







# Contents

## **DEPARTMENTS**

### **2 From the President**

### **3 Obereactions**

### **4 Around Tappan Square**

Launching food studies; athletes and service; an Obie's White House moment; conservatory student accolades; flush with Fulbrights; and more

### **10 Thought Process**

The Cat's cookie secrets; building a better bike co-op; research that resonates; plus Bookshelf

### **36 Class Notes**

### **48 Losses**

### **52 Endquotes**

## **FEATURES**

### **16 The Golden Age of Obiewood**

Oberlin creatives have the talent to make it in Hollywood. Now they have the network too.

### **24 Dett Fulfillment**

Themes of hope and commitment to progress permeate Oberlin's tour of New York.

### **32 Laymon's Terms**

Life has changed for writer Kiese Laymon, Oberlin's newest MacArthur Fellow. Now he's changing the lives of others too.

## **ART FOR DORM'S SAKE**

Remember winding lines outside the Allen Memorial Art Museum? The tradition lives on in Art Rental, where students procure works from the Allen collection to cherish for a semester.

PHOTO BY MIKE CRUPI

## **ON THE COVER**

Illustration by Buenos Aires, Argentina-based artist Nadia Radic.



## Obies Helping Obies? Now *That's* Entertainment

AT OBERLIN, OUR MISSION TO PREPARE STUDENTS TO DO GOOD IN THE WORLD MOTIVATES us to change, grow, and leverage some of our greatest strengths: our alumni, parents, and the entire Obie community.

One of the powerful initiatives that unites our students and alumni is Career Communities—part of our growing commitment to help students connect their undergraduate experience with thoughtful professional preparation in the form of internships, networking opportunities, and co-curricular experiences.

The Internship+ Commitment you have heard about, created to ensure that every student has the opportunity to engage in at least one funded internship during their time at Oberlin, bolsters these Career Communities. Internship+ commits up to \$5,000 for each student to support internships, research, performance-based experiences, and other qualifying pre-professional activities. This fall, we welcome the first class that will benefit from Internship+.

The Arts, Communications, and Public Service Sector Career Community includes a dedicated program—the Oberlin Entertainment Network, fondly referred to as “Obiewood”—championed by a group of Oberlin supporters active in the entertainment industry. Among them are recent grads—who mentor younger grads even as they refine their own career paths—and firmly established figures like Oberlin trustees Steve Dolcemaschio, an entertainment executive and the proud parent of two Obies, and actor-comedian Ed Helms '96. Their collective enthusiasm for supporting future waves of creative alumni lies at the heart of all that Career Communities represent.

Two other Obiewood founders—Michele and Kieran Mulroney, writers of the 2011 box-office hit *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* and parents of a 2021 Oberlin grad—also helped create a promising new program called the Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive. Held on campus over three days in January, the intensive invited eight young Oberlin alumni to learn from seasoned Hollywood creatives who have been recognized with some of the industry's most prestigious honors: Oscars, Emmys, Peabodys, and more. Clearly, the event made an impression: Fellows from the Screenwriters Intensive have continued to communicate with one another as their careers progress, and a second intensive—with a new cohort of creative Obies—will take place in January 2024.

Obiewood strengthens the relationships between Oberlin and Hollywood and provides ongoing support to our talented alumni already navigating careers in entertainment. These relationships we nurture within our community are a measure of our great institution, and the impact of efforts such as Obiewood motivates and inspires us in the vital commitment to every student's success.

CARMEN TWILLIE AMBAR  
*President, Oberlin College and Conservatory*

## Oberlin

Vol. 118 No. 2

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

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**THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN**

**With great synchronicity,** my Winter 2023 issue of the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* arrived at the same time Florida’s governor announced the banning of Advanced Placement Black history classes, declaring his state as “where woke goes to die.”

I arrived at Oberlin a transfer from a university with more than 50,000 students, city blocks of “Greek” houses, and a football stadium that held 10 times Oberlin’s population—college and town. If heaven is, as I believe it to be, without restriction, Oberlin was heaven. No judgment; *encouragement*. When I entered Oberlin, I obstinately believed I had the talent to make a living as a musician. Only in my late 50s did it dawn on me that I wasn’t a failure because I hadn’t, but that my gifts lay elsewhere in the practice of law. For me, hours of practice, as beloved as they were, were more obsession than ability. Meanwhile, Oberlin—its teachers, administrators, students, and townsfolk—planted in me a way of seeing the world as a place to be explored, not walled off.

I credit Oberlin for having helped me reach my mid-60s without regrets and the feeling that nothing was left undone. Oberlin lessons are for a lifetime, which make it particularly well-suited to slow learners like me. Oberlin let me be me—and more important, it taught me to let others be; that the world is all of us, in equal parts.

Divisive rhetoric is dangerous, and Oberlin is a natural target for it. But despite it, we thrive. Never at Oberlin was I under the illusion evil did not exist: not in the institution’s early years fighting for abolition, protesting the war in Vietnam, divesting from apartheid wherever it exists, and championing the rights of all people. Oberlin is the house I live in. It isn’t a small

Midwest college. It is the spirit of democracy and love. It isn’t a place I graduated from. It is an ideal that in difficult times seems fragile only if we doubt our unshakable belief.

Any time an aspiring politician shackles freedom, I renew my belief in Oberlin. If they come for me, as history teaches they may, I know others stand with me. I know this because I learned with and from them and am forever learning.

RICHARD WOLFSON ’81  
*Jackson, Mississippi*

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**(LOVE) LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**I applaud you,** Jeff Hagan, for your 14 years of outstanding work as editor of the alumni magazine (“Learning, and a Labor of Love,” Winter 2023). Because we were friends at Oberlin, I read the alumni magazine even more closely during your tenure, and I was never disappointed. You alluded to unresolved losses, and one that you mentioned—the 1983 murder of Grace Austin—really hit home. I became friends with Grace just a few weeks before her death. The world missed out on her contributions, as she was a truly special person who would have done amazing things. In the same vein, I would mention the death of English professor Phyllis Jones. She was my favorite professor during my freshman year. She died shortly thereafter—an event that I feel was not adequately addressed, leaving us to mourn in limbo.

Yet there is much good news to celebrate. Oberlin continues to make important contributions to social justice, the arts, and the humanities. And many Oberlin grads even achieve fame; we take pride in people like Denyce Graves, Robert Spano, Ed Helms, and Alison Bechdel. Through it all, Jeff, your intelligence, wit, and legendary sense of humor brought the Oberlin community closer together.

JONATHAN FELDMAN ’85  
*Rochester, New York*

.....  
**SPORTING CHANCES**

**Exactly when Oberlin** women began intercollegiate sports, I’m not sure. But I am certain that it was before 1977, as was noted

in the current issue. In the fall of 1971, we played field hockey against other schools in the state, and in the spring we competed in three lacrosse games. An alumni magazine article from that year will confirm this. Title IX was helpful. And it’s encouraging to see how much progress has been made for Oberlin women athletes in the 50 years since. Go Yeo!

FRANCIE BOBBE PEARCE ’71  
*Newport News, Virginia*

*Editor’s note: Francie, thank you for writing—first off, we couldn’t agree more how much progress Oberlin women athletes have made in the 50-plus years since Title IX. And we recognize and appreciate how the contributions of trailblazing athletes (such as yourself) paved the way for opportunities for future generations of athletes. That being said, your letter (and a few other notes from alums) about the timeline of women’s varsity and intercollegiate sports at Oberlin has spurred us on to dig into the college archives and re-check our facts. We’ll update everyone on our findings in an upcoming issue of OAM!*

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**Send letters to *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*, 247 W. Lorain St., Suite C, Oberlin, OH 44074; or send emails to [alum.mag@oberlin.edu](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.**

**Only@Oberlin**

**What Oberlin tradition do you remember most fondly?**

**Share your Obie memories at [alum.mag@oberlin.edu](mailto:alum.mag@oberlin.edu).**

Please keep submissions to 200 words or fewer—and include a photo of you from then or now! We’ll feature responses in our future issues and on our social media channels.

# Around Tappan Square

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**DEEP ROOTS**

Oberlin commemorated Black History Month with the theme “Remembering Our Roots” and events that stretched into March, touching on all corners of campus. One of the celebration’s signature moments, the annual BHM Fashion Show, also showcased this year’s emphasis on sustainability with the title “Woven, Worn, and Reborn.”

**CULTIVATING CHANGE**

## \$1M Grant Supports Food Studies Partnership

OBERLIN COLLEGE WAS AWARDED A \$1 MILLION grant to launch a food studies program in collaboration with Lorain County Community College (LCCC). The grant was presented by the Mellon Foundation, the nation’s largest supporter of the arts and humanities and the source of some \$20 million in grants to Oberlin since 1970.

The grant will support programming through the summer of 2026.

The new alliance unites students and faculty from the two campuses with local nonprofits. Together, the goal is to tackle urgent questions related to food justice, including the historical and present-day barriers that prevent residents—especially those in lower-income communities and communities of color—from accessing high-quality food in Lorain County and beyond. Groundbreaking partnerships with farms and food-justice organizations are central to the program and exemplify Oberlin’s commitment to community-based learning and research.

Oberlin’s focus on food studies has been crafted as an integrative concentration, one of

numerous programs intended to blend coursework with experiential learning.

“Students will learn to engage in respectful, reciprocal, and ethical relationships with growers and food justice advocates while gaining practical experience through internships and ongoing collaborations,” says professor Jay Fiskio, director of environmental studies at Oberlin. “We are committed to understanding the needs of our community partners and supporting their work.”

Together, Oberlin and LCCC will create or revise more than 20 courses and offer nearly 40 internships and other community-based learning opportunities for students at both colleges. Classes will explore topics such as foodways (the everyday activities, often carried out by women, related to the cooking and eating of food and how that cultural knowledge is passed from one generation to the next), Black farming and land ownership, and practices such as seed keeping (saving seeds to plant in later harvests to preserve biodiversity and culturally significant crops for future generations).

“The food studies program is the perfect marriage of rigorous coursework and real-life application of lessons learned in the classroom,” says Oberlin President Carmen Twillie Ambar. “This visionary undertaking lies at the heart of our mission to train young people to become leaders who do good in the world.”



GOOD SPORTS

## Athletics Wins National Service Award

OBERLIN'S DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS and Physical Education won the 2021-22 Community Service Award presented by the National Association of Division III Athletic Administrators—the department's second such title in five years. The honor recognizes the contributions Division III student-athletes regularly make to their campuses and local communities.

One of 350 eligible institutions, Oberlin also won the award in 2018.

“Our student-athletes continually display

their character and compassion for others, which inspires me on a daily basis,” says Natalie Winkelfoos, associate vice president for athletics advancement and Delta Lodge Director of Athletics & Physical Education. “Throughout their rigorous academic responsibilities and busy athletics schedule, they are always willing to step up and make an impact. Caring is truly our competitive advantage.”

In the past year, members of Oberlin's 21 varsity athletics teams, led by the work of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, totaled more than 2,000 hours of community service. Each team participates in at least one community service project each year, with partnerships that support local nonprofits as well as larger initiatives related to research of cancer and epilepsy and combating domestic violence.



Oberlin athletes lend a hand on move-in day each fall.



CONSERVATORY HONORS

## Concerto Winners Earn Spring Performances

Each fall, conservatory seniors are invited to compete in the annual Concerto Competition, with four winners featured in April and May as soloists with Oberlin orchestras. This year, the following musicians earned the featured spots (pictured clockwise from top left): pianist **Annie Qin** (performing Sergei Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18), violinist **Matthew Cone** (Sergei Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 63), soprano **Kylie Buckham** (Joseph Haydn's *Berenice, che fai?*), and oboist **Jonathan Kronheimer** (Walter Aschaffenburg's Concerto for Oboe).

“Our conservatory students are extremely supportive of each other, and one cannot find a better example than in the performances of the Concerto Competition winners,” Professor of Conducting Raphael Jiménez said. “When preparing these concerts, I can feel how every member of the orchestra is happy and proud to be part of this special day in the performance career of one of their classmates.”



## Learn More About How Oberlin Invests

Oberlin's Investment Office gets lots of questions from Obies interested in learning more about the endowment and how it's managed. As part of a series of updates to our Investment Office web pages, we've created a video series that addresses many of the questions heard most frequently. Find the FAQ and more at [oberlin.edu/investment](https://oberlin.edu/investment).

### RENEWED RESOURCES

## Wilder Hall Renovations Under Way

A multiyear plan to upgrade Oberlin's historic student union began in January and will continue through at least 2025, clearing the way for improvements ranging from a new staircase on the building's west side to the addition of an esports arena on the third floor.

Conceived by Chicago architect Joseph Lyman Silsbee—designer of the Memorial Arch on Tappan Square—Wilder Hall opened in 1911 as a men's dormitory and has also seen use as a meeting and performance space.

The renovation will preserve Wilder's remarkable history while providing students with a space that invites

increased opportunities for engagement. Highlights include:

- Accessibility upgrades, with the addition of a wheelchair lift
- Flexible dining areas
- New mail and package delivery system
- Improvements to the ballroom, main lobby, numerous offices, and WOBC radio

The project will also incorporate a phased transition from steam heat to hot-water heat and chilled-water air conditioning—improvements made as part of Oberlin's Sustainable Infrastructure Program.



**GETTING INTUIT** Improv Fest showcased student and guest artists in 13 events over the first weekend of March. Performances featured AI-based interactive and immersive sound, group improvisation, jazz, and students in Oberlin's Performance and Improvisation program. Guests included acclaimed flutist and composer Nicole Mitchell and pianist-composer Luis Perdomo. "The festival aligns with Oberlin's new improvisation minor in the ways it conveys how improvisation can be a thread that connects different areas of music-making," says Dana Jessen, a contemporary music professor and organizer of Improv Fest.



MICHAEL J. ELDERMAN

As a student with diverse interests, **KRIS PRANATA '89** found a home at Oberlin, surrounded by peers who were as eager as he was to gain hands-on experience in research, scholarship, creative work, and performance. Since graduating, Kris has remained close to Oberlin through alumni events and connecting with classmates. “Obies always treat one another with respect and wish to engage with each other’s interests,” he says. “It’s part of the Oberlin culture: No matter how obscure, someone else will share your passion.”

Through gifts to the Oberlin Annual Fund, Kris supports a culture that cultivates curiosity and helps students master the tools necessary to engage in humanity’s most urgent challenges, debates, and artistic frontiers.

Join Kris in empowering the next generation of Oberlin students with a gift to the Oberlin Annual Fund today.

**TO MAKE YOUR GIFT TO THE ANNUAL FUND, VISIT [ADVANCE.OBERLIN.EDU](https://advance.oberlin.edu) OR CALL 800-693-3167 TO DISCUSS CREATIVE GIVING OPPORTUNITIES.**

**MENTOR MOMENT**

## Six Faculty Earn Excellence in Teaching Honors

Six faculty members—three each from the college and conservatory—were honored with Excellence in Teaching Awards for the 2021-22 academic year.

Each year, three honorees are selected through a nominating process that includes input from deans and faculty councils of the college and conservatory. A February ceremony was held for the recipients at the home of President Carmen Twillie Ambar.

The recipients are: (clockwise from top left) **Ana María Díaz Burgos**, associate professor of hispanic studies; **Megan Kaes Long**, associate professor of music theory; **Bryan Parkhurst**, assistant professor of music theory and aural skills; **Renee Romano**, Robert S. Danforth professor of history; **Keith Tarvin**, professor emeritus of biology; and **Dang Thai Son**, professor of piano.



JENNIFER MANNA, DALE PRESTON '83, TANYA ROSEN-JONES '97



#### CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

## Johnnetta B. Cole '57 Wins Humanities Medal

DISTINGUISHED ANTHROPOLOGIST AND educator Johnnetta B. Cole '57 was one of 12 recipients of the 2021 National Humanities Medal. Cole received the honor from President Joe Biden in a March ceremony at the White House.

Born in Jacksonville, Florida, Cole enrolled at Fisk College at age 15, but transferred to Oberlin a year later. A cultural anthropology class ultimately sparked a career change—initially she wanted to be a pediatrician—and steered the rest of her professional life.

After graduating with a degree in sociology, Cole earned master's and doctoral degrees in anthropology from Northwestern University, making her one of the first Black women to earn a PhD in the field. She has taught at Washington State University, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Hunter College, and

Emory University, and served as president of Spelman College and Bennett College. In 2009, she became director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art.

The National Humanities Medal honors individuals and organizations “whose work has deepened the nation's understanding of the human experience, broadened citizens' engagement with history or literature, or helped preserve and expand Americans' access to cultural resources,” the White House noted in a press release. Cole was awarded because her “pioneering work about the ongoing contributions of Afro-Latin, Caribbean, and African communities has advanced American understanding of Black culture and the necessity and power of racial inclusion in our nation.”

Cole received an honorary degree from Oberlin in 1995.

#### STUDENT HONORS

## Oberlin a Top Fulbright Producer

Oberlin was named a Top Producer of Fulbright Students for the 14th consecutive year, an honor conferred by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which administers the Fulbright Program.

Fulbright is the U.S. government's flagship international academic exchange program. It supports exchanges with more than 150 countries around the world. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program awards grants to college graduates, graduate students, and early-career professionals.

Oberlin is a perennial leader in Fulbright honorees among undergraduate institutions, qualifying 13 students to study abroad in the 2021-22 academic year. Oberlin is third on the overall list of Fulbright awardees for the past year—and remains third on the all-time list, with more than 260 Fulbright recipients.

“After all of the disruptions, disappointments, and disconnections of the pandemic, I am thrilled to see so many Oberlin students going abroad again,” says Nick Petzak, Oberlin's director of Fellowships and Awards, part of the Center for Engaged Liberal Arts. “The mission of the Fulbright Program is to promote cultural exchange through direct interaction, and we certainly need more of that.”

Petzak adds that 31 Oberlin students have been named Fulbright semifinalists for the 2022-23 academic year—an unprecedented number for the school. Fulbright honors are announced throughout the spring season.

In addition to student honors, two Oberlin faculty members were named Fulbright U.S. Scholars for 2022-23: Professor of Anthropology Erika Hoffmann-Dilloway continues her long-term ethnographic fieldwork with deaf signers in Kathmandu, Nepal, and Associate Professor of Economics Evan Kresch joins the faculty at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid to teach a course he developed at Oberlin on economic development of Latin America.

# Thought Process



That beloved recipe leaves some room for baker discretion, says Hillel Hinton-Williams.

## RECIPE

### Cat Batch Fever

BY HANNA RASKIN '98

**What's the secret to those coffeshop cookies? A lot of love and a little flexibility.**

ACCORDING TO THE COOKIE recipe tacked to a wall of the Cat in the Cream, one tablespoon of molasses can be substituted for one cup of sugar. But when Hillel Hinton-Williams is working at Oberlin's student-run coffeehouse, he sometimes adds a little more molasses to the mix.

"These cookies are very forgiving if a person wants to vary amounts, or add in ginger or allspice, or use extra salt," says Williams, a senior from St. Joseph, Minnesota, studying psychology and education. "They allow for that personal touch."

Customization has always been a defining feature of cookies at the Cat, which prides itself on showcasing unique voices and spurning cover charges. While the recipe appears to have originated on the back of a Nestlé Toll House chocolate chip bag—a theory consistent with former Associate Dean of Students Clark

Drummond's vague recollection of the preparation having been borrowed from a co-op in the 1980s—generations of students have shaped the cookies into a singular aspect of campus culture.

The Cat has served cookies almost since the start. In 1978—three years after student Jennifer DeBeer '78 converted a staff breakroom in the basement of Bosworth Hall into "an alternative to the boozy, smoky atmosphere in the Rathskeller"—an *Oberlin Review* event listing for the café promised "live cookies and homemade entertainment." (If you

didn't laugh, try reading that line again very late on a Thursday night, which is when the paper's staff scrambles to meet its weekly deadline.)

Around that time, Lee Stern '78 immortalized the menu item in a poem. "I sat at a table and looked hopefully/From corner to corner for some trace of esprit/One skinny guitarist, one bony old hound/Some world-weary cookies were all that I found."

As Stern's verse suggests, the Cat's free-thinking student employees weren't all equally enamored of the presumably chocolate-chip cookies. In 1992,

years after the venue had relocated to the Hales Gym Annex, manager Ray Vinkey '93 announced plans for the café to shake off its folksy image—freshly baked cookies included.

“Our format has shifted to having jazz, and sometimes alternative theater, and occasionally rock,” he told a *Review* reporter, adding: “We’ve also tried to diversify and broaden the kinds of food we have. Bread. Pizza. All types of juices that the heart might desire.”

What the heart apparently desires most are warm cookies with unpredictable amounts of sugar and spice. Starting in the early 2000s, they became a campus-wide fixation.

Students endured “extraordinarily long lines” for oatmeal raisin cookies and tea, but the Cat’s staff felt like they bore the brunt of the cookies’ massive popularity. They dreaded working when improv comedy was on the night’s bill because they couldn’t bake cookies quickly enough to keep the ostensibly good-humored crowd happy.

“We have to battle with a very unhelpful oven to make these cookies,” Hinton-Williams explains.

Lately, he has been lobbying to add scones to the menu. In the meantime, he continues to individualize its cookies by playing fast and loose with the molasses.

By now, he rarely needs to consult the tacked-up recipe. But it closes with the instruction to “Wipe the sides of the molasses bottle before returning it to the shelf,” because at the Cat in the Cream—regardless of choices made nightly about cinnamon and raisins—a collective mindset still reigns.

HANNA RASKIN IS THE CREATOR OF *THE FOOD SECTION*, A NEWSLETTER COVERING FOOD AND DRINK IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH. SHE IS BASED IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.



## The Cat in the Cream’s Non-Vegan Chocolate Chip Cookies

YIELD: 20 COOKIES

### Ingredients

- 2 cups butter, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 cups brown sugar or 2 tablespoons of molasses
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 4 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 dash cinnamon
- 4 cups oats
- 3 cups chocolate chips

### Directions

Heat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

Combine butter and sugars in a large bowl. Add eggs and vanilla; stir to combine.

In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Pour dry mixture into wet mixture and stir until combined fully. Stir in oats and chocolate chips.

Drop by rounded tablespoon onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 20 minutes or until edges of cookies are slightly brown.

## The Cat in the Cream’s Vegan Oat Cookies

YIELD: 20 COOKIES

### Ingredients

- 1 cup margarine, softened
- 1½ cups granulated sugar or 1 tablespoon molasses
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 5 teaspoons water
- ¼ cup soy milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 cups oats
- Cinnamon (optional)
- Raisins (optional)

### Directions

Heat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Combine margarine and sugars in a large bowl.

In a separate bowl, combine cornstarch and water. Pour wet mixture into dry mixture and stir until combined fully. Add soy milk, vanilla, flour, baking soda, and oats, as well as preferred amount of cinnamon and raisins.

Drop by rounded tablespoon onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 20 minutes or until edges of cookies are slightly brown.

### GOOD REPAIR

# Feels on Wheels

BY G.M. DONLEY '83

**A bike lover gets his fix by helping others fix their bikes.**

WHEN HE FIRST ARRIVED AT OBERLIN, JOSH Bisker '05 brought a terrible bicycle from home. Lucky for him, it was stolen.

“I’m embarrassed to admit it, but it was a huge relief,” he recalls. “I hated riding that thing.”

In his fourth year, Bisker inherited a broken-down family bike that had been sitting in a garage in Baltimore since the early 1970s. He’d been reluctant to visit the Oberlin College Bicycle Co-op, located in the basement of Keep Cottage since its founding in 1986. He found himself intimidated by the anarchic, punkish vibe of the place.

But he really needed that bike. “I was living off campus, and this was going to be a lifeline.”

So Bisker worked up his nerve and began to volunteer at the co-op, keeping a very low profile but paying attention and learning a lot. “I really liked that it was volunteer-run and organized, that it had links to the town, and that so much of its energy went to supporting kids building floats for the Big Parade. I especially loved the ‘freedom-to-fail’ atmosphere.”

He found that very important in a hands-on educational space. “It was really easy to start contributing because you would learn one thing, and then you’d be able to help other people to learn that one thing,” he says. “You were able to be an equal contributor to the cohesive whole really quickly.”

Today, Bisker is the founder and executive director of Mechanical Gardens Bike Co-op, “a come-one, come-all educational center for bike repair and maintenance” located in Brooklyn, New York. In 2015, he called together a group of community organizers to help launch the place, leveraging the knowledge he’d gained at Oberlin and from other bike co-ops to inaugurate a new resource for New York City.

Eight years later, Mechanical Gardens has had two different headquarters and organizes pop-up repair events across the five boroughs. They’ve served more than 10,000 visitors, provided more than half a million dollars in parts and services, run approximately 1,000 events, and logged nearly 50,000 hours of volunteer labor.



To Josh Bisker (pictured with beard, at left), equity in bike co-ops is a wheel with many spokes.

## “That’s the whole thrust of an Oberlin education: How can we structure our relationships to power so that we can make the world more just?”

During the height of the pandemic, the co-op launched New York City’s first and only outdoor center for bike-repair education, staging a giant build-a-thon for healthcare workers and moving its base of operations to Red Hook, a transit-isolated waterfront neighborhood. The organization, Bisker says, “has played a unique role in increasing equitable access to bicycling, along with its social and economic benefits for individuals and communities.”

### Happiness is a grimy multitool

Mechanical Gardens’ model is built around drop-in hours during which anyone can work on their bicycle. “We do not fix your bike for you,” Bisker says. “We put the tools in your hands—the tools for happiness, I like to say—and teach you how to fix your bike. It’s not only about making sure people have bikes to ride, but also about instilling a feeling of empowerment and actual structured pathways for anyone to take control of their own mobility. It’s a volunteer-run and volunteer-held space, run *in* community and *by* community.” Pricing is suggested, so there are no financial barriers. The no-cost citywide mobile pop-up events, which are supported by the New York City Department of Transportation, are more about direct service provision than education—just volunteers helping make sure everybody’s bikes are working well.

Bisker’s experience has involved more than setting up a fun place to hang out with other cyclists. “I’ve gotten a degree in urban planning, and that has helped me mix my interests in urban equity with an understanding of spatial justice: the way that our physical spaces matter to our sociology and our frontiers for liberation inside our cities, in our embattled democracy, and in our centers for community action.”

His access-oriented philosophy can be seen in the co-op’s commitment to using design to promote social equity. After all, bike co-ops can have ambitious education programs and offer free service, but “often the spaces themselves are still oriented around people with more privileged access to knowledge—people who have already benefited from that freedom to

play and fail,” says Bisker. He cites the countless specialized nuts and bolts, which are often organized according to esoteric characteristics that only an experienced bike mechanic would understand. Or the way something as seemingly innocuous as a tool board layout can create a barrier to use.

“We’re trying to physically as well as programmatically embody the equity ideals that we’re striving to foster,” Bisker says. “The physical spaces need to be designed around the needs of the people who need access to them. These are design challenges that are overlooked inside of most educational programs, where people can end up inadvertently reinscribing the same systems of privilege that they’re trying to overcome.”

To Bisker, this disconnect between mission objectives and design of the spaces where those missions are carried out is one of the very common—but very solvable—problems of organizations seeking to promote equity and access. It’s true at Mechanical Gardens, and it’s true at Oberlin’s Bike Co-op too.

“The Oberlin College community is incredibly good at creating relational strategies to promote a better world,” says Bisker, who dreams of visiting his alma mater and helping to redesign the Bike Co-op’s space with such equity issues in mind. “That’s the whole thrust of an Oberlin education: How can we structure our relationships to power so that we can make the world more just?”

### The latest model

Mechanical Gardens lost its larger Red Hook headquarters at the end of 2022, meaning that planning for the future requires shifting gears. The organization has acquired 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, and Bisker is transitioning

from his executive director role to becoming a member of a board.

Incorporation means that the co-op can essentially cash in those years of dedicated volunteering as the founding investment in a sustainable mission-driven organization—one with a suitable physical space and a professional staff, working to improve lives in New York City for a long time.

“We have a track record of doing things nobody else has done in New York City, ever, and doing them very well,” Bisker says. “Now we’re building the capacity to secure a stable space and hire sustainable leadership from within the community of people who rely on our programs.”

For now, Mechanical Gardens is back in its original space—provided by St. John the Evangelist Lutheran Church in Williamsburg, Brooklyn—and continues to undertake mobile pop-up work. It’s a very different model than a student-run co-op camping out in the basement of a college building.

“I’m really proud of our work: the first real volunteer-run community bike co-op in New York City, the first outdoor center for bike-repair education. I feel proud of the huge number of people who have come through our doors. I feel proud of building mutual aid structures with Black-led cycling clubs, women- and trans-led cycling clubs, and local activist orgs. I feel really proud of the ways we have formed firm community ties within our neighborhoods of Brooklyn and of the ways that neighbors and small local institutions have welcomed us.

“Most of all,” Bisker adds, “I feel really proud anytime a participant in our programs says *us* instead of *you* when they talk about the bike co-op. It means that this project is changing people’s lives.”

### RESEARCH

## Meet the Researcher: Anna Francis '23



**Oberlin students conduct fascinating research across the sciences and humanities every day. Over the past year, fourth-year biology major Anna Francis of Weston, Connecticut, completed a project titled “Transcriptomic Analysis of Rhamnose Treatment on *E. coli* Planktonic and Biofilm Cells” under the guidance of professor Lisa Ryno. In late March, she was one of seven Oberlin students to present their research at the national meeting of the American Chemical Society in Indianapolis.**

**“My work with my mentor has prepared and inspired me to pursue a research career in biomedical science,” says Francis (pictured above right,**

**with Ryno), who has accepted a position as a research assistant at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston. She detailed her work with Ryno for the Office of Undergraduate Research:**

### **What’s the elevator pitch for your project?**

Biofilm formation is a natural phenomenon in which clusters of bacteria attach to an inert surface and embed themselves in thick layers of extracellular substances. Biofilm formation augments antibiotic resistance in bacteria and poses an elevated risk to global health. To study the environmental conditions that aid in biofilm formation, we are measuring changes in *E. coli* gene expression that occur in response

to sugar—an environmentally abundant, major nutrient source.

### **Why is your research important?**

The spread of antibiotic resistance among bacteria raises a significant challenge to global health. Our research provides insight into the environmental nutrients that influence the development of antibiotic resistance in *E. coli*. Our findings will establish a potential link between sugar metabolism and biofilm formation that can be used to develop new antibiofilm and antibiotic drugs to combat multi-resistant *E. coli*.

### **How did you get involved in research?**

During my first two years at Oberlin, I explored my interests

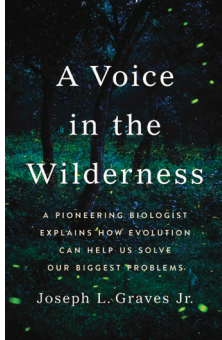
through different lab activities, courses, and workshops in the STEM department. I developed a passion for microbiology, molecular biology, and public health that drove me to seek out research opportunities in these fields. I was immediately drawn to Professor Ryno’s lab because it provided the opportunity to study the intersection between these three disciplines while gaining hands-on experience. One of my favorite aspects of the research process is the opportunity to explore the unknown and tread on new territory.

**Learn more about Francis’ project—and research by other students throughout campus—at [oberlin.edu/undergraduate-research](http://oberlin.edu/undergraduate-research).**



BOOKSHELF

# Recent Releases



***A Voice in the Wilderness:*  
*A Pioneering Biologist Explains How Evolution Can Help Us Solve Our Biggest Problems*  
Joseph L. Graves Jr. '77**

BASIC

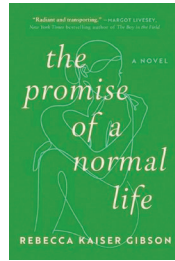
Once dubbed “the Black Darwin,” Joseph Graves is a biology professor at North Carolina A&T University and a key thinker on race and genetics. His new book continues a conversation that has been central in his career in evolutionary biology: the fallacy of biological race. At its heart, *A Voice in the Wilderness* is a memoir about the making of a scientist who is passionately devoted to better utilizing a scientific field that too often has been used to serve racist ideas. He braids engaging autobiographical storytelling with science to illuminate important details of his battle against racist theories.—*Karen Sandstrom*



***Unraveling:*  
*What I learned About Life While Shearing Sheep, Dyeing Wool, and Making the World's Ugliest Sweater*  
Peggy Orenstein '83**

HARPER

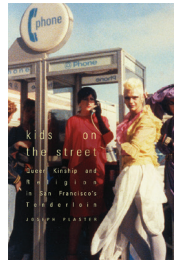
In March 2020, on her way to the airport for a trip to promote her book *Boys and Sex*, Peggy Orenstein's thoughts turned to the mysterious new virus that was making travel seem suddenly perilous. She turned the car around. Instead, the *New York Times* bestselling author spent quarantine on an epic act of craft. She sheared wool from sheep, then spun and dyed her own yarn, and finally knitted a sweater. And ultimately, she explores loss and changes that accompany late middle age. Her signature warmth, good humor, and keen intellect mark the resulting memoir.—*KS*



***The Promise of a Normal Life*  
Rebecca Kaiser Gibson '68**

ARCADE

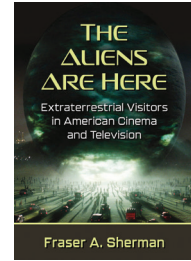
A poet's gift for noticing and naming fleeting detail makes the prose sparkle in this debut novel about a young Jewish girl growing into her life in late-mid-century America and beyond. The unnamed first-person narrator glides in and out of moments that reveal surprising scenes from the lives of her family alongside a tumble of vivid experiences that depict her own becoming. The novel was shaped during the pandemic from pieces of a story Gibson had been writing over the decades. Her books of poetry are *Girl as Birch* and *Opinel*, and her work has appeared in numerous publications, including *Slate*, *Harvard Review*, and *Los Angeles Review of Books*.—*KS*



***Kids on the Street:*  
*Queer Kinship and Religion in San Francisco's Tenderloin*  
Joseph Plaster '01**

DUKE

When Joseph Plaster moved to San Francisco in the early 2000s, he spent time visiting neighborhoods to find one that was attractive to him as a young gay man. That turned out to be the Tenderloin, a district central to the LGBTQ rights movement and a haven for marginalized and queer youth. In *Kids on the Street*, Plaster presents a compelling scholarly history of the social and financial networks that arise among denizens of tenderloin districts across America—networks often disrupted, their history erased, by gentrification. His research includes scores of oral histories he recorded from 2007 through 2011 with “the kids” of San Francisco's Tenderloin.—*KS*



***The Aliens Are Here:*  
*Extraterrestrial Visitors in American Cinema and Television*  
Fraser A. Sherman '80**

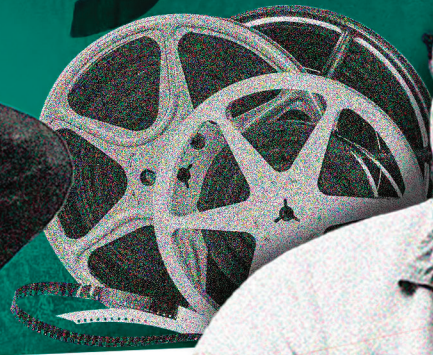
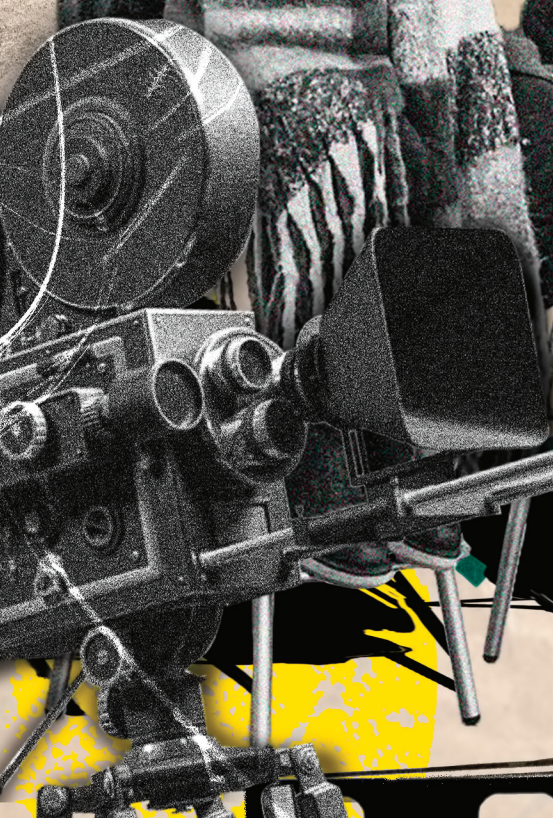
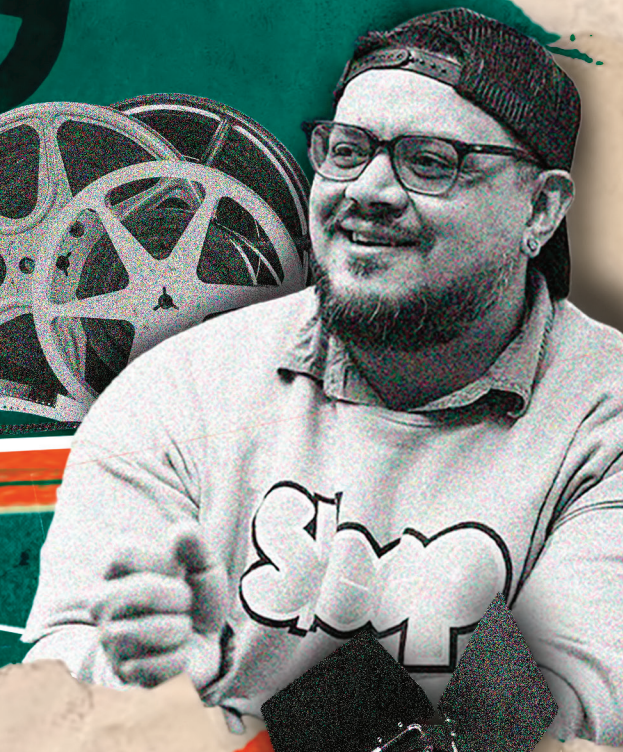
MCFARLAND

With a breezy style and an obvious love for his material, Fraser A. Sherman explores our fascination with alien visitors and cites themes that connect these stories: space invaders as proxies for immigrants, alien abductions, interplanetary love stories, and UFO conspiracy theories. Each chapter focuses on a film that embodies one of those themes. Among them: *The Thing from Another World*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Superman II*, and *Village of the Damned*. In an era when mysterious balloons waft above mountains and deserts, a book about ETs seems right on time.—*KS*



**APOLLO**

**ROBERLIN SCREENWRITERS  
INTENSIVE  
STERLIN HARJOS MEKKO**

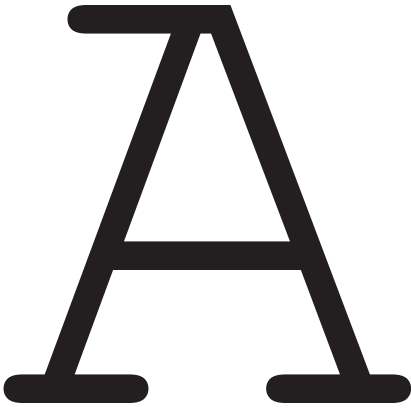




**THE GOLDEN AGE OF OBIWOOD**

**Oberlin creatives have the talent to make it in Hollywood.  
Now they have the network too.**

**By Annie Zaleski  
Illustrations by Nadia Radic**



**ASK MILES LABAT** about his favorite movies, and you'll get an impassioned, incisive response encompassing Fritz Lang's influential 1931 thriller *M*, Italian and Japanese filmmakers of the '40s and '50s, and the silent film icon F.W. Murnau.

"My preference, aesthetically, is just how film *feels*," says Labat, a 2014 Oberlin grad. "Because I grew up on music, I'm very big on feeling. That's why I love Thelonious Monk and Duke Ellington."

For Labat, music and film have always been intertwined. Growing up in New Orleans, he paired a talent for the drums with a deep passion for movies. At Oberlin, he continued to nurture both interests, studying jazz in the conservatory while taking enough film classes to earn a minor in cinema studies.

"I didn't really go to any parties," he says. "I went to the library at Mudd, checked out a room, and watched movies on the weekends."

After graduation, Labat gighed for a few years but realized he'd rather pursue a career in film. A self-taught writer, he worked as a camera assistant and refined his own craft, directing and producing a short movie and developing scripts.

Admission into film school, however, remained elusive. But when Labat heard about the inaugural Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive—a three-day event held on campus during the 2023 Winter Term and tailored to aspiring TV and movie writers—he didn't need to think twice before applying.

"If I learned anything from working in film production, it's that every opportunity counts. You just have to search for them."

**LABAT WAS ONE** of eight fellows in the initial Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive (OSI), a cohort comprising Oberlin alums at varying stages in their careers, toting scripts geared toward features as well as TV drama and comedy.

"Obies are original, independent thinkers and have a lot to say about the world," says writer, director, and producer Michele

Mulroney, vice president of the Writers Guild of America West and co-founder of OSI along with her husband, Kieran Mulroney (pictured, previous spread from left). "Our hope was that we could tap into those incredible voices that we know Obies have."

Adds Kieran: "The opportunity to take something that you've written and spend hours getting inside of it with another brain—with another artist, with another writer—is this rare thing."

Accordingly, across three packed days, the fellows were mentored by Sterlin Harjo, co-creator and showrunner of the Peabody Award-winning series *Reservation Dogs* (pictured, right on previous spread); Allison Schroeder, who was nominated for an Oscar, British Academy Film Award, and Writers Guild of America Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for *Hidden Figures*; Micah Schraft, who has written, produced, and directed multiple TV shows; and Julian Breece, who co-wrote the Emmy-nominated Netflix series *When They See Us* and wrote the screenplay for Netflix's forthcoming film *Bayard*.

The Mulroneys, who also served as OSI mentors, became involved with Oberlin when their daughter Stella '21 was a first-year student. They were a natural fit: Across a career that spans more than 20 years, they've amassed extensive writing, producing, and directing credits, including writing and directing the 2009 independent feature *Paper Man* (starring Emma Stone and Ryan Reynolds); writing 2011's *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*; and co-writing 2017's *Power Rangers*.

At Stella's graduation, the Mulroneys found themselves chatting with Laura Baudot, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and an associate professor of English. "In conversation over tea, I said, 'You know what Oberlin needs? It needs a writers' conference. It needs something that's known outside of the college,'" Kieran says.

A few months later, their idle conversation became a reality—and took shape over the year that followed. "We wanted this intensive to be very craft-focused, about the fundamentals of writing for the screen: screenplays and teleplays," Michele says. "It's not an industry accelerator, where we're about to try and go sell the projects, although we very much hope and expect these projects to do well."

An intensive dedicated to storytelling dovetails neatly with Oberlin's commitment to fostering opportunities for its students and alumni to develop their narrative skills and voices. Traditionally, students have

received a strong foundation in documentary filmmaking, animation, and experimental filmmaking, both at Oberlin and off campus via the nonprofit StoryLens Pictures and semester-exchange programs at Prague Film School and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

But in recent years, English and cinema studies professor Geoff Pingree noticed increasing interest in Oberlin's screenwriting courses. In response, he and creative writing professor Emily Barton joined forces to integrate the courses into both the cinema studies and creative writing programs. (The popular Cinematic Storytelling Workshop, for example, is cross-listed in both departments.)

"My conversations with Emily have been along the lines of, 'Why don't we build a pathway?'" Pingree says. "Let's build a pathway of what I call *writing for screens*. Increasingly, students are not writing for theater or movies. They're writing for iPhones or iPads."

To Pingree, OSI perfectly complements this evolution. "Oberlin proportionately produces a really high rate of good and interesting writers," he says. "But there's something about their relationship with stories that is very interesting. The intensive made sense to me as something that would naturally connect with this pipeline of Oberlin storytellers we're trying to create that write for different forms."

**PINGREE'S VISION ALIGNS** with existing opportunities for Oberlin students that are grounded in experiential learning and network-building. Among them are integrative concentrations, which blend coursework with real-world experience, and the wide-ranging resources of the Center for Engaged Liberal Arts. The latter connects students and alumni with a wide range of professional development support.

Creating pathways for Oberlin students and alums is also a major goal of the Oberlin Entertainment Network. Affectionately dubbed "Obiewood," the network exists to help students and alumni succeed in the entertainment industry.

Driven by a core working group of alumni and parents with established careers in Hollywood—including the Mulroneys, actor-comedian Ed Helms '96, executive Steve Dolcemaschio, and TV writer Andrew Guest '99—and presented in conjunction with Oberlin's alumni engagement office, Obiewood produces education-focused events and networking opportunities intended to untangle the often winding path toward working in entertainment. Previous



“The Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive is a conversation from artist to artist. It’s about supporting your script and ideas.”

KIERAN MULRONEY P '21

OSI mentors and fellows, pictured outside Oberlin’s historic Apollo Theatre in January 2023.

events have included a webinar called “The Art of the Pitch” and the panel discussion “Rising Stars vs. Old Guard: A Showbiz Clash of the Ages.”

A former film student at Oberlin, Helms has been working in entertainment for close to 30 years, his iconic roles including uptight dentist Stu Price in the *Hangover* movies, salesman Andy Bernard on *The Office*, and correspondent on Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*.

“I know how hard it is to land on your feet after college in general, but especially in an [industry as] crazy as show business,” he says. “It’s been really fun to collaborate with other alums and passionate people, just trying to figure out some pipelines and access points and landing pads, and making that transition a little bit easier.”

As with the Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive, Helms sees Obiewood fitting into larger initiatives on campus that are geared toward establishing pathways for students,

particularly the Career Communities, which offer formalized networks around various popular career tracks.

“The college is doing a really good job right now creating working groups in different professions,” Helms says. “We became the show business version of that.”

Obiewood also exists as a conduit of support for alumni already working in the entertainment industry—a model similar to Harvardwood, a nonprofit founded by (and geared for) Harvard University graduates that now has more than 10,000 members worldwide.

“In order to be successful in show business, no matter what path you want to take, you need to have an entrepreneurial fire in your belly,” Helms says. “But even if you have that—and I know from my personal experience—there’s always this sense of, ‘Where do you start? Where do you go? Who do you talk to?’ There aren’t really shortcuts, but we can make access to information

easier. We can demystify things and help people feel a little bit safer and more comfortable in such a chaotic business. And that can go a really long way.”

**AS A SENIOR MANAGER** for creative affairs at A+E Studios, Tasha Cohan ’11 spends her days discovering, developing, and shaping drama and comedy projects for TV and streaming platforms. The youngest member of the working group that drives Obiewood, she became involved partly because she found herself fielding multiple requests from students for informational interviews and realized there was so much interest in what she did—and curiosity about how she got there.

“Oberlin does such a wonderful job of finding incredible students who have so much to say and who engage with art in wonderful ways,” she says. “And so I thought that Hollywood—or my part of Hollywood, which is scripted

YE VEHEN GULENKO



dramas—could benefit from having more Obies all throughout the process.”

At Oberlin, Cohan thought she would be a documentary filmmaker. “[But] I found out that it really didn’t suit me professionally,” she says. After graduation, she moved into her mom’s garage in Portland, Oregon, and took a DIY approach to a career.

“I tried to teach myself how to write screenplays,” she says. “I read the books. I listened to the podcasts. But I was really getting nowhere, and I did not know a single person in scripted TV at all.” In fact, she found it difficult to even find an Oberlin alum who could do an informational interview.

She decided to get an MFA—an experience that led to internships and, eventually, her current job. But she realizes now that

the liberal arts education she received at Oberlin was enough preparation for what she does today.

“You need to be able to read, and talk about what you read, and write clearly and have an opinion about art,” she says. “And all that was stuff that I learned at Oberlin—more so actually at Oberlin than in my MFA [program].”

With Obiewood, Cohan helps younger alums grasp what it’s like to work in a studio on the business side; connects them to people who can help; and even simply “mak[es] them feel like they’re not alone,” she says.

“The time that was the hardest for me was that transition from my last year to actually finding my way. If I had known some of this information when I was still at

**OSI fellows (clockwise from top left): Ian Ashley Wood, Ru Anderson, Miles Labat, Katie Friedemann, Charlotte Istel, Hyacinth Parker, Rachel Leighson, Elizabeth Roberts**

Oberlin—if I could have been connected with some of these folks—I could have gone more directly into my path.”

Besides providing a sense of belonging and community, Obiewood facilitates invaluable career connections. During a Friday afternoon Zoom interview in early March, Liam Oznowich ’17 politely pauses the conversation to take a phone call, which turns out to be related to reserving space

for an upcoming Obiewood event that he's moderating.

That event, "Live from the Trenches: Hollywood's Rising Stars Share Their Stories," took place April 20 at the Los Angeles offices of United Talent Agency. The panel discussion—which included early-career employees working in acting, TV writing, documentary production, and series coordination—covered tangible, practical advice to industry newcomers about getting started, as well as sharing insights about what it's like working in Hollywood now.

Oznowich conceived the idea for the panel based partly on his own years of hard work and hustle. During college, the Cleveland native had several internships, including one in TV development at Paramount Television and another in the production department at *Late Night with Seth Meyers*. But Oznowich—who triple-majored in creative writing, cinema studies, and French—knew he wanted to write. So after graduation, he headed to L.A., where he took on more internships before landing at a talent agency as a literary assistant to two agents: one who focused on film and another who primarily handled TV.

"Everybody was telling me that no matter what I wanted to do, I needed to work at an agency," he says. "It was a lot of work [and] it was very hectic, but it was a year and a half of a lot of learning. It was like a crash course in how the business worked." Oznowich parlayed this experience into a writer's production assistant job on the first season of HBO Max's *Flight Attendant* and then gigs as a showrunner's assistant on *Supergirl* and *The Venery of Samantha Bird*.

In fall 2022, Oznowich stepped into his current role: assistant to Ed Helms. He's spent the past few months learning about what it's like to be on set as Helms has been filming a Netflix movie, *Family Leave*, alongside Jennifer Garner.

Oznowich traces his latest job to his own participation in Obiewood. He met Helms via a virtual pitch event, and they reconnected at an August 2022 Obiewood mixer. There, he boldly presented his idea for the panel that became Obiewood's "Live from the Trenches."

During subsequent email conversations, Helms asked if Oznowich was looking for work. "And I was like, 'Yes, please,'" he says with a laugh. "I'm freelancing. But I need a job." They hit it off during a more formal interview, and Oznowich got what he calls his "dream job," for many reasons.

"He was very open to me wanting to write, and [there's] the opportunity to get involved with the development side of the

## Elevator Pitches

**As part of the application process for the Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive, fellows included a pitch for a work-in-progress TV show or film script. Here are their winning ideas.**

### **Ru Anderson '19**

**KISSED BY CUPID (TV Comedy):** A volatile celebrity event planner and his idealistic assistant must pull off an over-the-top Labor Day party or face financial ruin. But things get complicated when the FBI shows up.

### **Katie Friedemann '22**

**BOY PROBLEMS (Feature):** An embittered young misandrist juggles three lovers in order to receive her inheritance, which will only be granted on the date of her marriage.

### **Charlotte Istel '14**

**GOOD GENES (TV Comedy):** Two friends start an underground sperm bank operation for lesbian couples.

### **Miles Labat '14**

**CAPER (Feature):** A corrupt ex-NYPD narcotics detective is coerced into infiltrating a Harlem heroin syndicate to avoid incarceration.

### **Rachel Leighson '13**

**THE BENDER GIRLS (TV Drama):** The serial-killing Bender family and the pioneering Ingalls family collide as their daughters, Kate Bender and Mary Ingalls, form an unlikely and deadly friendship in 1870s Kansas.

### **Hyacinth Parker '17**

**BLACK GIRL IN PARIS (Feature):** Set in 1986, Eden, a young Black woman from Georgia, follows in the footsteps of Langston Hughes, Josephine Baker, and most importantly, James Baldwin, as she pursues her dream of becoming a writer in Paris.

### **Elizabeth Roberts '13**

**VANTAGE (Feature):** In the bone-dry summer of 1992, romance blossoms between an ex-wildland firefighter and a radio jockey stationed as fire lookouts in the Cascades wilderness when they team up to investigate uncanny disturbances in their woods.

### **Ian Ashley Wood '12**

**JAGOFF (Feature):** The world's biggest bootlicker is drawn into the murky web of world domination when he's recruited by the local Pittsburgh chapter of the Illuminati to assassinate a hometown hero.

company in terms of reading scripts and giving my thoughts and having creative input,” Oznowich says.

“It seemed like a perfect opportunity.”

**MICHELE AND KIERAN MULRONEY** drew on their experience being part of the Obiewood working group as they envisioned what the Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive could look like. For starters, they were committed to presenting the program at Oberlin, since writing labs and intensives often take place in New York and L.A. Michele hoped to draw students with backgrounds in other disciplines, like music and science.

They were also inspired by their 2004 participation in the prestigious Sundance Screenwriters Lab and Directors Lab, which showed them the importance of creating an empowering and supportive environment.

“The Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive is a conversation from artist to artist,” Kieran says. “It’s about supporting your script and ideas. It’s, ‘You have built this object. How can we make this the best version of the

object?’ It’s a two-way conversation.”

Appropriately, one-on-one mentor sessions that dug into the fellows’ scripts were the cornerstone of OSI. These came paired with smaller-group breakout sessions, in which four fellows and two mentors gathered for in-depth discussions about strategies for rewriting and adapting intellectual property, as well as a session that simulated a writers’ room for television.

The intensive also featured a panel on what to expect in the business. “We got very real about some of the joys and challenges of working in this industry—which is a thriving industry, but a very selective industry, and it can be hard to get into,” Michele says. “And then once you get into it, it’s not easy to sustain a career. But we were able to share strategies about how to put your best foot forward, how to not lose your voice, [and] how to collaborate with producers and executives and other writers along the way.”

For writer and comic Ru Anderson ’19, OSI’s approach was exactly what they needed. “What I was looking for was mentorship and one-on-one time with

working screenwriters like the Mulroneys and the other mentors,” they said over Zoom from Los Angeles. “So I was like, ‘OK, this is perfect.’”

Anderson had applied to screenwriter intensives before but found them to be extremely competitive and appreciated that OSI was easier to get into. “I don’t need to pull off the odds of getting into Harvard—I just want to talk to someone who can teach me something. And that was exactly what I got, and it was awesome.”

A Philadelphia native who majored in comparative American studies, Anderson brought a script for a half-hour “mockumentary written in reality TV-show style, about an event-planning company in West Hollywood. So it’s sort of like *Selling Sunset* meets *Party Down*.”

Anderson, who also performs stand-up around L.A., received a lot of notes on the script. “At first, it felt really overwhelming, and I felt defeated, to be honest. But now that I’ve had almost two months to step back, I’m like, ‘OK, I can sort through everyone else’s voices, find my own, and still

Writer-director Julian Brece teaches at the Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive.





**“The fellows gain a lot from this program, but it’s a gift to the mentors as well. The energy, drive, and big starry-eyed dreams that were shared over those three days reminded me why I got into the business of visual storytelling in the first place.”**

**JULIAN BREECE**

incorporate things people have said to make it a stronger script.”

As it so happens, some of Anderson’s favorite shows involve Oberlin alums, including *Search Party* (Sarah-Violet Bliss ’06), *High Maintenance* (Ben Sinclair ’06), and *Girls* (Lena Dunham ’08). They were also buoyed by the community that’s grown out of a fall 2022 Obiewood networking event. “OK, cool,” Anderson remembers thinking. “Now I have access to this alumni network.”

Another OSI fellow, Hyacinth Parker ’17, has spent several years working on a script based on a book by Shay Youngblood. “The story is about a young Black woman named Eden who moves to Paris in 1986, in pursuit of James Baldwin and to become a writer and fulfill her dream,” she says.

After graduating with a degree in environmental studies, Parker moved abroad for a year and then worked in the *New York Times*’ advertising department, focusing on entertainment brands such as Netflix, Hulu, A24, and HBO. Over time, however, the San Francisco native felt pulled in a different direction. “There was a moment where I was like, ‘I would much rather work on *making* films,’” she says. Parker decided to change course. Her jobs today involve working in production—“mostly for documentaries and docuseries,” she says.

Parker’s path in entertainment has been typically nonlinear. “The first challenge was really figuring out how to get in,” she says. Finding the right position was also paramount—but complicated by the fact she finished her résumé the week before the pandemic hit in 2020. She decided to stay at the *Times* for an extra year, albeit in a different job, doing more creative strategies with the same entertainment brands, and worked on her script and other projects.

“One of the main challenges I face is learning how to be patient and how to have grit and keep pursuing the dream even

though it seems like everything’s falling apart,” says Parker, noting the pandemic “but then also the challenge of Hollywood always being in flux and figuring out how to get the story told and how to make the story when you don’t have enough money. Or it seems like everybody’s just interested in true-crime documentaries, and they don’t want to make a movie about a young Black girl who’s moving to Paris because it’s not demographically in.”

The OSI feedback was invaluable, however. “All of their advice really led towards the same path, which was: Keep going, keep pursuing this vision that you have for the story—but make it bigger, more expansive, and more dynamic.”

Parker is preparing to film a short version of her script in collaboration with her creative partner and a cinematographer and a French production team, with the goal of having a “strong stand-alone piece” that can also generate interest for the larger film.

“I really appreciated the opportunity to learn from writers who were so experienced and had such depth and success in their careers,” she says. “It was a privilege to sit with them for three days and was a breath of fresh air as they provided a new perspective on my story. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

**THE HOPE IS THAT** the first cohort of the Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive turns into a self-sustaining community—something that appears to be happening, as Michele Mulroneo shares news of fellows forming writers’ groups and meeting up in New York City. Ru Anderson, meanwhile, has been able to rely on Parker and another fellow, Charlotte Istel ’14, when facing “career conundrums that I’ve needed support with.”

However, much like how Obiewood benefits all members, the support goes both

ways. “I certainly can speak for the other mentors that we got as much, if not more, out of this intensive than the fellows did,” Michele says. “It was so inspiring for us. Their openness was incredible. Not every writer is able to be that open and receptive to interesting or challenging thoughts.”

The next Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive is set for January 11-13, 2024, with applications welcome beginning in September. Michele Mulroneo hopes to build on the success of this year, keeping the mentorship and group classes an integral part, while continuing to invite the greater Oberlin community to take part in screenings and panels. “We want to wrap our arms around the entire college and faculty and the town of Oberlin and make this something that annually we all look forward to doing and being together for,” she says.

Miles Labat’s OSI experience certainly fulfilled his expectations. His application included an original screenplay called *Caper*, rooted in police corruption in early 1970s New York City.

“It’s a fictional story that was based around a bank robbery from a corrupt ex-detective who needed to do the bank robbery in order to get out of a deal with the Black mafia of New York,” he explains. “And this was all based on actual syndicates and actual figures in the corrupt police department.”

In response to mentor feedback, Labat overhauled the script. He’s also eyeing up a move from New Orleans to L.A. this summer. And at the intensive, he had a chance to discuss old films, writers, and film theorists with his new mentors. “I’m like, ‘Man, I never get to talk about these people with anybody,’” he says. “There was a camaraderie aspect to the mentor sessions.”

His other enduring takeaways might prove to be even more valuable. “One of the best things I learned was from Sterlin Harjo, who said the difference between people who make it and don’t is perseverance—it’s not merit,” he says. “It is people who stick it through, because it’s gonna get hard, and a lot of people give up. And those that don’t give up eventually make it.” ■

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Obiewood: The Oberlin Entertainment Network is part of the Arts, Communications, and Creative Professions Career Community. Learn more and get involved at [go.oberlin.edu/Obiewood](https://go.oberlin.edu/Obiewood). For information about the 2024 Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive, visit [go.oberlin.edu/OSI](https://go.oberlin.edu/OSI).



# Dett Fulfillment

Themes of hope and commitment to progress permeate Oberlin's tour of New York.

Oberlin shined brightly on two of New York's grandest stages in January, and this time the glow spanned generations.

The Oberlin Orchestra and conservatory choral ensembles—numbering some 250 musicians in all—joined forces at Carnegie Hall for the second time in as many months for a program that showcased the masterwork of Oberlin composer R. Nathaniel Dett and the talents of two standout alumni soloists making their Carnegie Hall debuts: soprano Chabrelle Williams '11 and tenor Limmie Pulliam '98.

In early December, the ensembles performed before the United Nations General Assembly in a celebration of Oberlin's new partnership with the UN's Institute for Training and Research and the Global Foundation for the Performing Arts.

This time, the Oberlin entourage also included the exceptional musicians of the Oberlin Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble, which sandwiched a pair of sold-out gigs at the famed Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola between outreach visits with schoolchildren across the metropolitan area.

One day prior to the orchestra's performance of Dett's *The Ordering of Moses*, a panel discussion at Kaufman Music Center contextualized the life and work of Dett, who in 1908 became the first Black double-major graduate of Oberlin Conservatory and who enjoyed a remarkable career as a composer, performer, choral director, and educator. >



## Oberlin in NYC

**BORN IN CANADA** and raised in America, composer R. Nathaniel Dett is remembered as a pioneer who championed the use of spirituals and folk songs as a basis for Western classical compositions—a practice he developed as a student at Oberlin Conservatory and that he employed throughout his career.

Initially composed in 1932, Dett's oratorio *The Ordering of Moses* is widely considered his magnum opus in scale and in its articulation of recurrent issues concerning the construction of Black identity and artistry.

"Tonight's performance is distinct because it's about hope, and progress, and challenge, and movement forward and back—and forward again—because of our commitment to diversity and inclusion and equity," Oberlin President Carmen Twillie Ambar said from the Carnegie stage. "At a time when many openly question the value of diversity, the compositions you are about to hear remind us all of our humanity and that we can find joy in the wonderful complexity of difference."

The evening's climactic piece, *The Ordering of Moses* is a musical retelling of the Exodus story that summons Dett's firm grasp of classical composition.

The moment marked a coming-out party of sorts for accomplished soprano soloist Chabrelle Williams '11 and tenor soloist Limmie Pulliam '98, whose rich and varied careers had until that moment not included engagements at the famed venue. They were joined by mezzo-soprano soloist Ronnita Miller and baritone Eric Greene. The spotlight was shared by the orchestra as well as the choral ensembles, made up of the Oberlin College Choir, the Oberlin Gospel Choir, and the campus-community ensemble Oberlin Musical Union, prepared by conservatory faculty Ben Johns and Gregory Ristow.

The program opened with Johannes Brahms' *Tragic Overture*, followed by *A Metaphor for Power*, by ASCAP Award-winning Puerto Rican composer Iván Enrique Rodríguez. The deeply moving "musical essay"—in the words of its creator—calls into question the ubiquitously trumpeted assertion that all men are created



**Above:** Musicians prepare backstage at Carnegie Hall.  
**Right:** Conductor Raphael Jiménez and tenor soloist Limmie Pulliam '98.

equal. At the conclusion of the piece and at the beckoning of conductor Raphael Jiménez, the composer sprang from his seat on the left side of the house and dashed to the stage, where he crossed his arms over his heart in humble appreciation as waves of adoration washed over him from audience and performers alike.

On the eve of the Carnegie Hall performance, esteemed scholars and performers spanning the fields of African American music, choral music, ethnomusicology, music theory, and religion explored the music, life, and ideas of Dett in a discussion hosted by Kaufman Music Center. It was moderated by Courtney-Savali Andrews '04, assistant professor of African American and African diasporic musics at Oberlin.

The panel featured Jeannie Ma. Guerrero, retired professor of music theory at the Eastman

School of Music; Marques L.A. Garrett, professor of choral music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Roland Carter, professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; Damien Sneed, jazz faculty member at the Manhattan School of Music; Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, professor emerita of religion and women's studies at Shaw University Divinity School; and Fredara Hadley, ethnomusicology professor at the Juilliard School.

"We've all been ordered, here in America... to move forward to the future," Sneed noted in the discussion. "And just as Moses was victorious, now, Robert Nathaniel Dett, we call your name. Now we can lift up the ancestor and say, 'Now we honor you and put you in the proper place.'"



**Left:** Soloists (from left) Chabelle Williams '11, Ronnita Miller, and Eric Greene. **Above:** Panelist Fredara Hadley (left) and moderator Courtney-Savali Andrews '04.



**Left:** Jiménez (left) with composer Iván Enrique Rodríguez. **Above:** Jeannie Ma. Guerrero, Marques L.A. Garrett, Roland Carter, Damien Sneed, and Cheryl Kirk-Duggan. **Below:** Orchestra members take the stage.



PANEL PHOTOS: CHRIS LEE

**Oberlin in NYC**



Members of the Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble performed two sets at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola.





**“WHEN YOU’RE GOING** to New York City, you don’t just want to play a tune from the jazz canon that people have heard a thousand times, because there’s none of you in it,” Bobby Ferrazza, director of the Oberlin Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble, said at the outset of the group’s second-ever runout to the Big Apple.

“We want to give them something they can’t hear anywhere else. And when you’re making the tune your own, the excitement goes to the next level as it unfolds. It starts to play itself.”

What unfolded in back-to-back sets at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola was a jubilant mingling of musicians and mentors, alumni and friends of Oberlin, and avid devourers of jazz—two-plus hours of music that paid homage to the greats and showcased the young talent on stage through uniquely stamped solos and precocious original tunes. Interspersed with classics by the likes of Charles Mingus, Ella Fitzgerald, and Rollins himself were creative creations by first-year alto sax player George Rogers and senior guitarist Jacob Clements, with indelible musical markings left by all eight performers.



## Oberlin in NYC



**ON THE DAYS BEFORE** and after its twin sets at Dizzy's, the Sonny Rollins Ensemble visited schools and music programs in the city and in nearby New Jersey, performing for—and with—students and talking about their craft and life in the conservatory.

"I would be disappointed if I went anywhere else," guitarist Jacob Clements told students at the Jazz House Kids program in Montclair, New Jersey, when asked why he chose Oberlin. "You get so much care and attention here. I feel like everyone I interact with cares about me. I feel like I'm part of a community and not just going to school."

The Sonny Ensemble was established through the support of the legendary saxophonist, who charges the group's standout student performers to serve humanity through music.

"For me, one of the most satisfying parts is hearing how good this group sounds," said James McBride '79, a bestselling author and musician who was instrumental in connecting Rollins with Oberlin. "This is one of the best college jazz ensembles in the world. It's hard to hold New York City schoolchildren attentive for an hour and a half—you'd better bring something. And they did. I'm very proud of them. This is exactly what Sonny had in mind. This is life-altering."



ERICH BURNETT, LORENZO CINIGLIO, JACOB STRAUSS





New Yorker James McBride '79 (second from right, wearing hat), a key figure in the creation of the Oberlin Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble, joined Brooklyn schoolchildren for one of the ensemble's outreach gigs.





NYLA

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# LAYMON'S TERMS

LIFE HAS  
CHANGED FOR  
OBERLIN'S  
NEWEST  
MACARTHUR  
FELLOW. NOW  
HE'S CHANGING  
THE LIVES OF  
OTHERS TOO.

BY DAVID SILVERBERG  
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY TEMI COKER



WHEN KIESE LAYMON LOOKS back on his Oberlin years, he does not mince words.

“Being there, at a place that valued young Black artists, literally saved my life,” says the 1998 grad, an author and professor who was named a MacArthur Fellow last fall. At Oberlin, Laymon immersed himself among creators who were making lively, inspiring art. He was also inspired by the discipline he saw in so many others around him there.

After earning a BA in English from Oberlin, then an MFA from Indiana University, he went on to write two books—the novel *Long Division* and the essay collection *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America*—both originally published in 2013. The story of time-traveling Mississippi teens, *Long Division* was optioned by comedian Trevor Noah to become a TV series and was the winner of the 53rd NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work in the fiction category.

In 2018, Laymon released *Heavy: An American Memoir*, an eloquent and raw coming-of-age story featuring unflinching insights into his issues with body image, violence, and gambling. In between these deep works, each of them examining the Black American experience through the lens of his Mississippi upbringing, Laymon also wrote

to be fêted with a so-called “Genius Grant,” and the first since musician Rhiannon Giddens in 2017.

When he first got the call, six weeks before the official announcement, Laymon thought it was a joke perpetrated by his friend and fellow author, Reginald Dwayne Betts. “He once told me he’d prank me about getting a Genius Grant, so I thought it was him playing around with me. And it all didn’t really feel real until the announcement came out.”

What Laymon plans to do with the prize isn’t confirmed, he says, but one cause he’ll continue to support is the Catherine Coleman Literary Arts, Food and Justice Initiative, which he founded and named after his grandmother.

Headquartered at Jackson State University, the foundation offers free writing workshops to public school students who are mentored by students, faculty, and guests from the university’s creative writing program. Originally established at the University of Mississippi when Laymon was a member of the school’s English and creative writing faculty, the initiative relocated to his hometown in fall 2022—an announcement made shortly after the MacArthur news broke. (“My grandmama sent all her daughters to Jackson State,” he said at the time, noting the personal significance of the move.) The first group of student workshops are happening this summer.

Laymon has taught at the University of Mississippi, Vassar College, and for the past two-plus years at Rice University. Immersion in academia feels natural for him, in no small part because his mother taught political science for 35 years, retiring from

**“I’M NOW IN A NEW TAX BRACKET. I KNOW THINGS WILL SHIFT FOR ME IN TERMS OF WRITING ABOUT RACE AND CLASS, AND I’M PREPARED TO WRITE ABOUT THAT CHANGE.”**

“I remember in my first year, I was going for a run at 7 a.m. and I see this young kid—he looked 14—was coming out of his dorm room with a cello that was bigger than him,” he recalls. “And I asked him what he was doing up this early. He said, ‘Practice,’ and I immediately thought *Wow, the game has changed here. This is serious stuff.*”

for *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times*, and *ESPN.com*, among other major outlets.

Then in October 2022 Laymon learned that he had won an esteemed MacArthur Fellowship. He’ll receive \$800,000, paid out in equal quarterly installments over five years, with no strings attached. He is the 13th Oberlin alumnus

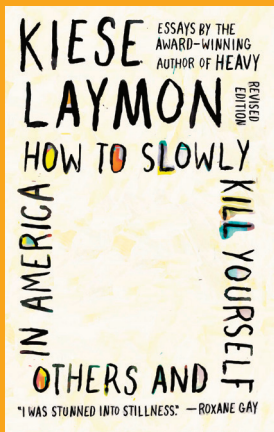
# THE LAYMON LIBRARY



## **Long Division**

SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2013  
(REVISED IN 2020)

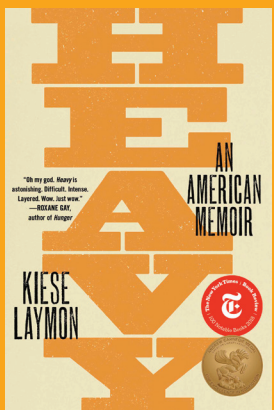
A novel that blends elements of time travel and mystery, this coming-of-age story charts the world of two Black teens in the southern U.S., in search of themselves amid a flurry of expectations from family and society. It has been optioned by comedian Trevor Noah for a TV series.



## **How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America**

SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2013  
(REVISED IN 2021)

This incisive, poignant collection of essays includes letters to the author's mother and uncle; a fictional presidential debate; observations on celebrity; and Laymon's recognition of his own complicity in the misogynist treatment of Black women.



## **Heavy: An American Memoir**

SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2018

Laymon's memoir explores his complicated relationship with his mother, as well as his struggles with eating, addiction, and gambling. Along the way, it touches on themes related to universal quests for truth, reconciliation, and love.

Jackson State in 2007.

"I wouldn't be a professor without her," he admits, "and she not only gave me a literary taste, because I was surrounded by books as a kid, but I have always admired her relationships with students. Sometimes, she would invite students to our place when they didn't have a home to go to for Thanksgiving or Christmas."

Laymon even studied for a semester at Jackson State when his mother was still teaching on campus; he soon left "because she was all up in my business," he says with a laugh.

Change and revision have been at the heart of Laymon's work recently, particularly in the reissued essay collection *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America*, which came about after he bought back the rights from his publisher. "Securing the rights to my books, revising them, and publishing them the way they want to be published are the most loving acts I could do for my work, my body, my Mississippi," Laymon writes in the author's note.

Poignantly written with sharp takeaways on race and relationships, the new edition finds Laymon "[writing] from Mississippi about our current awakening," he writes. "The movement of the essays is painted in regret and revelry." His passion for hip-hop glows in one piece, while another pointedly suggests how he will "not allow American ideals of patriotism and masculinity to make me hard, abusive, generic, and brittle."

In a new opening essay set at the beginning of the 2020 pandemic, Laymon deftly writes about how political and racial tensions in Mississippi are a microcosm of America itself. The piece weaves together multiple thematic threads: anxiety about the growing spread of coronavirus and concerns about keeping family members healthy; the

removal of the Mississippi flag but the protection of Confederate monuments, both of which happen against a backdrop of national uprisings after the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor; and the ways entrenched racism and violence perpetuate themselves throughout history. "Phantoms move at their own speed," Laymon writes.

In between teaching courses at Rice, Laymon is working on two new books, *Good God* and *City Summer, Country Summer*. He also plans to write about how his newfound wealth affects him. "I'm now in a new tax bracket," he says. "I know things will shift for me in terms of writing about race and class, and I'm prepared to write about that change."

And what drew a young Laymon from Mississippi to Oberlin? He had long been a fan of the late sociologist and author Calvin Hernton, who wrote the groundbreaking study *Sex and Racism in America* in 1965 and was a professor of African American studies at Oberlin until his retirement in 1999. "He was brilliant and so kind to me," Laymon says.

Writing and editing became hobbies outside the classroom too. He was editor-in-chief at the literary magazine *Nommo* and worked for a time as opinions editor at the *Oberlin Review*. "They were all so different and so challenging in a great way," he remembers.

It was also Oberlin, he adds, that introduced him to two tasty treats he now loves: tofu and hummus. "I wasn't a vegetarian until my first week at Oberlin," he says. "I'd been trying, but couldn't give up fish. That first week, I gave it up. Haven't had it since." ■

DAVID SILVERBERG IS A FREELANCE WRITER BASED IN TORONTO. ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY ANNIE ZALESKI.

# Class Notes

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**APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY  
FLOWERS—AND REUNIONS!**

Oberlin's Class of 1973 celebrates its 50th anniversary in May. This photo outside Peters Hall in April 1973 offers a glimpse of campus life back then.



COURTESY OF OBERLIN OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

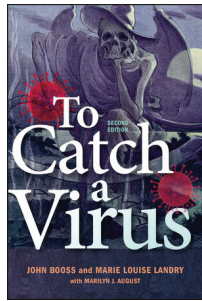
# 1950s

## 1957

Composer **Daniel Goode** has been a member of New York’s downtown experimental music community since the early 1970s. In 2004 he founded the Flexible Orchestra, a lineup of 15 to 18 players who present a premiere piece for each program. What makes them so flexible? Daniel changes up the orchestra every couple of years with a much smaller ensemble that plays one kind of instrument “and a few contrasting ones for spice.” [w] [FlexibleOrchestra.com](http://FlexibleOrchestra.com)

# 1960s

## 1960

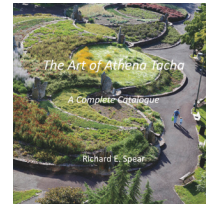


**John Booss**, a retired professor of neurology and laboratory medicine at Yale University, completed the second edition of his book *To Catch a Virus* (ASM Press/Wiley), which he coauthored with Marie Louise Landry. It journeys through the history of viral epidemics and the detective work of those determined to identify the culprits and treat the infected.



Holden '63

## 1961



**Athena Tacha** reports that a book about her storied career as an artist and sculptor was published in October 2022. Written by

Richard E. Spear, with an introduction by Syrgo Tsiara, *The Art of Athena Tacha. A Complete Catalogue* chronicles Athena’s work, which includes more than 40 public commissions from Alaska to Florida. The book features temporary installations, prints, drawings, video, film, photography, and text-based conceptual pieces.

## 1962



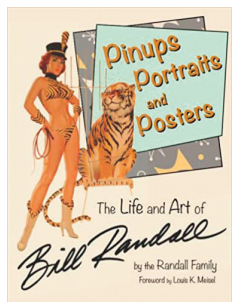
**Margaret L. Brouwer’s** newest recording, *Reactions: Songs and Chamber Music*, was released on Naxos as part of the American Classics series. The collection of contemporary chamber music includes *Rhapsodic Sonata*, *Declaration*, *I Cry—Summer 2020*, *The Lake*, and *All Lines Are Still Busy*. It represents Margaret’s interpretation of recent events, from war and conflict to the global pandemic to how one might feel being placed on hold during a telephone call.

## Class Notes

1963

**Gretchen Weltzheimer Holden** reports that conservatory graduate **Karen Hudson-Brown '64** invited residents of the Oak Grove, Ore., retirement community Rose Villa to a concert. “The facility has a piano and a clavichord. Karen not only played the instruments, but also described them. Karen’s explanation of the instrument and her playing were excellent,” Gretchen says.

1966



Barbosa '66



Morgan '66

**Victoria Randall Barbosa** collaborated with her siblings on a retrospective of their father’s work, *Pinups, Portraits and Posters: The Life and Art of Bill Randall*. Randall was one of the top commercial artists from the 1940s to the '70s. The book highlights his fine art, commercial and cover art, and light-hearted pinup calendars, with a foreword by Louis K. Meisel, coauthor of *The Great American Pin-Up*. ■ Richfield, Ohio, filmmaker **Logan Fry** describes his films as “prescient.” Among them, *The Last Man on Earth*, made during the pandemic and filmed on the empty streets of Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, proposed that melting glaciers would release new strains of coronavirus into the environment, leading to a new and more dangerous worldwide pandemic. Logan’s newest film, *Alien Viral Cleansing*, posits that sentient beings from other galaxies have determined to destroy all human life. He’s on a worldwide tour with his films *The Surrealistic Dream* and *penser, dormir, rêver*, both of which premiered in Philadelphia and resulted in Logan winning the Legacy Award. “It’s not easy for an untrained filmmaker to make internationally honored films from a farmhouse and studio in a small, semi-rural town in Ohio,” he says, “but Richfield is a great place to live and work. It’s a place that allows the imagination to run free.” ■ **John C. Morgan** released the book *Everyday*



*Wisdom: A Guide to a Better, Deeper Life* (Wipf and Stock). John has worked as a journalist, teacher, community organizer, and minister, and he’s written and published eight books and many articles. He’s currently a newspaper columnist.

1967

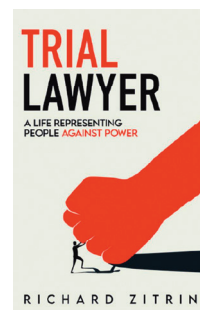


Fast '67

Oberlin College has played in the development of the training of PE teachers, started by Delphine Hanna in the 1880s,” Lee writes. It explores the roles of athletics at a liberal arts college and the changes in physical education that have taken place over the course of Oberlin’s history. ■ **Katherine Fast**’s debut mystery, *The Drinking Gourd* (2022), is set in a fictitious inn on the outskirts of Oberlin in the 1970s. The second novel in the series, *Church Street Under*, is scheduled for release in 2023. Her husband, **Jeffrey Fast**, has taught English for 51 years and now teaches and coaches soccer and lacrosse at the Belmont Hill School in Massachusetts. [w] [katfast.com](http://katfast.com)

**Lee C. Drickamer** collaborated with **Frederick D. Shults '54** to write *A History of Physical Education and Athletics at Oberlin College* (Ohio State University Press, 2022). “This book traces the roles

1968



Zitrin '68

wants to make their mark in the world, opportunities abound in Nepal,” he writes. ■ **Richard Zitrin**’s fourth book, *Trial Lawyer: A Life Representing People Against Power* (Political Animal, 2022) is a memoir and a commentary, as Richard puts it, “by a privileged white guy’s ongoing education about systemic racism and elitism.” An emeritus professor of legal ethics, Richard lives in San Francisco with his wife, Victoria. He is working on his next book.

**Daniel Miller** recently took his fifth trip to Nepal and his first near Mount Everest. Highlights included visiting dairy farms in the district of Dolakha, more than half of which have greenhouses. “For anyone who still

## 1970s

1971

**Janet Ruth Heller** writes that her one-act play *Pledging* was published in the autumn 2022 issue of *Rushing Thru the Dark* (Choeofpleirn Press). “*Pledging* is about two women friends who want to join sororities at Appleton College. However, the African American woman faces racial discrimination, and the Jewish woman needs to decide

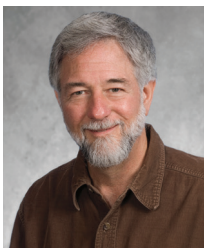




Lam Collins '74



Elias '74



Oelsner '71

whether to pledge sororities that have accepted her but excluded her best friend." *Pledging* was performed at the Tritonysia Play Festival at Triton College in Illinois in 2017. Janet is president of the Michigan College English Association and has taught English, creative writing, composition, and women's studies. [w] [www.janetrutheller.com](http://www.janetrutheller.com) ■ **Naomi Nemtsov**, an artist known for paintings and collages of the urban landscape, had an exhibition of her new work featured at the Bowery Gallery in New York in December 2022. Naomi creates two- and three-dimensional wall constructions and more conventional abstract shapes that form the foundation for drawings that connect these shapes. [w] [naominemtsov.com](http://naominemtsov.com) ■ **Geoffrey Oelsner** writes: "In my new book, *Attunements for the Earth: Poetic, Musical, Photographic, Anecdotal, Climatic, Intuitional, Scientific, Spiritual*, I offer an account of my journey with the intention to encourage and support others in their relationship with nature and spirit." Geoffrey learned the practice of attunement in the garden at the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland, and that led to a greater appreciation of nature and the world. "This inspired my music, garden, family life, and environmental activism." The book includes nature photography by his wife, **Leslie Berman Oelsner '73**. He

invites classmates to connect via email. [e] [oelsnergeoff@gmail.com](mailto:oelsnergeoff@gmail.com)

### 1973

**Russell Pittman** shares that **Karen Johnson Pittman** has retired from her position as CEO of the youth development nonprofit she cofounded and is now a partner in Knowledge to Power Catalysts, blogging and podcasting regularly in the Changing the Odds Remix podcast. Russell continues his work as an economist in the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice and recently received the division's Baxter Award, "presented in recognition of the lifetime contributions in economic analysis and contributions made to the effective enforcement of antitrust law by an economist." [w] [kpcatalysts.com](http://kpcatalysts.com)

### 1974

**Hilda Lam Collins** of the Tuesday Piano Quartette (eight hands at two pianos) of Geneva, N.Y., shares that the group celebrated its 100th anniversary with a concert on October 23, 2022. Since its founding in 1922, the group met every Tuesday afternoon for three hours to sample works from a collection of more than 350 orchestral and chamber music reductions and arrangements. Three of the four current members are Obies. Pictured left to right: **Linda Hanson Cox '69**, **Meg Cогnetta Heaton '73**, Hilda, and Jewel Hara. [w] [historicgeneva.org](http://historicgeneva.org) ■ **Gerald Elias** has written the book *Roundtree Days*, his first



Seshradi '74

Western mystery. He invites Obies and others to "find out how our hero, Jefferson Dance, solves cases of arson, kidnapping, and murder in a small desert town in the course of a single day." Gerald received a glowing review from *Publishers Weekly*. [w] [geraldeliasmanofmystery.wordpress.com](http://geraldeliasmanofmystery.wordpress.com) ■ Poet, essayist, and critic **Vijay Seshradi** read his work at the Hammer Museum, an event cosponsored by the UCLA Department of English and the UCLA Cultural Commission. Vijay is the author of *Wild Kingdom* (1996); *The Long Meadow* (2003), which won the James Laughlin Award; and *3 Sections* (2013), which won the Pulitzer Prize in poetry. Vijay has received fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Guggenheim Foundation. He has worked as an editor at the *New Yorker* and taught at Sarah Lawrence College, where he directs the graduate nonfiction writing program.



### GREETINGS FROM BASE CAMP

Dear Obies,

A number of years ago, back when I directed a food-justice nonprofit in Milwaukee, I wrote an article that was based on a cartoon by Zach Weinersmith. It depicts the peak on a bell curve where our desire to opine on a subject far surpasses our actual knowledge of the subject. As we learn more, we realize things are far more complicated than we thought. Weinersmith calls that moment “Mount Stupid.”

In the article, I wrote about my initial efforts to bring fresh produce and healthy cooking skills to a Milwaukee neighborhood known for its shortage of full-service grocers and overabundance of fast-food outlets. My plan was to rescue residents with an infusion of kale and broccoli.

My Mount Stupid moment came as I went about the task of serving as Neighborhood Food Crusader. I launched a healthy cooking contest at my farmers market, and much to my surprise, more than half of the entrants used recipes that were vegetarian and salt-free. I discovered proponents of healthy eating all over the community—people I’d ignored in my rush to find problems. My solutions had been based on stereotypes that left no space for relationship building. I hadn’t thought about the structural issues that might contribute to community health challenges. So I started to do less talking and more listening, and I began my descent down the other side of Mount Stupid.

I was surprised by the traction the article got. Local med schools added it to their community medicine courses, and Oberlin professor Jay Fiskio uses it in their environmental studies class on American agriculture. Every year, I visit with Fiskio’s students to discuss the importance of working with—and not on—residents and communities that could use a hand.

This spring, I visited Fiskio’s class again, and this time I was stumped by a question submitted by a student in advance. “You state that the goal of your work is to reduce ob\*sity,” they wrote. “How have you navigated...the mental and physical well-being of individuals impacted by weight shaming?”

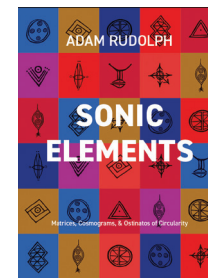
My immediate reaction was to get defensive—usually a reliable indicator of another impending Mount Stupid moment. The longer I sat with the question, the more I could see the student’s perspective. Our society is obsessed with being fit and thin. Did I inadvertently shame people who don’t fit that beauty standard? I think I did, and the question makes me realize I have more thinking to do.

And that is one of the things I love most about Oberlin. It’s a challenging place full of people dedicated to pursuing truth. Justice—and our notions around “the right thing to do”—are ever-evolving, and I have Oberlin to thank for that.

Young Kim ’85

President, Oberlin Alumni Association

### 1976



Conductor-percussionist **Adam Rudolph** shares news of two February 2023 concerts. In collaboration with 18 musicians from Brooklyn Raga Massive, Adam’s Go:

Organic Orchestra performed the European premiere of *Ragmala (A Garland of Ragas)* at Sons d’hiver. That month also saw the world premiere of a collaboration with Tyshawn Sorey as part of the Interpretations series. Adam also has a new book, *Sonic Elements*, available only at [adamrudolph.bandcamp.com](http://adamrudolph.bandcamp.com).

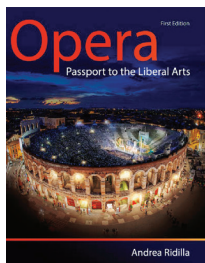
### 1977

**Annelie Fahlstedt** has written the children’s book *Fiddle Stew* (Mascot Press).

### 1978

**Pat Fitzsimons** credits Oberlin for her longtime friendship with **Bernadette Riganti**, who was recently diagnosed with dementia. “I first met Bernadette in 1976 when I transferred to Oberlin from Mount Holyoke College,” Pat writes. “We met at a party and talked about everything from parents to politics. Along the way we have boogied at the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, marched together on International Women’s Day, camped in torrential rain, and enjoyed the delights of living in London, where we have made our homes for many years. She was at the birth of my first child, Morgan, and I was at the birth of Alice, her second. We are both now grandparents. Thank you, Oberlin, for bringing us together.” Pictured from left are Pat and Bern ■ **Andrea Ridilla** wrote an online textbook for her opera





Ridilla '78

appreciation course during the pandemic. *Opera: Passport to the Liberal Arts* (Kendall-Hunt) presents opera with a Western European cultural and historical perspective, exploring how it developed

and who its patrons were along the way. Andrea, a professor of music and area coordinator of woodwinds at Miami University, teaches oboe and opera appreciation. She recently received the Miami University Distinguished Teaching Award.

## 1979

**David Hart** trained as a physical therapist at New York University and worked in New York City Public Schools, nursing homes, and for the Visiting Nurse Service on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. When his apartment became a co-op, he took the money and moved to Oregon and trained as an attorney. He began working for the Oregon Department of Justice, where he is a civil prosecutor targeting drug and medical device companies. Recently, the governor appointed David to the Opioid Recovery Board and to the Psilocybin Advisory Board. "What a long, strange trip it's been," he says.

# 1980s

## 1980



Hong '80



Lyons '80

**Douglas H. Frazer**, a tax attorney with DeWitt LLP, was named a 2022 Wisconsin Super Lawyer. ■ **Laura Kingsley Hong**, a partner with Tucker Ellis LLP of Cleveland, has been named to the 2023 Ohio Super Lawyers list. Laura chairs the firm's mass tort and product liability group, which includes more than 50 lawyers in six



Goree '82



Glickman '84

offices. ■ **Paul T. Levinson** wrote of the death of one of his great friends, **Karen Hendricks Crawford '81**, with whom he kept in touch via his travels as a media salesperson. Paul became disabled by a severe concussion in December 2006 after taking an ill-timed step off a commuter train at Boston's Back Bay Station. "The only lasting effects of the concussion are an enduring imbalance, but thankfully I did not lose verbal facility or skills." ■ **Abbe Lyons** published the book *Jewish Liturgy: A Guide for Everyone* (Hamotzi, 2022). [w] [hamotzipress.com/jewishliturgy](http://hamotzipress.com/jewishliturgy)

## 1982

**Mary Ellen Goree** plays violin with the San Antonio Philharmonic, a newly organized group led by conductor **Charles**

**Floyd '80**, who presented a week of concerts for young people. It was also the group's first pops performance. In addition to Mary, Obies in the orchestra include violinists **Beth Stoppels Girko '83** and **Karen Stiles '86** and harpist **Rachel Ferris '96**. Shown from left are Mary, Rachel, Beth, Charles, and Karen.

## 1984

**Mitch Glickman**, music director of the 68-member Symphonic Jazz Orchestra in Culver City, Calif., shares that the group celebrated its 20th anniversary. Its gala concert included the premiere of Mitch's latest composition, *gListen!* for beatbox flute and orchestra and featuring soloist Azeem Ward. [w] [SJOMusic.org](http://SJOMusic.org) [e] [mitch@SJOMusic.org](mailto:mitch@SJOMusic.org)

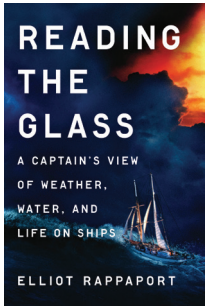
1985



**Daniel Schorr** released the solo album *Sedentary!* and the single “If I’m Alone” in November 2022. *Sedentary!* includes 12 original

songs, and Dan is featured on all instruments.

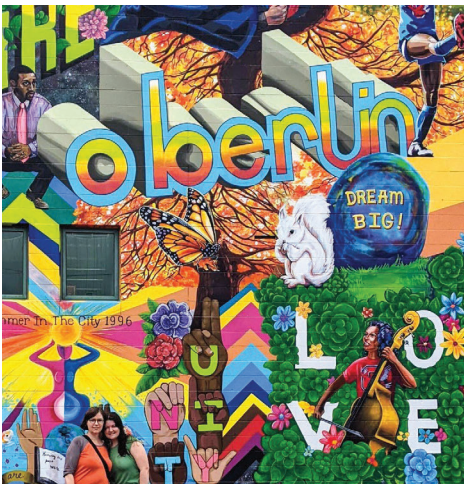
1986



**Jennifer Brady** drove her daughter, **Neve Kelley '26**, to Oberlin in August to begin her first year. A downpour prevented her from stopping at an alumni-sponsored event, so she took photos instead. “I’m so impressed by all

Rappaport '86

the ways Oberlin has become more so since I was there,” she shared. “I’m looking forward to celebrating my 40th reunion at her graduation!” ■ **Elliot Rappaport**, formerly a tall ship captain, has settled in coastal Maine and more recently found “a position of sudden responsibility” on the faculty at Maine Maritime Academy. He also had his first book published in February. *Reading the Glass: A Captain’s View of Weather, Water, and Life on Ships* began as a collection of notes for meteorology students and grew into something more. “If you spend enough time out in the rain,” he has said, “you will eventually strive to understand it.”



Brady '86

1987

**Eva Schlesinger** lives happily without a cell phone and still writes letters on colorful stationery with decorated envelopes. “Any other letter-writing Obies?” She invites classmates to contact the Alumni Office for her address.

1988



**David A. Diepenbrock** is a new practice group leader with the firm Weintraub Tobin. David represents clients in a wide spectrum of business and real estate disputes. His legal work

has garnered him recognition from Best Lawyers in America, Northern California Super Lawyers, Best of the Bar, and *Sacramento Magazine’s* Top Lawyers list.

1989

**Kelly AuCoin** is working on the FX limited series *The Sterling Affairs*, based on the podcast of the same name by Ramona Shelburne. Kelly is also filming season seven of Showtime’s *Billions*.

## 1990s

1990



**Birgit Lennertz Sarrimanolis** published her memoir *Transplanted* (Cirque Press, 2022). The braided story is about a geographical and medical transplant and chronicles the trials of battling

cancer against the backdrop of Alaska’s northern landscape. Her work has also appeared in *Cirque Journal*, *Five on the Fifth*, *49 Writers*, *Shark Reef*, and *Medicine and Meaning*. Birgit lives with **Nick Sarrimanolis '89** in Alaska, where she writes in a space overlooking the Tanana Valley.

1991

**Wanda Cruz-Knight** was named clinical chairperson and Lewis N. Coon Endowed Chair of the NorthShore UniversityHealth System Department of Family Medicine in



Cruz-Knight '91

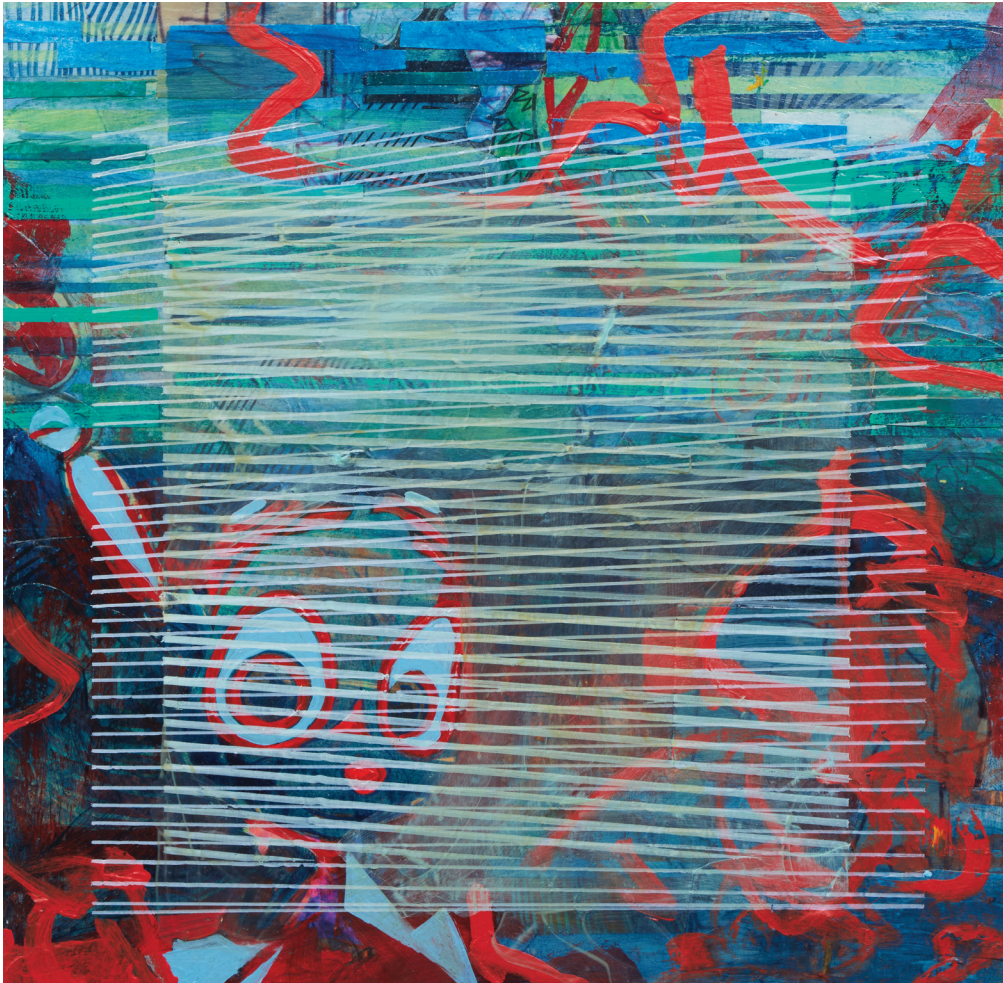
January 2022. NorthShore University HealthSystem is an affiliate of University of Chicago and is the training site for the University of Chicago Family Medicine Residency Program.

Wanda has had a distinguished career in family medicine as a clinician, educator, and researcher. She earned her medical degree at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and completed her residency in family medicine at Rush University Illinois Masonic. Attendees at Wanda’s induction ceremony included her husband, **Rayshon Knight '90**, and her academic advisor, **Robyn Thurston '83**. “So wonderful to partner with a fellow Oberlin grad at work,” Wanda writes. ■ **Kathryn Lang** was nominated by President Biden for the seven-member Social Security Advisory Board, which advises Biden, Congress, and the commissioner of Social Security. If confirmed, her term will extend through September 2026. Kathryn serves as director of federal income security at Justice in Aging, a nonprofit legal advocacy organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty. ■ **Lori Weinblatt**, who writes plays under the pseudonym Bess Welden, lives and makes theater in Portland, Maine. Her play *Madeleines* won the 2022 National Jewish Playwriting Contest and was a finalist for the 2021 Bay Area Playwrights Festival. *Madeleines* will be produced by the Jewish Theatre of Bloomington (Ind.) in May. *Death Wings*, her play with songs, won the 2020 Maine State Prize of the Clauder Competition for New England Playwrights. She is a 2022 Creative Community Fellow with National Arts Strategies.

1992



Composer-pianist **Dan Kennedy** released the Christmas album *An Enchanted Noël*. “These 12 tracks of solo piano are a potpourri of traditional carols, pop favorites, and even include two originals.” Dan says.



Wolf '00

### 1996

**Doria Hughes** writes: “I am kvelling! So excited for my husband, composer **Curtis K. Hughes**, and his virtual film debut on NewGal!” [w] [curtiskhughes.com](http://curtiskhughes.com)

### 1997

**Elizabeth Askren** has a new TEDx Talk called “Why Classical Music is the Wave of the Future.” Elizabeth writes that it is “the most urgent message I’ve ever written. I explore the ways in which you can use classical music to combat today’s toxic combination of isolation, confusion, threatened ecology, polarized societies, and virtual escapism.” [w] [elizabethaskren.com](http://elizabethaskren.com)

### 1998

**Elissa Gershowitz** is the new editor-in-chief of *The Horn Book Inc.*, one of the most distinguished resources in the field of children’s and young adult literature since

1924. She holds an MA from the Center for the Study of Children’s Literature at Simmons University (2000) and has worked for *The Horn Book* since 2006. ■ **Martha Guth** is codirector of Sparks & Wiry Cries, a global platform dedicated to art song spanning publication, live performance, and commission of new works. She recently collaborated with Oberlin Conservatory grads **Rhiannon Giddens '00** and **Tsitsi Jaji '97** on Shawn Okpebholo’s new 55-minute cycle *Songs in Flight*. It premiered at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium as part of the MetLiveArts performance series. [w] [sparksandwirycries.org](http://sparksandwirycries.org) ■ **Jason Kriveloff** continues to make music, primarily as a producer, DJ, and label owner. He’s written and produced hundreds of songs that have been released on various labels and has performed in clubs and festivals around the world. “My label

Razor-N-Tape is gearing up to open a record shop in Brooklyn,” he reports. [w] [jkriv.com](http://jkriv.com)

### 1999



Alvarez '99

**Ana Maria Alvarez** was hired to the faculty of the University of California, San Diego theater and dance department. Ana was commissioned by NC State Live,

Association of

Performing Arts Professionals (APAP Arts Forward), and UCLA Center for the Art of Performance to create a new work with jazz pianist and composer Arturo O’Farrill. The duet premiered in March at NC State Live and was codirected by **Cesar Alvarez '03**. Ana’s company, Contra-Tiempo, will be premiering a new work this year called *Azucar*. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband, **Jonathan Lowe '00**, and their children, ages 12 and 6. [w] [contra-tiempo.org](http://contra-tiempo.org) ■ **Devon Powers** has a new position: “I became a professor of communication and media at the University of Michigan College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. I have returned to the Midwest and my home state of Michigan after leaving in 1995 to start my first year at Oberlin.”

## 2000s

### 2000

**Jonathan Lowe** recently launched his own company, Spark and Sway, a full-service marketing and branded merchandise company. He previously worked for almost two decades with the Los Angeles Kings. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, **Ana Maria Alvarez '99**, and their two children. [w] [sparkandsway.com](http://sparkandsway.com) ■ **Greg Pierce** wrote the libretto for *The Hours* opera with music by Kevin Puts; it had its premiere in November 2022 at the Metropolitan Opera. It stars Renée Fleming, Joyce DiDonato, Kelli O’Hara, and **Denyce Graves '85**. The story is based on the novel by Michael Cunningham. ■ **Amy Leah Wolf**’s artwork was featured in the October 2022 show *Are we there yet?* at One Brooklyn Bridge Park Gallery in New York. “The title references

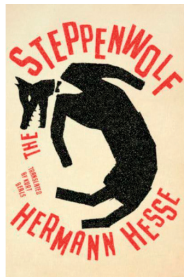
## Class Notes

the struggle to determine when a painting is complete,” Amy writes, adding, “The second meaning brings us back to our own experience of impatience, excitement, and expectation of childhood (or for those with children, the churn of parenthood).” It was her first solo exhibition in New York and featured more than 35 collaged paintings created in recent years. She uses donated children’s drawings and paintings as a base and inspiration for complex abstract compositions, which celebrate the raw and unrestrained art of the young. In addition to her art, Amy works for a nonprofit foundation as director of marketing. [w] [amyleahwolf.com](http://amyleahwolf.com)

### 2002



Andriano '02



Beals '02

**Joe Andriano** was elected in November 2022 to represent the Addison-Rutland District in the Vermont House of Representatives. While at Oberlin, Joe was a Cole Scholar with the Oberlin Initiative in Electoral Politics. His placement with the Vermont Democratic Party in the summer of 2001 was his first exposure to Vermont politics. After Oberlin, he earned a JD at Vermont Law School in 2005; taught law and ethics at Clarkson University, Loyola Marymount University, and Middlebury College; and was a Peace Corps volunteer in Armenia. He now operates a law firm in Orwell, Vt., where he lives with his wife, Sarah, and their two cats. ■ **Kurt Beals** is an associate professor at Washington University in St. Louis. He has translated *The Steppenwolf* (W.W. Norton & Co.) to wide acclaim. Released in January, Kurt’s version restores the original meaning of the hallucinatory German tale in a modern voice and captures the essence of Hermann Hesse’s own spiritual questioning. “Beals has managed the considerable feat of making a cult classic of twentieth-century literature feel completely alive for the twenty-first,” writes Steve Donoghue of *Open Letters*



Olivier-Mason '02



Goldberg '03



Huizinga '06

*Monthly*. Kurt has also translated the writings of Jenny Erpenbeck, Reiner Stach, Regina Ullmann, and Anja Utler. ■ **Joshua Olivier-Mason** and his wife **Anique**; **Margot and Mike Reavey**; and **Anne and Zach Pretzer '03** had fun together on Cape Cod. The friends and their eight children enjoyed backyard barbecues, pond swimming, shark-free beaches, Cape Cod baseball, and of course, reminiscing about Oberlin.

### 2003

**Rosa W. Goldberg** is one of four Obies to work at Lifecycle WomanCare, the longest continuously operating free-standing birth center in the country. Lifecycle WomanCare provides gynecological, pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care in its Bryn Mawr and South Philadelphia, Pa., locations. In addition to Rosa (from left),

who is a nurse, other alumni include **Sarah Appleby-Wineberg '89**, a midwife; **Carol O'Donoghue '89**, a midwife; and **Hannah Slipakoff '12**, a nurse.

### 2004

**Kurt Schwochow** writes that he has not done anything of any significance for a very long time.

### 2005

**Pia Monique Murray** is the new artist in residence for BRIC’s Intergenerational Community Arts Council, a team of residents who develop values-driven arts programming by, for, and with members of the Atlantic Terminal, Farragut, Ingersoll, and Gowanus New York City Housing Authority houses, and with the surrounding Brooklyn neighborhood. Pia will be working

# 2010s

## 2010

Artist **Arden Surdam** was part of a collaborative exhibition with Alessandro Rolandi called *UPROOT*, hosted by Hella Studios in Bern, Switzerland. The duo presented site-specific installations in the tower of the Viktoria fire station that represented their parallel experience of relocating to Switzerland. By incorporating displaced materials and capturing similarly foreign Bernese subjects, *UPROOT* invites viewers to consider the oddities associated with finding oneself in an alien location. [w] [jetlag.world/exhibitions](http://jetlag.world/exhibitions) ■ **Dory Trimble** was appointed to the board of directors for the Access Fund, the national advocacy organization that leads and inspires the climbing community toward sustainable access and conservation of the climbing environment. “Becoming a member of the Access Fund was one of the first things I did when I got into climbing—I signed up for a membership at my local gym, bought some used climbing shoes, and slapped my Access Fund sticker on my water bottle. Since then, as my relationship to climbing has evolved, I’ve watched the Access Fund evolve too.” Dory founded Trimble Advisors, which provides organizational design and philanthropic advisory services to families and individuals and to nonprofit and social-good initiatives preparing to scale.

## 2012

**Stephanie Bonner** attended Oberlin’s fall homecoming and enjoyed a mini lab reunion with recently retired professors Mary Garvin and Keith Tarvin and classmates **Sujata Murty** and **Bud Stracker**. Stephanie was delighted that Professor Garvin had kept her senior research poster displayed outside her lab in the biology department hallway for 10 years, saying “none of [the recent posters] were about bees!”

## 2013

**Eric Tinkerhess** is a music history instructor for the spring semester at the Colburn School in Los Angeles.

## 2014

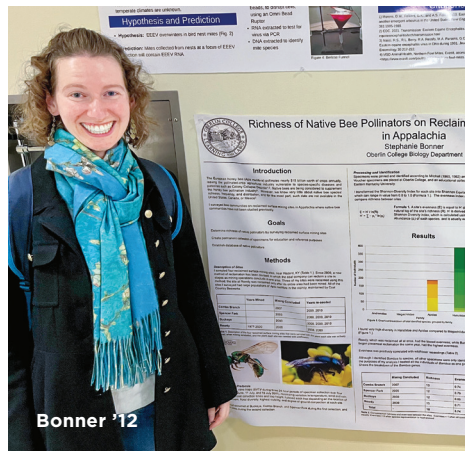
**Lily Samuel** shares an image of her recent marriage to **Aidan Mullaney**, which took



Samuel '14



Trimble '10



Bonner '12

with the program’s third cohort on developing a series of hip-hop performances that will travel in May and June to community centers at four local public housing developments.

## 2006

**Edwin Huizinga** is a baroque violin faculty member at Oberlin and performed in his first faculty recital. “I am still speechless about the opportunity and the weight of helping to inform and teach our next generation,” he writes. “I have been working with kids, students, and young adults ever since I can remember—and it is one of my biggest passions. I enjoy sharing and helping foster curiosity, passion, and an intention to create in those I work with, encouraging them to learn and grow. Please come visit Oberlin and say hello!” In addition, Edwin

performed in the Carmel Bach Festival’s Baroque and Classical Academy, and with the Monterey Symphony. His tour plans include “my favorite groups in the world, Fire & Grace and ACRONYM,” the latter of which was featured in the conservatory’s Artist Recital Series this academic year.

## 2007

**Julia C. Vogl** had her artwork featured in a recent open studio event at the Space Studio in London. She also presented her newest silkscreen film, *Sunkissed*, at the Cinema Museum in the Kennington Bioscope Silent Cinema program. “A pianist played alongside my work screened as a 35mm projection before the main event,” she writes. Her sculpture *Colouring Adult Eczema* remains on display at Guy’s Hospital in London.



place July 9, 2022. “We had 28 Obies at the wedding! Aidan and I met in our first year in Fairkid and started dating sophomore year. We got married in July, having been together for almost 11 years. The magic of Oberlin!” Pictured from left: **Melissa Greene '75** (mother of the bride), **Ben Rabin '16**, **Alex Abramowitz '15**, **Molly Samuel '04** (sister of the bride), **Seth Samuel '07** (brother of the bride), **Rachel Simon**, **Dan Melzer**, **Alex Kapiamba**, **Sujoy Bhattacharyya**, **Quinn Schiller**, **Nikhil Kalathil**, **Steve Marvel-Coen '11**, **Elliot Sakach '16**, **Jason Freedman '16**, **Rosie Black**, **Emily Marren**, **Ian Kelly '17**, **Nathaniel Bennett**, **Alison Kronstadt '16**, **Ryan Cioffi '15**, **Don Samuel '75** (father of the bride); front row: **William Samuel '78** (uncle of the bride), **Helen Samuel '19**

(sister of the bride), **Lily, Aidan, Eoin Mullaney '17** (brother of the groom), **Anna Bauman '17**, and **Tracy Samuel '78** (aunt of the bride).

**2015**

**William Thomas** and **Eleanor Spielman-Sun '14**, granddaughter of **Ruth Lurie Spielman '53**, were married on September 24, 2022. William and Eleanor were joined by many Oberlin friends including **Mia Young '13**, **Anita Peebles '14**, **Maddy Gold '14**, **Gabriel Moore**, **Kasey Cheydleur**, and **Emma Hadden**.

**2016**

**Anne Buckwalter Haddox** and **Sam Szabo '13** had an Oberlin Comix Collective reunion at Cartoon Crossroads Columbus, where

they tabled and participated in a panel discussion about autobiographical comics.

**2017**

**Jacob Maximillian Baron** produced *Her Garden*, an experimental, stream-of-consciousness, feature-length film infused with themes that focus on mental illness, mermaids, and love. *Her Garden* is touring the film festival circuit and is under consideration for grants for other public presentations. Jacob is also in the cast of *Quail Tales*, a new show and recurring series premiering at the Players Theatre in Manhattan. [w] [quailbell.com](http://quailbell.com)

**2018**

**Brianna Di Monda** shares that the *Cleveland Review of Books* hosted its first-issue launch party on December 10. “The magazine was founded in 2018 by an Oberlin alum, **Billy Lennon**, and several former students, including myself and Robert Gittings, who make up the magazine’s masthead. In the past year, the *Review* has started to get attention from outlets like LitHub and Bookforum, allowing us to fulfill our mission of bringing the critical thinking and writing coming out of the Midwest to a nationwide audience.” [w] [clereviewofbooks.com](http://clereviewofbooks.com)

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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).**





# Real property remains one of the main sources of wealth in the United States and is a terrific asset to contribute to Oberlin College.

Oberlin can consider accepting many types of real estate, including private residences, vacation homes, investment properties, and undeveloped land. It is also possible to donate your home during your lifetime and to continue to live in it as long as you wish.

Such gifts help Oberlin continue its tradition of providing a broad liberal arts education to students from around the country and the world. This type of gift may even provide tax benefits to you.

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## Would you like to learn more?

To begin a conversation, please contact Maria Miller or Alan Goldman in the Office of Gift Planning at 440-775-8599 or at [gift.planning@oberlin.edu](mailto:gift.planning@oberlin.edu).

# Losses

## Faculty, staff, and friends

Director of Conservatory Admissions and Enrollment Management **Beth Weiss** was an integral member of Oberlin's campus and community since arriving in 1992 with her husband, Professor of Conducting Tim Weiss. She joined the Conservatory Admissions staff in 1994 and assumed leadership of the office in 2020. Throughout her years at Oberlin, Weiss was a remarkable colleague, a dear friend to those who knew her, and a tireless advocate for the campus and community. Her sense of humor is legendary, as were her clear-eyed perspective, plain-spoken delivery, and deep love of Oberlin and its students. She died February 17, 2023, and is survived by her husband and their children, Abby '15 and Sam '17. ■ **Jiann Lin** served as East Asian librarian for 38 years, overseeing a collection of 26,000 volumes until his retirement in 2007. He enjoyed translating Chinese poetry and history, collaborating on projects with Longman Emeritus Professor of English David Young. Lin earned a bachelor's degree in English and history from National Taiwan University and two master's degrees: one in history and East Asian studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and another in library science from SUNY Albany. His interests included reading, classical music, impressionist artists, Japanese ukiyo-e, and Chinese landscape paintings. He is survived by his wife, Pearl, and two children.

## 1943

**Margaret Moore Stouffer** lived most of her life in and around Pittsburgh and regularly attended concerts by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and travel lectures at the Carnegie Museum. Stouffer was a supporter of the Senator John Heinz History Center, the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. She was a dedicated swimmer and enjoyed making jewelry, which she would gift to friends. Stouffer died November 9, 2022. She was preceded in death by her second husband, Bill, and stepdaughter Judy Thomas. She leaves a son, two stepdaughters, a granddaughter, and seven stepgrandchildren.

## 1944

**Margaret C. Warne Nelson** was a staff associate at the American Association of University Women and also taught at George

Washington University. She earned master's degrees in anthropology and zoology at the University of Chicago and a PhD in sociology at American University. She married Paul E. Nelson Jr. '43 and settled in the Washington, D.C., area, where she was active in Arlington County's League of Women Voters and worked with a group that studied water quality in local streams. Dr. Nelson died July 26, 2022, leaving a son and three grandchildren.

## 1947

**Alice A. Eaddy** taught music at Maryville College in Tennessee and later served as organist, accompanist, and choir director at churches and music groups in West Virginia, Nova Scotia, and Maine. She enjoyed teaching piano to children. Eaddy died December 22, 2022, leaving a daughter, a son, and six grandchildren. Gifts in her name may be made to the Oberlin Conservatory of Music Scholarship Fund at <https://advance.oberlin.edu/donate>. ■ Waldwick, N.J., resident **Dorothy Pfeil Kane** taught piano for her entire life until retiring at age 88. An enthusiastic interpreter of works by her favorite composer, Frédéric Chopin, she also performed in local concerts, which found her duetting with a violinist. She died October 4, 2022.

## 1948

Born in Nagpur, India, **Elinor G. Nichols** learned Hindi and spent her childhood exploring nearby jungles and caring for animals of all kinds. She entered Oberlin during World War II, majoring in psychology and sociology, and later earned a master's degree in psychiatric social work at the University of Iowa. With her late husband Roger Nichols '48, she settled in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The couple formed the non-profit University Associates for International Health, staffing Arabian hospitals and schools. When her husband became director of Boston's Museum of Science, Nichols organized exhibits and raised funds to build an Omni Theater. She died in September 2022, leaving three children, including Kathleen Nichols '75, and five grandchildren.

## 1949

**Peter Grove Weinberg** was a World War II veteran who fought in several battles in the Pacific and then met his wife, Margaret

Kurth Weinberg '49, at Oberlin after returning from military service. He lived for almost 66 years in North Stamford, Conn., where he enjoyed a long career in advertising and played the saxophone with bandmates and friends. Weinberg was an avid Yankees and University of Connecticut women's basketball fan and was deeply engaged with news and politics. He died November 28, 2022, leaving six children and seven grandchildren.

## 1950

Poet, journalist, editor, and dramatist **Jon C. Swan** was a recipient of a Rockefeller Grant for playwriting and a Guggenheim Fellowship for film writing. After majoring in English, he taught in Switzerland, worked for the American Friends Service Committee, and earned a master's degree in English from Boston University. He was a fact-checker and poetry reader at *The New Yorker* and later became senior editor at *Saturday Review* and *Columbia Journalism Review*. Along with his journalism work, Swan released three poetry collections and produced multiple plays. Swan died September 28, 2022. He leaves his wife Marianne, three daughters, and two grandchildren. He was predeceased by his brother, Arthur Swan '46, and their parents, Enid and Wilbur Swan, both Class of 1915, who met at Oberlin. ■ Longtime pediatrician **Ian Wilson** served in the Coast Guard during World War II and attended Oberlin for three years before being granted early acceptance to Western Reserve University School of Medicine. He entered practice in Detroit with his father and brothers before moving with his family to Petoskey, Mich., and working at the Burns Clinic and Little Traverse Hospital. While there, he helped establish a neonatal care unit. Dr. Wilson had three children with his first wife, Sydney Wilson '50. After her death, he married Onalee Lark. He died January 23, 2022, leaving his second wife and three children, including Gerald Wilson '81, and eight grandchildren, including Helen Wilson '18. Overall, 16 of his extended family members attended Oberlin, including Dudley Barnard '30, who served as treasurer of the college.

## 1951

**Lloyd Morrisett** was a psychologist and co-founder of the beloved children's TV show *Sesame Street*. He pursued graduate studies at UCLA and earned a PhD in experimental

psychology from Yale. He then taught at the University of California, Berkeley before joining the Social Science Research Council, then the Carnegie Corporation, where he became a vice president. In 1966, while working at Carnegie, he told friends about his young daughter's TV viewing habits and speculated children might learn more efficiently if educational material were presented in an entertaining fashion. Along with television producer Joan Ganz Cooney, he developed the idea for *Sesame Street*. Morrisett successfully raised \$8 million to fund the show and co-founded the Children's Television Workshop (now Sesame Workshop), which produced *Sesame Street* as well as other shows such as *The Electric Company*. "Without Lloyd Morrisett, there would be no *Sesame Street*," Ganz Cooney said. For three decades, he served as president of the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation, and he was an Oberlin trustee for many years, serving as board chair from 1975 to 1981. Morrisett died January 15, 2023. He leaves his wife, Mary F. Morrisett '52, as well as two daughters and two grandchildren. ■ **Priscilla Gunther Parrott** was a successful New England artist whose work was exhibited on Nantucket Island and in Concord, Mass. She died April 20, 2022, and is survived by four children and sister Anna Donaldson '51.

## 1952

■ **Alexander Heingartner** taught psychology at Ohio Wesleyan University for more than 30 years. After serving as a naval officer, he earned a PhD in psychology from the University of Michigan. He met his wife, Elinor A. Bower '53, at Oberlin, and they traveled extensively together. Heingartner enjoyed friends and family, baseball, trains, good food and drink, and engagement with politics. He died March 27, 2022, leaving his wife, four children—including Robert Heingartner '81 and Nancy Heingartner '88—and five grandchildren.

## 1953

■ **Carolyn M. Adams** died January 14, 2023. ■ **Arthur Hook** died August 31, 2022. He leaves a daughter. ■ **Kenneth H. Sauer** was a professor of chemistry at University of California, Berkeley and a researcher at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory who specialized in the study of oxygenic photosynthesis. He earned a PhD at Harvard

University and did postdoctoral work with Nobel laureate Melvin Calvin. Sauer liked music, traveling with his family to such destinations as Scotland and Australia, and hiking and canoeing in the Sierra Nevada mountains. He enjoyed hosting dinners for his research group with his wife, Marjorie. Sauer died November 5, 2022, leaving his wife, four children—including Rodney Sauer '85—and nine grandchildren.

## 1954

■ **Robert Idleman Cassady** was the first psychologist to work in the Arizona Department of Corrections. He graduated from New York Theological Seminary in 1957 and was pastor at Cuyler Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn before earning a PhD in psychology from the University of Arizona. He retired in Dover, Ohio, where he served as treasurer of his investment club and was a member of the Dover and Tuscarawas County historical societies. He died April 3, 2022, leaving his wife, two sons, and two grandchildren. ■ **David W. Soule** served for 50 years as a pediatrician in private practice and at Hillside Children's Center. He died December 13, 2022, at his home in Penn Yan, N.Y., leaving his wife, Peggy Soule '60, five children, and six grandchildren. ■ **Dolores Rae Miller White** was a prolific composer who enjoyed a lengthy and diverse career incorporating teaching and performing into her artistic practice while raising a family and supporting her husband, Donald, a cellist who was the first Black member of the Cleveland Orchestra. A native of Chicago, she attended Howard University before transferring to Oberlin, then completed a Master of Music in piano performance and composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She held various positions at the College of Wooster, Hartt School, Cleveland's Karamu House, and the Metropolitan Campus of Cuyahoga Community College, where she served as assistant professor of music. After retiring from teaching in 2000, White continued to compose vocal and instrumental works that draw upon ethnic and international influences. Her works have been performed by the Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and Cleveland Chamber Symphony, among other artists and ensembles. In fall 2021, White established the Dolores '54 and Donald '57 White Prize, to support student performance-based

projects that elevate Oberlin's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. She died March 24, 2023, and is survived by a son, daughter Dianna White-Gould '84, and three grandchildren.

## 1955

■ **Polly Joan** was a photographer, author, teacher, and member of the Ithaca Farmers Market Board of Directors in Ithaca, N.Y. A social activist in the 1960s, she later developed a program to help at-risk youth and wrote the book *Preventing Teenage Suicide: The Living Alternative Handbook*. She coauthored *A Guide to Women's Publishing*, self-published the poetry collection *No Apologies* and the memoir *Turning 60*, and was an adjunct English professor at Tompkins Cortland Community College. She enjoyed traveling and exploring the wilderness with her second husband, Charlie Zekoll '55. She established Polly Joan Photography, which she operated for 25 years before retiring. She died August 10, 2022, and was predeceased by her parents, Alice Young '31 and Courtland Griswold '27. She leaves her husband, two sons, and daughter Julie A. Kinscheck '86. ■ **Elizabeth Molder** was noted for her work with international students at the Westover School in Middlebury, Conn., where her husband, Joe Molder '53, served as headmaster. She was active in local communities, serving on the board at the Flanders Nature Center and the Mattatuck Museum. Molder died January 25, 2023, leaving her husband, three children, and nine grandchildren. ■ **Helen Spoon** taught elementary and junior high students and adult literacy. She earned a master's degree in literary education from Ball State University and was an avid reader, lecturer, and volunteer at numerous organizations. She served as a docent at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House. Spoon died May 24, 2022; she was predeceased by her husband, Kenneth Spoon, and sister Lynn R. Welcker '60. She leaves two daughters and four grandchildren.

## 1956

■ **Josylyn Caldwell Becker** died July 22, 2022. ■ **Kathryn L. Shaifer** spent her early professional years at IBM and later earned a master's degree in geriatric counseling. She was devoted to supporting her children's events and participating in parents' associations at their schools. Later, Shaifer became

## Losses

executive director of the Chestnut Hill Historical Society in Philadelphia and marketing director of Springfield Retirement Residence. She died January 19, 2023, leaving her husband, Carl Shaifer, as well as six children and 13 grandchildren.

### 1957

Artist and teacher **Douglas Kinsey** was an award-winning professor in the art department at the University of Notre Dame. Trained in abstract impressionism and touched by news images of those in crisis, Kinsey presented more than 70 one-man shows all over the world. He illustrated 20 books, and collections of his work are housed at Notre Dame's Snite Museum and the South Bend Museum. He cofounded a series of art and social-justice competitive shows at the Colfax Cultural Center. Kinsey earned an MFA from the University of Minnesota and had early teaching appointments at Oberlin, the University of North Dakota, and Berea College. Kinsey died May 21, 2022. He leaves his wife, Marjorie Schreiber Kinsey, and sister Dea Kinsey Andrews '61; he was predeceased by his father, Daniel Kinsey '35. ■ **Mary Lee Orr** taught elementary and middle school English in Massachusetts, Virginia, and Illinois. She was predeceased by her husband, Dan Orr '54, and a daughter, Rebecca Cary Orr '85, who is memorialized by Oberlin's Rebecca Cary Orr Memorial Prize in Mathematics. She is survived by daughter Sara Poskas '90.

### 1958

**Homer R. Gilchrist** started every game of his four years as a Yeoman basketball player. A 2015 inductee into the Heisman Club Hall of Fame, he holds the school's single-game (29) and career (959) rebounds record and became the first Oberlin player to score 1,000 points in a career, finishing with 1,233 points. Gilchrist died October 25, 2022. He was predeceased by his wife, Mary M. Gilchrist '59, and leaves two sons. ■ As deputy archivist of the United States at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., **Edward LaRue Weldon** administered presidential libraries and served as a commissioner for the National Historic Publications and Records Commission. Prior to this role, he was head of the appraisal division at the National Archives and served as editor of the *American Archivist*, the scholarly publication of the profession. He

was the first southeastern regional archivist for the National Archives, was appointed the first archivist for the state of New York, and later led the Georgia Department of Archives and History. He earned a master's degree and PhD in history from Emory University and studied archives administration at American University and the Georgia Archives Institute. He was president of his Oberlin class and lettered in baseball. Weldon died December 16, 2022, and leaves his wife of more than 60 years, Lilla Jane Powers Weldon '58, as well as two sons and three grandsons.

### 1960

**Barbara Joseph Herzberg** was a lifelong drama enthusiast who taught theater and acted in productions in Ohio, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. She earned a master's degree in theater at Tufts University and another master's focused on Shakespeare at Fairleigh Dickinson University's Wroxtton campus in England. Herzberg cofounded the Teachers Theater of New Jersey and taught English at Northeastern University and in the University of Kentucky state system, and theater and English at Rutgers Prep. She died October 24, 2022, and was predeceased by her husband, Norman P. Herzberg. ■ **Sara L. Stump Kearsley** worked in career planning and placement at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, and was recognized by the state of Washington for her volunteer efforts. She and her husband, Frederick E. Kearsley, were enthusiastic world travelers. Kearsley died September 14, 2022, leaving her husband, sisters Patricia A. Walsh '59 and Marjorie J. Mitchell '64, and brother Richard R. Stump '68.

### 1961

**James G. Scoville** died September 7, 1922. He is survived by his wife, Judith Scoville '62.

### 1962

**Diana Joyce Doering** was a lifelong professional pianist and piano teacher who performed solo and with her husband, drummer Francis "Butch" Axsmith, in the Diana Doering Trio. In recent years, she played daily for fellow residents in the assisted-living facility where she lived near Palm Beach, Fla. Doering, who spent her junior year at Oberlin studying at the Mozarteum in Austria, died May 4, 2022. She was predeceased by her husband.

### 1963

**John Frederick Witte**, a senior research associate at Reed College who was known for helping students with organic chemistry, died May 12, 2018, in Portland, Ore. He earned a PhD in organic chemistry from the University of Oregon at Eugene and was an avid gardener who regularly contributed to the Lents Food Group.

### 1965

**Lynn Olson Wilson** had a 27-year career as a member of the technical staff of Bell Laboratories' Mathematical Research Center. She was the only woman majoring in physics during her four years at Oberlin and was a devoted advocate for women in science and math. She earned a PhD in mathematics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and after retiring from Bell spent five years teaching physics at the Morristown Beard School in New Jersey. Wilson enjoyed challenging pastimes, competing at the Olympic trials in whitewater kayaking slalom, building a harpsichord, and using nature, math, and music as inspirations for her hand weaving. She died November 28, 2022, and leaves her husband, two children, and two granddaughters. She was predeceased by a sister, Janet Olson '69.

### 1966

**James Nichols** died January 2, 2023. ■ **Scott Alan Ritchie** enjoyed careers as a social worker in Hennepin County, Minn., and then as a legal editor at West Publishing. He earned a master's in social work and a law degree from the University of Minnesota. He died January 7, 2023, and is survived by his partner of 48 years, Gary Grefenberg, with whom he shared a commitment to gay activism and a love of history that included extensive travel throughout Europe.

### 1967

**John T. Couleur** died September 28, 2022, leaving his wife of 48 years, Jeanne; three children; and eight grandchildren.

### 1968

For more than 40 years, **Susan Gottschalk Blake** served as a health educator and elementary school teacher in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She and her husband, Jeff Blake, became a pastoral team, which led them to northern New England and then

North Carolina. Blake home-schooled her four children and was an accomplished pianist and singer, studied German, and enjoyed gardening, from-scratch cooking, many outdoor activities, and volunteering in the community. Blake died October 31, 2022, leaving her husband, four children, a foster daughter, and four grandchildren.

## 1970

**Mark Geoffrey Arnold** practiced law for 44 years at Husch Blackwell (formerly Husch & Eppenberger) in St. Louis. He authored Volume 17 in the Missouri Practice series, *Civil Rules Practice, 4th Edition*, and was a member of the Missouri Rules Committee until his death. A debater at Oberlin, Arnold served as debate coach at Boston College and then with the Harvard Debate Society, where one of his teams won first place in the 1974 National Debate Tournament. He graduated from Washington University in St. Louis School of Law and was editor-in-chief of the *Law Quarterly*. Arnold died August 3, 2022, leaving his wife of 35 years, Kathryn Mary Koch, as well as two sons and a granddaughter. ■ The Rev. **Lawrence Joseph McGuin** was a retired United Methodist Church pastor and a retired United States Air Force chaplain lieutenant colonel. He died December 13, 2022, and leaves his wife, Linda, and children. ■ **Donald Sharp** died June 30, 2019. ■ **Margaret Ann Fluck Smith** was a researcher at the University of California, Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, focusing on the genetics and evolution of mammals. She earned a PhD in zoology from UC Berkeley. She and her husband of 51 years, Gary Richard Smith '70, enjoyed traveling in Europe and to parks of the American West. She died October 19, 2022, and leaves her husband, a son, and a grandson.

## 1972

**Russell Malmberg** was a teacher, researcher, and head of the plant biology department at the University of Georgia, where he received the prestigious title University Professor in 2014. He served as director of the university's Plant Center and was associate dean of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. He was an advocate for the advancement of women in the sciences and was active in the establishment of many learning and intern programs. He earned a PhD in genetics at the University of Wisconsin and did

postdoctoral research at Michigan State University and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York before relocating to Georgia. He died January 5, 2022, leaving his wife of 42 years, Donna Carney.

## 1975

**Janet Dillon** spent her career helping nonprofits with financial oversight. She served as an accountant for Alianza Hispana; focused on homeless and health-care issues as CFO at Victory Programs; and was CFO of Community Servings, which delivers meals to people living with critical and chronic illnesses. Dillon, who earned a master's degree from Brandeis University, was a member of the founding and steering committees of the NonProfit Financial Managers group. She died January 25, 2023, leaving a daughter and four grandchildren.

## 1981

**Susan Barrett** was passionate in her efforts to stop the poaching of black and white rhinoceroses, traveling several times to South Africa in that effort with her husband, Trevor. Barrett died October 21, 2022. She is survived by her husband and two children. ■ **Karen Hendricks Crawford**, who built a career in arts management, died July 30, 2022, in Abiquiu, N.M. She enjoyed gardening and the rural lifestyle she shared with her husband, Larry, who survives her. ■ **Robert Jackson Taylor** was an adjunct professor in the science and environment department in the PandemiX Center at Denmark's Roskilde University. He earned a PhD in chemistry from Georgetown University and began his career as a teacher and science journalist before working on the development of epidemiologic studies at his company, SageAnalytica. Taylor died November 29, 2022, leaving his wife, four children, and seven grandchildren.

## 1985

**Vivian Trimble** of Hopkinton, N.H., died April 4, 2023. She left behind her husband David, children Scarborough (17) and Rebecca (14), and many friends and family who will miss her love and kindness. Vivian worked in New York City as a dancer, choreographer, music composer, and arts administrator and was a founding member of the bands Luscious Jackson and Dusty Trails. She then moved to New Hampshire,

where she worked as the programming director for the Capitol Center for the Arts, tended her garden and old farmhouse, and devoted herself to her family and friends.

## 1997

**Camelia Naguib** worked in the Los Angeles Police Department's Office of the Inspector General and rose to the position of assistant inspector general. She earned a master's degree in public policy from UCLA, was devoted to social justice, and strove to improve policies and practices for the LAPD and departments across the nation. Naguib was vegan and advocated for the ethical treatment of animals. ■ **Christopher Stanfield** was a longtime member of the punk band Bippy. He earned master's degrees in geographic information systems from the University of Memphis and in interior architecture from Chatham University. He died July 7, 2021.

## 2005

**Herman Whitfield III** was a gifted pianist and composer. A native of Indianapolis, he completed a double degree at Oberlin with majors in composition, piano performance, and politics. He continued his studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he earned a master's degree in piano performance. He was a two-time winner of an emerging composers competition presented by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and his Scherzo No. 2 in E Minor was premiered by the Indianapolis Symphony in 2006. Whitfield died tragically April 25, 2022.

## 2013

**Nicholas Lindblad** taught English in Changchun, China, initially with the company English First and subsequently at Jilin Agricultural University, where he became an assistant project manager. He studied in the Johns Hopkins-Nanjing University graduate program. Lindblad loved music and the Baltimore Ravens, spoke fluent Mandarin Chinese, had a great interest in the Far East, and was fond of hiking and nature. He died November 6, 2022, leaving his parents and a brother.

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**“Oberlin is a condensed bundle of wildly varying humans, each with their own stories and perspectives, within which you find ways to express yourself. Add a dash of backstabbing and a lot more coconuts, and that’s pretty much *Survivor* as well!”**

**Matt Blankinship ’17**, *Survivor* contestant

**“Sleater-Kinney, with White Stripes opening, the ‘Sco at Oberlin, ca. 2000.”**

User **@infinitebuffalo**, answering the Twitter prompt “Who’s the biggest artist you saw perform in a small room?”

**“I find activism in my hair. I don’t let people cut my hair for shows. Seeing natural black hair on stage is huge and it’s something that was historically shunned and shied away from.”**

Tenor **Joshua Blue ’16**, on defying stereotypes in opera, from an interview with *South Philly Review* in advance of his performance with Opera Philadelphia

**“That *Girls* was such a lightning rod for criticism in its day makes it especially rich to discuss a decade later...especially now that more shows, like *Insecure* and *Fleabag*, have gone on to feature women who do not have it all figured out.”**

The *New York Times*, interviewing podcaster **Julia Gray** about the resurgence of the HBO show *Girls*, created by **Lena Dunham ’08**

**“Many of us made the odd discovery in those college days that we learned a good deal more about psychology—that is [human] experience—from our literature courses than we did from (academic) psychology itself.”**

*Psychology Today*, describing the significance of a BA in English from Oberlin on the work of **Rollo May ’30**, considered a co-founder of humanistic psychology along with Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers

**“I stopped doing my homework and only got into that. That was the moment when I realized comedy was worth pursuing in a real way.”**

Comedian **E.J. Marcus ’19**, who has amassed more than 460,000 followers on TikTok (@ejhavingfun), on the impact of doing stand-up during senior year (in an interview with *The Face*)

**“Our goal is not just to inform, but to get people to care and to act, even though the most engaged among us are overwhelmed by this daily drumbeat of dismal headlines and social media madness. Worse, I think we’re starting to feel disempowered by it. We are getting numb and confused—turning off the newsfeed and distracting ourselves with Netflix.”**

**Melissa Fleming ’86**, Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications for the United Nations, in an April lecture at Oberlin



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mentor for the 2023 Oberlin Screenwriters Intensive