon Schuster**, **Dave Lauter**, **Michael Kramer**, **Gerri Goodman '79**, **Julie Kaufman '80**, **Beth Wright '80**, **Micah K. Wright '13**, and Harlan Wilson, emeritus professor of politics. She adds, "Contact us if you're coming to savor the wine, the art, or the countryside of southeast Washington."

1977

Photojournalist **Sue Dorfman** shares that her photo essay "The Poll Watcher," published in the spring 2022 issue of *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*, caught the eye of **Kenneth Benson '76**, editorial manager at the philanthropic foundation Carnegie Corp. of New York. "The rest is history," Sue says: She was commissioned to photograph the 2022 election cycle for the Winter 2022 issue of the *Carnegie Reporter*, the foundation's flagship publication. "The Voting Issue" features Sue's photos throughout, including on the cover and in the Center Point portfolio ("On the Line: Democracy in Action"). [w] www.carnegie.org/carnegie-reporter ■ **Daniel B. Keys** published *Why Are So Many Christians Ignoring Christ?* (Xulon Press) in June 2023. More information about the book is on the publisher's website. [w] www.xulonpress.com

1979

In December, **Lauren R. Taylor** received the Cornelius R. "Neil" Alexander Humanitarian Award from the D.C. Commission on Human Rights for her 40-plus years of working to end gender-based violence. The award "celebrates the



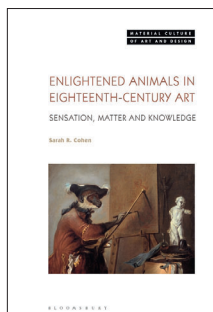
Taylor '79

efforts and accomplishments of individuals who have made significant contributions in the field of human or civil rights and to improving the quality of life in the District of Columbia.” ■ **Sarah Cohen** has had two books published on animal consciousness as it was embodied in early modern European art: *Enlightened Animals in Eighteenth-Century Art: Sensation, Matter, and Knowledge* (Bloomsbury) and *Picturing Animals in Early Modern Art: Art and Soul* (Harvey Miller/Brepols).

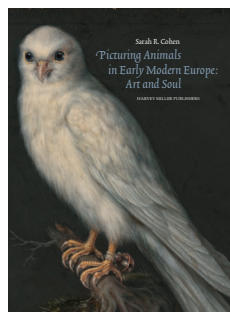
1980s

1980

Dr. Dionne Powell is one of the co-chairs of the Holmes Commission on Racial Equality in American Psychoanalysis. The commission issued its final report—the culmination of three years of work doing extensive surveys and interviews of psychoanalysts on racism in American psychoanalysis—on Juneteenth 2023. “Our process and results are the first in its kind, serving as a model for other fields,” Dionne writes. “As the demand for culturally sensitive clinicians accelerates, the relevance for psychiatry and graduate



Cohen '79



programs cannot be underestimated.” The commission’s final report is available at: [w] <https://tinyurl.com/HolmesCommissionFinalReport>

1981



Composer **Beth Wiemann** wrote the music and original libretto for *I Give You My Home*, a chamber opera inspired by the life of Rose Standish

Nichols that was presented by Guerilla Opera in Boston. The opera spotlights Bostonian woman Rose, a professional landscape architect who was also a suffrage activist and member of the Women’s Peace Party. *I Give You My Home* was presented as a studio album and opera film.

[w] parmarecordings.com.

1982

Lila Noonkester retired from Lander University in Greenwood, S.C., in December 2022. She served on the voice faculty at Lander for 34 years and as chair of the music department since 2008. The university honored her service by naming her emerita professor in 2023. ■ **Dr. Asishana Osho '10** is a cardiac surgeon and heart and lung transplant surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital; **Steven Finch** taught statistical programming at Harvard, does research computing at MIT, and wrote two mathematics books. They crossed paths in



an unusual way: Steven needed bypass surgery, and Asishana was available. Only minutes before the procedure began did they discuss their college backgrounds. This joyful photo was captured several days later. Steven is thankful to Asishana and the excellent supporting medical staff for saving his life. ■ In spring 2024, **Justin Hughes** will be the Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland. At Hanken, he will teach international intellectual property and research the history of Nordic copyright law. Currently, Justin is the Hon. William Matthew Byrne Jr. Distinguished Professor of Law at Loyola Marymount University and visiting professor of law at Oxford University. Justin was also the chief U.S. negotiator for two multilateral treaties, the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances (2012) and the Marrakesh Treaty for the Blind (2013).

1983

Jonathan Sturm retired in May after a 25-year career as professor of music history at Iowa State University. His tenure included performing as the violist with the Ames Piano Quartet and serving two terms as president of the faculty senate. In 2022, Jonathan was named Morrill Professor of Music, the highest honor awarded by Iowa State University for outstanding teaching, with research and service, across a career. This year, he also completed his 31st season as concertmaster of the Des Moines Symphony and published a chapter, “From Plato’s Republic to Bill and Ted’s Utopian Future: the Presence of the Arts in Peacebuilding,” in *Building Positive Peace* (Cambridge Scholars Press). Jonathan plans to pursue new opportunities in violin and viola performance, continue in his concertmaster responsibilities, and complete his violin pedagogy book while exploring the arena of composing.

1984

Méli Solomon writes: “Life is good here in Arlington, Mass. and has finally settled down. I moved back from Berlin, Germany, in 2017; finished a second master’s degree (a master of Jewish Liberal Studies) in 2019; and helped care for my dad (**Joseph L. Solomon '47**) until his death in June 2020. I also bought and remodeled a house during



Culberson '84

all that. Phew!” Méli adds that her Talking with God Project and associated Living Our Beliefs podcast continue to dominate her time. “The focus is how Jews, Christians, and Muslims live their faith. A recent guest was **Julie Kinscheck '86**. Ideas, comments, and questions welcome!” [W] talkingwithgodproject.org ■ **Steven D. Culberson** shares that “roughly 40 years after some epic spring breaks in the Rockies, we decided to stage another uprising of love, peace, and clouds at Red Hill near Carbondale, Colo.” **Jesse Low** hosted “scoundrels and knuckleheads” **Steve Karowe '83**, **Alex Biesada-Bangs '83**, **Elena Vassallo Crossman**, **Kate Maloney Vassallo '83**, **Michael Weaver**, **Ken Thompson**, and **Jean Miele**, while present in spirit were **David Hallinan** and **Michelle Reynolds Morse**. “We discovered anew what a treasure we found in the friends we made at Oberlin and spent a week sharing

many fond memories of the discoveries we made together in Northern Ohio in the mid-'80s.”

1985

Swingin' Up in Harlem, the newest CD from **Lafayette Harris Jr.**, is his second CD in a row to land in the top five on the *JazzWeek* jazz chart, which measures jazz radio airplay. It follows the 2020 release *You Can't*



Geller '85

Lose with the Blues, which stayed at No. 1 for two weeks and ended up being the third-most-played jazz CD of 2020 in America. Lafayette teaches at Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and plays and tours with Houston Person. ■ **Jaclyn Geller**, who teaches English literature at Central Connecticut State University and specializes in Restoration and 18th-century studies, writes that she “spent her sabbatical writing furiously, and it seemed to pay off.” She published an article, “Sociability,” in the *Oxford Anthology of Samuel Johnson* about Johnson’s reworkings of Aristotelian notions of friendship. With medievalist Edward Currie, she coauthored “Pedagogy and Pizarro,” an article that appears in the *New Chaucer Studies: Pedagogy and Profession* journal that describes studying with eminent medievalist and onetime Oberlin professor **Joaquín Martínez Pizarro '69**. And Cleis, the longest-running gay and lesbian press in the United States, published her monograph *Moving Past Marriage: Why We Should Ditch Marital Privilege, End Relationship-Status Discrimination, and Embrace Nonmarital History*. ■ **Andy Buck** returned from Spain after celebrating a milestone birthday only to be conscripted to serve as a volunteer coach for his 9-year-old granddaughter’s coed soccer team. He adds that concurrently, his article “Form as Embodied Place: The Pottery of Willi Singleton” appeared in the international journal *Ceramics Art + Perception*. The article expands on ideas that inform Singleton’s pottery and opens a new space for discourse around functional ceramics—beyond discussions of structure and function or art and craft. Writes Andy, “I enjoyed kicking around some ideas for this one.” He lives in Douglaston, N.Y. ■ **Michael Hussey** has served as the director of history, restorative history and research at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery since early December 2022. At the Portrait Gallery, he sets the historical framework within which the museum operates, with an emphasis on understanding how individuals—both past and present—shape national history and culture. Michael came to the Portrait Gallery from the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), where he led the development of NMAI’s groundbreaking Native Knowledge 360° educational initiative.



CHANGING WITH THE DEMANDS OF TODAY'S WORLD

Dear Obies,

In July 2023, our planet set a record for the hottest temperatures since the invention of calibrated thermometers. My colleagues and I are especially worried about urban heat islands: the phenomenon where asphalt, parking lots, abandoned factory buildings, and the absence of trees conspire to make certain neighborhoods hotter than surrounding rural and suburban areas. Urban heat islands are a public health problem that can't be remedied with air conditioning, mainly because they often occur in areas where necessities like food and rent take precedence over electricity bills.

This past summer, I found myself using an infrared camera to measure ground temperatures in these Milwaukee neighborhoods. The temps I found in my random sampling were six degrees hotter than those in better-resourced neighborhoods.

As I was fiddling with the camera, it occurred to me that I never would have envisioned doing this when I graduated from Oberlin 38 years ago. I was an East Asian studies major. My classmates can confirm that I did not excel in science.

But Oberlin prepared me for my current job by teaching me how to work with communities. In professor James Dobbins' Intro to East Asian Religions class, I came across a quote from philosopher Lao Tzu that informs how I work today: "A leader is best when people barely know he exists; when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: 'We did it ourselves.'" I learned when to accept people where they are—and when to gently challenge them—and that being correct but on your own doesn't get you anywhere. You have to persuade people to stand with you.

Admittedly, the world that greets today's Oberlin grads is different from the one that we saw after graduation. When I was a student in the '80s, the main environmental concern was the ozone layer, and our world responded with the 1987 Montreal Protocol to phase out chlorofluorocarbon production. Today's students are confronting even larger climate concerns—and, from some corners, political resistance to action.

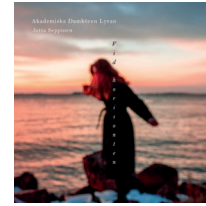
Oberlin is changing to meet the shifting demands of today's world, and some of these changes can be challenging to those who experienced an Oberlin of a different time. But remember: Oberlin is always evolving in response to the times. And after numerous visits to campus as your Alumni Leadership Council president, I'm pleased to report that the spirit of collaboration and consensus-building that we remember from our time at Oberlin is very much alive.

Oberlin's new interdisciplinary concentrations, like global health, food studies, and data science, have current students learning skills within an ethical, historical, and philosophical framework. And Oberlin's emphasis on doing good and not just doing well? It's still front and center. But don't take my word for it. Go back to campus, sit in a class, and see for yourself.

Young Kim '85

President, Oberlin Alumni Association

1986

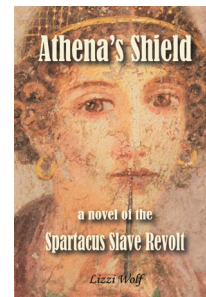


Hardy '86

Rob Hardy and composer Alex Freeman have collaborated on several new choral works. *vid horisonten*, a new EP by the Helsinki-based

women's choir Akademiska Damkören Lyran, opens with "Sidereus Nuncius," featuring words by Rob and the astronomer Galileo. In November, the Helsinki Philharmonic and Helsinki Music Centre Choir presented the world premiere of Alex's choral symphony *Ghost Light*, which concludes with a setting of Rob's titular poem. ■ **George Wolfe** published a novel, *Into the River of Angels* (Sager Group), available online via [\[w\]thesagergroup.net/books/into-the-river](https://thesagergroup.net/books/into-the-river) ■ **Jen Trynin's** "Hello Kitty" was published in the Summer 2023 issue of *Ploughshares*, a journal of new writing. The issue was guest-edited by noted novelist Tom Perrotta.

1987



Wolf '87



Jaffee '87

Lizzi Wolf (Liz Brent) published *Athena's Shield*, a novel in which the Spartacus slave revolt is seen through the eyes of a teenage girl: the daughter of the famed gladiator and rebel leader Spartacus the Thracian. Stanford University professor of Classics Richard P. Martin calls the book "as meticulously detailed, accurate, and colorful as a Roman wall painting." ■ Portland State University associate professor of sociology **Daniel Jaffee** published his second book, *Unbottled: The Fight Against Plastic Water and for Water Justice* (University of California Press). Dan lives in Portland, Ore., and loves hiking in the Cascades.

1988

Lisa Mitchell, professor of history and anthropology in the department of South



Asia Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, published *Hailing the State: Indian Democracy Between Elections* (Duke University Press), which explores the historical and

contemporary methods of collective assembly that people in India use to hold elected officials and government administrators accountable. [w] dukeupress.edu/hailing-the-state

1989

Thomas Brodhead writes that he is “exhaling” now that he’s published his Critical Performance Edition of the Charles Ives Fourth Symphony, as well as his critical editions of the Ives piano solos “The Celestial Railroad” and “Four Transcriptions from Emerson.” Thomas refined the score and parts by traveling across North America and Europe to get real-world feedback from conductors, musicians, orchestra librarians, and stagehands. Videos documenting his Ives journey and illustrated explanations of how the symphony’s thornier polytemporal passages work are available at [w] [youtube.com/@charles-ives-fourth-symphony](https://www.youtube.com/@charles-ives-fourth-symphony)

1990s

1991

Matthew F. Filner’s first book, *Play it As it Lies* (Back Nine Press), a memoir of fatherhood taking place over 18 years from 2002 to 2020, is coming this fall. “*Play It As It Lies* explores the myriad issues that I faced as a father in the 21st century,” he says. “I use golf and the particular rule that the ball must be ‘played as it lies’ as a metaphor for explaining how I have come to view fatherhood. I tell stories to explain the core values that fatherhood requires.” ■ **Erika (Bohn) Goldbaum** began the season with “much pomp and circumstance” after earning a doctorate in health sciences from the University of Sydney. “I certainly feel like the stereotypical Obie described at my freshman orientation. I went on to earn higher degrees and married fellow Obie



Goldbaum '91

David Goldbaum '89. ■ **Isaac ben Ayala** attended a “musically masterful, profound, joyous, and thought-provoking performance” by Imani Winds at New York City’s Zankel Hall. The troupe was led by bassoonist **Monica Ellis '95** and featured oboist **Toyin Spellman-Diaz '94** and flutist **Brandon Patrick George '08**. Isaac had not seen Monica and Toyin in more than 30 years since they were students at Oberlin Conservatory. “These two and their fellow musicians have always been such amazing musicians and super-kind human beings. I cannot begin to describe how joyful it was to both hear this amazing wind ensemble and to spend time once again with such dear friends, fellow classmates, and musicians.” ■ **Alice Hauschka** and her husband, **Sean Walsh**, were part of a mini-gathering of Obies at Seattle’s Benaroya Hall attending a performance of two short operas conducted by **Joseph Mechavich**. Pictured from left are **Susan Van Gundy**, Joseph, Alice, and **Ba Culbert**. Susan, Alice, and Ba live in the Puget Sound area, while Joseph lives in Philadelphia.

1992

In collaboration with the USAID-funded ReLAB-HS, **Patricia Saleeby** helped develop five courses geared toward helping clinicians and practitioners understand the World Health Organization (WHO)’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). An associate professor and social work program director at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill., Patricia is an international expert in the ICF who has also served on WHO committees to update and promote the use of ICF classifications.



Hauschka '91



Bastedo '94

1994

Michael Bastedo was one of 18 people elected to the National Academy of Education, which honors “outstanding scholarship or leadership related to education.” He will be formally inducted in Washington, D.C., in November. Michael is a professor and associate dean of research and graduate studies at the University of Michigan’s Marsal Family School of Education. He and husband Corey Powell also celebrated their sixth wedding anniversary in June.

1995

In April, **Damon Hamm** presented three sculptures at Culture Lab LIC in Queens, N.Y., as part of the exhibit *Past Tense/Future Infinite*, which explored different ways artists were affected by the isolation many felt during the pandemic.

1996

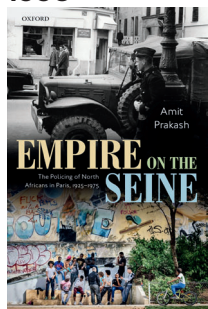
Susan Pearson’s 2021 book, *The Birth Certificate: An American History* (University of North Carolina Press), led to two notable milestones: She was promoted to full professor of history at Northwestern University and received the 2022 Book Award from the Order of the Coif legal honor society.

Class Notes

1997

Molly Barth shares that the Vanderbilt University Blair School of Music and the Vanderbilt Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy have “a number of Oberlin alumni who work together regularly and find joy in sharing tales of Obie days long past!” This group includes **Frank Candelaria '94**, **Leah Lowe '84**, **Stan Link '86**, **Russell Platt '87**, **Megan Gale '98**, **Dashon Burton '05**, and **Jared Hauser**.

1998



Prakash '98

In 2022, **Amit Prakash** published *Empire on the Seine: The Policing of North Africans in Paris, 1925-1975* (Oxford University Press). Amit is a visiting assistant professor of international and global studies at

Middlebury College and director of the Rohatyn Global Fellows program. ■ **Daniel Burton-Rose** has coedited a new book with David A. Bello: *Insect Histories of East Asia* (University of Washington Press).

2000s

2001

After graduating from Oberlin, **Shira Schwartz** served as assistant director of education for the Aspen Jewish Congregation before moving to Miami Beach—where she married and had two children, Ari and Ava—and later completing a master's degree in early childhood studies, administration, management, and leadership at Walden University. In 2019, Shira completed a discover nature teaching certification through the University of Missouri and became a youth conservation educator for the Missouri Department of Conservation. Now based in Columbia, Mo., she established the Missouri Wildflower Meadow Farm to provide education to farmers and landowners on how to convert farmland back to traditional prairie meadows. “I have finally discovered my life purpose as a prairie restoration activist,” she says. “Through my wildflower farm, I began a small business, Cottage Garden Seed Co., a



Schwartz '01



Helfer '03



Bergeret '04

wildflower seed distributor, to support the cultivation of wildflower gardens and help restore the prairies for the birds and butterflies.” ■ In August 2022, **Stefan Kamola** began a two-year research fellowship in Vienna, Austria, with the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Stefan is studying Persian historical writing in the 13th and 14th centuries.

2003

Will Schutt works as a poet, translator, and teacher. He recently edited and translated a collection of poems by the contemporary Swiss-Italian poet Fabio Pusterla, *Brief Homage to Pluto and Other Poems* (Princeton University Press). ■ On April 19, 2023, mezzo-soprano **Amy Maude Helfer** performed at Carnegie Hall as an alto soloist

with New York City Opera in the United States premiere of Lera Auerbach's Symphony No. 6, *Vessels of Light*. The piece is dedicated to Chiune Sugihara, Japanese vice consul to Lithuania, who issued thousands of visas to Jewish refugees during World War II. Amy Maude's recent performances include Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) with New York City Opera at Bryant Park; Petra (*A Little Night Music*) at Union Avenue Opera in St. Louis; *Carmen* at the Narnia Festival in Italy; and Dinah (*Trouble in Tahiti*) at Boheme Opera in New Jersey.

2004

Robert Richter received first place in the Notre Dame Magnificat Choir's 2023 Liturgy Alive! choral composition competition for his setting of *O Señor, Vivificanos* for

unaccompanied women's choir (SSA). Robert is the director of music and organist at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Carmel, Ind. [w] robertwesleyrichter.com ■

Genevieve Bergeret stage managed the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players' touring production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. She connected with a group of Obies in Fayetteville, Ark., at the Walton Arts Center: "It was such a treat to share this wonderful (and silly) production with old Oberlin friends. A great way to end tour!" Pictured from left: **Laura (Matters) Herold**, **David Lightfoot**, Genevieve, **Jonathan Stinson '01**, and **Warren Herold '01**. ■ In April, **Grace Hammond** taught a webinar for the American Library Association/Young Adult Library Services Association called "Supporting Teens with Organization and Stress Management Skills." Built on the premise that many teens use the local library as a refuge from stress, the workshop taught attendees "how to achieve student, patron, and staff buy-in for empathy-based, whole-learner library services." She is a high school media specialist at the Delaware Area Career Center.

2005



Burton '05

Andrew Schwab and **Jacqueline (Haumann) Schwab** welcomed daughter Charlotte Louise Schwab. The Schwabs live in Bexley, Ohio, and visit Oberlin as frequently as possible—and look forward to making Oberlin an integral



Schwab '05



Heady '07

part of Charlotte's childhood experiences. ■ Bass-baritone **Dashon Burton** reports that the Grammy-winning vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth has released a new album, *Rough Magic*. [w] www.roomfulofteeth.org/rough-magic

2007

Sarah Heady attended a residency at the prestigious Corporation of Yaddo and was pleased to learn that three of the 10 artists in her cohorts were Obies. The others were editor/writer **Adam Moss '79** and filmmaker **Heather Tenzer '95**. Pictured from left are Heather, Sarah, and Adam on the staircase of the Yaddo mansion. "During my residency I was working on a collection of linked essays about landscape and class in the Hudson Valley," she reports. Her second book of poetry, *Comfort* (Spuyten Duyvil), was released in fall 2022.

2008



Under the leadership of Mayor **Brian Pugh**, the village of Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., was awarded the highest clean

energy community rating in the state by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, in recognition of its municipal solar arrays, electric vehicle charging stations, and other green initiatives.

2009

Pianist-turned-illustrator **Shelley Hanmo Gian** joined the Gallt & Zacker Literary Agency as a children's book illustrator and is now represented by Marietta B. Zacker for



Korndörfer '09

book and editorial projects. Shelley rediscovered her love for children's book illustration during the pandemic lockdown and launched her art

studio, Junonia Arts, to share her paper-cut collage art with the world. Since 2020, Shelley has worked with clients across the U.S. creating book illustrations, editorial designs, puzzle games, and promotional images while teaching paper art workshops at libraries, arts centers, and festivals. [w] junoniaarts.com ■ **Ian Axness** has been appointed an assistant professor of musical theater and resident music director at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Ian returned to Oberlin in 2011 to work as a music director for the theater department production of *Flora the Red Menace* and again in 2015 to direct *The Landing*. ■ **Jens Korndörfer** has been appointed associate professor of organ at Baylor University. Prior to Baylor, Jens rebuilt the organ program at Georgia State University, where he taught applied organ and service playing and improvisation. Outside of this work, Jens leads a busy career as a performer and church musician, recording five CDs and giving master classes and presentations for American Guild of Organists chapters at conventions, universities, and concert halls. [w] jenskorndoerfer.com

2010s

2011



Colin Lynch is the new director of music and organist at Trinity Church in Copley Square, Boston, where he oversees and leads all

aspects of Trinity's music program, including directing the Trinity Choirs and Choristers. He previously served as associate director of music at Trinity and director of chapel music at St. Paul's School in Concord, N.H. [w] colinlynchorgan.com

Class Notes

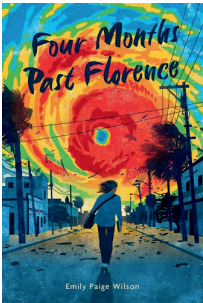
2012

Corey Patrick Harkins “Cuyote” was accepted to the 2023 Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad at De La Salle University in Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines. The goal is to immerse classroom teachers in the Tagalog language. Cuyote is interested in finding ways to incorporate Filipino culturally relevant teaching strategies into his curriculum at a majority Filipino migrant school in Honolulu. ■ **Emma Rowan** married Jim Pilkington on July 1, 2023, with several Obie friends and family in attendance. Pictured, back row from left: **Andrew Rowan ’83**, **Charles Rowan ’80**, **Willa Rowan ’15**, **Julia Chen ’12**, **James Rowan ’77**. Middle row: **Thomas Reid ’80**, **Griffin Sabelli ’14**, **Andrea Lehman ’83**, **Emma**, **Martha Rowan ’82**. Front row: **Laura (Stein) Moste ’14**, **David (Morris) Moste ’14**, **Rose Klaes ’24**, **Margarita Rovenskaya ’12**. Not pictured: **Nora (Cross) Collins ’12**, **Catherine Pierattini ’12**.



Rowan '12

2013



Wilson '13

Emily Wilson published her debut young adult novel-in-verse, *Four Months Past Florence* (Andrews McMeel Publishing), described as being for readers “who want a modern interpretation of

Harriet the Spy written in the style of *The Poet X*.” The book traces an aspiring high school journalist’s journey through friendship breakups, a moral dilemma that threatens her family, and her realization that life, like the weather, doesn’t always unfold as predicted. ■ **Hannah Seidel** married Michael Scholl in February 2022 in Arlington, Va., with many Obies in attendance. “My father, **Rabbi Ethan Seidel ’80**, performed the ceremony; he and my mother, **Rachel Breslow Seidel ’80**, met at Oberlin,” she shares. Pictured from left: **Cora Henry**, **Jessica (Woolf) Silverberg**, **Hannah**, **Asher Butnik**, and **Lauren Good**. ■ **Jamie Yelland** writes in to share that **Alex Edwards ’12** and **Cecelia Scheeler ’15** were married September 17, 2022, in Baltimore. In attendance were several Obies and former members of the Oberlin College Flaming



Seidel '13

Blades fencing team, reunited to share in their joy. “Alex and Cecelia live in Washington, D.C.; the rest of us are scattered across the globe from Boston to Japan,” Jamie says. Attendees included (back row): **Kent Ochs ’12**, **Ricardo Barrios ’12**, and **Isabella Esler ’15**; (front row) **Mark Logue ’14**, **Jamie**, **Alex**, **Cecelia**, and **Meg Davis ’14**. Also in attendance but not pictured was **Greg Solow ’10**.

2016

Earlier this year, multi-woodwind instrumentalist and composer **Max Bessesen** performed in several venues in the Midwest, including Irving Park

Lutheran Church in Chicago and Bar Centro in Milwaukee and began a monthly residency with his quartet at a new venue in Sugar Hill, Harlem, called the Porch. Max also qualified for the semifinals of the 7 Virtual Jazz Club International Contest 8th Edition. [w] maxbessesen.com

2017

Joe Greenberg married Alena Welch over Memorial Day weekend in Clarksdale, Miss. The couple met while working for Teach for America in the Mississippi Delta. Joe, who is currently attending Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy, plans to attend Georgetown University Law Center



Baker '19 and Valle-Hoag '19



Straw '19



Dyson '21



Yelland '13

in 2024. ■ In July, **Simon Regenold** was glad to meet **Lee Stern '77** by coincidentally sitting next to him on an Amtrak train from Washington, D.C., to New York City in July. Lee was returning home, while Simon was off to N.Y.C. for the weekend.

2018

Jessica Toltzis appeared as Angela in the Showtime series *Your Honor*, noting, “This is a recurring role, so you can also catch me in episode six as well!” ■ **Benjamin M. Jennings** joined the nonprofit Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) as a research associate in the cost, analysis, and research division of IDA’s Systems and Analyses

Center. The IDA aims to answer the most challenging U.S. security and science policy questions with objective analysis rooted in scientific, technical, and analytic expertise.

■ **Sage DeAgro-Ruopp** provided the music for Koresh Dance Company’s *Masquerade*, which took place May 4-7 at Philadelphia’s Suzanne Roberts Theatre.

2019

Thomas Valle-Hoag and **Claudia Baker** were married on April 29 in Concord, Mass., with many Obies in attendance. Thomas and Claudia met and fell in love at Oberlin while co-leading the Newman Catholic community.

■ **Matthew Straw** was named assistant

conductor for the Utah Symphony starting with the 2023-24 season. “From the first downbeat of my audition, I was impressed by the quality of music-making and the spirit this orchestra brings to every note they play,” he says. “I’m thrilled to join the team and bring meaningful music to communities across the state of Utah.” Matthew is also a graduate student in conducting at the Eastman School of Music.

2020s

2021

Abigail Dyson and **Nicolas Alvarez** were married on January 14, 2023, in her hometown of Webster, N.Y. ■ **Hannah Scholl** was selected for the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) Fellowship. She’ll spend the 2023-24 academic year in Germany living with a host family, attending a semester of college, and gaining hands-on work experience.

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Class Notes are prepared from a variety of sources but are drawn mainly from personal and professional news submitted by college and conservatory alums. Send your class note to alum.mag@oberlin.edu with “Class Note” in the subject line. In your submission, please specify your graduation year and how your name should appear in the note.



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Losses

Faculty/Staff

Joan L. Danforth, an honorary trustee and longtime supporter of Oberlin College, died June 12, 2023. Born in San Francisco, she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology at Stanford University and embarked on a career as a portfolio manager at Dean Witter and later was an investment officer at Citibank. Danforth served as an Oberlin trustee between 1987 and 1994 and at the conclusion of her term became an honorary trustee. In addition, Danforth served on the Allen Memorial Art Museum Visiting Committee for 26 years and established the Joan L. Danforth Endowed AMAM Asian Art Support Fund and the museum's Danforth Endowed AMAM Curator of Asian Art position. With her husband, Robert S. Danforth '47, she also established multiple funds and endowed professorships at Oberlin. These include the Robert S. Danforth Memorial Scholarship and the Robert S. Danforth Lectureship, as well as Robert S. Danforth professorships in history, government, and biology. Additionally, Danforth was an active volunteer and contributed to the success of the New Oberlin Century campaign and the Oberlin Illuminate campaign and received an honorary degree from Oberlin in 2013. She was preceded in death by her husband and is survived by two stepdaughters, a stepson, step-grandson, and step-great-granddaughter. ■ **Michael Kamarck '73** of Ithaca, N.Y., died June 30, 2023. Elected to the Oberlin Board of Trustees in 2012, he was a member of the Executive Committee and chair of the Capital Planning Committee. Kamarck earned a degree in biology at Oberlin and a PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He had a successful career in the biotech and pharmaceutical industries, working in a variety of technical operations and manufacturing positions. Known affectionately as the "sunshine pump" or "Excitable Boy PhD," Kamarck was known for his affinity and talent for mentorship, and he took great pride in assisting everyone to reach their highest potential in their career endeavors. He was also well-known to always have a smile on his face and would do anything to catch a laugh. Kamarck is survived by his wife, two daughters, two siblings, and a grandson. ■ Former faculty member **Bill Tidwell** died on March 16, 2023. Born in Kiowa, Kansas, he was an

outstanding athlete who excelled in track and field, particularly the half-mile; in college and the military, he won four NAIA championships and competed in invitationals around the country. Tidwell came to Oberlin during the 1959-1960 school year and spent more than a decade working in multiple roles, including chair of the physical education department, athletic director, associate professor of physical education, and coach of the track and cross-country teams. In 1971, Tidwell returned to his alma mater, Kansas State Teachers College (now Emporia State University), and became chair of the department of health, physical education, and recreation as well as director of athletics. After retiring in 1984, he kept busy by embracing his passion for animals and conservation. Tidwell is survived by his wife, two sons, and five grandchildren; he was preceded in death by a son. ■ Teacher, social justice activist, and lay minister **Diane Vreuls Friebert** died on April 6, 2023. Beginning in 1977, she spent 19 fulfilling years teaching and mentoring in Oberlin's Creative Writing Program. Friebert often remarked that the students she advised and taught, many of whom remained in touch throughout her life, made up her most fulfilling work-life; in fact, she continued to count a number of former students as dear friends long after retirement. Along the way, like all professors at Oberlin, Friebert served on many committees but was especially proud of her work enacting groundbreaking sexual harassment policy. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and St. Hilda's College Oxford, she published *Instructions* in 1971, which was followed by a novel, *Are We There Yet?* (1975), and other books of short stories and poems. Friebert also often affirmed that her most meaningful spiritual role was the three years she spent as a volunteer chaplain at her daughter's palliative care program at Akron Children's Hospital. Friebert is predeceased by her husband, Stuart Friebert, a poet, translator, emeritus professor, and founder of the Oberlin College Creative Writing Program. She is survived by her two children and their spouses, a grandson, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, and many beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

1944

Born in Oberlin in 1922, **John E. Yocom** transferred to MIT in 1943 and was drafted into the U.S. Army later that year. He served in Europe during the height of World War II, with his infantry group fighting in France and Belgium, including in the Battle of the Bulge. After returning home, Yocom completed his degree in chemical engineering and married Elizabeth (Betty) Clifford. While his work as an air quality consultant took him around the world, he also remained devoted to Betty, singing in church choirs with her throughout their 75-year marriage. Yocom died at age 100 on May 2 and is survived by his wife, a daughter, two grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

1946

Musicologist and harpsichordist **Mary Jane (M.J.) Corry**'s music studies at Oberlin were part of a lifelong devotion to the arts that included her earning a master's degree in music at Northwestern University and a PhD in music at Stanford, as well as studies with world-renowned musicians Nadia Boulanger and Paul Hindemith. Corry joined the faculty of the State University of New York at New Paltz in 1967 and retired in 1993. In 1997, a team she led published *The Performing Arts in Colonial American Newspapers, 1690-1783*, a groundbreaking catalog of music, lyrics, dance, and theater mentions in early American publications. Corry performed in many chamber and symphonic ensembles, and she played a turn-of-the-century musician in the 1994 film *The Road to Wellville*. She died May 15, 2022.

1949

Alan Llewellyn Bobbe was born on a farm in Albion Township, North Dakota, and enlisted in the Navy after graduating from high school in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. His naval training took place at Oberlin and Purdue University, and he served as a radarman on the *USS Chenango*. After returning to Oberlin to complete his studies, he met his eventual wife, Fran Kraft Bobbe '49, and the two married in 1951. Bobbe worked in advertising, and his interests included sailing, needlepoint, and travel; he also penned two books, *Crazy Quilt* and *Born on the Prairie and Thereafter*. He died January 16, 2023, and is survived by his

daughter, Francie Bobbe Pearce '71, as well as two sons, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. ■ A lifelong volunteer and political activist, as well as a tireless advocate for vulnerable community members, **Barbara Staley Bayless** was named an Outstanding Woman of Clinton County, Ohio, for her “significant economic, social, cultural and humanitarian contributions to the community” in 2003. Her work included stints with the Greene-Clinton Community Mental Health Board, the Wilmington Board of Education, the Wilmington Fair Housing Board, and the board of Hospice of Dayton. Bayless, who married Philip Bayless '49 shortly after graduating from Oberlin, was also very active with the Oberlin Alumni Council, serving on the executive board, and was class president. Bayless died on November 1, 2022, and is survived by three daughters—including Margaret Bayless '77 and Elaine Bayless '85—and six grandchildren. ■ **Barbara (Weiss) Miner** graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Oberlin and went on to become a physical therapist in Michigan until her retirement in 1992. After spending her childhood in Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, and Colorado, Miner became a well-seasoned traveler in her adulthood, leading her family on trips to Europe and various American attractions while also embarking on smaller treks, which she called “bummels.” Miner died May 25, 2023, in Holland, Mich.; she was preceded in death by her husband, Ed, and two siblings and survived by three children, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

1950

Eileen Elizabeth (Smith) Dettman had an array of passions that included violin, ballet, writing children's books, and bobbin lacemaking, and she pursued them throughout her life, taking ballet classes in Oberlin well into her 80s. After the 2008 death of her husband, John Warren Dettman '50, she became an advocate for patients dealing with Alzheimer's disease. She passed away on November 28, 2022, and she is survived by her daughter, Kathleen Anne Dettman Neher '77, as well as two sons, five grandsons, and two great-grandsons. ■ **Margaret “Kit” Spencer Humphries** was born in New Jersey and attended Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut, alongside future

First Lady Jacqueline Bouvier. She met both her husbands while studying art at Oberlin, marrying Arthur Nelson Cherry '50 in 1950 and Fred Leslie Humphries '49 in 1989. Humphries' wide array of interests led her down many paths. She taught elementary school and won awards for her watercolors, while her love of travel inspired her to obtain her pilot's license. She died January 3, 2023, and is survived by two children, three stepchildren, 11 grandchildren, and many great-grandchildren. ■ Akron native **Victor H. Keiser** was a free spirit in search of good times and sweet treats. He returned to Oberlin after serving as a radioman in the U.S. Navy, and he met his late wife, Betty (Detweiler) Keiser '47, while studying at the college. After graduating from Lawrence College, Keiser went into teaching, working at military-dependent high schools in Japan and Germany. Keiser went on to earn advanced degrees in math at the University of Colorado at Boulder and taught at Idaho State University and Whitman College. Keiser, who was known for gathering his large family in Michigan for reunions during the summer, died March 12, 2023. He is survived by two brothers, one stepsister, two grandchildren, and two stepchildren.

1951

Justin Frost began his academic career at Oberlin, where he studied history and biology. After earning degrees at Wesleyan, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Oregon, and the University of Turku (Finland), Frost taught at Southern Illinois University. He left academia and studied the effects of water temperature shifts on benthic organisms, then shifted to a career in computer science, which led to him writing the billing software for the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. He died May 18, 2022, and is survived by his wife, daughter, and a host of other family members.

1952

Robert L. Whitney, who earned a bachelor's degree in math at Oberlin and master's in actuarial science at the University of Michigan, had a long career as an actuary working for Mutual Life Insurance Co. of New York and Primerica Financial Services. Over a game of checkers in Talcott Hall, he met the love of his life, Susan Evans Whitney '52, who predeceased him in 2017.

Whitney was an avid hiker who hiked the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, using the trail name “Motel Man” because he often slept in a motel to avoid spending a night on the trail. He also hiked to the highest peaks in approximately 45 U.S. states, as well as many countries around the world. He loved the Grand Canyon, having hiked to the bottom approximately 10 times and rim to rim twice, as well as rafting down the Colorado River. He passed away on March 31, 2023, leaving behind four children, including Joan C. Whitney '80 and Bruce Whitney '86, as well as three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. ■ After graduating from Oberlin, **Colby Wilson “Skip” Dempsey** earned a PhD in Physics at Rice University and married his first wife, Dorothy Beeman Dempsey. He then moved to Amherst, Mass., to teach full-time at Amherst College. In 1968, he also joined the Democratic party and ran campaigns for Eugene McCarthy, Michael Dukakis, and other regional and local candidates, which was a passion of his for the rest of his life. In 1978, Dempsey married his second wife, Kathleen Martin, and moved to New Orleans. While there he pursued research at Tulane University and headed up the Neurosurgery Laboratory and cofounded the New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics High School. Dempsey and Martin retired to Driggs, Idaho, in 2006 to a sustainable log cabin that he helped build. Dempsey died in July 2022, leaving behind three children and two stepchildren, as well as nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. ■ Music was a lifelong passion of New Jersey native **Eleanor Briccetti**. She earned a bachelor's degree in music from the conservatory and a master's degree in music at Indiana University and played violin for orchestras in Kansas City, St. Petersburg (concertmaster), and Indianapolis (principal second violin). She also taught music and served as director of the Children's String Academy of Indianapolis (now the Indianapolis Suzuki Academy). An avid traveler who loved scuba diving and piloting small planes, Briccetti died April 25, 2023. She is predeceased by her mother, Martha Child (Class of 1920), and survived by brother William Child '50, as well as two children, two grandchildren, and many other family members.

1953

Julia von Szeliski majored in psychology at Oberlin, was president of the Modern Dance Club, and was elected Phi Beta Kappa. She married Anthony C. Albrecht '52, whose career as a U.S. diplomat took them around the world. Eventually, they returned to the Washington, D.C., area, where von Szeliski worked in the State Department, for 20 years winning recognition for representing the United States at the United Nations. A member of the Washington-area Ignatian Volunteer Corps, she won honors as a specialist in helping disadvantaged job applicants write their résumés. von Szeliski also participated in many prayer groups, where she developed enduring friendships. She died February 17, 2023, and is survived by her husband; four sons, including Anthony Jr. '79 and his wife, Cynthia Hale '79; and five grandchildren, including Jamie Albrecht '09 and Anna Albrecht '12. Her maternal grandmother, Mary Margaret Noonan, earned an MA from Oberlin in 1894.

■ **Capt. John L. Nicholson**, U.S. Navy (retired), majored in history at Oberlin, entered the Navy, and married Evelyn J. Sadona '53 on June 8, 1953. In the years that followed, he participated in 11 deployments. During the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident, his wingman, Everett Alvarez, was shot down, and Nicholson committed to continuous deployments until Alvarez was released as a prisoner of war in February 1973. Nicholson served as operations officer of the *USS Enterprise* in 1971, command of the *USS Kawishiwi* from 1973 to 1974, and commanding officer of the *USS Ranger* from 1974 to 1976. He retired from active duty in 1977 and went on to teach Navy Junior ROTC in Sanger, Calif. Nicholson died March 15, 2023. He was predeceased by his wife, who died in 2022, and survived by four children and nine grandchildren. ■ **Jane Moore Palmer** (Mary Jane Tucker) met her first husband, Barrie Michael "Mike" Moore, in fourth grade, and the two married in 1957, settling in Cincinnati. While living there, she volunteered with the Junior League of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Art Museum. At age 40 she began studying for a graduate degree in social work and earned a master's degree from Ohio State University in 1975. She began her counseling career in 1977 at the Children's Psychiatric Center of the Jewish Hospital and later worked at the Jewish

Family Service. Fifteen years later she met George Palmer, and they married, eventually moving to Lyme, N.H. A devoted correspondent who composed handwritten cards to those important to her, Palmer died February 14, 2023, and is survived by three children, a brother, and eight grandchildren.

1957

Adolescent and family psychiatrist **David Pearson, MD** died on January 25, 2023. He is survived by his wife, Rose, three children, and four grandchildren.

1960

While at Oberlin, **Donna Donaldson** earned her degree in psychology in three-and-a-half years and was named to Sigma Xi. She cultivated a happy marriage and family life with John Donaldson '60 and later embarked on a career as a ranger in the National Park Service. At the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, where she worked for 10 years, her duties included leading nature walks, presenting canal history, and directing mule-drawn replica barge trips. She then became the chief for visitor services at the National Mall and Memorial Parks, supervising rangers who worked in the monuments and memorials division and working on the redesigns and reopenings of various buildings crucial to American history. Donaldson died on November 20, 2022, and is survived by her husband, three children, and four granddaughters. ■

■ **Michael Rudman** was a renowned member of the theater community who directed Sam Waterston as *Hamlet* in 1975 in Central Park as well as Dustin Hoffman and John Malkovich in the 1984 Tony-winning revival of *Death of a Salesman*. After studying at Oberlin, he worked as a stagehand with the experimental theater collective Living Theatre and then attended Oxford's St. Edmund Hall. Rudman then began working at theaters around Great Britain, directing productions of Brecht and O'Neill at the Nottingham Playhouse in the '60s and going on to become the artistic director of the Hampstead Theatre Club. In 1978 he became an associate director at the National Theatre, programming the Lyttelton Theatre from 1979 to 1982 and continuing to direct plays like Neil Simon's *Brighton Beach Memoirs* there through 1987. A well-respected director who was passionate about the work

of Arthur Miller, Rudman also won a Drama Desk Award for his 1973 production of David Storey's *The Changing Room*. He died March 30, 2023, and is survived by his partner, Felicity Kendal, three children, and five grandchildren.

1961

Dr. Susan Lee Reibel Moore earned her master's degree in teaching at Radcliffe College and went on to become a teacher educator and author who wrote frequently about education, religion, literature, and culture. Moore, who died May 15, 2023, was the mother and mother-in-law of three, as well as a grandmother of five. ■ **George Rubis** studied viola performance at Oberlin and did graduate work at the Manhattan School of Music in New York. Later, he moved to the Washington, D.C., area, where he began teaching violin and viola. He married Roberta "Bobbi" Lennarz (née Lozensky) in 1973 and continued his teaching career through their 1980 move to Florida. In 2007, he cofounded the Hernando Youth Orchestra in Brooksville, Fla. He is survived by his wife, three stepsons, two brothers (including Carl Rubis '55), and a sister.

1962

Lois Felson Mock was a leading researcher for the Justice Department's National Institute of Justice (NIJ). After Oberlin, she earned a master's degree at the University of Michigan and was a Peace Corps volunteer in Peru. Mock was a federal employee for 35 years, retiring in 2007. During that time, she oversaw research portfolios that looked at firearms violence and white-collar crime, among other topics. Mock was instrumental in helping Americans look at gun violence as a public health issue, and NIJ Director Nancy La Vigne told the National Criminal Justice Association that Mock was "a fierce and tenacious advocate for research." After retirement to Virginia, Mock, a devoted birder, volunteered at the Animal Welfare League of the Northern Neck. She died March 30, 2023, and is survived by her partner, John Peterson. ■ **Michael Zenge** taught piano, keyboard literature, and the history and interpretation of Lieder at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill for 34 years, winning two teaching awards that included an endowed chair. Zenge studied piano at Oberlin, as well as at the University

Losses

of Illinois and the Akademie Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. While at UNC, he received two Fulbright grants, one to study piano and Lieder accompanying at the Musikhochschule in Munich and another to teach those subjects at the National University of the Arts in Taipei, Taiwan. He also spent 18 summers as artist-in-residence at the Franz Schubert Institute in Baden bei Wien, Austria. Zenge died January 14, 2023, in Albuquerque, where he and his wife, Jeanine (Hayes) '61 moved after his retirement from UNC. He is survived by his wife, son, and two grandsons.

1963

After graduating, **Linda Lobb Timmins** went from Oberlin to San Diego, where she met her eventual husband, William Ammon Timmins. An English as a Second Language instructor and drug court counselor, Timmins lived all over the country, laying down roots and volunteering in each of her new hometowns. Timmins, a passionate reader and dog owner, traveled around the world with her longtime friend Laurel. She passed away on May 8, 2023, and she is survived by her ex-husband, two sons, and four grandchildren. ■ **Michael Robert Heintz** cultivated his lifelong love of music starting in Dayton, Ohio, where he was born. During his junior year at the conservatory, he studied at Mozarteum Akademie in Salzburg, Austria. He then pursued graduate studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he earned a master's degree in sacred music. Heintz, a dedicated and skilled church musician for nearly all his life, was the music director at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Alexandria, Va., for 36 years, and he maintained active memberships in the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Anglican Musicians. He died April 21, 2023, preceded in death by John Charles Garverick, his life partner of more than 50 years.

1964

Daniel Blumenthal graduated from the University of Chicago School of Medicine and earned a master's in public health from Emory University. His post-graduate internship as the first Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) physician in Lee County, Ark., led to him establishing the Lee County Cooperative Clinic, which to this day provides medical care and other health services to the county's underserved

population. As the founding chair of the Morehouse School of Medicine community health and preventive medicine department, he dedicated his career to teaching medical professionals how to treat and care for patients from disadvantaged underserved populations. In 1998, Blumenthal founded the Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center, which works on risk reduction and early detection in African American and other minority communities. Blumenthal retired from the medical school in 2014 but worked as a professor and chair emeritus of the department until his death on July 25, 2019. He was survived by his wife, three children, three siblings, his stepmother, and numerous relatives and friends.

1965

After graduating from Oberlin, **Carroll McClure Lewin** went to Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass., where she earned a PhD in anthropology. Her field work was in the Baluchistan region of Pakistan, where she studied and later wrote about sexual dichotomization, marriage, the practice of purdah, and the exclusion of women. She joined the anthropology department at the University of Vermont, Burlington, where she helped found the women's studies department and served on the advisory boards of the Fleming Museum and the Center for Holocaust Studies. In the 1990s, she shifted her focus to Holocaust studies, developing an anthropological framework for understanding the impact of violence on individual and collective memories, tension between history and memory, and the role of narrativity in each of these contexts. Lewin died on Oct. 30, 2022, and is survived by her husband, two daughters, two grandchildren, and a sister.

1966

Robert Edward "Bob" Smith had a long career in education that began after he earned an MA in teaching from Oberlin, which he followed with a PhD in education administration from Washington University in St. Louis. An English teacher who became a principal and superintendent, Smith was also ordained as a deacon and elder in the Presbyterian Church. He also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, coached youth sports, and published the 2022 thriller *Frog Gig*. Smith

died December 14, 2022, and he is survived by his wife, three children, and a brother. ■ **Dean Palmer** earned a PhD in physics at Brown University after graduating from Oberlin. As a nuclear physicist, he held postdoctoral positions at the University of Liverpool, England, and at the University of Minnesota, where he "smashed atoms," as he described it to his family. He was an expert in the field of magnetic recording, developing the technology used to store data on computer hard drives, first working at IBM and later at Seagate. Palmer loved spending time outdoors, could fix anything in the house, and was famous for the ingenious contraptions he built. Palmer died March 8, 2023, and is survived by his wife, two daughters, a stepdaughter, two grandchildren, and four siblings.

1967

James (Jim) T. Bynum studied piano at the New England Conservatory in Boston after graduating from Oberlin and went on to work at the Boston Conservatory, where he eventually became dean of financial aid. In addition to being a fine pianist and organist, the Texas native was a consummate cook and entertainer, and he was also a master at restoring and preserving historic homes. He and his husband, John Joseph Moriarty, restored their Boston brownstone before turning their attention and talents to restoring and preserving their home in Fall River, Mass. Bynum died on September 8, 2022; he was preceded in death by Moriarty and his very good friend, Terry Decima '64. He is survived by a niece, several nephews, and four sisters-in-law. ■ **Danica Miller Eskind** was active in theater and costume design at Oberlin, working summers with Oberlin's Gilbert & Sullivan Players on Cape Cod. She graduated with a degree in art history and pursued her creative interests working at the Museum of the City of New York, as a milliner at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, and in costume design for theaters in Washington, D.C., and Rochester, N.Y. She and her husband, Andrew Eskind '68, settled in Rochester, where she worked at Geneva Theatre. Eskind eventually left to launch DANICA, her own brand of apparel with textiles from photosensitive dyes. She later worked as a graphic designer and developed community arts projects. She is survived by her son and her former husband.

1969

David Lidgett spoke fondly of his short time at Oberlin. He died in December 2018 and is survived by his wife, Karen.

1972

Robert Benjamin (Ben) Dobey built on the music education he earned at Oberlin to become a master of the organ. He earned his doctorate at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., and studied on a Fulbright Scholarship in Germany. After a long stretch spent in Washington, D.C., where he worked with the Washington Bach Consort, the Cathedral Choral Society at the National Cathedral, and the Woodley Ensemble, Dobey moved to Sheboygan, Wis., where he served as the organist and choir director for Grace Episcopal Church. Dobey, whose work as a musician and passion for gardening was rooted in a desire to share beauty with the people around him, died April 20, 2023, and he is survived by his sister as well as his nieces and nephews.

1975

Raised in Sidney, Ohio, **Nancy Lucille Graham** earned a master’s degree in political science from the University of Colorado after her time at Oberlin. She spent the majority of her career with Policy Studies Inc., providing technology and implementation services to government agencies all over the country. A Denver resident for 48 years, she was also a published short story writer and active member of the Lighthouse Writers Workshop. Graham, who died March 5, 2023, is survived by two daughters, two grandchildren, and a sister. She was also married for 28 years to Robert Behr ’75, who died in 2013.

1977

Marie Slezak Pearthree had a diverse and highly regarded 40-year career in Arizona’s water community. After studying geology at Oberlin, she earned a master’s degree in geosciences at the University of Arizona and became a civil engineer. Marie focused on flood plain management early in her career before switching to water supply in the mid-’90s. She then served as deputy director of Tucson Water from 1998 to 2008 and was deputy general manager of the Central Arizona Project (CAP), which delivers Colorado River water to Arizona, from 2009

to 2016. After “retiring,” she coauthored the book *Tucson Water Turnaround: Crisis to Success*, a cautionary story about abruptly changing water supplies. Pearthree also received two career awards from the AZ Water Association. She died February 22, 2023, and is survived by husband Phil ’77, and daughters Genevieve and Kristin ’15. ■ After graduating from Oberlin, **Ann Goodman Rapson** worked on her law degree while employed at the University of San Francisco. She was admitted to the California state bar in 1984 and practiced labor law at Thierman, Simpson & Cook in San Francisco and criminal law in Alameda County. Rapson met her eventual husband, David, while studying for the bar exam, and they were married three months after their first date. She was an avid hiker who also swam at least five days a week; additionally, she volunteered with numerous local political campaigns, was active in the Bay Area Jewish and pro-Israel communities, and won numerous blue ribbons at the Alameda County Fair for her pies. She died February 13, 2023, and is survived by her husband, two daughters, and two granddaughters.

1980

John (Djahanshah “DJ”) Refoua was a seasoned editor who was nominated for an Academy Award for his work on *Avatar*. He began his editing career in television in the early ’90s, working on shows like *Law & Order* and *New York Undercover*. He became a frequent collaborator of director James Cameron, handling editing work for the *Avatar* franchise, the Fox sci-fi series *Dark Angel*, and the Titanic documentary *Ghosts of the Abyss*; Refoua’s work will be seen in *Avatar 3*, which is scheduled for release in late 2025. Other credits include *Reno 911!* and its associated film, *Reno 911!: Miami*; *The Equalizer*; and *Transformers: The Last Knight*. He died May 14, 2023, and his survivors include his wife, son, and granddaughter.

1982

Jessie Ware was a distinguished mediator and parenting consultant who could be relied on for fairness and compassion with her clients and for insightful, humor-laced truth with her colleagues. The Mount Vernon, Iowa-raised Ware loved all things musical, pontoon rides, hummingbirds,

watching the Minnesota Lynx, Pawleys Island, adventure travel, and spending time with her friends. She died August 19, 2022, and is survived by Roberta Pisa; three sons; her mother; and four brothers.

1995

Jennifer Hampton was a professor of physics and department chair at Hope College in Holland, Mich. She studied physics as an undergraduate at Oberlin and earned a Master of Philosophy in physics from the University of Cambridge in England, which she attended on a Churchill Fellowship, and earned a master’s degree and PhD in physics from Cornell University. Her areas of expertise included electrochemistry, batteries and fuel cells, and nanoscale science, and she helped mentor students who later published in journals and received awards. Hampton, a seasoned world traveler, was also a deacon at her church in Holland, where she sang and played clarinet on the worship team. She is survived by her parents, two sisters including Ellen (Hampton) Filgo ’97, as well as many relatives and friends.

2006

After graduating from Oberlin, **Munjot Sahu** graduated cum laude from the Indiana University School of Law. She joined the law firm of Baker & Daniels (now Faegre Drinker) in the business litigation practice. There, she worked on high-profile cases, including representing Marsh Supermarkets in a lawsuit against its former CEO. She next became in-house counsel at Eli Lilly and then went on to work at Roche Diabetes Care as senior counsel. Over her career, Sahu published numerous articles in legal publications and served on the American Bar Association’s Mass Torts Litigation Committee. Sahu was also devoted to her community in Zionsville, Indiana, working pro bono on guardianship cases and with the Wills for Heroes program. Sahu is survived by her husband and son.

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Please submit death notices of roughly 100 words to alum.mag@oberlin.edu (with “Losses” in the subject line) or mail to *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*, 247 W. Lorain St., Suite C, Oberlin, Ohio 44074. Our obituaries section includes Oberlin alumni, staff, faculty, and friends of the institution. Space limitations require us to focus on summarizing the person’s career and education, and we are unable to include photos.

“Diversity and inclusion—things that people had fought passionately for during the civil rights movement—made it possible for someone like me to attend medical school in the United States. It’s important to me that we maintain and grow that kind of opportunity for everyone.”

Said A. Ibrahim ’87, the first Black medical school dean appointed at Thomas Jefferson University, in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* profile

“There was a whole other crew of people in the stadium that I was friends with in college; I had no idea they were there. They were on the other side of the stadium and stayed after to catch me, so it became this minireunion.”

Mary Notari ’07 in *Slate*, discussing the response after being crowned winner of the Brooklyn Cyclones’ annual Elaine Dance Contest—as in, *Seinfeld’s* Elaine

“Understanding how these most basic biological systems first took shape will ... give us greater insight into how life works at the most fundamental level.”

Popular Mechanics quoting Associate Professor of Biology **Aaron Goldman**, coauthor of a study exploring new ways to look at the origins of life on Earth

“Renewable energy is becoming the smarter choice economically. Anyone who buys a building that isn’t solar-powered is just wasting their money.”

David Orr, emeritus professor at Oberlin College, quoted in a *Newsweek* article on ultra-sustainable building design

“Warmed by reassurance, schooled in the arts and wholly in love with the natural world, Gordon headed off to Oberlin College. On its faculty were professors who had fled antisemitism in Europe. Gordon worked as a secretary for one, a political scientist, typing his dictated thoughts and polishing his heavily accented English as she went. ‘The underground movement in Europe during the war became my standard of what people have to do to fight bad government,’ she would say later.”

The Riverfront Times (St. Louis) on the activist life and times of **Gloria Gordon ’44**, who celebrated turning 100 in August 2023 by continuing to advocate for climate change

“Conservation is a very narrow field to begin with—and in that field, East Asian conservation is like the head of a pin. All of us have had to figure out how to do it on our own terms.”

Tanya Uyeda ’88, the first full-time Asian art conservator hired by the Seattle Art Museum, quoted in *The Seattle Times*

“Sullivan is deep on all levels: touch, counterpoint, utter relaxation, swing, transparency of ideas, no matter how dense the texture. He takes you through the whole emotional spectrum, unabashed joy included. It’s completely rooted and completely original all at once. If you have the chance to hear him, don’t miss it. He is quietly revolutionizing jazz piano playing—actually piano playing, period.”

Grammy-winning jazz pianist Brad Mehldau, posting on X after being wowed by a **Sullivan Fortner ’08** performance

“The term [imposter syndrome] stems from the Seventies, when Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes, two assistant professors at Oberlin College, in Ohio, decided to investigate what seemed to be a widespread phenomenon: women gripped by a sense of innate inferiority, their experiences of the workplace and society at large (everything from small talk to personal relationships) defined by a kind of self-sabotage that needed to be constantly negotiated.”

The Independent (U.K.)

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Photo by Dale Preston



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a conversation about
how we find the words
that we should have.”**

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