

# Oberlin

OBERLIN ALUMNI MAGAZINE

SPRING 2022

HOW  
AN  
ECONOMIST  
TURNED  
MESSY DATA  
INTO  
CLEAN  
CONCLUSIONS  
USING  
FANCY MATH  
AND WON  
A NOBEL  
ALONG THE WAY.

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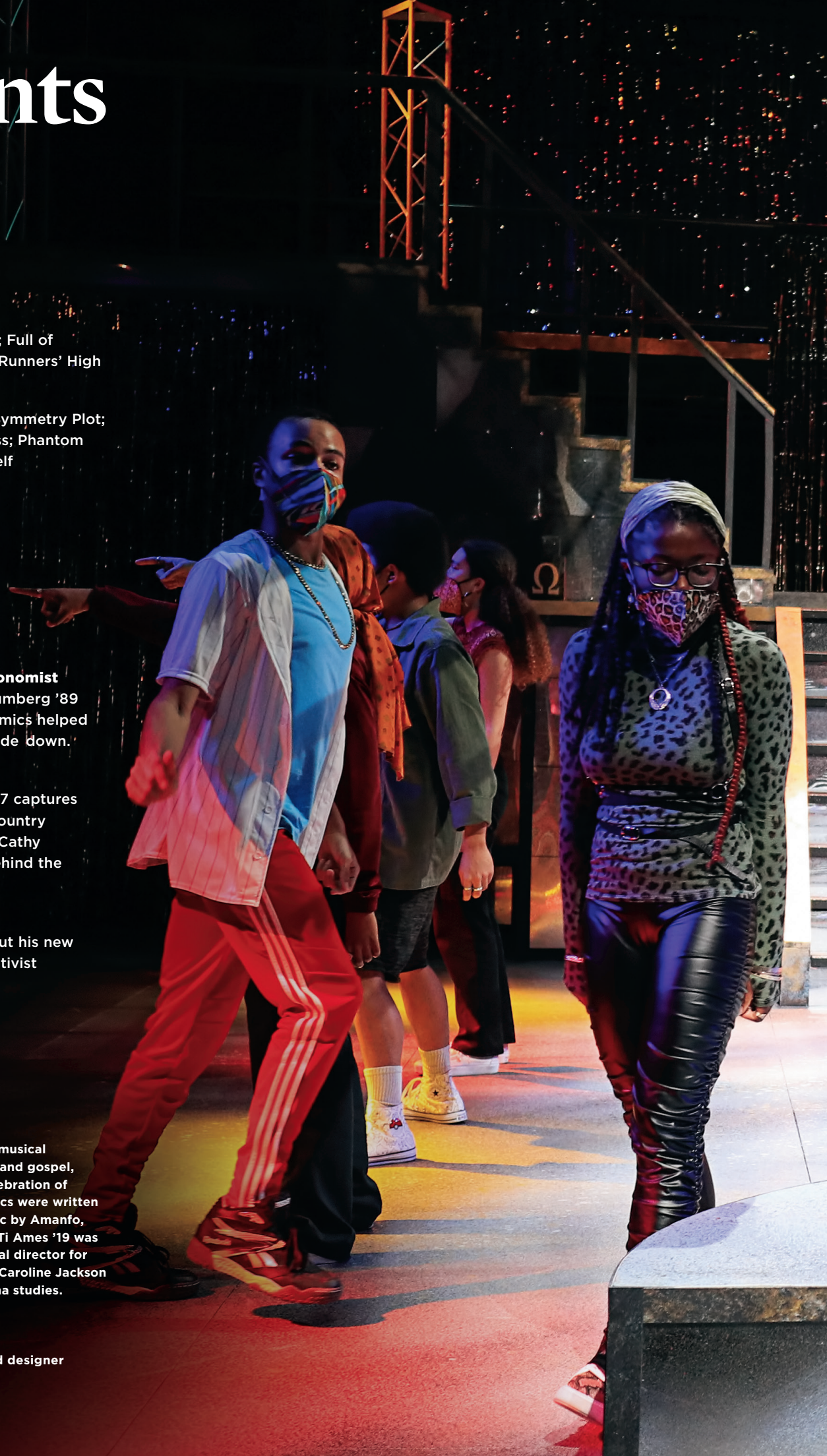
## CLASSIC OBERLIN

*Olympus*, an original, student created musical featuring hip hop, rap, Afrobeat, R&B, and gospel, was performed as part of Oberlin s celebration of Black History Month. The book and lyrics were written by Cyril Amanfo '22, with original music by Amanfo, Max Addae '21, and Mark Ligonde '22. Ti Ames '19 was associate director, dramaturg, and vocal director for the production, which was directed by Caroline Jackson Smith, professor of theater and Africana studies.

PHOTO BY JOHN SEYFRIED

## ON THE COVER

Illustration by Washington, D.C. based designer Matt Chase.











## Building on our Legacy

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF MY JOB AS PRESIDENT IS TO ensure that Oberlin’s way of being in the world—particularly with regard to race and equity—continues to be a part of how we lead higher education. One of the overriding reasons I came to Oberlin was to contribute to this institution’s impressive legacy.

Institutional ambition and legacy were much on my mind when I created the Presidential Initiative on Racial Equity and Diversity. The PI, as we now call it, is a way for Oberlin to advance our values on campus while preparing students to make a difference in the world and to further

society’s ability to embrace honest conversation about race, equity, and inclusion.

This is both a challenging and historic moment. As a nation, we are torn along lines of culture and color and the disparate experiences these monikers suggest. Progress toward equity is sometimes obscured and at other times feels like it is in reverse. The world our students are entering is more complex and, in some ways, less welcoming than the one that greeted me more than 30 years ago.

We recently marked 10 years since the killing of Trayvon Martin, who lost his life while walking at night through a Florida community. He was 17, younger than all but a few of Oberlin’s students.

The PI report and its numerous recommendations represent solid steps forward in Oberlin’s drive to make a difference in a slow arc toward racial equity. It complements the strong work already taking place across campus in areas such as athletics, the conservatory, arts and sciences, and student affairs. The new Center for Race, Equity, and Inclusion, derived from the PI’s work, is Oberlin’s most ambitious DEI construct in several years. It will be instrumental to Oberlin’s ever-growing commitment to DEI on campus and will allow the college to participate in the national conversation on race and prepare our students for the world. It will have an executive director who will oversee programs for undergraduates, faculty, and post-doctoral fellows.

An advisory committee will serve the center and its executive director. Many campus diversity efforts, including the Multicultural Resource Center, will be connected with the center. I am also creating a position in human resources to shore up hiring practices with respect to race, equity, and inclusion.

To measure our campus culture with respect to DEI, Oberlin is participating in the National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates, a survey through the Liberal Arts College Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA), a coalition founded by Oberlin and five other colleges in 2020.

Each year, the survey will focus on either students, staff, or faculty. We are analyzing the data from our students who evaluated the degree to which they feel like they matter and are affirmed. These survey results will help us respond even more effectively to the concerns students raise about our campus climate. The staff survey will be conducted in this spring, and the faculty survey will occur next year.

Our work in the conservatory has already produced significant results, including a mentoring program sponsored by the Oberlin Alumni Association of African Ancestry (OA4); the reimagined theory curriculum and ensemble program that supports decentering the canon from the Western tradition; the approval of a tenure track faculty position in African American and African diasporic music; a new interdivisional minor in African American music; and creation of the James R. ’58 and Susan Neumann Postdoctoral Fellowship in Jazz History.

I offer this update to reinforce for you Oberlin’s institutional resolve and the personal commitment that I and many others have to this important quintessentially Oberlin work.

Oberlin is a complicated place that evokes strong feelings. Our graduates fan out around the globe, many to enjoy fruitful careers, and find happiness and fulfillment. We are grateful to hear from many of you regarding Oberlin’s value to society. The PI and our DEI work is this generation’s opportunity to build upon Oberlin’s legacy and to prepare students to do what they are destined to do: Go out and change the world for good.

CARMEN TWILLIE AMBAR  
*President, Oberlin College*

## Oberlin

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### POSTMASTER

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**APPEALING PEDALLING PEDDLER**

Typically, I throw the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* on top of the festering pile of magazines I so over-eagerly subscribed to—a stack rivaling the torturous room of *New Yorkers* from [the television show] *The Good Place*. But, something about Ben Sinclair’s inquisitive smile on the cover pulled me in (“Will Ben Sinclair Maintain the Buzz?,” Fall 2021). Maybe it was his unmistakably Jewish features, akin to mine, or the photograph—with an ’80s modus operandi—that piqued my interest. Of course, the magazine did not disappoint. Kim France’s exposé on Sinclair was engrossing and, somehow, relaxing. Oberlin produced yet another oxymoron: the down-to-earth and successful actor. Next on my list of TV shows to watch during endless forays between the couch and fridge: *High Maintenance*.

JOE GREENBERG ’17  
*Clarksdale, Miss.*

**KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES**

The latest magazine mentions Lynds Jones (“Pioneers of the Bird World,” Fall 2021), who contributed so much to ornithology in the early 1900s. His son was George Jones, Class of 1920, head of the botany department in the 1950s, before botany consolidated with zoology. He used to take some of us birding; I can remember one memorable trip to Castalia, Ohio, where an amazing variety of ducks congregated in the warm pond. Better than studying a bird book!

The head of zoology, my major, was Hope Hibbard, whom we all called “Miss Hibbard” instead of “Dr.” for some reason. She was also head of the American Amoeba

Society, which we thought was very funny. She took us to the Oberlin cemetery to look for fairy shrimp in the pools. And she brought in a cow trachea once and blew through it so it said “Moo!”

Both are fondly remembered by this member of the Class of ’58.

CYNTHIA FINCH POWERS ’58  
*Roanoke, Ind.*

*Our story on Jones and Althea Sherman inspired a number of letters, which we will share in the next issue of the magazine.*

**COUNTRY OF ORGAN**

I really enjoyed the article highlighting the unparalleled organ collection at Oberlin (“An Organ Story,” Fall 2021). My experience as an organ student was truly enhanced by having weekly lessons and easy access to practice on such a variety of stellar instruments. Unlike other instruments, organ technique and literature are directly linked to the countries of origin and to the instruments’ traditions of those areas, so having access to the different styles of organs is fundamental to having a comprehensive understanding of the music. Students at Oberlin are truly fortunate to experience these instruments spanning different eras and countries, all within an easy walk across Tappan Square. I also loved the artwork by May van Millingen—what a treat!

SARAH MOON STAMEY ’09  
*Bloomington, Ind.*

**NOTE ON CAMP**

*Crip Camp* is one of the best documentaries I’ve seen in years (“True Stories,” Fall 2021). It made me smile and cry and wish I could have done half as much with my entire career in the psychiatric recovery field. Imagine my thrill to learn that this Netflix production, made with help from Barack and Michelle Obama, has a direct connection to Oberlin!

I can’t think of a better plot line: Don’t feel sorry for us. Strive to be as human and, yes, as normal as we are, in your own life. In the words of virtuoso rock climber Maureen Beck, the hero of another outstanding

documentary (*Stumped*), who was born without part of her left arm: “We don’t climb to be special, we don’t climb to win some silly awards. We climb because we love climbing just like everybody else.”

My mom, Elizabeth Witheridge, wrote seven books for children. The best (in my humble opinion) is *Dead End Bluff*, whose lead character is blind. He becomes a hero, not in spite of his disability, but because of it. Think about that for a while and you’ll come up with several plots to explain that sentence (*Wait Until Dark* immediately comes to mind). In much the same way, the characters in *Crip Camp* are heroes for each other.

Thank you, Oberlin, for helping to create people like Nicole Newnham ’91.

TOM WITHERIDGE ’69  
*Denver, Colo.*

**CORRECTIONS**

*In the previous issue (Losses, Fall 2021), due to an editing error, we mistakenly placed the obituary for Richard Newell Cooper ’56 in the wrong class year. We also mistakenly indicated Glenn Roberts ’68 and his family were Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II; it was Norman Mineta, the congressman for whom Roberts worked, who was interned.*

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



# Around Tappan Square







**THE NATURE/NURTURE  
OF WINTER TERM:**

Neuroscience majors Tsitsi Zana, left, a second year student from Zimbabwe, and Chilly Wallace, center, a third year student from New Jersey, participated in a Winter Term research project utilizing cellular, molecular, and biochemical techniques to investigate nature/nurture interactions in neurodegenerative diseases. The project was led by Robert W. & Eleanor H. Biggs Professor of Neuroscience Gunnar Kwakye, right.

For a video tour of highlights from this year's Winter Term projects, visit [go.oberlin.edu/WT-2022](https://go.oberlin.edu/WT-2022).



HONORS

## Oberlin Continues Stretch as Top Fulbright Producer

BY SCOTT WARGO

Oberlin has been recognized as a top producer of Fulbright students for the 13th consecutive year, placing fifth among baccalaureate institutions in 2021-22 and sending nine scholars to study abroad.

“Oberlin’s success is a testament to the leadership development of an Oberlin experience and the global engagement of our students, faculty, staff, and curriculum,” says Nicholas

Petzak, Oberlin’s director of fellowships and awards. “I think it is particularly notable that Oberlin has remained a top producer of Fulbright students during the pandemic. Our students have remained committed to the ‘promotion of international goodwill’ that drives the promise of the Fulbright Program, and Obies have refused to forget about the broader world.”

Oberlin Fulbright

scholars are engaged in a range of experiences around the globe: collaborating with astrophysicists in Montréal, teaching English to secondary students in Austria, and researching the cultural heritage of Benin in West Africa.

The Fulbright Program was established more than 75 years ago to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries and is the world’s largest and most diverse international educational exchange program. Since 1970, more than 250 Oberlin students have received Fulbright awards.

PHILANTHROPY

## \$1.6M Gift Supports Endowed Fellowship in Jazz History at Oberlin Conservatory

BY ERICH BURNETT

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, THE GENEROSITY of James R. and Susan Neumann has led to incomparable opportunities for Oberlin students to study the history of jazz. Now a new gift from the Neumanns will offer additional paths to explore the quintessentially American art form.

The Neumanns, who in 2011 gifted to Oberlin an extensive collection of more than 100,000 recordings, books, posters, and other artifacts chronicling the history of jazz, have donated \$1.6 million to establish a fund supporting the creation of an endowed conservatory faculty position in jazz history. An allocation of \$100,000 of the overall gift will support the Neumann Jazz Collection.

The newly endowed fund makes possible the creation of a postdoctoral fellowship. Each fellow will be appointed for a two-year period on an ongoing basis and will teach two courses on specialized topics in jazz history. Those courses will draw on the conservatory’s expansive archival materials provided by the Neumanns and others. In addition, each fellow will pursue individual research, which will involve Oberlin students.

“I’m delighted that, through this generous gift, we will be able to expand our offerings in jazz history in such a meaningful and enduring way,” says Dean of the Conservatory William Quillen.

“Increasing the number of academic courses dedicated to jazz history has been an interest of numerous members of our community here at Oberlin—and a particular interest of mine—and I’m thrilled that we are able to achieve such a goal through the addition of bright new faculty members. The generous, longtime support of Jim and Susan Neumann has been instrumental to the development of the unrivaled opportunities for jazz study that exist at Oberlin.”



PREVIOUS SPREAD: CLARISSA HEART '20, THIS PAGE: MIKE CRUPI





JAMES R. AND SUSAN NEUMANN JAZZ COLLECTION

The endowment of Oberlin’s jazz history faculty position coincides with news of a newly developed minor in African American music created in tandem with the Conservatory of Music and the College of Arts and Sciences. The conservatory will appoint a new tenure-track faculty member in African American and African diasporic music later this spring.

“The gift provided by Jim and Susan Neumann marks a new era for the

appreciation of jazz at Oberlin and ultimately beyond,” says Deborah Campana, head of the Conservatory Library—which houses the conservatory’s Special Collections—and director of the Division of Musicology. “The Conservatory Library is grateful for the generous support of the collection itself. At the same time, we look forward to working with a new colleague who will inspire students’ thinking about jazz as they navigate the rich resources represented in this

unparalleled collection.”

A lifelong jazz enthusiast, James Neumann ’58 promoted jazz concerts at Oberlin as a student in the mid-1950s. He has maintained close ties to his alma mater in the decades since his graduation.

“It is fortuitous that this gift is going to the school where I graduated from,” he says. “It is a wonderful way to come full circle, just an incredible piece of good fortune for me, and I hope for Oberlin too.”





**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

## Phase One of SIP Project Ends with Tree Planting

Oberlin College planted the first of 126 trees that will dot the campus and town as replacements for the trees that were removed to install underground distribution pipes as part of the college's ambitious Sustainable Infrastructure Program (SIP).

The goal of SIP is to upgrade the college's century-old heating infrastructure to a hot water system, a major step toward Oberlin's goal of achieving a carbon-neutral campus by 2025. This work will enable a large-scale geothermal system, add

cooling to buildings, and implement other structural improvements that will increase student and faculty comfort year-round. Minimally, every tree that was removed will be replaced—in some cases, with two trees—with 65 trees planted on campus and 61 in the city.

A wide range of considerations, including the city's tree replacement guide, species native to Ohio, the interplay of diverse species, the structural integrity of a species, and aesthetics, went into the criteria used for selecting the trees and

their planting locations.

"Our goal is to make choices today that will stand the test of time," says Becky Bode, grounds service manager, who is spearheading the reinstall alongside arborist Al Shauck. "We selected trees that will thrive on campus and enhance the experience for those attending Oberlin 100 years from now."

Included is the American larch, a specimen now found only in Oberlin's nearby arboretum, says Bode. Bigleaf magnolia was selected for its rarity and beauty. Other trees carry an added historical reference, such as the hackberry tree, which was once used for flooring and barrel hoops in pioneer days.



The deciduous conifer American Larch, which has oval, winged seeds that are dispersed by the wind and feed mice and voles throughout the winter, is among the tree species being planted in Oberlin.





**A GOOD RUN**  
The women's track and field team won its fifth North Coast Athletic Conference Championship in program history in February. Oberlin's victors totaled 166.5 points to secure their fourth title in the last five contested indoor championships, with their last in 2019.

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# Thought Process



## DOCUMENTARY

### Ry Russo-Young's Family Movie

BY KYRA MCCONNELL '22

RY RUSSO-YOUNG '03 BEGAN HER CAREER telling fictional stories on film, but for nearly three decades, she was preoccupied with a very true story: her own.

Russo-Young grew up as the younger daughter of Robin Young and Sandy Russo, a lesbian couple who helped pave the way in the 1970s and 1980s for LGBTQ+ people to have children. They found a sympathetic donor in Tom Steel. But Steel soon came to want a larger role in Russo-Young's life. Her mothers insisted this was not the family they had in mind—what they wanted was a nuclear family. Steel sued

for paternity and visitation rights. Russo-Young was just 9 years old when she was thrust into the spotlight of the case.

"I had wanted to tell this story since my mid-20s," Russo-Young says, "It was a defining event in my childhood. I had done a lot of press about it, and I always wanted to come to understand it further, but I wasn't clear on what I wanted to say or how I felt about it."

Instead, she directed TV episodes and films, including the novel adaptations *Before I Fall* and *The Sun is Also a Star*, and two films which she also cowrote—*You Won't Miss Me* and

*Nobody Walks*, written with Lena Dunham '08.

Still, her own story was never far from her mind. Using footage of her family she had filmed as a hobby growing up, along with press footage from the 1999 PBS documentary *Our House*, which featured the Russo-Young family, she worked with an editor to create a mock trailer for what a film version of her story might look. From that beginning came *Nuclear Family*, a three-part documentary that premiered last fall on HBO Max, where it continues to air.

"I had always been telling the story, but my



experiences were co-opted through the lens of somebody else, be it political or social,” she says.

Working as the director of the film and as an on-camera subject was challenging, Russo-Young says. In addition to her mothers and sister, the film features new and archival interviews with friends of her family and those of Steel, who died of AIDS in 1998.

Mitigating these tensions while retaining a sense of objectivity during interviews took practice and patience. “I didn’t want to injure anybody more than they had already been damaged in the process of the story itself,” she says. “I had to remind myself, ‘just listen, be open, and try to not judge as it’s happening, but to hear it.’”

“It took a lot of energy on my part to refuse to go to a place that I would automatically go to. The movie was all about tracking my arc of subjectivity.”

While talking about the details of the lawsuit was difficult, the experience was “completely riveting as a filmmaker,” she says—one that will inspire how she approaches her work in the future, whether in narrative filmmaking or documentary. “Life is really short, and I want to make work that reflects who I am and what I believe in.”

Russo-Young credits her time at Oberlin as formative in cultivating her identity and beliefs as an artist, “a great time for me to start practicing what I wanted to do.” She participated in “a little bit of everything,” including a film project that explored her custody case through a retelling of the fairytale *Little Red Riding Hood*, featured briefly in *Nuclear Family*.

“That was my first exploration of this entire narrative, and that was done at Oberlin in the art building as a performance,” she says. “It was two nights, all of my Oberlin friends came, and it was an independent project that I did, I think for Winter Term.” She views college as a time to produce “bad work” as part of the learning process. “You don’t get to do better work until you do bad work. That’s what I was doing—but it wasn’t bad, it was just young.”

And while her colleagues in the film industry come from all walks of life, “what unites those experiences is continuing to try things out and do the work in all different ways and all kinds of environments.

“That’s what’s so great about Oberlin specifically—it allows you to try a bunch of different experiences, crafts, and creative endeavors and then see what you like and respond to it.”

## POEM

# Black Heroism is Unskilled Labor

BY XAN PHILLIPS '14

**Angela makes sure the right people die at the funeral.**

**A grandchild of the Tulsa Massacre, her skin**

**is artifice, a call to dream so nothing occurs.**

**When her yt colleague detonates a suicide bomber**

**she blocks the blast with a casket. It is common knowledge**

**that womanism does feminism’s housekeeping.**

**Much as one might travel, one guilt-trips.**

**In this case, to Re-Reconstruction Era fantasy.**

**Did I mention that everyone is a cop, and still**

**someone is trying to tell a story about justice.**

**Quiet as it’s kept, take something from the blackbox**

**and a little black ekes out further into the ethos,**

**but these stories don’t need to matter; they’re made from it.**

**I find no proxy here in iconography, genomes ache.**

**“Okonkwo hangs himself in the end” says Angela,**

**spoiling the final pages of *Things Fall Apart*.**

**“Angela won’t die at the end,” I say, to spoil another thing.**

Copyright © 2021 by Xan Phillips. Originally published in Poem-a-Day on February 25, 2021, by the Academy of American Poets. Xan Phillips is the author of *Hull* (Nightboat Books, 2019). “This poem is part of a larger ekphrastic project called *Spectacle*. ‘Black Heroism is Unskilled Labor’ is written about [the television show] *Watchmen*’s Angela Abar,” says Phillips.





Lisa Neumann '13 and  
Katherine Pardue '14

### RECIPE

## Hark! A Vegan Café

BY JEFF HAGAN '86

HARK! CAFÉ, IN DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS, got its start on the front lawn of an off-campus house on South Pleasant Street in Oberlin in the fall of 2014. That's when friends Lisa Neumann '13 and Katherine Pardue '14 began imagining a place where their co-op friends would all want to work. The café's name pays homage to Harkness, of which they were both members, and, indeed, another of their Harkness friends does work there. "Any other interested Harkies are encouraged to contact us with your application," says Neumann.

The two signed a lease on a space in a restored historic building in March 2020—just as Minnesota went into lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Neumann, the baker, and Pardue, the chef, operated Hark! as

a carryout kitchen for nearly a year, offering a wide range of dishes and baked goods that are plant based (the duo went vegan out of environmental concerns surrounding the animal agriculture industry) and gluten-free (a necessity for Pardue, who has celiac disease). In January 2021, they opened Hark! as a sit-down restaurant.

Much of the menu reinvents the kinds of food the two grew up on, drawing inspiration from Neumann's Betty Crocker cookbook and Pardue's Louisiana French and Sicilian family cuisine. This recipe, however, has its roots in Oberlin.

"Katherine was the master of making this deep fried tofu and would often make it for a large group of us late at night, when everyone got back from the 'Sco or the Feve and was ravenously hungry," says Neumann.

Although some of the directions are set forth in the title of the recipe, the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine's* test kitchen asserts that substitutions may be made for attire and song choices.

## Harkness Pizza Night Tofu Nuggets That Will Make You Want to Sing "Come Sail Away" Half-Naked in Your Kitchen

### Ingredients

**1-2 blocks** extra firm tofu (extra points if you can find tofu from Twin Oaks Co-op!)

**4-6 cups** of canola, soy, or peanut oil for frying

### Dry Ingredients

**1 cup** cornmeal

**½ cup** nutritional yeast flakes (NYF)

**1 Tbsp + 1 tsp** salt (plus extra to taste)

**1 Tbsp** broth powder (vegan beef or chicken flavor is ideal, but vegetable is also good. If you don't have this, then pulverize a bouillon cube)

**1 Tbsp** paprika

**2 tsp** onion powder

**2 tsp** garlic powder

**1 tsp** ground black pepper

**½ tsp** cayenne (double to make it SPICY)

**¼ tsp** ground thyme (optional)

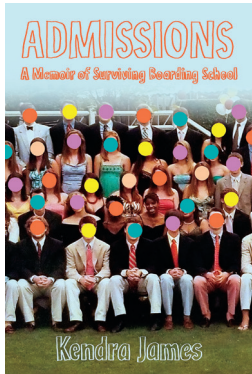
### Directions

1. Pour oil in a deep fryer or a deep pot and heat to 350-375°F. To test your oil's heat, toss in a test piece of tofu and see if it bubbles and rises to the top quickly. If it sinks to the bottom, the oil is not yet hot.
2. Whisk dry ingredients together in a large metal bowl and set aside.
3. When the oil is hot, cut tofu into 1.5" cubes. Quickly rinse tofu in water.
4. Toss tofu in the dry mix until every piece is thoroughly coated.
5. Fry tofu for 3-5 minutes or until the cubes are brown and slightly puffed.
6. Drain tofu on wire cooling rack or kitchen towels and lightly dust with salt to taste.
7. Add to pizza, dip in favorite sauce, or eat hunched over a bowl with eight of your closest friends at 1 a.m.!



BOOKSHELF

# Recent Releases

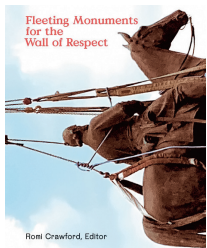


## Admissions: A Memoir of Surviving Boarding School

Kendra James '10

GRAND CENTRAL PUBLISHING

Don't let the sly wit and pop culture slant fool you—*Admissions* is a serious, nuanced look at the privileges James had and the privileges she was denied as a smart, financially comfortable Black student at Taft, the prep school Connecticut boarding school her father also attended. *Admissions* makes its points with sharply observed, often humorous, details. Her “Respectability Politics” mother, James writes, “couldn’t understand a rap lyric until approximately five and a half years into the Obama presidency.” Even the laugh-out-loud moments pack a poignant punch. James describes a pep rally in which the name of their own school is set on fire. “I’m not sure why we were burning ourselves in effigy, especially since with two Ts in the word Taft, every picture from one of those rallies looks like it’s a Klan-hosted cross burning.” *Admissions* is a privilege to read.—Jeff Hagan '86



## Fleeting Monuments for the Wall of Respect

Romi Crawford '88, Editor

GREEN LANTERN PRESS

There is no longer any sign of the *Wall of Respect*, a 1967 Chicago mural that depicted Black heroes across cultural and political spheres. Its ephemeral nature suits Crawford, a professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, whose book argues against permanent monuments for this or any other historical event. She asked a range of artists and writers to create strategies for “impermanent” commemorations of the *Wall of Respect*. The result includes essays, instructions for performance, a tear-off flyer, and a music playlist, among other interventions. Lauren Berlant '79, who died in 2021, and Naeem Mohaiemen '93 are among the contributors. —JH

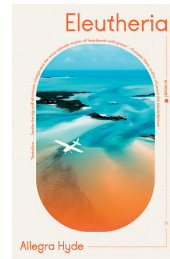


## Bauhaus Women: A Global Perspective

Elizabeth Otto '94 and Patrick Rössler

HERBERT PRESS

Opening up this volume of profiles of the women who were part of the groundbreaking, influential Bauhaus art school is like stumbling onto a buried treasure. The 45 brief sketches include examples of the work of these women, and despite nearly a century intervening, the art feels fresh and exciting, embodying the Bauhaus ideal of integrating art and technology. Also apparent here is its humor and optimism: Few modern art movements offer up as many images of its practitioners smiling as the Bauhaus does. In another book of art historical rescue, *Haunted Bauhaus*, Otto explores the more transgressive aspects of the school. —JH

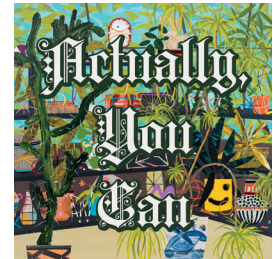


## Eleutheria

Allegra Hyde, Oberlin Assistant Professor of Creative Writing

VINTAGE BOOKS

*Eleutheria* is set in a world like ours—only more so. The growing impact of climate change, made worse by a vain, egomaniacal, imperial president who goes blind staring at the sun during an eclipse, inspires a rootless woman, Willa Marks, to seek refuge in Camp Hope, a tropical utopian eco-colony intent on showing the world a path forward through their own example. Willa is willful but rudderless—or at least without a paddle (literally, in the novel's early scene). She flails and stumbles, but remains a committed devotee, possessing, as one character says of her, an innocent recklessness—itsself a possible path forward. —JH



## Actually, You Can

Deerhoof, with Greg Saunier '91

JOYFUL NOISE

Deerhoof's inclination toward innovation sees them mixing their trademark outlandish guitar riffs and playful, surreal lyricism with operatic instrumental flourishes and a winking classical sensibility, leading to a style they've dubbed “DIY baroque.” The album is stridently political, seeking to fight an oppressive status quo and pandemic-enforced isolation with music that inspires action and builds community. Simultaneously abrasive and gorgeous, elegant and anarchic, grounded and spiritual, *Actually You Can* is another deftly-executed left turn for rock's most consistently surprising group. —Will Hagan '21



QUOTE

**“The American people have been enlisted in an eerie face-off, one all the more nightmarish for the way the completing specters play off one another. On one side is a Deep State conspiracy that threatens to thwart the will of the people and undercut the constitutional authority of the leader they elected. On the other side is a raw personalization of presidential power, one that a theory of the unitary executive has gussied up and allowed to run roughshod over reason and the rule of law. These we submit are the phantom twins of a beleaguered republic.”**

From the introduction to *Phantoms of a Beleaguered Republic: The Deep State and the Unitary Executive* (Oxford University Press, March 2021), written by **Stephen Skowronek '73**.

ALUMNI/STUDENT COLLABORATION

## Working in Symmetry

BY JULIE EVANS

**Oberlin College computer science students put alumna Dorothy Koster Washburn's archaeological data on the map**

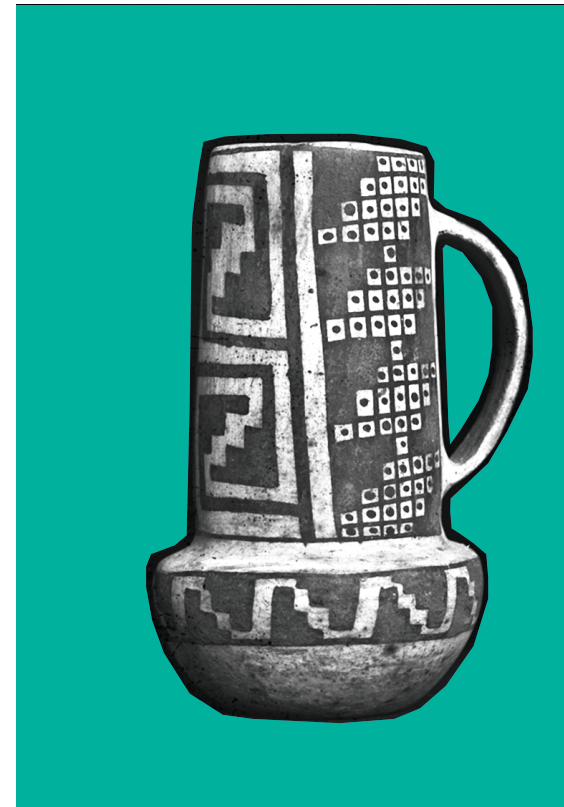
As an archaeologist and scholar of prehistoric pottery from the American Southwest, Dorothy Koster Washburn '67 has assembled a database of more than 20,000 ceramic designs—drawn mostly by her own hand—representing 500 of the region's archaeological sites. Washburn analyzes them for their geometric symmetry, which provides insight into social relationships, environmental conditions, and human settlement from 400-1500 AD.

Washburn envisioned an interactive digital map to classify and display her symmetry data but lacked the technical skills to create one. Knowing that her alma mater had a computer science major, she reached out to Professor Robert Geitz, chair of the department, with an intriguing proposition—would any students be interested in creating a digital map of her life's work for their Winter Term project?

It was mid 2020, and the global pandemic had shut down in-person learning. Students were taking classes remotely in different states with different time zones. But four computer science students—Kurtis Vetter, Tianxing (Victor) Zhu, Natalie Korzh, and William Knowles-Kellett—accepted Washburn's proposal.

Over the next three months, the students held meetings over Zoom where they brainstormed ideas, divided responsibilities, and shared their results, discarding some ideas and adopting others. They learned new technologies, including a programming language and sophisticated geographic information system (GIS) software.

The end result is an interactive, customized U.S. Geological Survey map that allows the user to filter search results by time, symmetry design and structure, color, and ceramic type, and reveals the frequency of each within those search parameters.



Washburn was thrilled with the final result, which lets her view and share her data in an easily accessible and interactive format. “Oberlin kids are smart. This type of map is being worked on by professionals at computer science departments at other universities with big budgets to get it done—and they’re still working on it. But these Oberlin kids did this for free in two or three months. That’s how smart Oberlin kids are,” she says.

In addition to honing his web development skills, Zhu, a senior at Oberlin double majoring in studio art and computer science, says the project taught him how to work through trouble spots and search for solutions—often using Google as his guide. “We tried so many things in the beginning to get the map right. I became very good at narrowing down problems, finding resources, and solving problems,” he says. “I don’t think too many peer students know how to build a customized and professional map like this one.”

For Vetter, a senior computer science major, the mapping project reinforced his interest in a career in computer programming. It also made him realize that





web design was not for him.

“I had never worked on anything quite like this before,” Vetter says. “But the main thing we learn in computer science is *how* to learn. We learn how to start from scratch—how to learn an entirely new language and new framework.”

He was inspired by Washburn’s passion for her work and the trust she placed in the students to excel. “She always had positive words to say and was excited when we introduced new ideas.”

Washburn is currently collaborating with three Oberlin anthropology students on a new project, investigating why people began making identical pottery designs in approximately 1000 AD. It marks her third Winter Term project with students. She encourages other alumni to get involved.

“It promotes ties between alums with projects and ideas and students who have the skills and creativity to work on projects,” she says. “More than just receiving credit for Winter Term, they gain valuable experience. It is a win-win situation. This is what an Oberlin education is all about.”



**Oberlin is where Class of 2011 grads Pichaya Poy Winichakul and Ryan Head found their best friends, learned from rigorous academic experiences, and met creative and critical thinkers whose passion and dedication to public service still inspire the couple today. “We give to Oberlin annually because more than ever, the world needs Oberlin caliber leaders, creators, and problem solvers with bold ideas that center people and communities.”**

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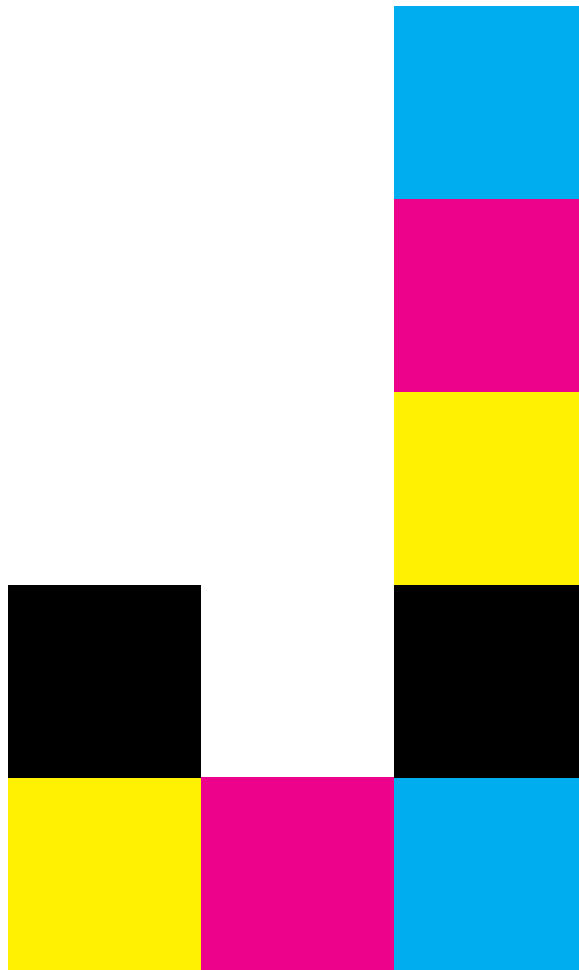


# A REALLY GOOD DAY FOR AN ECONOMIST

JOSH ANGRIST '82 WAS A DISMAL STUDENT  
UNTIL HE DISCOVERED ECONOMICS. WHEN HE  
HELPED DISCOVER A WAY FOR ECONOMISTS TO  
DETECT WHAT'S RELEVANT IN A FIELD OF  
COMPLICATED DATA POINTS, HE WON A NOBEL.

BY ALEX BLUMBERG '89 | ILLUSTRATION BY MATT CHASE





JOSH ANGRIST '82 WILL BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU that when he was in high school in Columbus, Ohio, he was a pretty terrible student. The only class he liked was a vocational course—print shop—where he learned silkscreening and typesetting. His grades weren't great. He barely graduated. He didn't go to college; he instead spent the years after high school working full-time in jobs that didn't require a degree.

Four decades later, he won the Nobel Prize for economics.

A lot of stuff happened in between, of course. One of those things was Oberlin College. During the time Josh was working (a series of gap years, before anyone called them that), he applied to Oberlin. "When I finally did go to Oberlin," Angrist says, "I took an econ class that I loved."

It was an intro class taught by Bob Piron. "I thought he was a great teacher," Angrist says. "He had a confrontational style that kept the students on their toes. And he was also very funny."

Angrist was immediately taken with economics, the way it took on topics of immense public interest while applying a mathematical rigor. "It was engaged with current affairs in a way that I thought was deep and sophisticated."

Did I mention also that Josh Angrist really didn't like math? See, that's ironic because, well, here's just

one example of the kind of work that won him the Nobel:

$$E[Y_i - Y_{0i} | D_i > D_{0i}] = \frac{E[Y_i | Z_i = 1] - E[Y_i | Z_i = 0]}{E[D_i | Z_i = 1] - E[D_i | Z_i = 0]} = \frac{\delta}{\pi_1 - \pi_0}$$

What happened was that once Josh saw the ways math could be applied in economics, he dedicated himself to catching up. He took calculus, game theory, and linear algebra. "I sort of worked my way up from mediocre math student who was failing calculus to one of the top economics students at Oberlin." He was invited to do honors, which was "kind of like being a PhD student." And from that point, he was on his way. A PhD from Princeton. Teaching posts at Harvard and Hebrew University, a full professorship at MIT, and then in 2021, the Nobel.

So, about the Nobel. The reason the editor of the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* asked me to write this article is because I cofounded a public radio podcast about economics called *Planet Money*, which breaks down complicated economics concepts into everyday language. I'm going to try and translate Josh Angrist's formula from math into English.

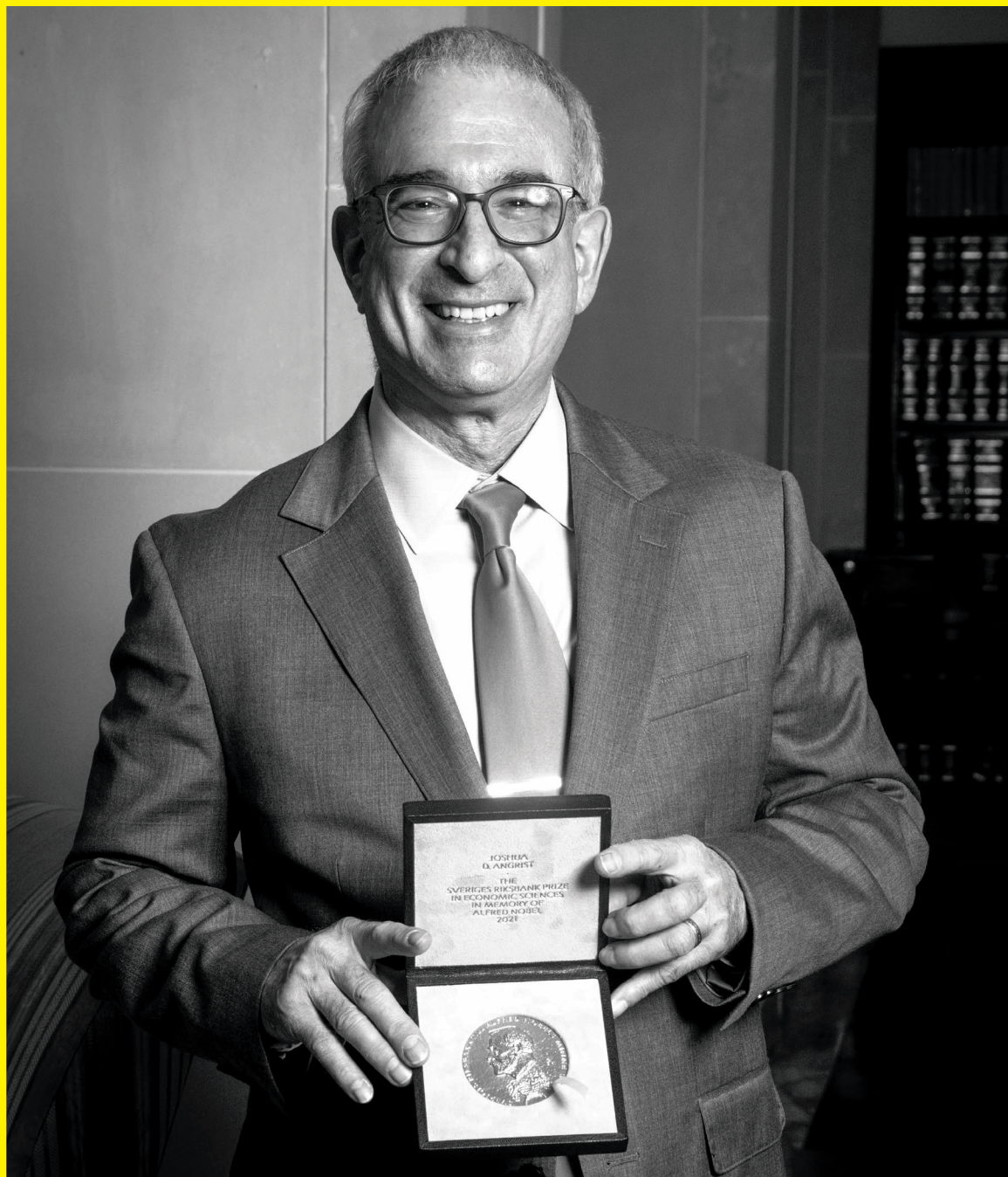
Let's start at the beginning. How do we know if things work? In many fields of science, you answer that question with a randomized controlled trial, or RCT. You give medicine to 100 randomly selected people (the treatment group) and a placebo to 100 others (the control group). The treatment group and the control group should resemble each other except for that one key difference—the treatment group gets the medicine. If the treatment group gets better and the control group doesn't, you have compelling proof that your medicine works.

Economists love to do RCTs, but for many questions economists want to explore, RCTs aren't always possible to set up. Instead, economists look for what are called natural experiments. Suppose, for example, you want to find out if attending a highly selective public magnet school actually leads to better outcomes for students. You could compare test score data and see that the magnet school's test scores are higher than average. But this doesn't tell you why the magnet school scores are higher. Are they higher because of the excellence of the magnet school? Or are they higher because of the excellence of the students the magnet school selects—students who would score high no matter where they went to school? In other words, there's no control group. You can't take a hundred magnet school test-passers and put them in a regular school and then compare them with another hundred test-passers who actually went to the magnet school.

But! Economists have figured out a way to get something pretty close to a control group when dealing with the messy real world—something called a *regression discontinuity*.



**LATE BLOOMER**  
Angrist with his Nobel



One of my favorite economists, Emily Oster, who writes a regular newsletter called *ParentData*, explained it in a recent post. Imagine, she said, a magnet school where there's a test to get in. Comparing the kids in the school to the general population of kids doesn't tell you much, for the reasons above. BUT, you can learn a lot by comparing a smaller population of kids—ones who just barely got in, to ones who just barely didn't. Oster writes:

*Let's say the cutoff is 87 points. The kids who got 86 points and the kids who got 87 points are probably*

*quite similar, except that those with the 87 points got in, and the 86 did not. If you followed those two groups over time and compared their outcomes, you'd be a lot more confident attributing differences to their high school attendance.*

So let's say we wanted to answer this question: Does this fancy-pants school with its admission test actually help you earn more as an adult? We could compare a group of adults who were just-missers—who scored just under the cutoff, between 80 and 86—with a group of just-makers—who scored between



87 and 94. Oster shows how a graph comparing their wages might look, below.

All those dots on the left of the yellow line, those are the just-missers; to the right of the line, the just-makers. And sure enough, there's a big wage jump at the cutoff score of 87, from under 15 to almost 20. That jump, that is the regression discontinuity. It shows that the treatment—admission to the selective school—has an effect on wages beyond what you would expect to see as test scores increase. Society should do more of whatever's happening in that fake school.

But this doesn't just work in fake scenarios. Oster also cites a real-world example. Economists Douglas Almond, Joseph J. Doyle Jr., Amanda E. Kowalski, and Heidi Williams utilize a regression discontinuity to study the effects of medical interventions on low birth weight babies. Babies born at very low birth weights have a higher risk of getting sick and dying. So hospitals are much more careful with very low birth weight (VLBW) babies. Hospital staff check them more frequently and perform more screenings and diagnostic checks. Babies are considered VLBW if they weigh below 1,500 grams.

So the researchers above performed a regression discontinuity analysis on babies just on either side of that line. The group just under 1,500 grams got lots of intervention, the group just over 1,500 grams got less: Did it matter?

In a word, yes!

The y axis (the one that goes up—*I see you English majors*) is mortality rate. (See graph at right.) Higher is worse. The x axis is birth weight. The dot to the far left shows, as we would expect, that the tiniest babies have the highest mortality. Also, as we would expect, mortality improves as the dots move to the right and the babies get heavier. *Until we get to the magical cut-off number,*

*1,500 grams!* Babies just on the other side of that cut-off, the side that is heavier and should therefore be healthier, have *higher* mortality than the lighter and less healthy babies on the other side. This clearly indicates that all that intervention happening on the left side of the cut-off is working. And hospitals should do more of it, even on heavier babies.

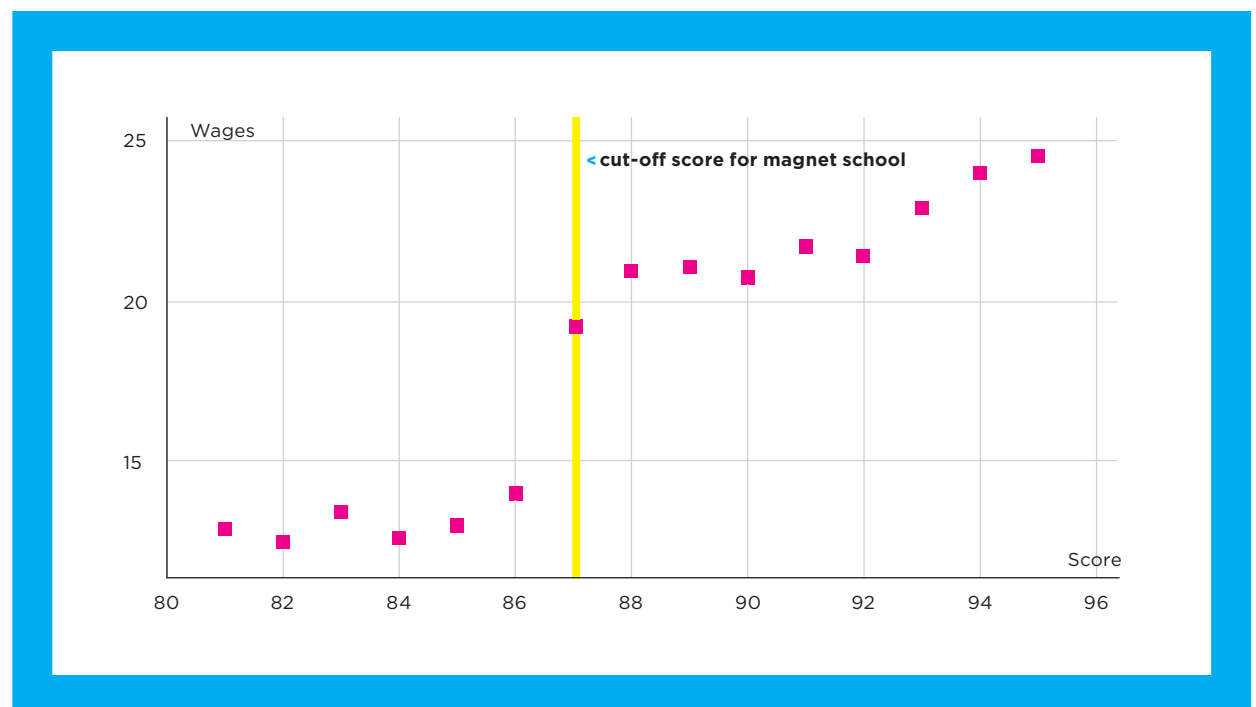
But what does this have to do with Josh Angrist's Nobel Prize? Well, as he put it in his acceptance speech:

*In his latest book, cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker writes: "When a data scientist finds a regression discontinuity, or an instrumental variable, it's a really good day." I like to think we made such days even better.*

Angrist and his co-winners, David Card and Guido Imbens, made those regression discontinuity discovery days better by developing a set of methodological tools, essentially, a lot of mathematical formulas like the one on the previous page, to help academics learn even more from regression discontinuity studies.

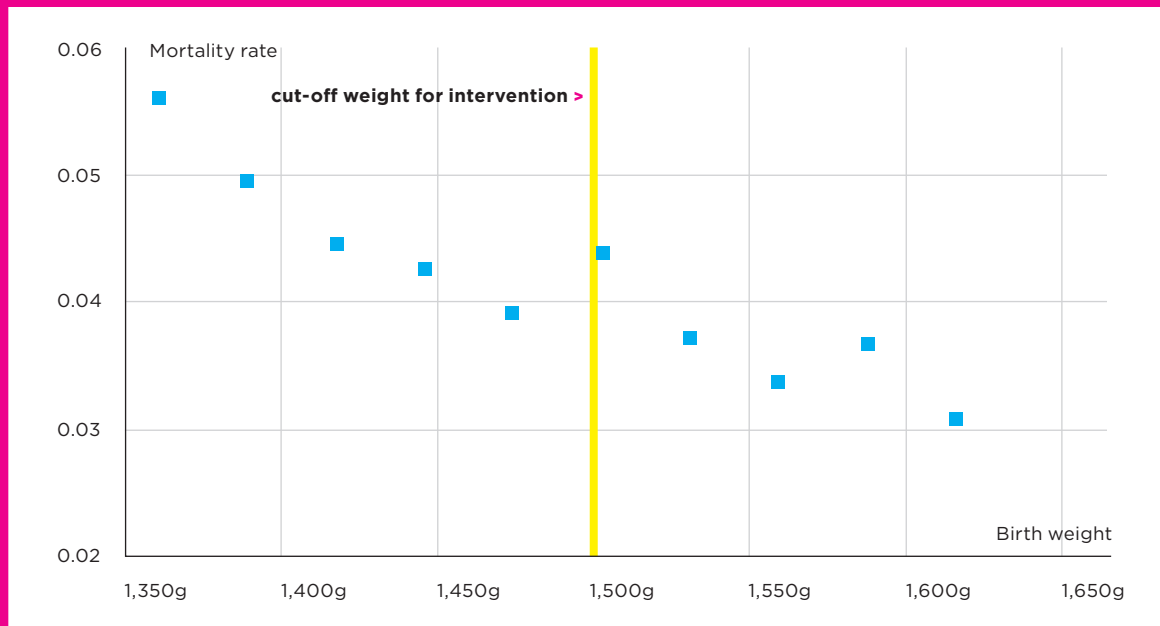
Consider this real world example. The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) runs a series of charter schools. (It was a KIPP school featured in the documentary *Waiting for Superman*.) Lots of people want to know: Do these KIPP schools work?

There is a way to do a regression discontinuity study to answer that question: looking at the KIPP waitlist. More families applied to the school than got in. The ones who weren't accepted were put on a waitlist. As spots opened up, families were called randomly and offered a spot. So, Angrist and his colleagues had the beginnings of a good regression discontinuity study—families on the waitlist who had one differing variable: whether or not they got the acceptance call.



An example of regression discontinuity: a significant wage jump between adults who, as children, scored just high enough for admission to a selective school and those who scored just below the cutoff.





Proof that medical intervention works: babies born at a weight just low enough to require lots of medical attention actually have a lower mortality rate than slightly heavier babies who received less intervention.

BUT. There was a problem. Unlike in Emily Oster’s pretend school, in this real school, when the variable—the acceptance call—separates the population, the population does not stay separated. The two groups—the admitted and the unadmitted—shift, blend, and switch places. People can originally accept a spot off the waitlist, but then reconsider and drop out. People who don’t get offered a spot can call and email the school every day and increase their odds of getting a spot through sheer force of will. The data—people—are messy. And therefore it’s harder to measure outcomes. If test scores improved, was it because the treatment group—the ones who got accepted—were helped by KIPP? Or was it because the treatment group was full of the offspring of highly motivated, get-what-they-want parents—the kind of kids who were going to do well wherever they went to school?

Angrist thought there should be a way to sort through this messy data. He talked about it with his friends and colleagues, including a friend at Harvard, a young economist named Guido Imbens who also happened to be his neighbor. “The laundry room for his building was in the basement of my building,” says Angrist, “so we would chat on Sunday mornings.” Two economists, doing laundry, chatting about econometrics. The chats continued and continued, until, says Angrist, “eventually, we proved the big theorem that the Nobel recognizes—the Local Average Treatment Effects [LATE] theorem.”

The LATE theorem, essentially, uses lots of fancy math to work with messy data and draw clean conclusions. It sorts through the mess by dividing groups further, into what Angrist calls always-takers, never-takers, and compliers.

Never-takers, in the KIPP schools example, are the ones who get the call off the waitlist but decline to attend. Always-takers are the opposite. As Angrist writes, they

“are dying to go to KIPP; if they lose the KIPP lottery, their mothers find a way to enroll them in KIPP anyway, perhaps by reapplying.”

And then there are the compliers. When the compliers don’t get in, they don’t fight it. When they get called off the waitlist, they accept. The compliers are the ones Angrist is most interested in studying; it’s the group upon which KIPP’s effect, if there is one, will be most pronounced. The always-takers, the ones most eager to get into KIPP, might be the ones who need KIPP the least. The compliers are where the greatest opportunity for improvement rests.

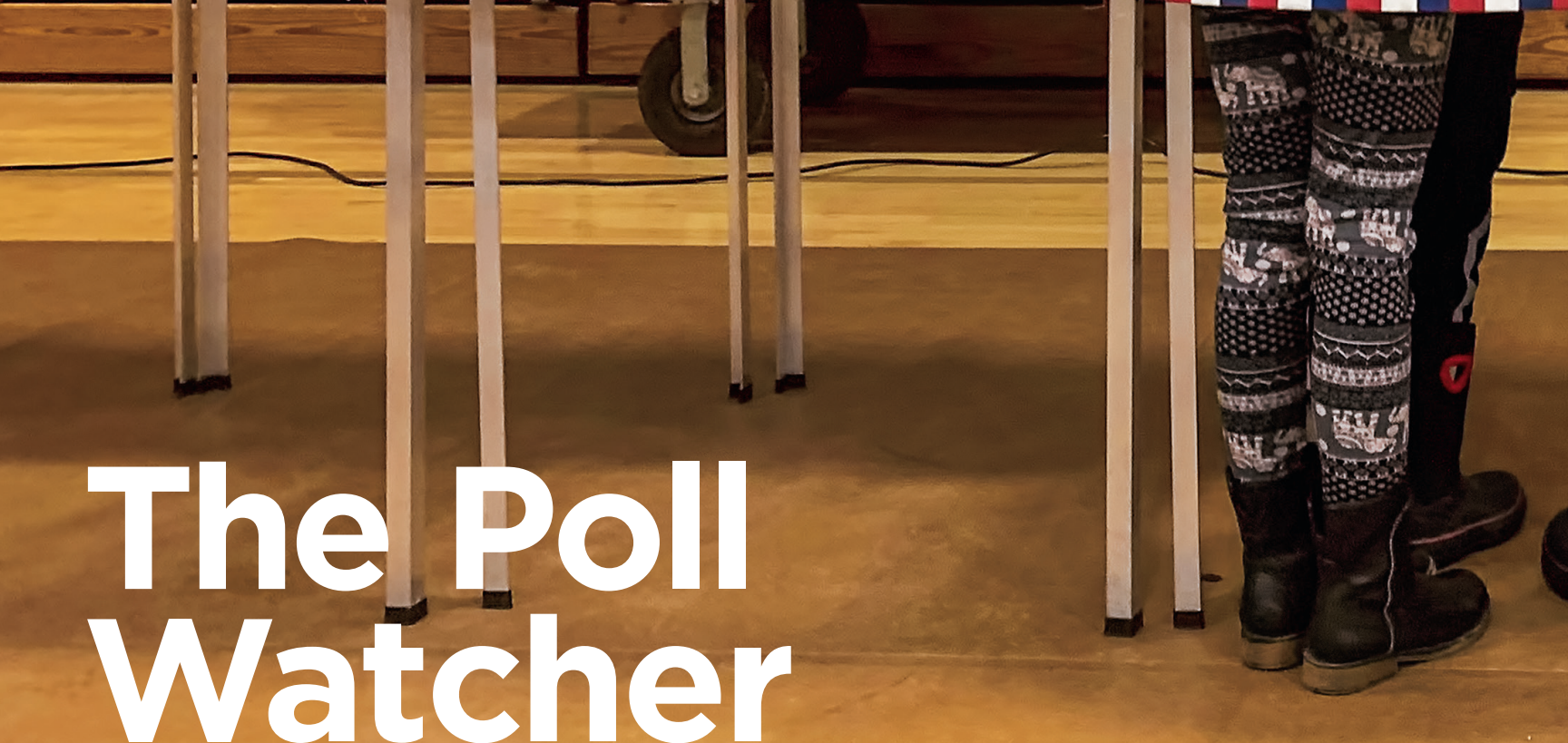
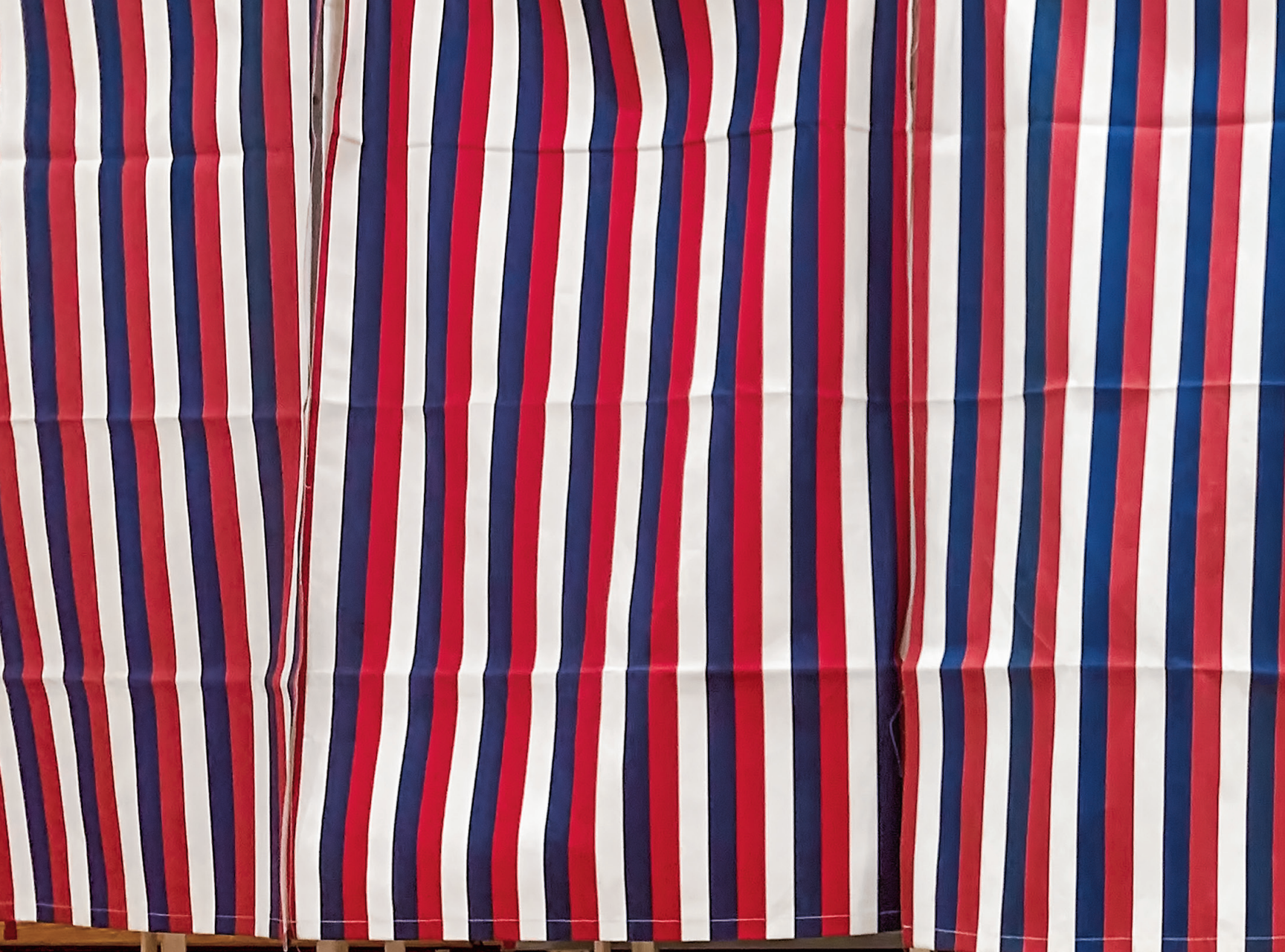
And sure enough, Angrist’s and Imbens’s work on charter schools showed that KIPP’s effect on this group was very large. Before enrolling in the charter schools, this group performed much worse than the average student. After enrollment, there was practically no measurable difference between this group and the KIPP population at large.

It turns out, if you figure out how to tell what kind of effect is happening on the compliers, you win a Nobel prize. “The fact that not everybody gets treated, that’s bedeviled the analysis of randomized trials for decades,” says Angrist. “We solved that problem.”

Not bad work for a kid who barely made it out of high school. “Guido and I always say, ‘Better LATE than never.’” Angrist says. He’s talking about the acronym for the theorem that won them the Nobel. But it applies to his own life just as well. ■

ALEX BLUMBERG '89 IS AN AMERICAN ENTREPRENEUR, RADIO JOURNALIST, AND FORMER PRODUCER FOR PUBLIC RADIO AND TELEVISION BEST KNOWN FOR HIS WORK WITH *THIS AMERICAN LIFE* AND *PLANET MONEY*. HE IS THE COFOUNDER AND CEO OF THE PODCAST NETWORK GIMLET MEDIA.





# The Poll Watcher





**Photojournalist Sue Dorfman '77 captures Americans exercising their right to vote at a moment when that right seems most imperiled.**

**TEXT BY CATHY SUNSHINE '75**





**S**HORTLY AFTER CONGRESS lowered the voting age to 18, photojournalist Sue Dorfman '77 cast her first ballot in Oberlin. More than 40 years later, her commitment to civic participation and voting rights would bring her back to Ohio to document the 2020 election cycle, along with visits to nearly two dozen other states. Dorfman logged more than 24,000 miles that year, mostly in an RV, as she crisscrossed the country photographing voters, poll workers, organizers, demonstrators, and candidates. "I wanted to show what participation in our democracy looked like in different parts of the United

States, and to tell the stories of those involved," she says.

The resulting photo narratives are part of her Documenting Democracy project, which includes a website and forthcoming book. The images show Americans registering, educating, and mobilizing voters; serving as poll workers and election monitors; casting ballots in person, by mail, and in drop boxes; counting ballots; and demonstrating their support for candidates and voting rights. As a nonpartisan project, Documenting Democracy doesn't advocate for specific candidates or parties, Dorfman says. "One of the underpinnings of our democracy is that we can hold differing political

views. I believe this perspective allowed me to be welcomed in a diverse array of spaces."

Growing up in upstate New York, Dorfman says she took for granted that everyone had the right to vote. Not until she photographed the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa in the 1980s did she realize that not everyone had that right—and that some had to fight and perhaps die to get it. A few years later she witnessed parallels between the anti-apartheid movement and the push against voter suppression in the U.S. South while documenting voter outreach and registration in Selma, Alabama. In the 1990s she returned to the South, Mississippi this

**ABOVE:** Knowing the wait to vote could be long, John Roberts brought a folding stool to the polls in Belleville, Pennsylvania.

**PREVIOUS SPREAD:** A teddy bear waits while its owners help their parent vote in New Hampshire's presidential primary.





**LEFT:** A woman stands on the Lincoln Memorial steps as the casket carrying the late voting rights icon Rep. John Lewis is about to pass by.



**RIGHT:** Caucus attendees in Fairfield, Iowa, hold up their first-round presidential preference cards to be counted. A candidate who receives the support of 15 percent of the people in the room is deemed “viable” and moves on to the next round of voting.





Nevada is the first western state to cast ballots for presidential candidates. This caucus-goer in Las Vegas awaits the count of the first round of voting. A candidate must receive 15 percent of the caucus votes to be considered viable.





**ABOVE:** The Lumbee tribe makes up more than one-third of Robeson County, North Carolina. Brittany Hunt is part of the group Women Advance, which provided food and nonpartisan encouragement to residents to vote.

**ABOVE:** Jai Bahri is one of thousands of volunteers who came to Georgia to get out the vote for Democratic candidates in the January 5, 2021, Senate runoff elections.



**LEFT:** Trump supporters who believe that he won the election line a traffic circle on Cape Cod on November 21, 2020.

time, and also traveled through Massachusetts to interview people in both states on what voting rights meant to them. The resulting film, *Dying to Vote*, was completed in 2004 and screened on the Oberlin campus that fall.

Dorfman chose to begin Documenting Democracy in Iowa, whose caucus kicks off each presidential nominating season. “Since I had no idea of what a caucus actually was or how it operated, I realized that the best way for me to learn—and to share what I learned with others—was to document it through photography.” She then headed to New Hampshire, which kicks off the presidential

primaries, followed by Nevada for that state’s caucus. Next up was the South Carolina primary, then Alabama, where she recorded voting rights advocates marching across Selma’s Edmund Pettus Bridge. Super Tuesday was spent at polling sites in Virginia. Working with the Election Protection coalition of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, she monitored how the spread of COVID-19 disrupted access to polling places during the early primaries. Despite the pandemic, she continued photographing electoral participation as the primaries were rescheduled and voters and election workers returned to the polls.

In deciding which states to visit, Dorfman relied on planning, networking, and serendipity. “I wanted to spend time in non-battleground and battleground states, particularly in often overlooked ‘flyover’ and Southern states,” she recalls. She chose some locations because of their political importance, and others because she was interested in a particular voting population, such as Native Americans in Minnesota. Sometimes it was just a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

For Dorfman, poll workers and poll watchers are the unsung heroes of the democratic process, and many of her images reflect their dedication. In 2020





**LEFT:** A volunteer for Mike Espy's Senate campaign carries a sign to place in a supporter's yard.



**ABOVE:** During the early evening hours of November 4, 2020, Madeline Young is in a festive mood at Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, D.C., as the vote count seems to be going Biden's way.



**ABOVE:** Poll workers wearing protective gear assist a voter in Baltimore. On April 28, 2020, a special election was held to fill the remainder of the term of Maryland Rep. Elijah Cummings, who died in office in 2019.

many poll workers chose to sit out the election cycle due to COVID-19 concerns, requiring replacements to step in. One who did not sit out was David Stamps, a long-serving poll worker she met in New Hampshire. He told her that if he caught Covid while working the polls and became gravely ill, he'd have no regrets for giving his life to ensure the integrity of our democracy.

Dorfman is a contract photographer for ZUMA Press, so her photos are picked up by international wire services and publications ranging from the *Wall Street Journal* to *Mother Jones*. The thread running through all her work, she says, is “social justice and the human spirit.”

She was in Georgia photographing the vote count for that state's Senate runoffs when the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol took place on January 6, 2021. Returning to D.C. ahead of the presidential inauguration, Dorfman watched and photographed as the nation's capital was transformed into a militarized zone, its downtown patrolled by some 26,000 heavily armed National Guard troops. Although the rhetoric around the November election outcome had been fraught, she says, “I never expected to see roadblocks and steel fences ringed with concertina wire surrounding the U.S. Capitol on Inauguration Day.”

In 2022, Dorfman is still on the road.





**TOP RIGHT:** On the morning after a pro-Trump mob stormed the U.S. Capitol to stop the election certification, a lone protestor raises U.S. and Gadsden flags. He has written “4 martyrs” on the U.S. flag in reference to four people who died during the January 6 insurrection.

She wants to explore the impact of recent changes to state voting laws—both those that advance democracy and voting rights and those that suppress them. Several Supreme Court decisions, beginning with *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder* in 2013, have weakened enforcement of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, allowing states to change their voting laws without prior federal approval. “We’re in a new era in which voting rights are both expanding and contracting. I want to know how these changes will affect attitudes toward civic participation and people’s thoughts on where to go from here,” she says. “The ability to cast a vote, to select a candidate to

represent one’s views, and to have lawfully cast ballots count is the cornerstone of our democracy. The U.S. electoral system is flawed and fragmented. Who can vote, and how and when, is determined by vastly different state and local laws. Yet people register, make calls, knock doors, and head to voting booths and ballot boxes, all to make their voices heard.” ■

CATHY SUNSHINE '75 IS A FREELANCE WRITER AND EDITOR IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

SEE THE DOCUMENTING DEMOCRACY WEBSITE AT [HTTPS://DOCDEM.SUEDORFMAN.COM](https://docdem.suedorfman.com). PHOTOGRAPHER SUE DORFMAN '77 IS EAGER TO CONNECT WITH ALUMNI WHO ARE WORKING IN VOTING AND ELECTIONS. CONTACT HER VIA THE PROJECT'S WEBSITE.

**ABOVE:** Sue Dorfman stands outside her RV. On the van’s window is a replica of the U.S. postage stamp commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote.

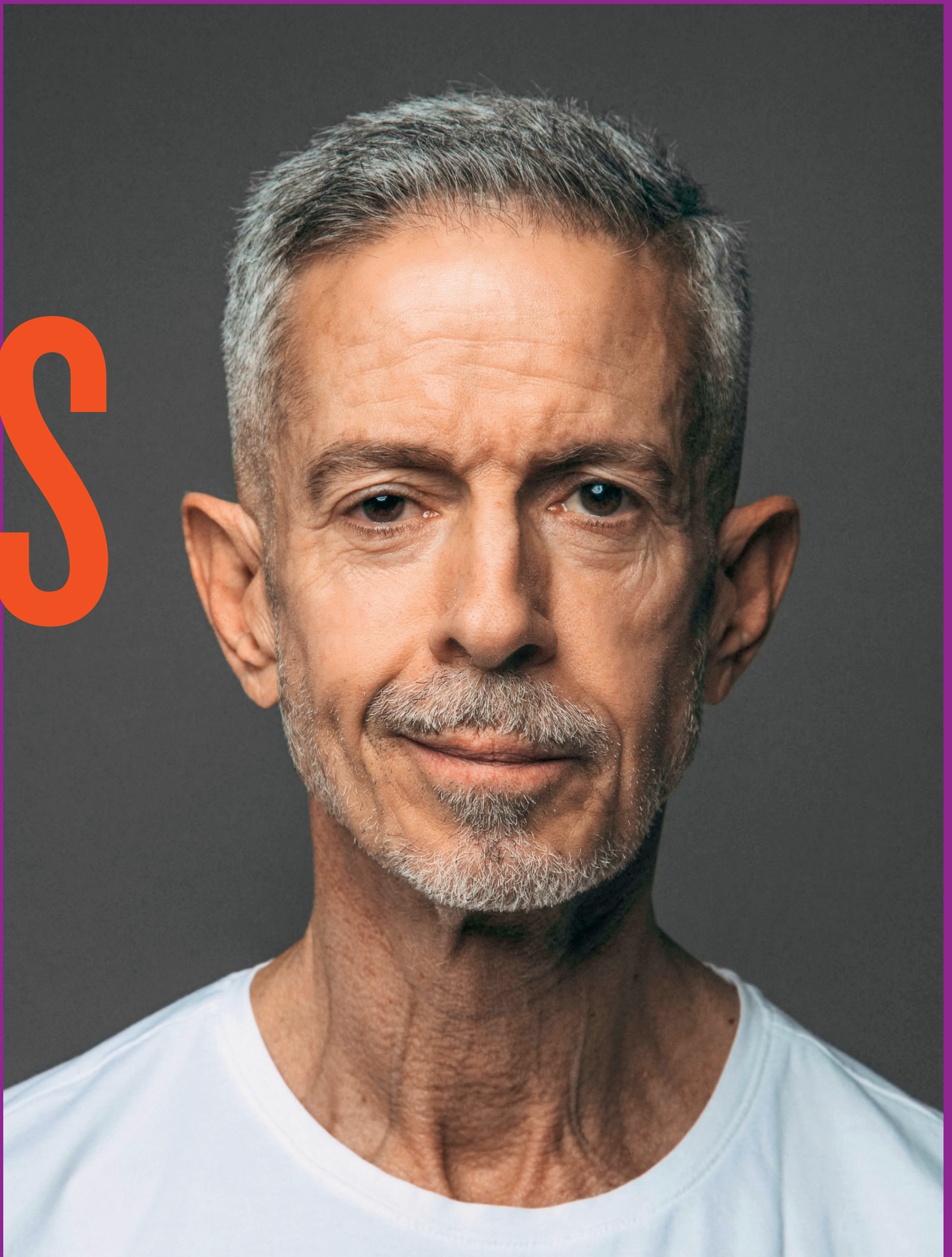


# PETER STALEY SECOND ACT

PETER STALEY '83 MADE HIS NAME WITH CONFRONTATIONAL AND SOMETIMES OUTRAGEOUS ACTIVISM TO BRING ATTENTION TO THE AIDS CRISIS. HE MAY BE A LITTLE QUIETER, BUT AS HIS NEW MEMOIR ASSERTS, HE'LL NEVER BE SILENT.



'S





# IF DOCUMENTARY FILMS

may be said to have stars, then Peter Staley '83 was one of the stars in *How to Survive a Plague*, David France's 2012 history of the activist group ACT UP during the worst days of the AIDS crisis. Newly diagnosed as HIV-positive in 1987, Staley joined ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) shortly after it was formed; in one of the film's many affecting scenes, he sadly shakes his head while saying, "I'm going to die from this."

Instead, he lived to tell the tale, and he does so beautifully in *Never Silent: ACT UP and My Life in Activism*, published in October by Chicago Review Press. One of the book's many highlights is a description of how Staley conceived and carried out a plan to cover the house of bigoted Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) with a giant condom.

Other memorable ACT UP actions or demonstrations include the gathering of survivors who threw the ashes of their dead loved ones on the White House lawn, shutting down trading on the New York Stock Exchange, occupying the Food and Drug Administration, and invading the corporate headquarters of drug manufacturer Burroughs Wellcome. Staley spotlights many of these episodes in his book.

His activism continued after the glory days of ACT UP. Confronted by his own addiction to crystal meth, Staley used his own money to launch an ad campaign to increase awareness in the gay community of the connection between meth and HIV infection. More recently, he has provided behind-the-scenes support to his old friend (and sometime rival) Anthony Fauci, who has become the target of conspiracy theories while trying to stanch the COVID-19 pandemic. And in *Staley v. Gilead*, an antitrust case currently making its way through the legal system, he is still working to make HIV drugs available at lower cost to those who need them.

Writer Greg Varner '84 talked with Staley last fall.

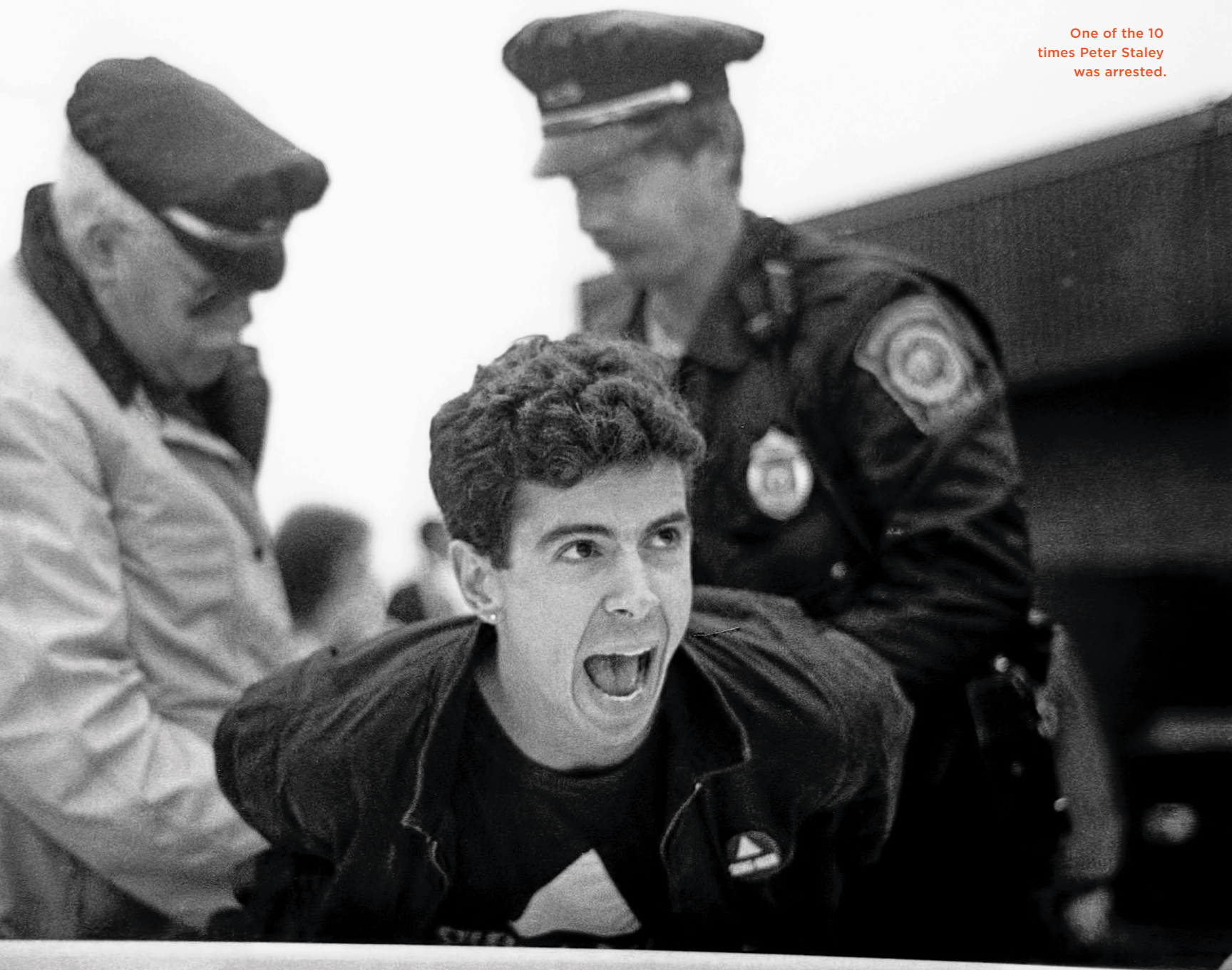
## Why did you write this book?

After *How to Survive a Plague* came out in 2012, quite a few people started nudging me to write my own version of my story, so there was that kind of challenge in the back of my head, and I realized there was a clock ticking on my memories. But the real impetus was the flood of people reaching out to me who were very inspired by this history. And I knew as great as *How to Survive a Plague* was, only I could tell my story my way.





One of the 10  
times Peter Staley  
was arrested.



**You write that you found Oberlin's acceptance of gayness a huge and refreshing change from your life before Oberlin.**

I didn't include a lot of my gay life at Oberlin. My first year, I stayed firmly in the closet. After going to London in my second year, I started going to the meetings of the Gay Union. I met my first boyfriend at one of those meetings, and we kissed under one of the beautiful flowery trees on campus. I remember that very

clearly. My first kiss was in London, but my first romantic kiss was with someone I started dating at Oberlin.

**How did your time at Oberlin influence your activism?**

One of the things I loved about my time there was getting stoned with other students in a dorm room and talking about politics. I got good at having heated arguments with people to the left of me, which was something that I had to be good at in ACT UP.

**People unfamiliar with the history described in your book may come away from reading it thinking you took part in a handful of famous demonstrations: the stock exchange, the condom on Jesse Helms' house, the invasion of the Burroughs Wellcome headquarters. How many actions did you take part in that aren't in the book?**

Dozens. I got arrested 10 times. There were actions that I organized that were very

complex that didn't make it into the book. The one where we blockaded Astra Pharmaceuticals, totally shutting down any access to the complex, with activists handcuffing themselves under multiple U-Haul trucks, was a very complex action that I organized which made it into the huge *60 Minutes* piece on ACT UP, but didn't get mentioned at all in the book because it would have been thematically repetitive.



**You have said that your years with ACT UP were surreal. Why?**

I think that when a lot of people look back on the so-called plague years, the standard narrative is centered on death and dying and stigma and the horror of it all. But for those of us who got through those years, there's a flip side to that coin.

The flip side is that we were like the French Resistance, doing missions impossible all the time—great feats of daring that were very exciting. And we were all having sex, and we didn't think we'd live that long, so we lived life to the fullest. We took what time we had left and went all out. Between all the funerals and taking care of those who were sick, there was extraordinary joy, especially in witnessing what I'm convinced was the most amazing moment in queer history: to see a community that unified and organized and determined. I think it was queer America's greatest moment, and to be a part of it was surreal.

We owned the Downtown scene back then. Night life was at its peak in New York in the '80s and early '90s, and ACT UP was at the peak of that night life. Whatever our members decided was the best place to dance, that was the best place to dance in New York. We would go out every week and fill these clubs. The highs were really high.

**Did you intend for your book to be a how-to manual for activists?**

No. I don't think there's a standard template, but I do think that stories of activism have an amazing ability to inspire, and there are certainly lessons that can be learned. But all movements create their own new playbooks, based on the time they happen and the tools that are available to them at that time. What I do tell is how this movement mentored me. I was this clueless closet case on Wall Street who didn't know a thing about the gay political world in New York City, and within months of joining ACT UP, I

realized that when I went to our meetings, I was part of something far larger than what was happening on those Monday nights. We were a chapter in a larger book of history that was beautiful.

If you look at homophobia as measured by a long-term Gallup poll starting in 1977, AIDS created a backlash against us that was getting worse, and even the rollout of the Quilt in 1987 didn't slow that backlash down, but ACT UP did. The homophobic line dropped over 20 points and stayed down for a good five years, and I think it was because we shattered the American myth of the homosexual—that we were weak and timid and would cower in a corner. Instead, we were on the national news every month for years, fighting back, determined, organized. And it got wrapped up with a very sympathetic storyline in the press about how we had formed all of these organizations to take care of our own because the government was just ignoring us and letting us die. But those stories didn't happen until ACT UP forced AIDS onto the nightly news for a good three years nonstop. And the money for AIDS research absolutely soared: By 1990, ACT UP's third year, it was over a billion dollars a year, and other groups were complaining about the powerful AIDS lobby. We went from being despised and left to die to being a powerful AIDS lobby.

**Are you optimistic about today's AIDS activism?**

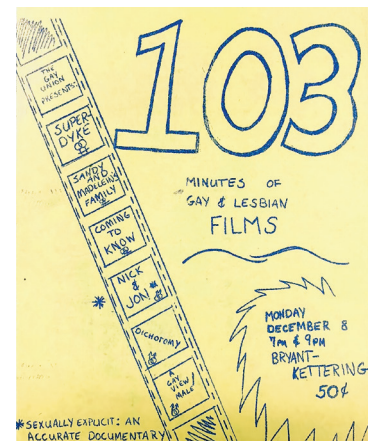
I call it kind of a frustrated optimism. There's definitely powerful contemporary AIDS activism around the unfinished business of ACT UP, which was preventing HIV infections. We have the tools now to do that. And we no longer question whether we have the wherewithal to get things done if we put a little elbow grease into it. Today, we have the tools to pretty much stop HIV in its tracks, both within an individual and within a community, as long as we can convince the powers that be to



invest a little money up front to save a huge amount of money and a lot of lives down the road.

And we've been able to do that in real time, and that's incredible! San Francisco now has less than 100 infections a year. We need to have a party and dance in the streets over that. It's extraordinary! New York City has had double-digit decreases for years now. In Washington, D.C., it's the same. Blue areas of the country are getting HIV under control while red areas are letting the fires continue to burn, and that's the frustration. How do we replicate what the blue areas are doing nationwide?

And we're slowly trying to figure that out. We actually



Staley spotted this 1980 flyer on campus and says it changed his life. "I figured I could sneak in after the lights were turned down, find a seat in the back, and see what I had been missing out on most of my life," he writes in his memoir. "Boy did I ever."





Staley atop the awning of the Food and Drug Administration, when ACT UP shut down the building for a day in October 1988. Anthony Fauci, Staley's friend now, but a rival at the time, is pictured at left, under the red lettering GUILTY.

convinced the Trump administration to launch a national HIV prevention program that was crafted initially in Tony Fauci's head and now is law and has buy-in from the Biden administration and Republicans alike. The group I'm involved with now, the PrEP4All Collaboration, has a magic opportunity over the next three years to work with a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that is more HIV-friendly than any CDC in history. So, if we can't get shit done in the next two years, with the hundreds of millions of dollars that are being appropriated now for HIV prevention, then we don't deserve to call ourselves activists.

And the great thing is that most of the activists doing this are millennials, and they're much more diverse than ACT UP ever was. We are a lean, mean, fighting machine, and there's very little infighting. So, I find today's activism very rewarding and exciting. I'm glad these younger folks are letting me tag along for the ride.

**You recently said that ACT UP would fail if the AIDS crisis happened today, assuming the same levels of homophobia. Could you elaborate?**

ACT UP's biggest success was in the impact it made on American consciousness. We actually did change hearts and minds

nationally. We guilt-tripped the whole country into saying, "Whoa, we might not like the gays, but this isn't cool that we're letting thousands of them die." And within months we got to a point where 80% of Americans were saying that the U.S. government should spend more on AIDS research. That would be impossible to do today, when you can't get 80% of the country to agree on COVID vaccinations.

Today, we see political polarization and the breakdown of a shared set of facts. There's been a fairly fast and persistent breakdown of the epistemological floor, to the point where it's only a minority now in this country that understands what facts are and

what facts aren't. And once that hits a minority level, it becomes very hard for any movement to get traction. We've seen the climate change movement fail for a couple of decades now because of that, because the Republican party turned against that movement. Today on Fox News, ACT UP would be attacked just like Black Lives Matter was, raked over the coals and marginalized. We would never be able to convince 80% of Americans to do anything.

**On a certain level, I view your activism as an expression of love. You wanted to stay alive, sure, but that's a backhanded expression of your love for your life and society. And your work also made the world a better place for everyone, which seems a loving thing to do.**

I've always been open that I came to ACT UP for selfish reasons, but within months, HIV wasn't the only thing that had bitten me. I got bit by this beautiful movement. We knew we were going to change history. What we were doing was not about us, it was about huge numbers of people that we didn't know. Ever since, I've been doing activism that has very little to do with improving my own life. It's a very powerful way to live. Now I'm doing all this COVID activism targeting the Biden administration.

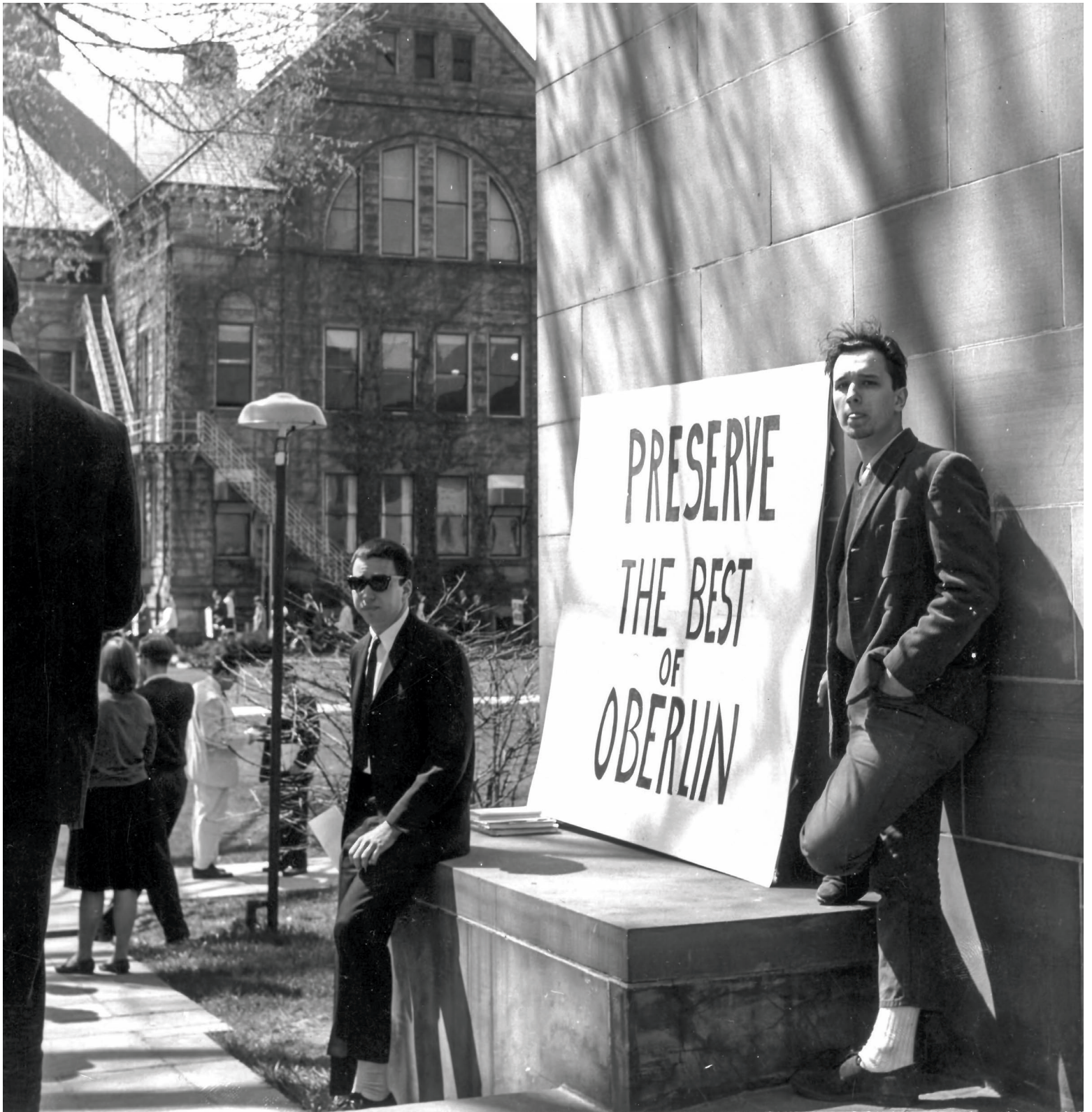
**What's your nutshell definition of activism?**

Activism is about how, if you're not a politician, all the rest of us can create change. ■

GREG VARNER'S WORK HAS APPEARED IN THE WASHINGTON POST, OUT MAGAZINE, NERVE, AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS. HE LIVES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



# Class Notes

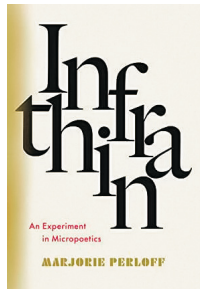


**CARR CLASH** Student unrest in the spring of 1963 dominated the headlines of the *Oberlin Review*, as students challenged the administration on a number of issues, including what they saw as restrictive social rules and policies they feared would rob Oberlin of its uniqueness. More than 500 students, most clad in business attire, surrounded Finney Chapel during the spring assembly speech of President Robert Carr to “dramatize dissatisfaction with recent campus trends in a quiet and orderly manner,” according to its organizers. Student protesters objected to the construction of “large and standardized” dormitories and the lack of student voice in the decision-making process. They carried signs saying “End Creeping Ivyism,” “Participation, Not Paternalism,” and, as seen above, “Preserve the Best of Oberlin.”



# 1950s

1953



Literary critic **Marjorie Perloff** completed the book *InfraThin: An Experiment in Micropoetics* (University of Chicago Press), named for artist Marcel Duchamp's term for

the slightest shade of difference. Also new is her collection *Circling the Canon, Volume I: The Selected Book Reviews of Marjorie Perloff, 1969-1994* (Recencies Series: Research and Recovery in Twentieth-Century American Poetics). Marjorie is an emerita professor of humanities at Stanford University and of English at the University of Southern California.

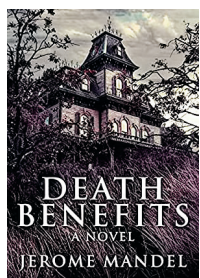
1954

**Jim Wolf** reports that **Phil Hanawalt's** visit to Boulder, Colo., in September 2021 resulted in a mini class reunion that included Jim, **Alice "Weezie" Bradley**, and **Harry Poehlmann**.

1956

Retired music educator **Kathy Kauffman** credits her spinet piano for helping her through the pandemic. She moved to the Dearborn, Mich., senior community Beaumont Commons with her partner, Bob Brynes, three years ago. The spinet had belonged to Bob, who died in August 2019. "I think my playing helped others, too, because they would sit outside my apartment to listen," says Kathy, who also indulges her artistic side through a creative writing class and by leading singalongs with other residents.

1959



**Jerome Mandel's** dark novel *Death Benefits* was published by Next Chapter in June 2021. "I wrote it as a blockbuster, so it's not a touchy-feely, good-time book," Jerome reports. "But

one friend stayed up until 3 in the morning to see how it ended." [w] [mybook.to/dbjm](http://mybook.to/dbjm)

# 1960s

1961

**Bruce Richards**, who taught in the Oberlin physics department for 40 years and is president of his class, reports that he and his family celebrated the 107th birthday of his father, **Walter Richards '37** in December, a month before the patriarch died. Walter is pictured at the party with son **Mark Richards**; Mark's wife, **Barbara Geisler Richards**; Bruce; and son **Christopher "Kit" Richards '67**. Walter's late wife, **Jeanne Lesser Richards '37**, and most of his siblings are also Oberlin alumni.

1962

Works by Cleveland-based composers **Margaret Brower** and **Dolores White '54** were performed at a December 2021 concert called "Cycles of Creation and Annihilation," presented by Blue Streak Ensemble and Burning River Baroque at Cleveland's St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The concert featured Margaret's *Light* and Dolores' *I Breathe Poetry* alongside Baroque music. ■ Eighty paintings were included in an **Alice**

**Dalton Brown** retrospective that spans 55 years of her output. The exhibit took place from July to October 2021 at My Art Museum in Seoul, South Korea, and was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy there. Alice enjoyed three weeks in residence at the museum in late summer. ■ **Dave Eberhardt** won the Enoch Pratt Library/*Little Patuxent Review* prize for poetry in 2020. Dave retired in 2010 after a 33-year career in what he calls the criminal injustice system. He was incarcerated at Lewisburg Federal Prison for pouring blood on draft files in 1967 to protest the Vietnam War. ■ Three works by artist **Annie Shaver-Crandell** were included in the Salmagundi Club of New York's fall auction, which happened in October 2021.

1967

**Lillian Lynk Fleming** and **Joe Hyman** became friends waiting tables at Oberlin and have capitalized on pandemic technology to reminisce. Joe lives in California, where his passions include his grandchildren and family, literature, and riding his road bike in the early morning on hills overlooking the ocean. Lillian, a Chicago resident since graduation, is widowed with no children and enjoys the company of her rescued dog, Barney. She served for 28 years as a





## Class Notes

geography professor at Wilbur Wright College and enjoys international travel. She recently visited her former roommate, **Elizabeth Hatton Darrow**, for an exhibition of Elizabeth's paintings in Wilmington, N.C. Together they had dinner with **Lynn Herndon '72**. Elizabeth's work can be explored at [ElizabethDarrowArt.com](http://ElizabethDarrowArt.com).

### 1968

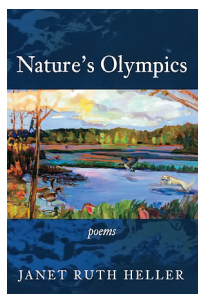
**Donald Barr**'s book *Crossing the American Health Care Chasm: Finding the Path to Bipartisan Collaboration in National Health Care Policy* (Johns Hopkins University Press) argues that teamwork is essential to improving U.S. health care. Ultimately, Donald asserts, the divide is more dangerous than ever. To learn more about the book, visit [jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu](http://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu).

## 1970s

### 1970

**Lydia Seifter** created a YouTube tribute to late pianist Leon Fleisher, inspired by his legendary interpretation of Brahms' D Minor Concerto. Fellow Obies who took part in the tribute include **Marian Hahn '71**, **Robert Merfeld '67**, **Spencer Myer '00**, and the late **Albert Stanziano '69**. [w] [youtu.be/tYdSj\\_2U8K4](https://youtu.be/tYdSj_2U8K4) [e] [seifterlydia@gmail.com](mailto:seifterlydia@gmail.com)

### 1971



**Janet Ruth Heller**'s new book of nature poems, *Nature's Olympics* (Wipf and Stock), consists of four sections dedicated to the seasons. Poetic forms include haiku, tanka, sonnets, and free verse. "Like many

writers, I find that the natural world inspires insight into human life," Janet says. Also included are works that probe the intersections between nature and politics, feminism, and religion [w] [wipfandstock.com/9781666730739/natures-olympics](http://wipfandstock.com/9781666730739/natures-olympics) and [www.janetruthheller.com](http://www.janetruthheller.com)

### 1972

**Douglas Anderson**'s first novel, *In Madison's Cave* (Frayed Edge Press, 2021), is Thomas Jefferson's imaginary "explanation



of himself" to fellow patriot John Adams, who had once requested as much in a series of correspondences with Jefferson. The book considers early American history that has affected the state of today's government and politics, education, race relations, and other themes. Douglas earned an MA and PhD from the University of Virginia. He taught college for 40 years, mostly at the University of Georgia. He is the author of the nonfiction books *The Unfinished Life of Benjamin Franklin* (Johns Hopkins, 2012) and *The Introspective Art of Mark Twain* (Bloomsbury, 2017). He lives with his wife in Portland, Ore.

### 1973

**Sherry Brigham Siddall** published her first book, a poetry chapbook titled *Sweet Land* (Finishing Line Press). Her work has also appeared in *Tar River Poetry*, *Kakalak*, *Pinesong*, and *Poetry in Plain Sight* and has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize. She is enjoying retirement in Chapel Hill, N.C., where she has lived with **Bill Siddall** since 1975. **Carol Douglas Henderson '74** is a neighbor and good friend. [w] [www.finishinglinepress.com/product/sweet-land-by-sherry-siddall](http://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/sweet-land-by-sherry-siddall)

### 1974

**Ted Heavenrich** enjoyed a road trip with classmate **Jim Eisenstein** up the coast of Maine. "While we were in Southwest Harbor, we visited with our old quantum mechanics professor, Joe Snider," Ted writes. "Jim also did a lot of solar research with Joe in the summers at Kitt Peak." Jim is an emeritus professor at the California Institute of Technology. Pictured left to right: Joe, Jim,



Ted. ■ **Joyce White** was named Friend of Thai Science 2020 by Thailand's Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation. The honor recognizes her decades of research on the archaeology of Thailand and especially her work on the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ban Chiang. With collaborators, Joyce is authoring a monograph suite on the ancient metallurgy of Ban Chiang and other Thai prehistoric sites, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. She also recently coauthored "The Metal Age of Thailand and Ricardo's Law of Comparative Advantage" in the journal *Archaeological Research in Asia*. She has been conducting research in Laos since 2001, and she remains the first and only American archaeologist to establish a field research program there. In 2013 she founded the nonprofit Institute for Southeast Asian Archaeology and serves as its executive director. Joyce lives in the Philadelphia neighborhood of University City.

### 1975

**Keith McCown** is the 2021 recipient of the Cushing-Gavin Award for exemplary





Orolowsky '75

service to labor management efforts in Massachusetts. Keith works for the firm Morgan, Brown & Joy. The honor is presented by the Boston Labor Guild. ■ **Dzvinia Orlowsky** translated a collection of works by

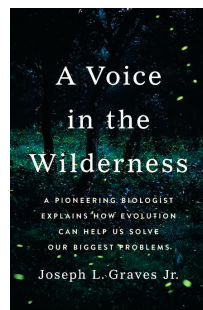
Ukrainian poet Natalka Bilotserkivets. *Eccentric Days of Hope and Sorrow* is the eighth volume in the Lost Horse Press Contemporary Ukrainian Poetry Series. ■ **Debra Wise** authored the ebook *Underground Railway Theater, Engine of Delight & Social Change*, which tells the story of the first 25 years in the history of the theater company Debra cofounded in Cambridge, Mass., with Wes Sanders, an Oberlin faculty member from 1967 to 1978. At 43 years old, it is one of the longest-running regional theaters in the Boston area. Debra is in her 34th year as artistic director. [w] [URTheaterEbook.com](http://URTheaterEbook.com)

## 1976

**Janet Hunt** served as an organ coach to actress Debra Christofferson (pictured at right with Janet) for the New Line Cinema release *Salem's Lot: Second Coming*. The movie was filmed in Massachusetts and is scheduled for release in September 2022. ■ World music pioneer **Adam Rudolph** has issued his 12th release with Go: Organic

Orchestra, his concept for a “future orchestra” he launched in 2001. *Resonant Bodies* draws on the talents of eight guitarists from New York City (and no fewer than 108 foot pedals) whose collective experience includes working with Wilco, Cassandra Wilson, Ornette Coleman, and more. “I have never heard music like this before,” Adam says. “Each of these outstanding artists played with so much imagination and soulfulness. I am grateful.”

## 1977



**Joe Graves Jr.** completed three newly published books: *Principles and Applications of Antimicrobial Nanomaterials* (Elsevier, 2021); *Racism, Not Race: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*

(Columbia University Press, 2022), in which he and coauthor Alan Goodman tackle common misconceptions about race, human biology, and racism; and *A Voice in the Wilderness: A Pioneering Biologist Explains How Evolution Can Help Us Solve Our Biggest Problems* (Basic Books, 2022), which, he says, “describes my time at Oberlin.”

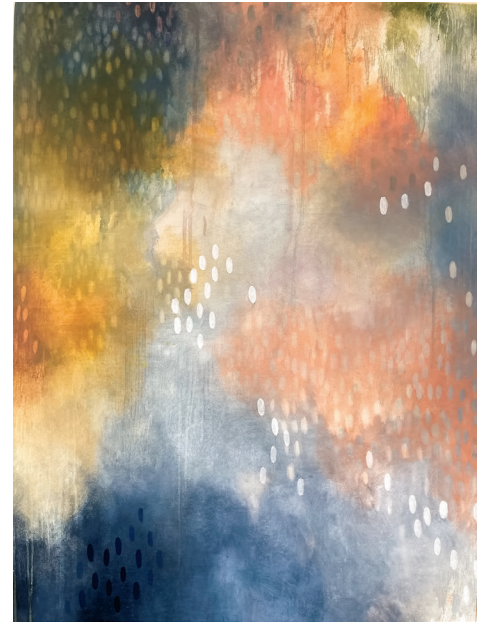
## 1979

**Sule Greg Wilson** co-wrote a pair of books over the past two years: *Funky Banjo Level One* and *Funky Banjo Level Two*. “*Funky Banjo* is dedicated to three things: bringing banjo playing in its many forms to the public, teaching reading skills, and documenting and expanding the African American heritage of the banjo,” Sule says. [w] [www.FunkyBanjo.com](http://www.FunkyBanjo.com)

# 1980s

## 1980

Artist and educator **Michel Droge** is a visiting artist in residence at Bigelow Laboratories for Ocean Studies in East Boothbay, Maine. There she meets regularly with scientist Beth Orcutt, who studies microbial life in deep-sea environments and the effects of deep-sea mining on the ocean’s ecosystems. Their collaboration has resulted



Droge '80

in Deep Sea, an ongoing project investigating the effects of deep-sea mining on the ocean’s and world’s ecosystems. An exhibition of paintings from the project took place in the fall of 2021 at the Maine Jewish Museum in Portland. [w] [www.micheldroge.com](http://www.micheldroge.com)

## 1981

Freelance editor **Kate Levine** tutors elementary schoolchildren who struggle with reading. She works through Reading Results, a nonprofit that collaborates with the public schools of Portland, Ore. ■ After 10 years as a freelance musician and educator in central and northern Virginia, **David Norfrey** relocated with his wife and began working for a nonprofit foundation in New York City. “While music is not currently my day job,” he writes, “I have continued working on a long-term project of writing and recording original songs and arrangements from my personal faith journey, which is strongly connected to my Oberlin experience.” [w] [paracletecollaborative.com](http://paracletecollaborative.com)

## 1982

**Jane Millikan** became pastor of the Congregational United Church of Christ in Valley City, N.D.

## 1983

**Maria Green Cohen** just completed the Ohio Listening Tour, a six-month project of the Ohio Department of Education aimed at



hearing the thoughts of grade-school teachers, students, and parents about their experiences learning through the pandemic. Maria is an impact officer and director of research at the PAST Foundation. Results of the study will inform future Ohio education policy. ■ **David Forman**'s first book-length translation, *The Clever Little Tailor*, is a children's book issued in a Yiddish-English bilingual edition with new illustrations. It was written in 1932 by David's grandfather, Solomon Simon. [w] [www.davidrforman.com/the-clever-little-tailor](http://www.davidrforman.com/the-clever-little-tailor) ■ **Mike Metlay** recently published his first book, *Synth Gems I*, a guide to synthesizers as art, which is geared toward serious synth enthusiasts as well as newcomers. [w] [bjooks.com/products/synth-gems-1-exploring-vintage-synthesizers](http://bjooks.com/products/synth-gems-1-exploring-vintage-synthesizers) ■ **Wendy Uhlmann** writes that she is "finding it hard to believe that I have turned 60 and know that many classmates have reached or will soon reach this milestone birthday. We're still young, right?" Wendy was elected to the board of directors of the American Society of Human Genetics for a three-year term beginning January 2022, the only genetic counselor serving on the board and one of only two to serve over the last two decades.

### 1984

**Cedric Merlin Powell** earned the University of Louisville's Distinguished Faculty Award, the university's highest teaching honor. Cedric is the Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs Professor of Law. One nominator described him as a "law professor's law professor."

### 1985

**Charles Courtsal**'s book *Revolutionary Girl* (NFB Publishing, 2021) is the true story of Elizabeth Wilson, a teenager who served as a spy for General George Washington at the start of the American Revolution. "The main character in the book is a relative of mine," Charles notes. "Her story was carefully detailed in a diary, written in 1887, that I inherited about a decade ago. When I read the story for the first time, I thought, 'This is too good to be gathering dust in my basement.'" [w] [www.amazon.com/dp/1953610978](http://www.amazon.com/dp/1953610978) ■ **Lâle Davidson** published *Strange Appetites*, a collection of magical realist short stories, which won the Adirondack Center for Writers People's Choice Award. Her debut novel, *Blue*

*Women Burning*, came out at the end of last year (both books are from Red Penguin Books). Lâle's stories have appeared in *The North American Review*, *The Collagist*, *Fickle Muse*, and *Big Lucks*, among others. Her story "The Opal Maker" was among the Wingleaf Top 50 Very Short Fictions of 2015, chosen by Roxane Gay. Lâle has taught writing and public speaking for nearly 30 years at SUNY Adirondack. [w]

[laledavidson.com](http://laledavidson.com) ■ **Edna Wallace** traveled from the Bay Area to Seattle in August 2021 to visit her first-year Oberlin roommates **Heidi Hooper** and **Mari Maruyama**, a long ways and time from when they lived together in a South Hall quad. Heidi is a psychologist in Berlin, Mari is executive director of a Japanese American student-exchange program in Seattle, and Edna is a psychotherapist. Also joining the fun was Heidi's sister, **Heather Hooper '86**, a physician associate in Seattle.

### 1986

**Carl Freire**'s translation of *Providence Was With Us* (JPIC, 2020) recounts the life of late Japanese physician and humanitarian Nakamura Tetsu and covers his work with patients suffering from Hansen's disease and later in building a canal for subsistence farmers in Afghanistan. Outside his work as a self-employed translator, Carl and his partner, Yuko, live in Tokyo and look after their feline companion, Grey.

### 1987

**Dan Furman**'s original musical, *The Joe Hill Revival*, was presented by Brooklyn Tavern Theater in New York. It tells the story of labor activist and songwriter Joe Hill, who was framed and executed by the state of Utah in 1915. Joe directs the theater, which specializes in immersive experiences in



Wallace 85

which the audience is encouraged to dine and drink during the show—and perhaps become a part of it.

### 1988

**David Diepenbrock** was named among the Best Lawyers in America for 2022 and *Sacramento Magazine*'s Top Lawyer 2021. David specializes in commercial litigation and real estate with the firm Weintraub Tobin.

## 1990s

### 1992



Kim '92, Smith '92

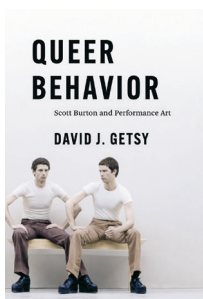
Toronto-based performance artist **Jess Dobkin**'s exhibition *Wetrospective* was presented by the Art Gallery of York University in September 2021. "I've been thinking a lot about how to undo, redo, reimagine, represent, activate, upcycle the archive," Jess writes. "For my purposes, I'm not interested in the archive as a presentation of historical documents. I am interested in how it can be performed. How it can be in conversation with the living present and also speak to the future." ■ **Kyung Hyun Kim**'s new book, *Hegemonic Mimicry: Korean Popular Culture of the Twenty-First Century* (Duke University Press, November 2021), considers the recent global success of Korean popular culture—the Korean wave of pop music, cinema, and television—from a transnational and transcultural perspective. Kyung Hyun is a professor of East Asian studies at the University of California, Irvine. [w] [www.dukeupress.edu/hegemonic-mimicry](http://www.dukeupress.edu/hegemonic-mimicry) ■ **Derek James Smith** has published his first science fiction book, *Technoconvergence*, using the pseudonym James Smith. [w] [technoconvergence.com](http://technoconvergence.com)



## 1993

Economist **Darrick Hamilton** spoke at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute in December 2021 in a virtual event open to the public. His lecture argued that racism, sexism, and other “isms” have been used strategically throughout human history to consolidate economic and political power for some at the expense of others. “But we can make a different political choice: an economy grounded in values of inclusion, human dignity, sustainability, and shared prosperity,” he asserts. [w] [www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2021-darrick-hamilton-lecture-virtual](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2021-darrick-hamilton-lecture-virtual)

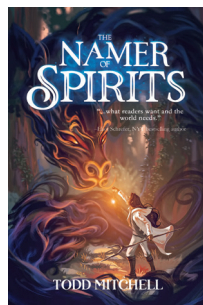
## 1995



**David J. Getsy** was named the inaugural Eleanor Shea Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia. For the past 15 years, he has taught at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago,

where he was Goldabelle McComb Finn Distinguished Professor of Art History since 2011. His fourth book, *Queer Behavior: Scott Burton and Performance Art* (University of Chicago Press), will be published in May 2022. Two of its main case studies are Burton’s Bronze Chair (in the collection of the Allen Memorial Art Museum) and an important 1973 performance at Oberlin.

## 1996



Mitchell '96

**Doria Hughes** co-curated an in-person/virtual hybrid exhibition of the work of late painter **Rosemarie Beck '44** at Kenkeleba House in Lower Manhattan in the fall of 2021. The show was presented

by the Rosemarie Beck Foundation, where Doria is the archivist and collection manager. Doria’s daughter Ariana Hughes is a member of the Class of 2022. [w] [tinyurl.com/ps94j7mu](http://tinyurl.com/ps94j7mu) ■ Two books by **Todd Mitchell** were published in fall 2021, both by Owl Hollow Press. *The Namer of Spirits* is a

steampunk eco-fantasy (for ages 9 and up) that’s been optioned for film/TV development. *Breakthrough: How to Overcome Doubt, Fear, and Resistance to Be Your Ultimate Creative Self* is for writers, artists, and creators who know what it’s like to struggle with bringing new things into existence and who want to enhance their relationship with creativity. [w] [toddmitchellbooks.com](http://toddmitchellbooks.com)

## 1997

In November 2021, **Elizabeth Askren** collaborated with the Dallas Opera and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra on fostering leadership and inclusivity in classical music. Her involvement includes serving as a master teacher at the Dallas Opera’s Hart Institute, which addresses the gender imbalance of leadership in opera, and as a guest speaker for the Dallas Symphony’s “Women in Classical Music” symposium. ■ **Damin Spritzer** was promoted to associate professor at the University of Oklahoma after being named area chair of the organ department in 2020. Damin has recorded five CDs for Raven Recordings, performs regularly, and is active with the Organ Historical Society, the Association of Anglican Musicians, the Organ Media Foundation, and the American Guild of Organists Dallas and Oklahoma City chapters. She earned degrees from the Eastman School of Music and the University of North Texas.



Spritzer '97

## 1998

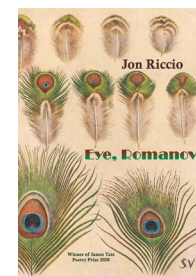


Bliss '98

**Jackson Bliss’** collection of experimental short stories, *Counterfactual Love Stories & Other Experiments* (Noemi Press, 2021), focuses on mixed-race/Asian American and Pacific Islander identity in the American Midwest

and more broadly examines the ways in which stories can be told, challenged, celebrated, and subverted. Jackson lives in Los Angeles with his wife and their two dogs. The book can be found at [www.noemipress.org](http://www.noemipress.org). ■ **Thomas Hitoshi Pruiksma** authored a new translation of Tiruvalluvar’s *Tirukkural*, a Tamil masterpiece of poetry and practical philosophy published by Beacon Press (2021). Each chapter consists of 10 short verses, or kural, on a single theme, and addresses questions of ethics, power, and love that are more relevant today than ever. Thomas’ books include *The Safety of Edges* and *Give, Eat, and Live: Poems of Avvaiyar*. He lives in Seattle, where he teaches writing for Cozy Grammar. ■ **Hanna Miller Raskin** was a winner of Substack Local, a \$1 million global initiative to advance independent local journalism. She used her grant to launch *The Food Section*, a newsletter covering food and drink across the American South. Hanna is a former food editor of *The Post and Courier* in Charleston, S.C., where she lives.

## 1999



Riccio '99

**Jon Riccio’s** chapbooks *Prodigal Cocktail Umbrella* (Trainwreck Press) and *Eye, Romanov* (SurVision Books) were recently published, the latter as a winner of the 2020 James Tate Contest. ■

**Jenny Waldo’s** first feature film, *Acid Test*, premiered at the Austin Film Festival in October 2021 and also appeared at the Twin Cities Film Festival. It’s an adaptation of a short film Jenny screened at the 2017 fest. She lives in Houston, where *Acid Test* was





### OBIES ARE STILL OBIES

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic I was, like many of you, working out of my dining room. Visiting the *Oberlin Review* website became a part of my weekly routine, and in September 2020 I encountered this little gem in the Security Notebook section:

“9:50 p.m. Officers responded to a report of underage students drinking alcohol at the bandstand in Tappan Square. The students were located and identified. Beer was confiscated and disposed of. All students were practicing social distancing and wearing masks.”

We don't know the names of the students, but I'm sure all of us can picture that scene in Tappan Square. They were probably stressed out about academic deadlines, tired of being confined to their dorm rooms. Maybe there were some athletes present, trying to process the disappointment of seeing their seasons cancelled. I felt reassured by that three-sentence security report because I could picture a 19-year-old me under that bandstand, drinking Genesee Cream Ale. It comforts me to know that despite all the ways our lives have been turned upside down during the pandemic, Obies are still Obies. I've met many of them. They're as original, gifted, and goofy as we were. They still question authority. Their need for justice is still baked into their DNA. The kids are alright.

But the needs of the students are changing and, like it or not, Oberlin is changing to meet these needs. Perhaps there are some aspects of your Oberlin experience that made it so Oberlin for you, but which may not be priorities for students now. Our alma mater once had a seminary, and students had to attend daily chapel, but the practice wasn't meeting the needs of students and was phased out, thankfully. Obies today graduate with mountains of student debt and need to find jobs, quickly. Many of us got to where we are today by way of serendipity and luck. Today's Obies don't have that luxury.

And memory is a funny thing. I catch myself romanticizing my life at Oberlin, but if I'm honest with myself, by today's standards I was not as hip or forward-thinking as I'd like to think. When my son came out as transgender, I was forced to confront my own transphobia, which went unchallenged even at Oberlin. My evolving identity as an Asian American has led to the later realization that Oberlin's cooperatives in the 1980s tended to be white spaces. This human urge to look back on the good old days and make sacred the things that were most important to us reminds me of why “conserve” is at the root of “conservative.”

Oberlin wasn't perfect then, and it's not perfect now, but it's trying to be, and you can help it get there. But the way forward is not by hiding behind your keyboard and taking potshots at each other on social media. It's through Obie-to-Obie dialogue. If you see something distressing on Facebook, do some investigating to see the big picture. If you disagree with someone, call them. Don't lecture but listen to understand. And if you can't find common ground, agree to disagree. That's the Oberlin that I remember and choose to conserve.

Young Kim '85  
*President, Oberlin Alumni Association*

created. She graduated from the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. [w] [www.jennywaldo.com](http://www.jennywaldo.com)

## 2000s

### 2000

**Sarah Freeman** was named director of exhibitions of the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center in her native Vermont, where she oversees the artistic and curatorial facets of the museum's contemporary art exhibitions. After graduating, she worked for museums in New York, London, and Glasgow before beginning at Brattleboro as exhibitions manager in 2015.

### 2001

**Meg Ansara** was named director of AmeriCorps VISTA. She previously worked at Stand for Children and was the CEO and a founding partner of 270 Strategies, where she founded and led the company's education practice. She has also worked on senate and gubernatorial campaigns, served as cofounder and senior advisor for Organizing Corps 2020, was a national regional director for the 2012 Obama for America campaign, and was a forest firefighter in Oregon. ■

**Edward Parsons** became VP of artistic programs with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra in January 2022.

### 2002

**Stephen Clink** and **Benjamin Bunte '08**, directors of the Flower Mound High School Orchestra, hosted Oberlin viola professor Peter Slowik for a clinic and master class at the Texas school. Pictured left to right are **Gail Blazier Bowers '05**, who is a teacher in the program, and Stephen, Peter, and Benjamin.

### 2003

**Kenneth Bean** was appointed assistant conductor of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and will lead rehearsals as conductor of the Symphonic Orchestra of the Youth Orchestra of Central Jersey, PSO's youth orchestra partner. Kenneth earned a master's degree in music education from Jackson State University and is an instructor and conductor in the Philadelphia area and an active trumpet player. ■ **Meg Morley** is conducting research in Cairo on the





Clockwise from top left:  
Clink '02, Kaplan '07, Vogl '07,  
Oelsner '07, Zamcheck '07



changing dance industry in Egypt with support from a Fulbright U.S. Student Award. The topic is the basis of her doctoral dissertation in anthropology from Indiana University. She is joined by her husband, **Jeff Porter '06**, who is taking a break from his career in theater, and their two cats.

## 2005

**Ori Fienberg's** collection of prose poems, *Old Habits, New Markets, won Elsewhere Magazine's* chapbook contest. It contains a supernova, preexisting conditions, infrastructure for the construction of a national sonnet, a minotaur seeking a real estate agent, the world's smallest lion, wheat pennies, more than 1,000 feet of hair, and much more. ■ **Mary Larew** was appointed executive director of the Saint Paul Conservatory of Music. Mary is an accomplished violinist, an award-winning composer, and a seasoned arts administrator who previously worked as a teaching artist, a Suzuki violin instructor, and in roles with

numerous community music organizations. She moved to Saint Paul from Connecticut with her family. She earned an MA in arts administration from Teachers College of Columbia University and a PhD in directing medieval music dramas from the University of York.



## 2007

**Julia Doctoroff** and husband Matt welcomed their daughter, Sidney, in March 2021. She was born at the Royal London Hospital, which is featured in the TV series

*Call the Midwife*. ■ **Sari Bourne Kaplan** and **Matt Kaplan** of Piedmont, Calif., welcomed a baby girl, Maya Georgie Kaplan, on September 24, 2021. She joins big sister Mackenzie. ■ Indie-pop musician **Amy Oelsner** won the 2020 Indiana Emerging Artist Award. She is the founding director of Girls Rock Bloomington, a nonprofit music and mentorship organization for girls, trans, and non-binary youth. She lives in Bloomington with her husband, Justin, and daughter, Robin. [w] [amyoelsner.com](http://amyoelsner.com) ■ It's been a busy year for artist **Julia Vogl**. She was part of a group exhibition at Eltham College's Gerald Moore Gallery in London in summer 2021. She served as a mentor to young artists through a public art initiative of the Tate Collective, with their final projects on display at Tate Modern into 2022. Her video installation *Still Dot Moving* was exhibited in a special show presented by London curator and designer Rebecca James. And her screen print *Spontaneous Planning* was included in the Royal Academy's



## Class Notes

summer exhibition *Reclaiming Magic*, an annual celebration of contemporary art and architecture. ■ **Ariela Zamcheck** married **James Dylan Rees '11** on October 9, 2021, in Windham, N.Y. Ariela is a family medicine physician and public health specialist working in student health at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., where Dylan is a lecturer and research scientist in electrical engineering. They met while Ariela was completing a fellowship with the New York State Department of Health. They couldn't be happier to have found each other and to combine their Oberlin families. Obies in attendance included (from left to right) **Sasha Margolis '90** (whose band The Big Galute was hired to play the wedding and whose Oberlin background was only discovered just before this photo was taken), Dylan, **Renee Jakaitis Trafton**, Jon Good '06, **Sara Rizik-Baer**, **Meredith Dowling '06**, **Fajer Saeed Ebrahim '13**, and Ariela.

### 2008

**Thomas Buck** married Maria Papaioannou on November 21, 2021, in Larnaca, Cyprus. They were joined by **David Buck '63** and **Anne Posten**. ■ **Leah Gage** is the drummer and vocalist for the Washington, D.C.-based punk band BRNDA, which released the record *Do You Like Salt?* on Crafted Sounds in August 2021—complete with cover art painted by New York-based artist **Brittany Jordan '09**. “Brittany and I are best friends and have been since we met in South Hall as first years at Oberlin,” Leah writes. “This collaboration took so much effort on her part and was so rewarding for us both.” [w] [www.brittjordanart.com](http://www.brittjordanart.com), [brendadc.bandcamp.com](http://brendadc.bandcamp.com), and [www.craftedsounds.net/salt](http://www.craftedsounds.net/salt) ■ Electronic musician **Noah Kalos**, known as MycoLyco to his 650,000 TikTok followers, was featured in *Rolling Stone* in November 2021 for his work connecting synthesizers to mushrooms and recording the results. [w] [vm.tiktok.com/ZM8tppCs3](http://vm.tiktok.com/ZM8tppCs3) ■ **Rachel Kelly Unger** and **David Unger '07** welcomed a son, Michael, on April 5, 2021. Michael joins big sister Rosemary, who was born August 7, 2019.

### 2009

**Melissa Wolfish Bekoff** married David Bekoff at a ceremony at the Ebell of Los Angeles on November 9, 2019. **Caitlin Praetorius**, **Melissa Bourgoin Garner**, and



**Claire Whitman '10** were members of the wedding party. Also in attendance were **Ezra Spier**, **Becky Bob-Waksberg**, **Christopher Gollmar '10**, **Ma'ayan Plaut '10**, **Eush Tayco**, and **Hillary Carter**. ■ **David Cyzak** received a number of grants, including the Middle Tennessee State University College of Liberal Arts Student Success Award for contributions to student success and an open education resource grant to create a free worldwide resource for students to advance their knowledge of reed-making and oboe pedagogy. David coordinates the institution's music industry program, which he helped bring into existence. ■ A collaborative artwork by **David Rueter** was featured in the 34th São Paul Bienal in Brazil from

September to December 2021. Titled *deposition* and produced with artists Marissa Lee Benedict and Daniel de Paula, the installation occupied a central position within the main exhibition of the Bienal and included salvaged remains of the Chicago Board of Trade's agricultures futures “trading pit.” The project was also awarded a Graham Foundation grant. ■ Violinist **Brendan Shea AD '11** and wife **Yerin Kim '10** released their first studio album, *The Sound and the Fury* (Blue Griffin). Yerin recently became a tenure-track assistant professor of piano at Central Washington University, prompting their move to the Pacific Northwest. They welcome contact from Oberlin alumni in the region. [w] [www.](http://www.)





Bekoff '09



Spier '09



Stidd '09



Mansour '10

shea-kimduo.com ■ **Ezra Spier**, Jackie Bousek '08, and **Louis Grube '08** (who felt equally embraced by the Class of '09) explored the American Southwest together for nine days in September 2021. Their trip stretched from Sedona, Ariz., to Park City, Utah, and included visits to numerous national parks and wonders of nature. They were joined along the way by **Constance Cave Grube '79** (who felt equally embraced by the Class of '80) and her husband, Michael Grube, retired managing director and scene designer of Oberlin's theater and dance department. In Utah, they met up with **Maya Silver '08** and **Dory Trimble '10**. Pictured left to right are Louis, Jackie, and Ezra at Horseshoe Bend, near Page, Arizona. ■ **Reva Stidd** married Jonathon Zinger at sunrise on June 1, 2021, in the heart of Washington, DC, where they met and live with their two dogs, Kasha and Willow. ■ Artist **Hannah Vaughan** launched a new "Crushed" collection that was part of WantedDesign Manhattan's Look Book 2021 program, which took place in November at Javits Center. Hannah's creations are the result of "sheer force and a hydraulic press," which are used to process and crush waste metal into furniture. [ig] @hannahvaughanstudio

## 2010s

### 2010

**Samia Mansour** married Fatjon Mani on June 26, 2021, in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. They were joined by many Oberlin friends including (from left): **Tim Dustin '08**, **Sarah Fisher '08**, **Talia Greenberg '15**, maid of honor **Abi Haren**, Fatjon, Samia, **Rachel Davidson '15**, and **Daveed Buzaglo '16**. ■ **Arden Surdam** and Meghan Gordon contributed to the new book *The Kitchen Studio* (Phaidon Press), a collection of recipes by artists from around the world. Their collaborative series, *Studio Cooking*, began in 2014 with the question *How do artists feed themselves while they are working in the studio?* "After devouring it from cover to cover, my dilemma is figuring out if it should be shelved with the cookbooks or with the art books. My guess is that I will need two copies," acclaimed chef and art collector Massimo Bottura wrote in his introduction to the book. [w] [ardensurdam.com/Studio-Cooking](http://ardensurdam.com/Studio-Cooking)





**2011**

**Colin Lynch** won the Masterwork Arts Foundation Organ Competition Award from an international pool of more than 20 competitors. The award is designed to aid with the career development of an emerging organist. ■ **Yidi Wu** was named a National Academy of Education Spencer Postdoctoral Fellow, through which she is completing a book on student activism in 1950s China and launching a new project on the transition of Christian schools to Communist universities. Yidi teaches history at Elon University.

**2014**

**Emily Marren** married **Jason Freedman** '16 on September 4, 2021, in South Tamworth, N.H., after meeting through Oberlin's ultimate team nine years earlier. Their wedding was attended by 31 Oberlin alums and included Jason's parents, **David and Laurie Tobey-Freedman** '78. Also present were **Michael Meyer** '77; **Major West** '78; **Josh Safier** '91; **Jeremiah Hay** '13; **Lily Samuel**, **Aidan Mullaney**, **Carmen Phillips**, **Alex Kapiamba**, **Quinn Schiller**, **Nikhil Kalathil**, **Chris Halsted**, **Eric Bronson**, **Rachel Simon**, **Nathaniel Bennett**, and **Rosalind Black**, all Class of '14; **Natalie Oswald** '15; **Ben Rabin**, **Alison Kronstadt**, **Conrad Schloer**, **Jay Francis**, **Elliot Sakach**, **Ally Fulton**, **Sarah Goldstone**, and **Sam Hume**, all Class of '16;

and **Anna Bauman**, **Ian Kelly**, and **Jackie Milestone**, all Class of '17.

**2016**

Jazz musician **Max Bessesen** moved from Chicago to New York City to pursue a master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music. He's also performing at a number of New York clubs. His partner, Camille, will continue nonprofit work for the Education Development Center. Max recently completed his second album, *Throughout: Music From the Aquarian Age*, and he received a project grant from the Luminarts Cultural Foundation to fund release shows for it. He welcomes advice, contacts, travel tips, food recommendations, etc. He writes: "If you're in New York, let's hang!" ■ **Tenor Colin James Doyle** won the Frances MacEachron Award from the Oratorio Society of New York as part of its 44th annual Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition Finals Concert in August 2021.

**2018**



**Shai Wolf** portrayed Henrik in 42nd Street Moon's production of Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* at the Gateway Theatre in San




Francisco in November 2021. Shai attended the American Dance Festival and is a 2019 graduate of the National Music Theater Institute at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Conn.; they also play cello with the Redwood Symphony.

**2019**

Pianist **Crystal Jiang** performed Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 19 in F Major as part of a Mostly Mozart program with the Symphony of Westchester (N.Y.) in November 2021. She is a graduate student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where she studies with Alon Goldstein.

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**Class Notes are prepared from a variety of sources, including news media reports, press releases, and other material sent to us. Send your news—and high-resolution images—to [alum.mag@oberlin.edu](mailto:alum.mag@oberlin.edu).**





# Oberlin Shines, Even at a Distance

LYNN KEITH-SWENSON KELLY '73

HANNAH PHOTOGRAPHY

**Adding Oberlin College to your estate plan is one of the many ways you can provide for the future of your alma mater. You can also make a gift of real property, arrange for gifts that pay you income during your lifetime, and direct contributions from your donor-advised fund.**

*I was attracted to Oberlin by its history, the availability of conservatory concerts and activities, and the people I found there. The co-ops were a significant part of my experience: I lived in Keep Cottage and ate at Harkness and Old Barrows. As an English major, I enjoyed exposure to a broad range of literatures and cultures, and I learned to think and write more clearly.*

*To me, Oberlin remains a beacon of principled thought and action. It embodies integrity and a*

*willingness to confront difficult choices. My hope is that many others will continue to be as nourished, supported, and awakened to new possibilities by the college as I was.*

*For these reasons, I've named Oberlin as a beneficiary in my will. Although I live in Australia, I was able to arrange for a charitable gift to be provided from my estate. It makes me happy to know that future students will benefit from these funds. —Lynn Keith-Swenson Kelly '73*

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Maria Miller and Alan Goldman in our Office of Gift Planning would be glad to discuss any of these options with you confidentially. Please contact them at [gift.planning@oberlin.edu](mailto:gift.planning@oberlin.edu) or at (440) 775-8599.

**OBERLIN**  
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# Losses

## Faculty, staff, and friends

Author, poet, social activist, and professor **bell hooks** helped to define, refine, express, and advocate for Black womanhood and expanded the reach and meaning of feminism through her writing, teaching, and public statements. She held a PhD from the University of California, Santa Cruz, for which her dissertation was on Toni Morrison. The first of the 30 books she wrote, the poetry collection *And There We Wept*, was published in 1978. It was followed three years later by *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, which in 1992 was named one of the 20 most influential woman's books in the last 20 years by *Publishers Weekly*. She was a member of the Oberlin College faculty for six years, arriving in 1988 as an associate professor in English and women's studies. She also taught at Yale, the City College of New York, and Berea College. In 2020, she was named one of the most influential women of the past century by *TIME*. Dr. hooks died December 15, 2021. ■ Athlete, coach, and physical education teacher **Joe Rider Horn '60** was inducted with the inaugural class into Oberlin's Heisman Club Hall of Fame in 1986. He earned a master's degree at Penn State University in 1961 and returned to Oberlin in 1963 to teach physical education and coach for the next decade, launching the school's ice hockey program during that time. He completed a PhD in physical education at Ohio State University in 1976 and went on to teach and coach for many years in the Lima, Ohio, area. His career concluded with induction in the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches Hall of Fame. As a student, he earned nine varsity letters at Oberlin, becoming an All-American in lacrosse and a Small College All-American Honorable Mention in football. Dr. Horn died May 1, 2021. He is survived by his wife, Jean Gray '60; two sons; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. ■ **Robert E. Warner** was a longtime professor of physics at Oberlin whose passion for his subject was rivaled by his joy in sharing it with his students. He blended his professional expertise with his love of music in a course on musical acoustics. Away from the classroom, he sang in the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and regularly performed as soloist at his church. He earned a BS from

Antioch College and a PhD from the University of Rochester. Before joining the Oberlin faculty in 1965, he served as instructor and assistant professor at the University of Rochester, Antioch College, and the University of Manitoba. He undertook sabbatical assignments at Oxford University, Michigan State, and the University of Notre Dame, and he was a visiting scientist at the Kemfysisch Versnellers Instituut in the Netherlands and at the University of Surrey in England. He became the Donald R. Longman Professor of Natural Science at Oberlin in 1995 and held that professorship until his retirement in 2002. In 1999 the American Physical Society honored Dr. Warner's contributions with its Prize for a Faculty Member for Research in an Undergraduate Institution. He died March 14, 2021, leaving his wife, Mary Ann; four daughters; seven grandchildren; five stepchildren; and many stepgrandchildren.

## 1939

**Marian Josephine Peckham Wade** was the longtime organist and choir director for the First Baptist Church of Schenectady, N.Y. She married Dale Hubert Wade in 1940 and was an active volunteer for many years, including service to her local food pantry, PTA, and the Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts. Ms. Wade died June 8, 2021. She was preceded in death by her husband and a son and daughter. She is survived by a son and daughter and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## 1943

The valedictorian of Hyde Park High School in Chicago, **Alice Eugenia Gutsche** pursued graduate studies in plant pathology at the University of Wisconsin. There she met and married David Gutsche, with whom she raised a family. She died November 2, 2020, leaving three children, three grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

## 1944

**Pauline M. Doudna** was a longtime member of and pianist for the Barnesville First United Methodist Church in Ohio and taught piano lessons for many years. She was a member of her garden club and a 37-year trustee for her local library. Ms. Doudna died January 1, 2021. She was predeceased by her husband,

William Doudna, and a daughter. She is survived by two daughters, two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

## 1945

**Karl Lemmerman** followed two brothers to Oberlin, entering with the Class of 1945 but taking two years leave to serve in the Navy, where he completed the Naval Electronics Training Program and served aboard a landing ship in the Pacific and China from 1944 to 1946. He returned to Oberlin using the GI Bill, married Kathryn Joslin '46 in Oberlin's Fairchild Chapel, and upon graduation, moved to Ithaca, N.Y., where he earned a PhD in physical chemistry from Cornell University. After Dr. Lemmerman was hired by Proctor & Gamble, the couple moved to Cincinnati, where they lived for 64 years in the same house and raised three children. When he retired in 1988, he and his wife traveled for more than 20 years. Dr. Lemmerman died May 18, 2021, leaving a daughter, son Karl '77, five grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of 74 years and son Keith '72.

## 1946

**Patricia Kennedy Ballou** devoted her career to library science, serving for 25 years at Barnard College, where she became a specialist in women's studies and authored two volumes: *Women: A Bibliography of Bibliographies* (1975, 1986) and *Thelma Ballou: From the Green Mountains to the Middle Kingdom*, a celebration of her mother-in-law, a missionary in China. She graduated from the Columbia University School of Library Science and worked for several years at the libraries of Brown University and City College of New York. She married fellow librarian Hubbard W. Ballou in 1948. The couple retired to Vermont, where Ms. Ballou was active in the Chester Historical Society and St. Luke's Episcopal Church. She died October 16, 2021, leaving two daughters, including Nancy Steffens '72, and a granddaughter. She was preceded in death by her husband.

## 1947

**Elizabeth Jane Frazier Karplus** was a nationally recognized science educator and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She earned a



master's degree in physics from Wellesley College and began her career typing manuals and conducting tests for early computer scientists Grace Hopper and John von Neumann and running Princeton University's radiochemistry lab. She married physicist Robert Karplus, and together they relocated to Berkeley, Calif., where he was a university physicist and she supported his research on science education and childhood reasoning capability. After her youngest child was born with cerebral palsy, Ms. Karplus completed a second master's degree in special education and spent 18 years as a high school resource specialist. She wrote on the topics of math education and was a pioneer in protecting rights of students with disabilities. Ms. Karplus retired in 1986 and for the next three decades poured her efforts into volunteering in Jamaica, China, Colombia, Michigan, California, and Washington, D.C., with the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and other groups. She died September 22, 2021, leaving seven children, 16 grandchildren, including Miriam Hellweg '01, and 16 great-grandchildren. Her extended family includes nine others who attended Oberlin.

#### 1948

**Gerald Runkle** enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a professor of philosophy and academic dean at Southern Illinois University. He completed a PhD at Yale University in 1951 and authored the books *Western Political Theory; Anarchism: Old and New; Good Thinking; Theory and Practice;* and *Ethics: An Examination of Contemporary Moral Problems*. In retirement, he enjoyed piloting his Cessna 152 and playing bridge. Dr. Runkle died June 21, 2021, leaving two daughters, five grandchildren, and one great-grandson. His death follows that of his wife, Audrey Colchin '47, and a son.

#### 1951

**Susan Frances Kessler Danforth** worked for 35 years at MidPenn Legal Services, retiring in 2011 as a paralegal and coordinator of the Lancaster (Pa.) Bar Association's Volunteer Attorney Program. The Lancaster Bar established the Susan K. Danforth Award for law firms in honor of pro bono contributions. Ms. Danforth died September 13, 2021. She was predeceased by her husband, Theodore Danforth '50, whom she

met at Oberlin. She is survived by their five children, including Teresa Danforth '74, 10 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. ■ After many years of volunteer service to the League of Women Voters and other groups, **Anne McKinne Heitkamp Eglinton** became executive director of the Family Service Society of Hartford, Conn., in 1971—the first of three executive positions she held with social service organizations. She served on Oberlin's student council and dormitory council, and became a cofounder of the Pyle Inn co-op. Her service to Oberlin continued long after graduation with roles in the Oberlin Alumni Council, including a stint as class president and as regional coordinator in New York and Connecticut. She earned a degree in social work from what is now Case Western Reserve University. Ms. Eglinton married Arthur Wolf in 1951, then married Douglas Eglinton '51 in 1979. She died August 13, 2021, leaving three children and a grandson.

#### 1952

**Anna Carol Dudley** was a singer and vocal teacher whose life of service was shaped through mission trips to India, a path inspired by her upbringing in her father's church and by her exposure to Shansi at Oberlin. She met her future husband, Richard Dudley, through Shansi, and she returned to campus after their first India trip together to follow her bachelor's degree in history with a master's degree in voice from the conservatory, earned in 1956. Ms. Dudley's vocal career spanned historical, classical, and contemporary arenas and included collaborations with artists such as Earplay and Kronos Quartet, directing vocal programs for the San Francisco Early Music Society, and teaching at San Francisco State University, Stanislaus State University, and the University of California, Berkeley. She died May 27, 2021, leaving her three sons, Shannon '82, David '87, and Justin '92, and five grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband. ■ The daughter of Oberlin graduates, **Judith Lee Griswold** found her own path in music through participation in Musical Union. After graduating, she performed in California and internationally with the Winifred Baker Chorale. She enjoyed a career as a teacher and social worker for foster children and volunteered as a court-appointed advocate.

Ms. Griswold died September 20, 2021. She is survived by her husband, David Hawkins; four children; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by one child. ■ **Lois M. Wright Hagen** was a second-grade teacher and financial aid advisor for Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Ill. In 1951 she married Tom Carroll, with whom she had three children. She later remarried Fred Hagen. She died October 30, 2021, leaving her children and eight grandchildren. She was predeceased by her stepson. ■ **Richard M. Ohmann** was a professor and provost at Wesleyan University and a pioneer in the development of cultural studies and the eventual "culture wars" of the 1980s and 1990s. He earned renown for his outspoken stance against the Vietnam War and his advocacy for the women's movement, which he espoused at the annual conference of the Modern Language Association in 1968, setting off a pivotal movement in the politicization of literary studies. He wrote the influential book *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (1996), which probed the effects of early mass marketing efforts on consumer patterns and body ideals. That same year, Lynne Cheney, the former chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the future second lady of the U.S., called him a dangerous radical in an essay for the *Wall Street Journal*. He earned a master's degree and doctorate from Harvard and began his career as a scholar of British literature. By the 1970s, Dr. Ohmann was writing a series of books exposing what he saw as the complicity of higher education in the perpetuation of class, gender, and racial hierarchies. He married Carol Burke in 1962, and they remained together until the 1980s, after which he remarried Elizabeth Powell. Dr. Ohmann died October 8, 2021. He was preceded in death by his second wife. He is survived by a daughter, a stepdaughter and stepson, and a step-granddaughter. ■ **Robert J. Thomas** was a professor of math and computer science at DePauw University for 33 years, teaching computer science before such a device had even found its way to campus and later serving as the first director of the computer center. His efforts were instrumental in the development of DePauw's computer science department. He earned a master's degree in public health



## Losses

from Indiana University and a master's in physics and a PhD in mathematics from the University of Illinois. Dr. Thomas died September 24, 2021, leaving two children, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of nearly 60 years, Doris Ruth Thomas.

### 1953

**Virginia T. Liao** was born in Beijing to parents working with the Presbyterian mission in China. The family eventually moved to Oberlin, where Ms. Liao earned her degree in education. A schoolteacher, she taught in Ohio and Wisconsin, among other places, before settling in El Cerrito, Calif., with her husband, David Liao. She died May 28, 2018, leaving a son. ■ **Thomas E. Patton** was a professor of philosophy at the University of British Columbia, where he specialized in formal logic and philosophy of language. He earned a master's and a PhD from Harvard. Upon retiring in 1996, he relocated to Guerneville, Calif., and married Nichae Blume, whom he knew through his college roommate and lifelong friend, Frank Blume '53. He enjoyed playing flamenco guitar and creating sound systems for family and friends. Dr. Patton died September 19, 2021, leaving his spouse, two sons, including Christopher '91, and two grandchildren.

### 1954

**Cynthia Meyer Grubb** began a teaching career in Palo Alto, Calif., before marrying Tom Grubb and relocating to San Francisco. She worked as a librarian at Schools of the Sacred Heart and was active with the Save the Redwoods League, Calvary Presbyterian Church, and the Oberlin Alumni Association. Ms. Grubb died December 22, 2020, leaving a daughter and two granddaughters.

### 1955

**Margaret Ann Kennedy** was an artist in a variety of media and an instructor at colleges in Indiana and Maryland. She earned a music degree from Wells College, followed by an MA in art history at Oberlin, a master of divinity from Earlham College, and an MFA from the University of Wisconsin. She lived and worked for nearly four decades in Burkittsville, Md., where she also served on the town council. Her areas of expertise included printmaking,

drawing, oil and acrylic painting, and stained glass, which can be found in the windows of churches across the Midwest and New York. Ms. Kennedy died September 23, 2021.

### 1956

**Robert Haskell Kelso** worked in accounting and finance for Arthur Young, Trans World Airlines, and American Airlines; later as CFO of the wax and petroleum company Moore and Munger; and finally as chair of Cross Oil. He served in the military, then graduated from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. In retirement, he wed his loves of travel and service as a member of the Citizens Democracy Corps in Bulgaria. Mr. Kelso died June 6, 2021. He leaves his wife, Luisa; two sons; and five grandchildren. ■ **Anndora Langeland Morginson** died October 28, 2020. ■ **Alison Wilder** earned a master's degree in library science and worked in libraries for more than 30 years. She was an active member of First Unitarian Church of Rochester, N.Y., for more than 55 years. Ms. Wilder died May 22, 2021, leaving her husband of nearly 65 years, Donald Wilder; three children; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

### 1957

**Harvey E. Hall Jr.** worked as a music therapist at the Cleveland State Hospital and Cleveland Psychiatric Institute. A musical prodigy, he earned a bachelor's degree in music from Morehouse College at age 19 and was accepted to graduate school at the University of Georgia, then rerouted by the forces of segregation to attend Oberlin instead, at the expense of the state. His Oberlin studies were interrupted by service in the U.S. Army in a musical role in support of his fellow soldiers, which launched his careers as an organist and music therapist. He served in musical roles at a variety of churches, including 26 years as music director at Trinity United Church of Christ in Cleveland. Mr. Hall died March 15, 2018, leaving his wife, Gail, and two sons, as well as two grandchildren. ■ **Robert Lough McFarland** taught kinesiology and physiology of exercise for 25 years at Frostburg State University, where he also coached lacrosse, swimming, and diving. He earned a master's degree and PhD at Kent State

University in 1973 and met his future wife, Ann, while working at the YMCA in Lima, Ohio. Following his retirement in 1998, the couple traveled across the U.S. and abroad for more than 15 years. Dr. McFarland died July 11, 2021, leaving his wife of 62 years, a son, two daughters, and nine grandchildren.

■ **Marjorie Noll Van Cleef** was a public school music teacher in Pennsylvania and Connecticut and later a teacher of English and writing at several community colleges. She earned a master's degree in education and completed coursework toward a doctorate at the University of Massachusetts. She played piano throughout her life and was a longtime church organist, most recently at St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Ms. Van Cleef died October 26, 2021. She leaves her husband, William Dyson; a son and daughter; four stepchildren; and three grandchildren.

### 1958

**Edwin Einar Sundt** was an English teacher for 55 years at six schools across multiple states. An athlete who played baseball at Oberlin, he went on to coach baseball and soccer for many years. He wrote poetry and authored three novels that blended history with his New England upbringing. Mr. Sundt died September 10, 2021. He leaves Ann, his wife of 63 years; their three daughters; and six grandchildren.

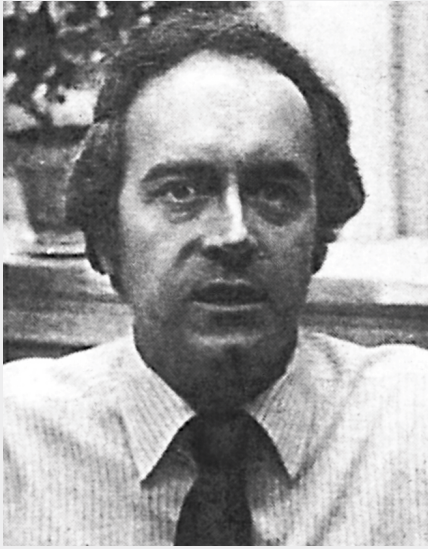
### 1959

**John C. Farris** served for 35 years as a writer and editor for the Voice of America, a department of the U.S. Information Agency. He retired from the U.S. Navy with the rank of commander. Mr. Farris died August 17, 2021, leaving his wife, two daughters, and four grandchildren. ■ **George M. Rosenstein Jr.** was a longtime professor of mathematics at Franklin & Marshall College. He earned a master's degree and PhD in mathematics from Duke University and began his teaching career at Western Reserve University before transitioning to Franklin & Marshall in 1967. His research on the history of the teaching of calculus led him to coauthor a textbook, *Discovering Calculus*. He volunteered with the city planning commission, Planned Parenthood, and the Literacy Council in his hometown of Lancaster, Pa. Dr. Rosenstein died July 21, 2021. He is survived by his wife of 61 years,



## MEMORIAL MINUTE

# John Olmsted, 1942-2021



John Charles Olmsted was an extraordinary teacher and scholar who spent most of his career in the English department at Oberlin, beginning in 1970. For a long time his office was right beside mine, and we got to know each other very well over all of those years. Along with Bob Longworth, I was a crown-bearer at his wedding to Olga Markof-Belaeff, and I followed the growth of his children, Vanya and Galya, to their poised and intellectually vibrant adulthood and beyond. John was born in Windsor, Canada, in 1942 and grew up in Strathroy, a small town near London, Ontario. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario in 1964 and his graduate degrees from Harvard in 1965 and 1972.

He was a brilliant and intellectually adventurous scholar-teacher who was always pushing into new areas of passionate interest. A distinguished Victorianist, he came to offer a variety of challenging and fascinating courses, including several in the novels of William Faulkner. He loved to teach William Butler Yeats, of whom he had

an encyclopedic knowledge. During his time at Oberlin, he developed an interest in 18th- and 19th-century British art, for which he deepened his expertise with a fellowship at Berkeley in 1978-79 and a summer fellowship at the Huntington in 1983; and he then published substantially in the area. He taught in a variety of special programs—in NEH summer seminars for high school teachers, in the Oberlin in London Program several times, and in the Strasbourg Program. Having been a journalist in his Canadian days, he frequently worked with Oberlin College journalists, especially on their Winter Term projects.

John was a spellbinding teacher, whose courses were always popular and stimulated some of our best students. He delighted in quoting from one of his student course evaluations: “I am told that he is a very good lecturer.” John took some pleasure in noting his high reputation as a lecturer and enjoyed self-mockery, deflating that reputation. Besides his mastery of lecture, he was always experimenting with small, seminar-style groups and individual tutoring and was equally successful at the different modes of teaching.

As one of John’s older colleagues, I valued his daily conversation: his penetrating comments on scholarly and critical issues and about everything else. He described his grandfather as an eloquent evangelical preacher, and in some ways, John was a secular version of that family calling. Two of his aunts were pillars of the Liberal Party establishment in the London area, and I think John inherited some of their Canadian Liberal Party perspective; he always brought a Canadian liberal’s view to American politics, perhaps with some

shading from the best Victorian intellectuals like John Stuart Mill.

Jennifer Bryan offered me a younger faculty member’s sense of John’s effect: “I would like to recall John’s great kindness and generosity to his younger colleagues. John helped and supported me more than anyone else when I came to Oberlin; he always had time for me, and he and Olga welcomed me into their home many times. He shared general wisdom about teaching and life, cheered me on when I needed it, and offered me practical help when I asked (photocopying all of his London Program notes for me before I went, for example). As you know, he was an extraordinary teacher. I was so lucky and grateful to him as a role model and mentor. He was also a dear friend to me, and I will miss him.”

He loved living in the town of Oberlin and was especially proud of the swimming pool behind his house; but he led his family in the Canadian habit of wintering in Florida whenever possible. He could be at home in Florida and in both Londons, Stratford and the United Kingdom, in Strasbourg, in California, and while traveling, especially in the Lincoln he took such pleasure in driving. There was a side of him that envied the Byronic hero whom he studied, but he was also a devoted family man, loving his wife and children. I am sure that love was a strong remaining consolation to him in the years of decline from Alzheimer’s, that most terrifying ailment to us as a band of intellectual adventurers. His presence among us was one of the delights of Oberlin. *Frater, ave atque vale*. Brother, hail and farewell.

**Robert Pierce**  
*Emeritus Professor of English*



Harriet '59, as well as a daughter and son-in-law, Beth and Brian Cole, both Class of 1990, and a grandson.

### 1960

Organist and harpsichordist **Edward Brewer** served in the Domestic Peace Corps until assuming the role of organist and choir director at Judson Memorial Church in New York City's Greenwich Village in 1964. His long career included performances with AmorArtis, the Oratorio Society of New York, the New York Choral Society, New York Philharmonic, New York Collegium, Orpheus, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and Philharmonia Virtuosi. He was founding director of the Brewer Chamber Orchestra and the Soclair Music Festival, a role he filled for 30 years. He also operated a pipe organ and harpsichord rental company that continues to be operated by his son and daughter. As a graduate student at the University of Illinois, he received a Fulbright Fellowship that facilitated studies with famed organist Helmut Walcha in Frankfurt, Germany. Mr. Brewer died April 3, 2020. He leaves Virginia, his wife of 51 years; a son and daughter; and three grandchildren. ■

**Lois Nilson Howard** served as artistic administrator of the National Symphony Orchestra from the late 1980s until 1995, a role in which she worked closely with music director Mstislav Rostropovich in establishing the orchestra's world-class reputation. She also directed the Kennedy Center's chamber music program and later formed her own artist-management company, Lois Howard & Associates. She enjoyed performing on keyboards in classical ensembles and pursuing her love of painting in the Dutch and Flemish traditions. Ms. Howard died June 17, 2021, leaving her daughter, two stepsons, and two grandchildren. Her death follows that of her husband, Edward Purrington. ■ **Sarah Belchetz-Swenson** was a celebrated painter, printmaker, and portrait artist whose distinct and complex style was rooted in her study of the old masters. In the early years of her career, she immersed herself in the New York art scene before marrying Victor Swenson and raising their family, all the while maintaining an active studio of her own. She established a career that revolved around portraits of college presidents, including the official portraits of Oberlin Presidents Nancy Dye

and Emil Danenberg, heads of industry, and other dignitaries. In the early 2000s, she began researching and presenting on the materials and styles of the old masters and created a course on historic painting techniques at Smith College. Ms. Belchetz-Swenson's work can be found in many university and private collections, including the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra, Australia; Columbia University; Smith College; and Oberlin College. She died September 12, 2021, leaving two daughters and four grandchildren.

### 1961

**Sondra Feenan Brasher** earned a real estate license and worked as a paralegal at the firm Morris, Nichols, Arshat & Tunnell in Wilmington, Del., and later in the real estate law department of DuPont. She married Tom Calhoun and began her career as an elementary school music teacher. In retirement she took up writing her memoirs. Ms. Brasher died August 4, 2021, leaving two daughters and three grandsons. ■

**Robert Michael Sherman** was a career civil servant who was celebrated upon his 2016 retirement as a man who devoted his life to weaponry with the singular goal of securing peace. With an MS in social psychology from the University of Connecticut, he found his calling in politics, working as a delegate for Senator George McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign. He devoted 25 years as a congressional staffer to three Democratic representatives, his focus on arms control and nuclear non-proliferation. He then left Congress to work for the U.S. Department of State's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, where he served as director of the Advanced Projects Office and worked on a groundbreaking policy to ensure that all U.S. landmines are detectable, self-destructing, and self-deactivating. Mr. Sherman's achievements overshadowed years of suffering during his youth, the result of being born with no left hip socket and enduring a dozen surgeries to correct a six-inch difference in leg length. He died July 8, 2021, leaving his wife of 28 years, Enid McKittrick; four children; and three grandchildren.

### 1962

After pursuing graduate studies at the University of Texas, **Rebecca Lowrey**

**Cramer** settled in Colorado Springs, Colo., and raised four children while remaining active in volunteer initiatives for her political party and the environment. She was an avid traveler and made numerous trips abroad in her later years. Ms. Cramer died June 29, 2021. She is survived by her husband of 59 years, Owen '62, as well as their four sons, including Thomas Cramer '88, and eight grandchildren. ■ **Barbara Jeanne Chong Gossard** was a church organist for 50 years at congregations in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Florida, and Hawaii. She earned a master's degree in sacred music from Union Theological Seminary in New York, then returned to marry her Oberlin sweetheart, Harvey Gossard '64. She was preceded in death by her husband and is survived by two sons, including James "K.O." Chong-Gossard '91. ■ **David Newman** taught theater and drama at Oberlin for eight years, followed by more than two decades of teaching at St. Paul's School in Concord, N.H. He completed an MFA in playwriting at Yale University and devoted many years to a novel about the Medici family of medieval Florence. He founded the York Readers Theater, through which he introduced audiences to works by and about the likes of Oscar Wilde, Mark Rothko, and W.H. Auden. He married Matt McTighe in 2019. Mr. Newman died June 4, 2021, and is survived by his husband, two children, and grandchildren.

### 1963

**Taylor Jeggles** was an accountant for many years. She departed Oberlin after her sophomore year to support her husband's graduate school efforts, later earning a BA from Otterbein College in 1983 and her CPA designation soon after. She made her family her first priority. Ms. Jeggles died September 5, 2021. She leaves her husband, David Jeggles '61, two children, six grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. ■ **Keith Larson** worked for 38 years as the editor of alumni class notes at Harvard Business School. His piano studies at Oberlin were followed by a master's degree and PhD in musicology from Harvard University, supported by two Fulbright scholarships that accommodated extensive study of madrigals in Naples, Italy. He also worked as a ballet school piano accompanist, church organist, author for the *Grove Dictionary of*



*Music*, and teacher at the University of Wisconsin and the University of Texas. In 2002 he began a new passion for Chintz pottery, which he collected and studied extensively, including through research trips to the British Museum and Staffordshire Pottery archives. Dr. Larson died February 18, 2021.

## 1964

**Lucy Salinger Warner** was a writer who advanced from the *Oberlin Review* to book publishers in New York and London, and finally to the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo., where she eventually became head of communications. With a 1985 book (and 2017 reissue), she documented the collaboration between that center and architect I.M. Pei, which resulted in the organization's iconic building in the Boulder foothills. Born in Buenos Aires, she lived as a child in Italy, where she and her husband returned later to a second home. After Oberlin, she lived in London with classmate Margie Burgess, '65, then with her husband, Richard Warner. In 1971 they moved to Colorado, where late in his career Richard founded Colorado Recovery, a progressive program for people with serious mental illness. Ms. Warner's involvement in the Boulder community extended from political activism to choral singing. After her husband's death, she joined the board of Colorado Recovery, eventually serving as president. She died May 22, 2021, leaving a son. She was preceded in death by her husband and a son.

## 1965

**Sandra Lynn Carlock** was a renowned pianist and teacher at the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia for more than 50 years. She performed and lectured on music across the U.S. and elsewhere and partnered since 2014 with French violinist Guillaume Combet as the Carlock-Combet Duo. She completed a master's degree in music at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and pursued postgraduate studies at Juilliard. Also a devoted photographer, she enjoyed capturing landscapes, architecture, and portraits. Ms. Carlock died September 8, 2021, leaving her former husband, Lee Snyder. She was preceded in death by her second husband, Kurt Sotmon. ■ **Timothy V.**

**Craine** was a professor and chair of the math department at Central Connecticut State University from 1993 until his retirement in 2009. He continued to teach part time for more than a decade afterward. He spent two years teaching math in Ghana with the Peace Corps and taught in public schools in New Haven, Conn., and Detroit. He earned a PhD in math education from Wayne State University in 1984, earning a Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching that same year. He supported the Socialist Workers Party for five decades and was the party's candidate for governor of Michigan in 1982. Dr. Craine died September 25, 2021. He is survived by Leslie Hart Craine '65, his wife of 53 years; two daughters; and four grandchildren. ■ **Peter G. Pollak** fought for civil rights and was the only white member of the militant Black group known as The Brothers, which was active in Albany, N.Y., from 1966 to 1971. He edited the group's weekly paper and led efforts to improve the lives of impoverished Black residents of the region while combatting the political establishment. In 1985 he established Empire Information Services, an electronic press release distribution business that later grew into the website aggregator The Empire Page. Ironically, Mr. Pollak pivoted dramatically in his later years, becoming an ardent supporter of conservatism and the presidency of Donald Trump. In 2020 he published the memoir *Left to Right: One Man's Journey*. Mr. Pollak died October 20, 2021, leaving his second wife, Judy, and his children and grandchildren.

## 1966

**Marguerite Iskenderian** was an associate professor at Brooklyn College, where she served as the music cataloguer since 1972. An accomplished cellist and pianist, she was a founding member of the New York Repertory Orchestra. She earned graduate degrees from the Northwestern School of Music and Rosary College. Ms. Iskenderian died April 24, 2021. ■ **Joshua Lee Shlosberg** was a monk of Mepkin Abbey in South Carolina from 1992 to 2002. He asked to be buried at Mepkin upon becoming ill. He died March 23, 2018, and was buried in July of that year in the presence of loved ones and others from the monastic community.

## 1968

**Gideon Schein** was for two decades a partner with the Eddy & Schein Group, a senior services company he cofounded. He earned an MA in theater from the University of Minnesota 1971 and an MBA in marketing and film finance from Columbia Business School in 1988. He spent the first half of his career working in the theater and film world, with stints in stage management, production, and directing in Berlin, Rochester, N.Y., and Minnesota. He was founding executive director of the New York Festival of Song for nearly a dozen years before becoming a partner at Gossamer Films. To the Oberlin community he was best known as a tireless volunteer and supporter on behalf of Oberlin and his fellow classmates. He was an alumni admissions rep and career counselor, lead class fundraiser, and class president, and he served on the Alumni Association's executive committee, the communications committee, and former Oberlin President Marvin Krislov's advisory council. He spent countless hours behind-the-scenes working to help plan reunions and fundraise. In 2006, Mr. Schein won the Alumni Association's distinguished service award. He died December 14, 2020. ■ **Mark Criswell Simcox** was a cellist in the Boston Lyric Opera Orchestra for 40 years and principal cellist of the Boston Classical Orchestra and the new music ensemble Alea III. He also performed with the Boston Pops, the Boston Ballet Orchestra, the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, and in national tours with the New York City Opera. He retired to Key West, Fla., in 2013 and joined the Southernmost Chamber Music Society. Mr. Simcox died July 19, 2021.

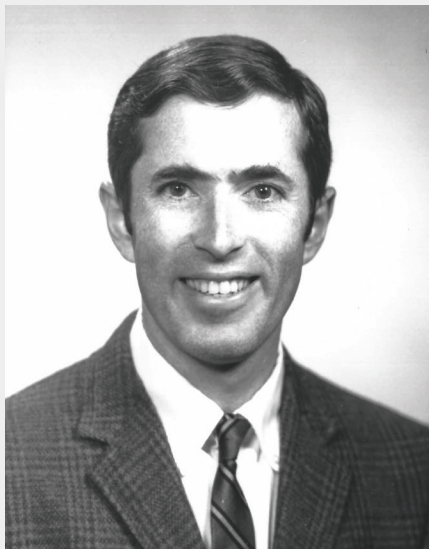
## 1971

**John O. Brittain Jr.** was the owner and operator of Nolin River Nut Tree Nursery in Kentucky and one of several Oberlin classmates who joined forces to buy land in the Bluegrass State and establish simple and fulfilling lives there. He later earned a master's degree in agronomy from Cornell University. Mr. Brittain died June 15, 2020, following the death of his wife, Elizabeth. He is survived by two daughters. ■ **William Verne Craig** was a physician who founded Reflections Healthcare in Pahrump, Nev. He earned his medical degree from the University of Rochester and developed a



## MEMORIAL MINUTE

## Richard Alexander Levin, 1932-2021



Dick Levin came to Oberlin in 1968 with master's degrees in music composition and genetics from the University of Washington, an undergraduate degree in biology from Harvard, and a doctorate in microbiology from the University of Iowa. He also brought with him a poet's soul, an enthusiasm for learning and teaching, and a deep sense of caring for all around him. He was about to join a campus embroiled in the Vietnam War, where he would lecture in Hall Auditorium to 300 talented but restive biology students, many of whom were there mostly because of the college's science requirement.

Dick was already a master teacher when he arrived, with great enthusiasm and clarity in presenting his subjects and with a mature recognition that he was teaching the students as well as the subjects. When he walked into a lecture hall, the students felt his presence and knew that he was on their side, that he valued them as well as the topic of the day. In addition to helping to hold the huge biology class together, Dick had sole command of a large genetics class and a smaller laboratory course in

microbiology. He showed students how they could each conduct, starting from scratch and with simple equipment, their own thoughtful and detailed research on variants of *E. coli*. Later he would teach human biology, and a seminar on sexually-transmitted diseases. Teaching and learning were fun, and the students loved him for it.

Early in his years at Oberlin, Dick was selected by the students to give a senior assembly address in Finney Chapel. He brought his guitar, and at the end of his talk, in haunting melody, sang of the transitory nature of life:

*Passing through, passing through  
Sometimes happy, sometimes blue  
Glad that I ran into you,  
Tell the people that you saw me  
passing through*

I never actually saw Dick when he was blue, for he recovered so quickly from the inevitable blows of life. In those days the faculty had to contend not only with student anger over the war but also with its own conceived need for continual evaluation. Each year the faculty sat in judgment upon itself, ranking each of its members in rather public display. Dick quickly transcended this unhappy ritual. He sensed the vanity of human applause and appealed to a deeper and higher purpose. Nevertheless, applause came when he received the first award for science teaching the college ever bestowed.

Dick's teaching was grounded in extensive scholarship and inspired research. I recall him telling me in excited tones about the new genetic engineering centering on the use of bacterial plasmids. He had hopes for inducing *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* to create root nodules in maize, allowing crops of corn to add nitrogen to the soil. Someday it may really happen. He was also prescient in realizing that the college needed a

virologist-immunologist to teach that rapidly expanding and essential field.

Scores of Oberlinians are indebted to Dick for the interest he took in their lives and welfare. More than once he helped lift me from a slump, bringing comfort and wisdom to our kitchen table or to runs together on Butternut Ridge Road. He spread friendship, good will, and cheerfulness around the community.

In an eloquent and loving tribute, Dick's three daughters, Rebecca, Susan, and Sarah, described his devotion to them and to his wonderful wife, Amy. I often heard the love in Dick's voice when he talked about his family, and saw the radiance in visiting their home.

When Dick retired from Oberlin in 2003, he and Amy went back to their beloved Seattle and settled on Bainbridge Island. Dick remarked that he could retire anywhere in the world as long as it was west of the Cascades. He wrote of singing Woody Guthrie's song "Roll on Columbia" as he crossed the Columbia River into Washington. Time was all too short, but love and happiness are not measured in time.

Dick has quietly taken his place among the greats of biology educators, among the likes of Huxley, Agassiz, and Stephen Jay Gould. To borrow from Thoreau, Dick carved the atmosphere in which he lived and made it more beautiful, creating waves that will pass forever through the ages. A hundred years from now, the example he set, the inspiration he gave, the radiance and love that he generated, will still be part of the morning air as the sun comes up over Oberlin, and students walking across Tappan Square will inherit, however unknowingly, a breath of goodness and of joy from his passing through.

**Tom Sherman**  
*Emeritus Professor of Biology*



bibliotherapy program that used poems, stories, and novels to complement medical treatment. His exam rooms incorporated curated art collections to invite conversation about emotions and experiences. Dr. Craig died September 17, 2021. He leaves six children, including Megan Clare Craig-Kuhn '09, and four grandchildren. ■ Pianist and educator **Steven G. Wiseman** taught at the University of Wyoming, Truman State University, and the University of Kansas, where he earned a master's degree in music. He later served as president of the Quincy Conservatory of Music. Upon completing his studies with Emil Danenberg at Oberlin, Mr. Wiseman formed the New Quincy Trio and performed throughout the Midwest. He later relocated to Colorado, where he performed with the Colorado Arts Trio, then to Arizona, where he often appeared as guest pianist for the Steinway Society Concert Series. Finally, he settled in New Mexico and joined the faculty of the New Mexico School of Music. He died February 5, 2021.

### 1976

A nontraditional student at Oberlin, **JoAnn Nichols Bruno** raised her five children in Oberlin from the 1960s to 1980s and was a great lover of nature. She continued her education with a master's degree in counseling from Xavier University. She died July 10, 2021, leaving her children, including David Bruno '84, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

### 1979

**Lauren Berlant** was a longtime University of Chicago English professor who analyzed the impact of modern society on individuals' emotions. In 1983 she earned an MA and in 1986 a PhD, both from Cornell University. She wrote numerous books, the best-known of which is *Cruel Optimism*, which examines the disconnect between people's dreams and expectations for fulfilling lives in the face of societies' declining ability to provide job security, upward mobility, and lasting romantic connections. She also authored a trilogy of books about the concept of American sentimentality, exploring how it has been exhibited in art, literature, politics, and American culture. Dr. Berlant died June 28, 2021, leaving her partner, Ian Horswill. ■ **Carol Marie Frazier** was an accomplished

pianist and vocalist who taught music for 24 years in the Philadelphia public schools before becoming manager of education at the Kimmel Center, a role she held for the next 18 years. As a pianist and singer, she performed numerous times in Europe, beginning in childhood and for years afterward. She earned a master's degree in music education and sacred music from Southern Methodist University. She died May 28, 2021, leaving many loved ones. ■

**Michael Morgan** was the longtime music director of the Oakland Symphony and a lifelong believer in the power of music to elevate communities. Over his 30 years in Oakland, he relished the dual nature of his role: to facilitate compelling performances of a broad range of repertoire and to ensure that his orchestra reached out to its community at every turn. Through regular programming in the Oakland schools and innovative concerts that showcased the music of marginalized cultures, the symphony under Morgan became a model of outreach and education for music organizations everywhere. He catapulted into the spotlight in 1980 by winning the Hans Swarowsky Conducting Competition in Vienna; two years later, he assumed the role of Leonard Slatkin's assistant conductor with the St. Louis Symphony and later became the first Black assistant conductor of the Chicago Symphony. In addition to the Oakland Symphony, he was artistic director of the Oakland Youth Orchestra and served for 16 years as music director of the Sacramento Philharmonic and Sacramento Opera. He was artistic director of Festival Opera for more than a decade and music director of the Bear Valley Music Festival. Since 1993, he also served as music director of the Gateways Music Festival, dedicated to supporting the professional development of musicians of African descent and to inspire communities through performance. Mr. Morgan died August 20, 2021.

### 1984

**Tim Desmond** worked in information technology for the Children's Museum of Boston and later for the intellectual property management firm Clarivate. He enjoyed camping and hiking, and he summited all the 4,000-ft. peaks in New Hampshire's White Mountains. He died September 27, 2021, leaving his loving family.

### 1986

**Lucille Isenhardt Sommer** was an elementary schoolteacher and an instructor at Foothills and Denver community colleges. She earned a master's degree in psychology from Antioch University's Seattle campus and a PhD in communication from the University of Colorado. In 1994 she married Paul Sommer, with whom she had two children. Dr. Sommer was widely talented, with interests that ranged from gourmet cooking and gardening to singing and performing on piano and flute. An avid outdoorswoman, she enjoyed fly fishing and organizing backpacking trips with her friends and family. She volunteered for political candidates and traveled as a research analyst for a Rotary program that promoted leadership development for indigenous women of Peru. Dr. Sommer died August 13, 2021, leaving her husband and children.

### 1992

**Taliesin Gregory** followed his brothers Probyn '79 and Rohan '85 to Oberlin. He worked in the New York publishing world, which included the literary agency Darhansoff & Verrill. He was also employed in various roles by Badger Healing Products. He was a lover of literature, theater, fly fishing, preserving wild river habitats, and promoting B-corporations. Mr. Gregory died July 20, 2021. He is survived by his wife, Heidi Tompkins.

### 2015

**Anaís Francis Stewart** was an economics major at Oberlin and a leader in student life who promoted disability rights and racial justice. She was involved in the Third World Co-op, In Solidarity, La Alianza Latinx, and the Black Student Union, and she danced with And What!?. She was an avid reader who enjoyed traveling and spending time with family and friends. Ms. Stewart died July 8, 2021.

### 2019

**Stephen Gladstone** was a passionate student and a dedicated volunteer for various causes. He is remembered for his great sense of humor, intelligence, and the great love he poured out to friends and family. He died October 1, 2021.



**“I have whiplash. I never thought that following my passion and being a comedy nerd could actually lead to this job.”**

**Daniel Cramer '18** whose influential *Cramer Comedy Newsletter*, which keeps track of up-and-comers in comedy, landed him a producer position at Sony Pictures Entertainment

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Chief Justice **William H. Taft** in the December 1923 *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*

**“As a very young child, I wanted to be a writer, but I couldn’t even articulate that desire or ambition because it didn’t seem possible to me. At Oberlin, it began to seem possible to me, partly because I made friends who were from a very different milieu—who grew up in households where it was normal to work in some avenue of the arts or in publishing or media. I started to realize, ‘Oh wait, this is something that a real person could do.’ It took me a while to have the courage to actually do it, but that kernel entered my consciousness at Oberlin.”**

Author **Joanna Rakoff '94** to the *Oberlin Review*'s Maeve Woltring, arts and culture editor, December 10, 2021

**“[i]f an adjacency to whiteness, behaviorally or otherwise, is the only way a Black child can thrive in your institution, then your institution has failed that child, no matter what the other benefits are.”**

**Kendra James '10** in her book *Admissions* (see Bookshelf, page 13)

**“Putin has done what no one in the West could do, which is revive the concept of the West.”**

**Richard Haass '73**, president of the Council on Foreign Relations

**“We need an economy that empowers people with resources well beyond education—including education—but also many other factors, like good health, like a job.”**

**Darrick Hamilton '93**, the Henry Cohen Professor of Economics and Urban Policy at the New School, on a November episode of *The Problem With John Stewart*





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