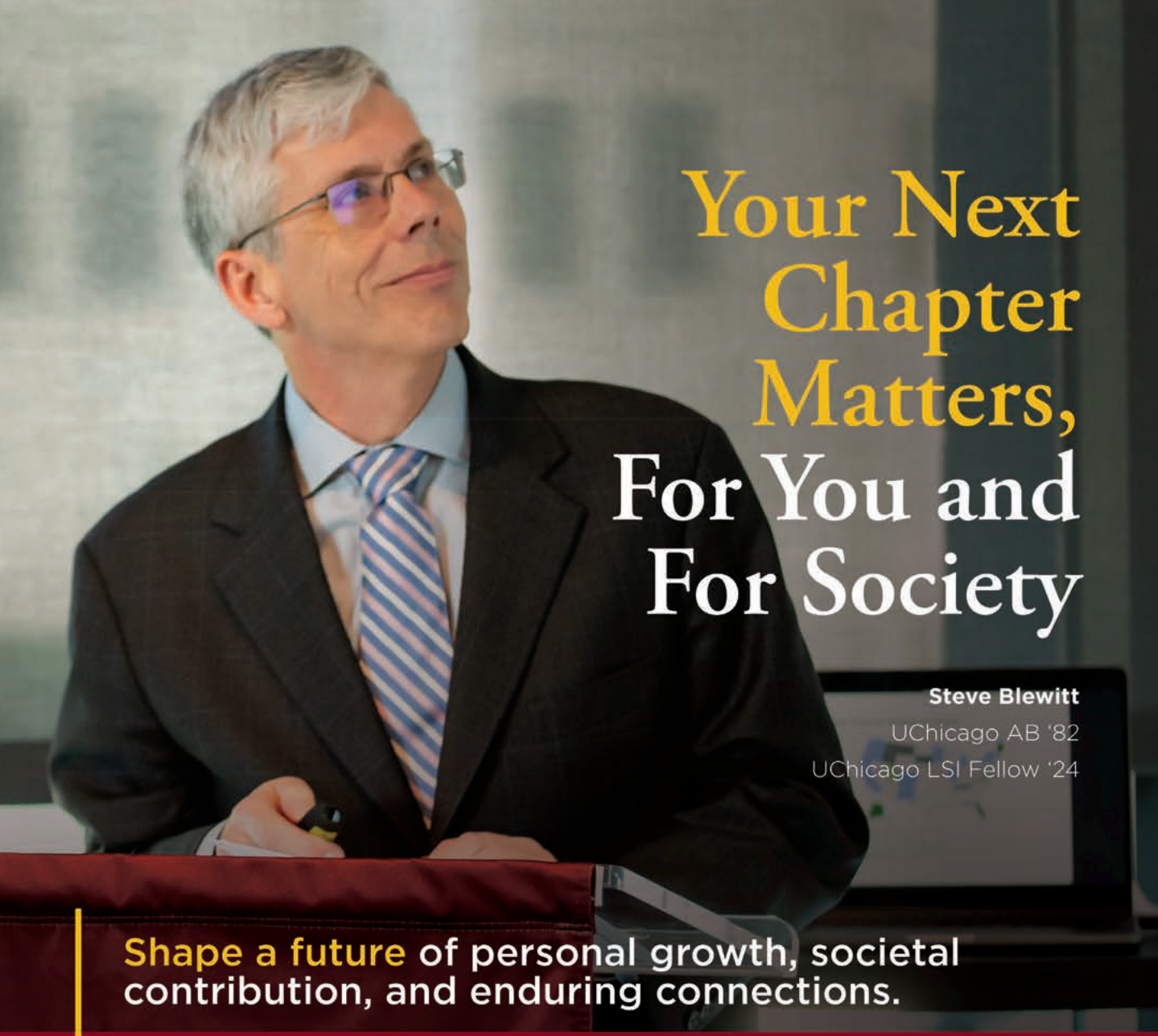
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO MAGAZINE



FALL 2025, VOLUME 118, NUMBER 1



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VOLUME 118, NUMBER 1, FALL 2025

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The University of Chicago Magazine (ISSN-0041-9508) is published quarterly (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) by the University of Chicago in cooperation with UChicago Advancement, 5235 South Harper Court, Chicago, IL 60615, and sent to all University of Chicago alumni. Published continuously since 1907. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER Send address changes to *The University of Chicago Magazine*, Alumni Records, 5235 South Harper Court, Chicago, IL 60615. © 2025 University of Chicago

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COASTAL UNSHELVING

BY LAURA DEMANSKI, AM'94

I have sorted out my life. Or so it feels. During the last week of August, my dad and I performed a major purge of items stored in his basement, where surprises—unexpected but familiar—had waited years in plastic containers and cardboard boxes.

This sort of work, as you probably know, is as much emotional as physical. Opening all of the above, one by one, I thought of a favorite line from Philip Larkin's "This Be the Verse": "It deepens like a coastal shelf." Layered here was not misery, as Larkin has it, but remnants of every phase of our life as a family—a happy one that has defied the bleak certainties of the poem, whatever its literary perfection and shock value.

Also layered: many phases of my own life well into adulthood. In decades of urban apartment living, I've never had a basement, so some of the flotsam and jetsam of those years had landed back in Michigan.

There were 30-year-old notebooks from graduate school, densely filled with notes and doodles. Books published by Poseidon Press, where I had my first job after college. Stoppard, Pinter, Fornés, and every other text from a contemporary drama course—but oddly nothing from any other college course. High school papers and report cards ("As a writer of prose fiction, Laura is talented and accomplished. As a literary analyst, she is just OK."). Lions and tigers and my first teddy bear, Theodore. And in a chest, the tiny crocheted sweater I wore leaving Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital for the wider world in 1968.

As lived experience, the phases of my life have flowed into one another seamlessly. In the retrospect provided by their surviving relics, they stand out like concentric rings in a tree trunk—or strata in a coastal shelf. I thought about how much more had already been discarded than kept, a kind of editing of the past, and why I'd saved what I had.

What have you held on to from your life at UChicago, or elsewhere? We are always interested, and I'd bet that your fellow alumni are too. Write to us at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.

Moving on up

It's with great delight that I report the latest *Magazine* staff addition—and subtraction. **Chandler A. Calderon**, who has served as Alumni News editor with true distinction since 2022, took on a new role as senior writer in July. As we search for someone to fill her old shoes, you will be treated to more of Chandler's sharp observation and vivid storytelling, beginning with "Crossover Artist" in this issue (page 40). Congratulations to her, and to us. ◆

Vol. 118 / No. 1

FALL 2025

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On the cover

Carolyn Yackel, SB'92, makes handicrafts—like this *temari* ball—to explore mathematical concepts, especially related to symmetry. See "Crossover Artist," page 40. Photography by Christopher Ian Smith.

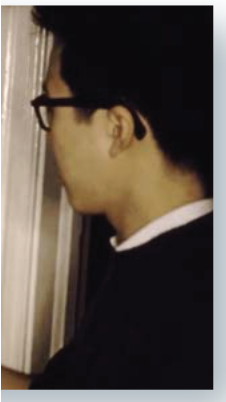
This page

The South Side Home Movie Project, now in its 20th year, collects and preserves forgotten footage. From global events to family memories, the archive offers a singular window onto the past. See "Collective Memory," page 16. All images courtesy the South Side Home Movie Project.



1 Editor's Notes 4 Letters

Features



24 **Cronies with benefits** *By Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93*
You've probably been captured. **Luigi Zingales** is onto you.

26 **Life itself** *By Susie Allen, AB'09*
Nobel laureates and nuclear experts urge action on a looming threat.

30 **Colorfast** *By Tori Lee, AB'13, and Louise Lerner, AB'09*
An alumna artist and a team of UChicago chemists revived a century-old recipe for blue pigment.

36 **A fighting chance** *By Susie Allen, AB'09*
A new book challenges conventional wisdom on gun violence and suggests new approaches to solving the problem.

40 **Crossover artist** *By Chandler A. Calderon*
Carolyn Yackel, SB'92, weaves together math and fiber arts.

46 **Songs of experience** *By Shigehiro Oishi*
Beyond seeking pleasure or meaning, the writer argues, a third path to a good life is to embrace its complexity.



11 **UChicago Journal**
Research and news in brief

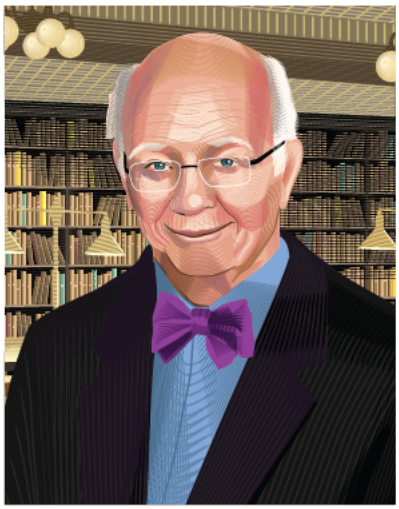


53 **Peer Review**
What alumni are thinking and doing

Clockwise from top center: Dr. Helen Nash Collection, Jean Patton Collection, Charles "Chuck" Mayewaki Collection, Ramon Williams Collection, Glenna Kiner Collection, Roberts Family Collection, Ramon Williams Collection, Jay Kavanaugh Collection. All images courtesy of the South Side Home Movie Project, an initiative of Arts + Public Life at the University of Chicago.

LETTERS

The University of Chicago Magazine welcomes letters about its contents or about the life of the University. Letters for publication must be signed and may be edited for space, clarity, civility, and style. To provide a range of views and voices, we ask letter writers to limit themselves to 300 words or fewer. Write: **Editor, *The University of Chicago Magazine*, 5235 South Harper Court, Chicago, IL 60615**. Or email: **uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu**.



Life enriched

I read with interest the recent article remembering Martin E. Marty, PhD'56 ("A Light That Stays," Summer/25). He was my adviser while I was at the Divinity School. His intellectual breadth and curiosity were unparalleled. He had a knack for connecting and articulating disparate historical and social realities in a practical way that created meaningful themes in our lives.

But what I always appreciated was Martin Marty, the person. Being at a dinner party for students in his home often ended up with some question of interest. It was always an evening to remember. Ten years after I graduated, I ran into Marty in a Colorado drugstore while on a family vacation. He greeted me warmly by name—in keeping with his encyclopedic mind. His wit, wisdom, and light will indeed stay. I consider my own life to have been greatly enriched because of having known him.

David Frantz, AM'75, DMin'80
INDIANAPOLIS

The Summer/25 issue brought sad news about Martin Marty's passing but also treasured memories about this truly great scholar.

In late 1966, my senior colleague Edward Schwartz, PhD'55, and I (at the School of Social Service Administration, now the Crown School) were both deeply interested in income maintenance policy. Our interest was increased by the recent work of Chicago colleague Milton Friedman, AM'33, on the negative income tax as a practical alternative to current unpopular approaches.

We consulted with Friedman about our plan to sponsor a symposium on the topic. We envisioned a small group of scholars from various disciplines convening for a serious examination of the basic idea of a guaranteed annual income.

Economists, social workers, politicians, and others were, to say the least, shocked at such a seemingly radical approach by none other than Friedman, at the time one of the world's best-known conservative economists and the leader of the Chicago school.

We turned next to colleague Martin E. Marty, at that time a young scholar in the Divinity School, for a paper on the topic of the cardinal obligation found in the world's religions to care for the poor.

The prolific Marty responded quickly with a typewritten carbon copy of a seminal paper on the requested topic. That copy was lost, and the plan for the symposium ended in 1967 when I accepted a position in California and Professor Schwartz retired. The symposium was a good idea then, and perhaps its time may come again. Meanwhile, I hope Martin's paper turns up in its original form.

Ten years after I graduated, I ran into Marty in a Colorado drugstore while on a family vacation. He greeted me warmly by name—in keeping with his encyclopedic mind.

I am a year older than Martin Marty but joined the faculty several years later than he did. I had always admired his teaching and writing.

Alan D. Wade, PhD'60
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA



Heart and mind

David Tracy trained a generation of theologians (see Deaths, page 77). I had done graduate work at the University of Leuven in Belgium before coming to the University of Chicago. I came to Chicago because of David Tracy, whom we were reading in Leuven. In his work I found a breadth and depth matched by only a handful of contemporary theologians.

When I met David, I found in his person a caring, encouraging, and demanding mentor. The range of his knowledge amazed and challenged me. His interest in my work inspired me. David learned from his students as well as taught them. While an original thinker and an internationally renowned scholar, he was without hubris. His unassuming manner invited conversation and exchange of ideas. His

From left: Illustration by Daniel Hertzberg; photography by Lloyd DeGrane, UChicago Photographic Archive, apf1-13196, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library



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insightful criticisms alerted students to pitfalls and dead ends but left their autonomy intact. He knew well the fragile nature of graduate students' psyches. He also upheld the standards of excellence expected of students at Chicago.

David's mind was so agile that he moved from the Greeks to postmodern philosophers with aplomb. I never left a lecture without a new idea or a different angle on an age-old problem. My only difficulty was keeping up with him. His lectures regularly forced me to expand my horizons.

In the seminar room, he relished the opportunity to engage students one-on-one and encouraged his students to do the same with each other. It was in this setting that I learned to articulate my own theological ideas. Those ideas were not always accurate, not always refined, not always nuanced, not always universally well received, not always permanent—but they were my ideas, and David Tracy encouraged me to formulate them. David did not uncritically accept his students' ideas, but he consistently invited them to think creatively.

Finally, David was loyal to Chicago, to the academy, and to his students. He told me that he stayed at Chicago because the conversation there was fruitful. He enjoyed his colleagues, delighted in his students' progress, and was able to develop many lasting relationships over the years. He made a difference in the academy and in students' lives.

Chester Gillis, PhD'86
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

David learned from his students as well as taught them. While an original thinker and an internationally renowned scholar, he was without hubris.

Comiskey Park memory

When William Julius Wilson left for Harvard, he suggested Gary Orfield, AM'65, PhD'68, as his replacement on my dissertation committee ("Civil Rights Scholar," Alumni News, Summer/25). So I had a dissertation committee of Donald Bogue, James Coleman, and Gary Orfield. One day I was in Orfield's office talking to him about my dissertation research, when he said he had tickets to the White Sox game that night. He asked if I would like to go. I said sure. He said, "You can take my daughter with you." So I ended up attending the game with his daughter.

Louie Woolbright, PhD'85
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA



After the verdict

I read with interest your article "Evolution on Trial" (Spring/25) and want to provide a footnote for John Mark Hansen's Scopes/Darrow history. The article correctly states that John Thomas Scopes, EX'31, "eventually found a new job as a geologist, working in the oil and gas industry, living in Houston, Texas, and Shreveport, Louisiana."

My father, John S. Ivy, SB 1922, gave Scopes a job when no one else would. He told me Scopes had been looking for an extended time but could not get a job due to his "notoriety" and the ostracism he was experiencing. This was almost a decade after the trial.

My father was one of the founders of the United Gas Corporation. He was the chief geologist and president of the exploration and production subsidiary Union Producing Company. United Gas was growing in spite of the Depression due to a number of oil and gas discoveries it had made and the rapid expansion of its gas pipeline distribution network. Though my father did not tell me how Scopes came to seek a job at United Gas, my father obviously would have been a key decision-maker in the hiring of a geologist. He did tell me that Scopes wanted to keep a low profile and asked him to try and protect his anonymity.

In fall 1971, when I was living in Thompson House, I rappelled twice from my eighth-floor window. The steam radiator made a good anchor.

My father entered the University of Chicago in 1917, received a bachelor of science degree in geology in 1922, and continued his graduate studies until February 1923. One of his professors was Edson S. Bastin, SM 1903, PhD 1909, who became Scopes's adviser. I believe Bastin conducted a 1918 geological field trip to Oregon and Washington, in which my father participated. This, aside from the coursework, would have allowed them to know each other beyond a casual basis.

My father told me Clarence Darrow called him in the mid- to late-1930s to indicate he was searching for John Scopes and asked if he knew how to get in contact with him. My father arranged a meeting between Darrow and Scopes and met Darrow when he came to Houston.

The timing of the Darrow/Scopes meeting is interesting, as Darrow died of heart issues on March 13, 1938, just before his 81st birthday. Speculating again: It is human nature that as one approaches the end of their time here, a desire arises to seek out and visit again those who have earlier had a significant impact on one's life. Darrow, at the age of almost 80, seeking to find Scopes after he had completely disappeared into obscurity possibly indicates the importance and depth

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of the relationship that Darrow and Scopes had developed. Perhaps an appropriate bookend to the relationships developed during the trial?

Conway G. Ivy, MBA'69, AM'72
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA



1970s reflections

In your oral history of Pierce Tower ("Ho-Ho, the University of Chicago Is Funnier Than You Think," *The Core*, Spring/25), Donald Bingle, AB'76, JD'79, cites a rumor of someone who rappelled from his window to the cafeteria roof, frightening the Tufts House coeds.

In fall 1971, when I was living in Thompson House, I rappelled twice from my eighth-floor window. The steam radiator made a good anchor. A bemused campus security officer watched the first time. A week later I taught my dormmate David Haimson, EX'74, how to do it, and we took turns descending. This time security gently discouraged me from making it a habit.

Since my window faced University Avenue, we rappelled to the ground, not the cafeteria roof. And I know there were no coeds in Tufts at that time, as I was on the committee later in the year that negotiated which Pierce Tower houses would go coed first (Tufts and Shorey to start) in fall 1971.

Gary Alan Miller, AB'74, SM'74
YAKIMA, WASHINGTON

I appreciated the letter by Steve Froikin, AB'73, taking to task *The Core*'s coverage of the 1970s at the U of C (Summer/25).

Highlighting the humor of Big Ed, the Marching Kazoo Band, and the

Photography by John Zich





LETTERS

Lascivious Costume Ball is really to miss the point of the period.

The shared humor was set amid the context of a dark and difficult time, where the daily news was filled with death and destruction, sharpened by the distasteful rule of Nixon/Agnew nationally and Richard J. Daley locally. No one who lived through that time would describe it as mirthful.

Especially tone-deaf is the inclusion of recollections by Jim Vice, EX'55, AM'54. Those of us who were there recall him as the school's field enforcer, issuing disciplinary summonses that resulted in the suspension or expulsion of many protesting U of C students.

Michael Brant, AB'70, AM'82
SAN FRANCISCO



Cold comfort

Refrigeration is critical in places less fortunate than Middle America ("Cold Case," Spring/25). The International Institute of Refrigeration was created in 1909.

The impoverished world still loses a massive amount of food production due to a lack of refrigeration from field to table. Although still a challenge in 2025, the built environment could be an area of university research to secure a food security cold chain using solar photovoltaic/thermal energy and ad/absorption chillers. A low-cost version could be a righteous applied technology undertaking by the U of C.

Mitchell NewDelman, JD'65
MONACO



Fine dining

I saw the photo of Orly's in your Spring/25 issue ("Orly's or ...," Alumni News). In 1981 I would have been either a junior or senior at U-High.

While I was growing up in Hyde Park, my parents often bemoaned the lack of "good" restaurants. When Orly's opened, they decided it was the best Hyde Park offered. I remember thinking, "So this is what a 'good' restaurant means!" I'm glad to hear from friends still in the 'hood that there are a few good restaurants to choose from today.

Sophia Gebhard, LAB'82
MINNEAPOLIS

Moment of recognition

I was perusing the Spring/25 issue when I happened to see my past self teaching a class outside ("Have Chalk—Will Travel," Alumni News). I did this at least once every spring when I was teaching. I cannot quite make out what is on the board; otherwise I could tell you the course. I still teach in T-shirts and shorts (when it is warm).

I was a PhD student in mathematics at the University of Chicago from 1988 through 1994. I met my (eventual) wife, Sarah Witherspoon, SM'91, PhD'94, on the first day of orientation in the mathematics department. We are currently both professors of mathematics at Texas A&M University.

Frank Sottile, SM'89, PhD'94
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

I still teach in T-shirts and shorts (when it is warm).

BLAST FROM THE PAST

THE OLD MAN'S INSTRUCTIONS

If you will refer to lines 17, 18, and 19 of Column 2 of Page 15, the autumn issue of the *University of Chicago Magazine*, you will read a horror that is bound to call forth howls of rage from some of your alumni, on whom you probably count for generous remembrances in their wills. It's calling forth a heartfelt one from me.

The horror is the reference to "inspire athletes with a 'special cadence'" *et seq.*

"Special cadence" my ischial callosities! It would be appreciated if you would inform this condescending donkey that the cadence was the Alma Mater. It was played, at 10:06 (*not* 10:05), in honor of A. A. Stagg, because it was at that moment that the Old Man passed the crisis and rallied from a virulent case of pre-antibiotics pneumonia.

Three unsettling thoughts come from this unfortunate reference in your otherwise excellent article on the University's campanology. First, the Alma Mater is no longer heard at night. Second, perhaps, the University is today too sophisticated to bother with sentimentalities such as an Alma Mater. Third—God forbid!—that the University is forgetting to re-state its faith in the ideals Don Richberg wrote into this small hymn's lyrics.

John K. Barton, PhB'26
Amarillo, Texas

VOL. 68, NO. 2, WINTER 1975

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RESEARCH AND NEWS IN BRIEF



FACE-PLANT
Why do most of us see a face in this harvest bounty? Learn more in "Body Horror," page 14.

12 *Policy challenges*

14 *Science fiction meets neuroscience*

16 *Reel history*

23 *Terraforming Mars*

Giuseppe Arcimboldo: *Summer*, 1563, Kunsthistorisches Museum, public domain

POLICY

Shark Tank for wonks

In policy challenges, students compete for cash prizes—and pitch creative solutions to real-world problems.

BY ELIZABETH STATION



The winners of the Harris Policy Innovation Challenge. The team's proposal to revitalize downtown Chicago involved transit upgrades and affordable housing.

How would you combat hunger anywhere in the world? Create affordable housing in a rural or urban community? Help the City of Chicago dig out from under its $35 billion pension debt?

Drafting a plan to tackle vexing questions like these isn't everyone's idea of fun. But for the University of Chicago undergraduate and graduate students who compete in policy challenges throughout the academic year, the events offer an opportunity to imagine novel solutions to local, national, and global issues.

More than 200 UChicago students participated in challenges organized by the Institute of Politics (IOP), the Harris School of Public Policy, Career Advancement, and other campus sponsors in 2024–25.

Jennifer Steinhauer, a senior director at the IOP, has a theory about why the contests attract students from varied majors and academic programs. "On a campus that is very, very rich with theoretical learning," she says, "to do a real practical exercise, I think, is something that a lot of students crave."

Policy challenges demand significant work outside the classroom. Fired up by a provocative prompt, small teams—usually two to five students—meet regularly to brainstorm solutions to a problem. Over several weeks (or months, depending on the competition), they analyze data and documents, talk to stakeholders and experts, and submit preliminary proposals. The top three or four teams are invited to present their ideas to judges in a final, public competition. Plans that combine creative thinking with a compelling narrative, clear financial data, and good graphics often prevail. Winners receive prize money and a plummy accomplishment for their résumés—and build their professional networks along the way.

Harris Public Policy's annual Policy Innovation Challenge, which focuses on local issues, drew 90 participants in 2025. Organizer **Justin Marlowe**, a research professor who directs the school's Center for Municipal Finance, sees the event primarily as an educational opportunity and "a twist on the kind of venture capital challenges that you see in business schools."

In many business schools (and on the long-running TV show *Shark Tank*), entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to a panel of angel investors. Policy competitions borrow from that format while enabling wonkish students to deepen their understanding of complex, multifaceted public policy issues. And though the chance to split a $10,000 prize motivates many Harris team members, they also want to be recognized by their peers and industry professionals "for doing good work," Marlowe says.

Here are highlights from four policy challenges that engaged UChicago students in 2024–25.

Lame ducks and DIY DOGE

Institute of Politics challenges are open to all UChicago students. Undergraduate teams have beaten out graduate student competitors more than once. Winning team members of the Spring Quarter 2025 competition received $500 each.

In Fall Quarter 2024, entrants had to create a piece of bipartisan legislation that could pass during a lame-duck session of Congress. Challenge winners **Robbie Hiatki** and **Willa Wiley**, both

Photography by Be King Media

Class of 2027, proposed a pilot program to fund childcare services for families of first responders. Former US Senator Joe Manchin (I-WV) judged their pitch. "I think he appreciated our approach to practicality and bipartisanship," says Hlatki, and "he was really judging us very rigorously, just like you would be in a Senate markup."

In Spring Quarter 2025, students were asked to think like a do-it-yourself Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and suggest ideas to shrink the federal bureaucracy. The winning scheme, "Lean, Not Mean: Cutting Waste, Rewarding Results," called for across-the-board cuts in departmental budgets, while redirecting part of the savings into an innovation fund that rewarded effective programs.

The students' plan offered, "not just the stick of budget cuts but also the carrot of incentivizing people to cut on their own," says **Penelope Stinson**, Class of 2027. Although IOP director and former US Senator **Heidi Heitkamp** (D-ND) peppered Stinson's team with tough questions, she ultimately invited the students to edit their proposal so that she could potentially share it with members of Congress.

In February 2026 the IOP expects to bring teams from 30 colleges around the country to campus to compete in a policy challenge "super bowl" focusing on health care.

Supply-side solutions

The Kreisman Initiative for Housing Law and Policy—part of UChicago's Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation—organized its inaugural policy challenge in spring 2025.

Noting the shortage of inexpensive housing for Chicago's low-income renters, the competition asked students to describe where and how the city could create more than 125,000 affordable rental units over the next five years. Solutions had to focus on supply-side opportunities to increase housing stock, rather than demand-side strategies like cash assistance for tenants.

Eighteen teams submitted proposals. The only all-undergraduate team took top honors with their plan to redevelop unused public school buildings into "anchor sites" on Chicago's West and South Sides. The students also suggested levying a vacancy tax on private properties to fund affordable housing, engaging community members in planning, and requiring sites to be within a half mile of public transit.

Elayna Whiteman, Class of 2026, a member of the first-place team, said the goal of the challenge was to spark ideas "that could get other people in the audience thinking—because there were a lot of people in the conference room who either worked for the city or worked on other initiatives for affordable housing."

Culture and connection

What can Chicago do over the next three years to create a thriving downtown for the next 20 years? Working with alumni mentors, participants in the Harris Policy Innovation Challenge spent nearly five months developing detailed answers to this question.

To improve public spaces, connectivity, and affordability—critical elements of downtown Chicago's long-term vibrancy—the winning team made three recommendations. First, the students proposed transforming about a half-mile stretch of Michigan Avenue into a pedestrian, bike, and bus-only corridor. Second, they suggested an overhaul of the underutilized pedway system to connect downtown's "cultural mile" to the central Loop. Third, to promote residential growth, the project prioritized affordable housing and other amenities for arts and cultural workers.

After the competition, the students' plan garnered local and national media attention. Team members presented their proposal to the Chicago Bar Association and the Harris Alumni Board. "What we created here was an audacious idea that is a very feasible one," says **Uchenna Offorjebe**, MPP'25. The students' research showed how other cities had repurposed valuable real estate to renew their downtowns, he adds, which "should always evolve and improve." ◆

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MOLECULAR ENGINEERING

Made-for-TV sensors

Diamond nanocrystals are some of the most promising materials for building hypersensitive quantum sensors—tools that could one day detect diseases like cancer inside living cells. But shrinking these sensors to a cellular scale drastically weakens their performance. To tackle this problem, **Uri Zvi**, PhD'25, and collaborators from UChicago's Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering and the University of Iowa turned to an unlikely source of inspiration: quantum dot LED televisions. These TVs use fluorescent quantum dots stabilized by special shells. Borrowing the idea, the researchers encased diamond nanoparticles in siloxane (silicon-oxygen) shells designed both to be biocompatible and to enhance the particles' quantum properties. The team expected minor gains, but the coating drastically improved the stability and sensitivity of the particles. Published in May in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the study provides a new framework for engineering quantum devices and opens the door to ultra-sensitive biosensing.—*V. L.* ◆

NEUROSCIENCE

Body horror

In a new book Austin Lim, PhD'14, explores brain science through science fiction.

BY CHANDLER A. CALDERON

The unknown is at the heart of both scientific curiosity and horror, **Austin Lim**, PhD'14, observes in the introduction to his new book. It's what drove Luigi Galvani to undertake his experiments on the electric stimulation of dead tissue, which in turn inspired Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. And it's why things we can't explain make us afraid, like the empty hallways and disorienting layout of the Overlook Hotel in *The Shining*.

Horror on the Brain: The Neuroscience Behind Science Fiction (Prometheus Books, 2025) is an exploration of the theory and history of neuroscience through works of horror and science fiction. Lim delves into the real science that inspired these works, and along the way finds that the books and films themselves offer insights into the complex workings of our brains.

For Lim, the science itself may be even scarier than the fiction. There's a "haunting realization at the end of neuroscience," he writes, "that we are not even in control over our own bodies and that our fears, desires, emotions, consciousness, and everything else in the multifaceted human experience are guided by clumps of cells."

Wend your way through three of the science-and-fiction connections Lim explores in *Horror on the Brain*.



Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo's work has seen a, well, renaissance in recent years, thanks to its use in brain imaging studies. Some of his works play with pareidolia, a tendency to interpret vague patterns as familiar images; for example, viewers of *The Jurist* can recognize the arrangement of a fish's mouth, a bird's backside, and turkey flesh as a human face.

Giuseppe Arcimboldo: *The Jurist*, 1566, Nationalmuseum, public domain

Fear factors

When the governess sees her predecessor's ghost in the schoolroom in Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, she first shrieks but then reasons with herself, deciding she needs to stay and protect the children in her charge. This encounter encapsulates a fear response formally theorized in the 1990s, writes Lim. In this framework, fear operates "at two levels, the physiological and the cognitive," called the "low road" and the "high road," respectively.

The low road involves involuntary physiological changes that occur when the sympathetic nervous system, cued by the hypothalamus, increases the concentration of the hormone norepinephrine in our bloodstream to prepare us for action. Our heart rate and breathing quicken, digestive processes slow, pupils dilate, and we may get goosebumps. Like James's governess, we might even scream. (The hypothalamus also controls hunger and sex drive. "As the joke goes," Lim writes, "there are four Fs of the hypothalamus: fight, flight, feed, and reproduction.")

Then a more rational reaction kicks in. This part of the fear response is theorized to originate in the prefrontal cortex, "the fanciest part of our brain," used in planning and choice: "Circuits here help us inhibit our base animal impulses," writes Lim. "Thinking that dead people don't materialize out of thin air or that it is now your duty to protect the innocent children placed at your charge: high road."

Face to face

At the climax of M. R. James's 1904 ghost story "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad" the frightened protagonist, Parkins, perceives the features of "a horrible, an intensely horrible" human face in a crumpled linen sheet. The illusion can be explained by pareidolia, "the natural propensity to interpret vague stimuli as something else more easily contextualized," as Lim defines it. We tend to spot facial features, especially, where they aren't: A truck's headlights and grille or the windows and door at the front of a house—if they're positioned just right—make us think of eyes and a mouth. One theory is that we err on the side of recognizing faces because our protohuman ancestors, hairy as they were, needed to quickly recognize facial features to determine whether they were dealing with a friend or a stranger. This may lead to false positives, but better safe than sorry.

Facial recognition occurs in the bottom of the temporal lobe, near the base of the brain. Researchers have isolated a portion of this region, called the *fusiform face area*, that is most active in this kind of cognition. Injury to this area can lead to prosopagnosia, an inability to recognize others' faces. "In a way, prosopagnosia is the conceptual opposite of facial pareidolia: not enough faces or too many faces," says Lim.

Total recall

William Gibson's 1981 cyberpunk short story "Johnny Mnemonic" revolves around a courier who stores hundreds of megabytes of clients' sensitive information in microchips implanted in his head, accessible only to the client with a password. The technology used in the story roughly parallels the actual working of human memory. One common way neuroscientists understand memory, Lim explains, is as a three-step process: Sensory signals are encoded, stored, and recalled.

Short of implanting microchips in your brain, there are ways to improve memory during these steps—some conscious and some biological. Mnemonic devices can help the encoding process. In the memory palace technique used by the ancient Greeks, for example, you enhance the encoding process by imagining walking through a familiar physical space and locating different sensory signals within the space. However, Lim cautions, unlike Johnny, most of us cannot encode everything we experience.

After stimuli are encoded, cell patterns are modified so the stimuli can be stored and eventually recalled. One way the brain improves its ability to store and recall information is through long-term potentiation, the best-studied form of synaptic strengthening: As a signal travels to the brain, the neurotransmitter glutamate is released, starting a process that results in more receptors being available for neurotransmitter binding, so that next time the same input will cause a stronger response.



Austin Lim, PhD'14.

Maybe Johnny experienced some long-term potentiation between the short story's publication in 1981 and the 1995 film adaptation starring Keanu Reeves. The filmmakers dramatically increased Johnny's memory storage from the original hundreds of megabytes to reflect technological developments. "How much am I carrying? 320 gigabytes," says Reeves's character. If the movie were remade today, Lim muses, "the data courier might brag about the hundreds of terabytes of valuable corporate data stored somewhere in his head." ◆

QUICK STUDY

ECONOMICS

Pandemic productivity

Real labor productivity in US restaurants had been constant for nearly 30 years when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. In a National Bureau of Economic Research working paper from March 2025, a team led by Chicago Booth's **Austan Goolsbee**, the Robert P. Gwinn Professor of Economics, and **Chad Syverson**, the George C. Tiao Distinguished Service Professor of Economics, shows that productivity at US restaurants jumped more than 15 percent in 2020 and has remained elevated. To understand why, the researchers analyzed mobile phone and transaction data from more than 100,000 fast-food restaurants. They found a plunge in the amount of time people stayed in restaurants, with the percentage of customers staying 10 minutes or less rising. There was also a surge in take-out and delivery orders that persisted when in-person business returned. Shorter visits translated directly into higher productivity, enabling restaurants to serve more customers per employee without adding staff. The findings suggest that other service industries may have seen similar gains—an idea the researchers say is worth exploring in future research.—*V. L.* ◆

Courtesy Austin Lim, PhD'14



A 1950s float at Chicago's historic Bud Billiken Parade from the Ramon Williams Collection. Williams, an electrician and amateur filmmaker, documented life in Bronzeville from the 1940s to the 1960s. In 2020 the South Side Home Movie Project received over 300 reels of film shot by this "citizen with a camera"—the project's largest-ever donation.

CINEMA

Collective memory

The South Side Home Movie Project brings Chicago history to life.

BY TORI LEE, AB'13

"*We want your home movies!*" proclaimed *Hyde Park Herald* ads and flyers taped up in South Side storefronts. Two decades ago, the scrappy archive headed by **Jacqueline Stewart**, AM'93, PhD'99, first put out the call for the historical treasure troves hidden in basements and attics.

Today, in a climate-controlled vault at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, the South Side Home Movie Project (SSHMP) holds over 1,200 reels of footage shot by South Siders from the 1930s to the 1980s. And with a few clicks on the archive's online portal, anyone can step inside a 1940s nightclub, wave to Joe Louis in the Bud Billiken Parade, or spend Christmas morning in a living room in the Chatham neighborhood.

This year the project is marking its 20th anniversary with an exhibition titled "The Act of Recording Is an Act of Love," kicking off a yearlong celebration of the project's journey collecting community history.

In the early 2000s, Stewart, a renowned film scholar and South Side native, had become increasingly interested in how nontheatrical films contribute to motion picture history. At a Home Movie Day event in New York, she saw the power of community screenings.

"I thought it was a phenomenal way to bring that kind of local moviemaking to light, to honor the people who made it and to immediately show them why it was important to share it with others," says Stewart, a professor in cinema and media studies and host of the *Silent Sunday Nights* program on Turner Classic Movies.

For the past 20 years, SSHMP, now part of Arts + Public Life at UChicago, has carefully digitized and preserved hours of footage from families and amateur filmmakers. Just as essential as protecting these physical materials, Stewart says, are the programs and events that activate the collection by bringing together people who donated footage, community members, musicians, and scholars.

"Step by step, we've been working to discover new ways to share these films within and beyond the South Side communities in which they were made," says Stewart, who recently returned to campus after serving as director and president of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles. "I'm hoping that our 20th anniversary can be a way for us to connect with more partners to help us make sure that this archive continues to build and thrive for generations to come."

The 20th anniversary exhibition title was inspired by an observation from poet and musician Jamila Woods after viewing materials from the archive: "The act of recording is an act of love," she said. "To press record is to say, 'I want to remember you, I wish you to be remembered.'" ◆

From the Ramon Williams Collection. Courtesy of the South Side Home Movie Project, an initiative of Arts + Public Life at the University of Chicago.

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Models walk the runway at the Parkway Ballroom during the 1944 Hope Fashion Show, captured by Ramon Williams on 16mm film.



Susan Ellis dances with her brother Michael in their family living room. The Ellis family shot 40 home movies on 8mm film at their Auburn Gresham home and on family trips throughout the 1960s.



Firefighters douse a flaming building in East Garfield Park the morning after the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., captured on film by Chatham resident Jean Patton.

From top: Ramon Williams Collection, Alphonse and Nancie Teer Ellis Family Collection, Jean Patton Collection. All images courtesy of the South Side Home Movie Project, an initiative of Arts + Public Life at the University of Chicago.

QUICK STUDY

BIOLOGY

Gut reaction

Researchers from UChicago led by **Megan Kennedy**, PhD'23, a student in the Medical Scientist Training Program, recently revealed how gut health recovery following antibiotics is shaped by diet. In the study, published in April in *Nature*, mice were fed diets mimicking either a Western (processed food, red meat, dairy, sugar) or Mediterranean (whole grains, produce) diet. Both groups were then given antibiotics. After antibiotic treatment, mice on the Western-style diet struggled to maintain a diverse gut biome and were thus more susceptible to infections such as *Salmonella*. The gut biomes of mice eating the Mediterranean-style diet recovered a greater variety of microbes than those eating the Western-style diet, even when the latter were given fecal transplants. The research highlights diet's influence on gut health and resilience: More so than fecal transplants, a healthy diet facilitates the support and recovery of the gut microbiome.

—B. S. ◆

WAYFINDING

A Maroon alphabet

Can you master UChicago's campus building abbreviations?

It's your first day of classes at the University of Chicago. Tucked into your crisp new notebook is a schedule—but how to decipher its mysterious runes? What, in the name of William Rainey Harper, is K 120? And how is W different from WB?

Your challenge: Match the campus building's abbreviation to its photo—and make it to class on time. (Need a hint? You can find full names for each building below. NB: One archway leads to two buildings.)—*S. A.*

BSLC

C

CL

H

K

KPTC

S

SS

W

WB







Full names: Biological Sciences Learning Center (BSLC); Cobb Lecture Hall (C); Classics Building (CL); Haskell Hall (H); Kent Chemical Laboratory (K); Kersten Physics Teaching Center (KPTC); Swift Hall (S); Social Sciences Research Building (SS); Walker Museum (W); Wieboldt Hall (WB).

1, 5: Photography by Tom Rossiter; 2, 3, 6, 8, 9: Photography by Jason Smith; 4: Photography by Joe C. Moreno; 7: Photography by Michael Salaic

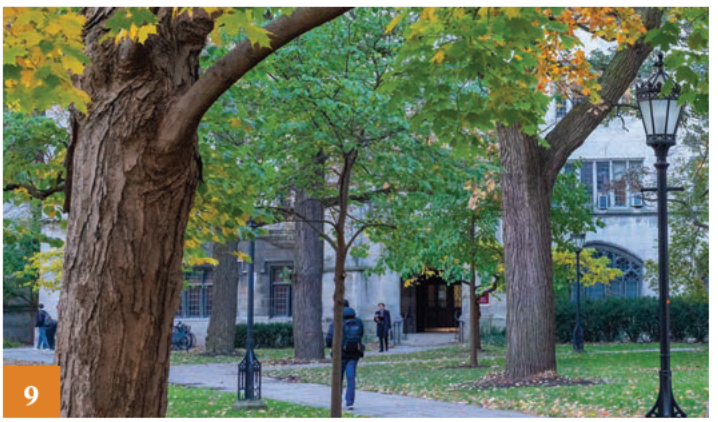

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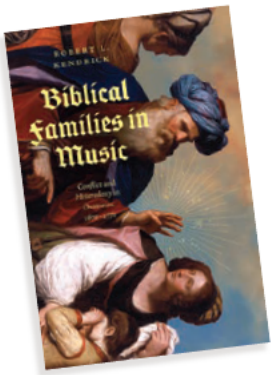

9

Answer key: 1-KPTC; 2-W; 3-H; 4-C; 5 (left)-CL; 5 (right)-WB; 6-K; 7-BSLC; 8-S; 9-SS

RESEARCH

Fresh ink

A selection of recent books by UChicago faculty members.



Biblical Families in Music: Conflict and Heterodoxy in Oratorios, 1670–1770

University of Chicago Press

By Robert L. Kendrick
Robert O. Anderson Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in the Department of Music

The oratorio was a Catholic musical-dramatic form, popular in Italy, Austria, and southern Germany in the 17th and 18th centuries. Performed in churches for upper-class and clerical audiences, these works conveyed biblical stories (often loosely adapted) through recitative delivery, arias, and ensemble numbers—often with a sermon in the middle. **Robert L. Kendrick** studies oratorios that dealt with spiritual tragedies, including death, fratricide, and forbidden love. These works, he argues, were didactic, teaching piety and the values of Christian family life. Kendrick explores how audiences' reception of biblical stories was influenced by their adaptation as oratorios. And for these elite audiences—whose family ties were so important to social status—he asks how oratorios affected family dynamics.

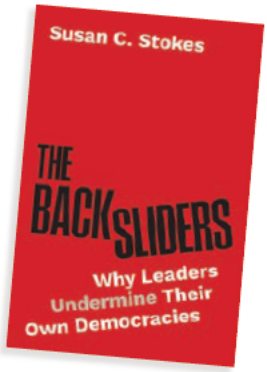


Indigenomicon: American Indians, Video Games, and the Structures of Dispossession

Duke University Press

By Jodi A. Byrd
Professor in the Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity

Video games often replicate dynamics of settler colonialism, capitalism, and extraction, scholars have argued. **Jodi A. Byrd** builds on this research, drawing on Indigenous studies, Black studies, queer studies, and Indigenous feminist critique to examine how games such as *Assassin's Creed*, *Animal Crossing*, and *Dark Souls* reproduce Indigenous dispossession and erasure. They also examine why these dynamics continue to appeal to the collective imagination. Analyzing independent, Indigenous-designed games, including *Never Alone* and *Umurangi Generation*, alongside major studio-backed blockbusters, Byrd highlights how Indigenous game designers have foregrounded Indigenous philosophies based in reciprocity and accountability. These artists, Byrd suggests, offer opportunities to reimagine games as sites of antiracism and decolonization.



The Backsliders: Why Leaders Undermine Their Own Democracies

Princeton University Press

By Susan C. Stokes
Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Political Science

In the past two decades, about two dozen countries have seen attacks on their democratic institutions and processes—from their own elected leaders. **Susan C. Stokes** investigates why this wave of what experts call democratic erosion is happening now. The answer, she argues, lies in the last decades of the 20th century, when free trade and globalization led to increased income inequality. This inequality set the stage for movements on both the right and the left that prepared voters to tolerate leaders' actions against democratic norms and institutions. Stokes explains how democratic erosion occurs, analyzing the actions of leaders and changing dynamics within the voter base. Weakening of democratic institutions, she writes, can impact citizens' rights and protections long after an autocratic leader has left office. She lays out strategies for stopping this process and repairing the damage it causes.



The Classic of Poetry: Ancient China's Songbook

The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press

By Edward L. Shaughnessy
Lorraine J. and Herrlee G. Creel Distinguished Service Professor in Early Chinese Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

Written between 1000 and 600 BCE, the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing*) is the oldest existing poetry collection in the world. The 305 poems are said to have been selected by Confucius from the 3,000 ancient poems known in his time, and they have been consistently read in China for millennia. Divided into three sections—*Feng* (airs), *Ya* (odes), and *Song* (hymns)—corresponding with the music that would have accompanied them, the poems are a record of the history and culture of their era. Archaeological discoveries in the 20th and 21st centuries of variations of and commentary on these poems, written on bamboo slips and silk rolls, have shed light on the collection, and new manuscript discoveries bearing on the poems have been published as recently as 2019. **Edward L. Shaughnessy** draws upon these newly unearthed insights in his translation of the *Classic of Poetry* to craft a comprehensive and modern interpretation of a foundational text.—*C. C.*



August 6, 2025

Community members were off to see the Wizard at a Movies on the Midway screening of Wicked (2024).

Photography by John Zich

For the record

URBAN EDUCATION SUPPORT

Steven A. Kersten, JD'80, and his wife, Priscilla Kersten, have made a $25 million commitment to the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice's Urban Education Institute (UEI). Steven Kersten is a University of Chicago trustee, and Priscilla Kersten is a member of the Crown Family School Council. The gift significantly expands UEI's focus by increasing innovative research on K–12 education, training next-generation education leaders, and funding cross-disciplinary collaborations that strengthen schools and student outcomes. In recognition of the gift and the institute's reenergized focus, UChicago has renamed UEI the Kersten Institute for Urban Education.

BIOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH

A $21 million gift from philanthropist Thea Berggren will establish the Berggren Center for Quantum Biology and Medicine. Work at the center will merge quantum technology with biology, seeking to harness the power of quantum engineering—capable of the most sensitive measurements known to science—to peer inside the human body in unprecedented ways. The goal is to unlock insights into biology and disease that were previously out of reach, paving the way for new diagnostics and therapies. The Berggren Center will be housed within the Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering and will draw on UChicago's renowned strengths in quantum science, biomedical research, and clinical care.

HOLDING COURT



Theater producer, artistic director, and performance curator Avery Willis Hoffman has been appointed the Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director of Court Theatre, effective November 1. Hoffman most recently served as the artistic director of the Brown Arts Institute and professor of the practice of arts and classics at Brown University. There she led the opening of the Lindemann Performing Arts Center and curated its first season. Previously Hoffman was program director at the Park Avenue Armory in New York. For nearly two decades, Hoffman has collaborated with director Peter Sellars on global theater, opera, and dance productions including Shakespeare's *Othello*, Mozart's *Zaide*, and Toni Morrison's *Desdemona*.

CAREER EVOLUTION



Neil Shubin, the Robert R. Bensley Distinguished Service Professor of Organismal Biology and Anatomy, has been nominated to serve as the next president of the National Academy of Sciences, which has recognized outstanding science and promoted public understanding of scientific fields since 1863. Shubin, a member of the academy since 2011, will begin his term on June 30, 2026. A scholar, educator, author, and science communicator, Shubin is known for his discovery of a 375-million-year-old fossil called *Tiktaalik roseae*—an important transitional form between fish and land animals and the subject of Shubin's 2008 book *Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body* (Pantheon Books) and the Emmy Award–winning 2014 television series based on it.

INTELLIGENT ADDITION

Chicago Booth has added a new MBA concentration in artificial intelligence. Students in the new concentration will be required to complete three relevant courses from a selection including AI and Financial Information, AI for Good, Applied Artificial Intelligence, and Generative Thinking. "Through the new concentration, we will challenge students to think differently, not just about algorithms, but about how AI reshapes human capital, decision-making, and society itself. It's here that cutting-edge computation meets deeply human insight," said Sanjog Misra, the Charles H. Kellstadt Distinguished Service Professor of Marketing and Applied AI.

QUANTUM LEADERSHIP

President Paul Alivisatos, AB'81, was among the speakers on quantum technology at a July 24 Capitol Hill briefing for staff members in congressional offices and federal agencies. The University organized the event—with speakers also including US Deputy Secretary of Commerce Paul Dabbar; Senator Todd Young, MBA'02 (R-IN); quantum experts from the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin; and leaders from the Chicago Quantum Exchange and several Midwest-based quantum companies—to showcase UChicago and the Midwest's leadership in quantum. Alivisatos emphasized UChicago's collaborations with other universities and national laboratories, and also underscored the need for ongoing investment and partnerships across academia, government, and industry.

EARLY SUCCESS

Ewain Gwynne, a professor of mathematics, has received the 2025 New Horizons in Mathematics Prize for his work in conformal probability, which involves the study of probabilistic objects such as random curves and surfaces. The prize is given to early-career scientists and mathematicians who have already made a substantial impact on their fields and includes a $100,000 award. He plans to donate the entirety of the prize money to the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, a nonprofit focused on curing multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer.

RES JUDICATA



For the first time in program history, UChicago took first place in the American Mock Trial Association's National Tournament. The Maroons triumphed over Miami University in the final round of competition, held April 6 in Cleveland. Jack Martinez and Emberlynn St. Hilaire, both Class of 2026, alongside Ethan Donovan, AB'25, served as the team's attorneys. Mateo Gjinali, Anderson Lynch, and Penelope Stinson (all Class of 2027) and Elijah Bullie, AB'25, portrayed witnesses.

Clockwise from top: photo copyright Tangled Bank Studios, Howard Hughes Medical Institute; courtesy UChicago Mock Trial; photo by TeQoa Griffith | BlaqPearl Photography



INTERVIEW

Greening the red planet

Humans will likely go to Mars. What we do when we get there warrants careful study and discussion, says Edwin Kite.

BY SUSIE ALLEN, AB'09

Terraforming, the idea of creating sustainable habitats and biospheres beyond Earth, isn't just science fiction. **Edwin Kite**, associate professor in geophysical sciences, is one of many scientists studying how humans might live on Mars. In May he coauthored a piece in *Nature Astronomy*, "The Case for Mars Terraforming Research," proposing that rigorous study of Mars's physical, biological, and chemical conditions is necessary before making decisions about inhabiting the planet. Such research, Kite says, could also contribute foundational knowledge about our universe: "By studying climate change on Mars, we learn a lot about processes that matter for climate in general." This interview has been edited and condensed.

What are some possible choices for the future of Mars?

One is that people never visit. But I don't think that's likely. Many countries have contributed to Mars exploration, and a lot of this investment is driven by the idea that humans will eventually go.

One model is the Antarctica model, where we send all the supplies people need from Earth to Mars. That's not really sustainable.

Another model is local or regional terraforming. You might create a local habitat—a dome, for example—and within that environment you might have ponds, lakes, and forests, and you're producing most of what you need from the soil, air, and rocks on Mars.

The third model is global terraforming, which is when the whole planet becomes habitable. If you want to do this, there are two steps. There's a relatively quick and easy step of warming up the planet to allow photosynthetic life, and then there's a hard and slow step of building up the oxygen levels, allowing more complex forms of life.

Why does Mars terraforming interest you?

The research is going to be an effort that will span many generations, like space exploration itself. So we can start work now that will pay off later, and a good starting point is to think about the basic physics and chemistry. Some of that information we'll get from the rovers and orbiters that are already on Mars. Some of it will require more experiments, calculations, and simulations on Earth.

Our political attitudes toward pretty much everything change on timescales of just a few decades. What's not going to change is the science, so that's a natural thing to focus on.

Do you think climate change on Earth has increased interest in Mars terraforming?

No. Making Mars's surface habitable for humans to walk around unaided would take at least centuries. Mars is not a solution to our societal-scale problems on Earth—in part because we tend to take those problems with us. Mars is not Plan B for humanity.

You've written that it's important to consider the ethical and scientific aspects of terraforming in tandem. Why?

This is how consensus is formed for any new technology. For example, biotech is constantly creating new possibilities that raise serious ethical and philosophical questions, and ultimately the discussion leads to a consensus that leads to societal agreement that gets codified into law. Sometimes, informed by research, we decide collectively not to move forward with a technology.

We have, as humans, reached consensus about lots of stuff like that. The Montreal Protocol protecting the ozone layer is one example. The deep-sea floor is another example: There's an organization called the International Seabed Authority that has jurisdiction over economic activity on the deep-sea floor. And the Outer Space Treaty regulates exploration of space.

What is your favorite piece of Mars-related pop culture?

I'm fond of *The Martian*. I'm a participating scientist on the Mars *Curiosity* rover. In *The Martian*, even though it's a story about one person stranded on Mars, a lot of the drama is about the team back on Earth figuring out how to get him out of the problem. I think it captures the teamwork well. And the fictional hero of *The Martian*, Mark Watney, is a University of Chicago alum. ◆

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Illustration by Robert Ball



CRONIES WITH BENEFITS

You've probably been captured. Luigi Zingales is onto you.

BY CARRIE GOLUS, AB'91, AM'93

Crony Capitalism, taught by **Luigi Zingales**, meets in the basement of the Harper Center on Wednesdays at the unpopular hour of 8:30 a.m. Nonetheless, by 8:15 a.m. several students are already in their seats. "I hate waking up early," one student wrote on an evaluation for the course in a past year, "but I dragged myself out of bed at 7:30 a.m. to get ready to go listen to Professor Zingales talk for three hours."

Zingales, the Robert C. McCormack Distinguished Service Professor of Entrepreneurship and Finance at Chicago Booth, is highly entertaining and loves to poke the bear. He cohosts the podcast *Capitalisn't*, which aims to explain "how capitalism can go wrong, and what we can do to fix it."

Crony Capitalism takes a similarly skeptical approach. Economies throughout the world do not really resemble "the idealist version of free markets generally taught in economics classes," the syllabus states: Corporate governance, wealth inequality, regulation, the media, and the political process all distort the market. Public-serving entities are subject to regulatory capture, when an agency meant to act in the public interest instead acts in the interest of the industry it's supposed to regulate—a concept first described by Chicago Booth professor and Nobel laureate George Stigler, PhD'38.

Zingales's course focuses on why crony capitalism in all its forms—giving unfair advantages to those with the right connections—"prevails in most of the world," and why it's increasingly prevalent in the United States.

At 8:30 a.m. Zingales quickly reviews last week's homework on sugar subsidies. Students were assigned to read a *ProMarket* article on the Fanjul family, Cuban refugees who have made a fortune selling sugar in the United States. Students had to use opensecrets.org, which tracks money in US politics, to compute the Fanjuls' campaign donations and lobbying expenditures (directed at Republicans and Democrats alike), then calculate their company's benefits from subsidies and protections. The return on their investment, students discover: a staggering 4,000 percent.

As well as the carrot, the Fanjuls employ the (implied) stick. Zingales shares a story about an unnamed presidential economic adviser who, during a talk, remarked that the United States should get rid of sugar subsidies. Driving back to the White House, the story goes, the adviser received a phone call suggesting that he not do that again. "The Mafia does exactly this," says Zingales, who comes from Italy. "For most people, it's convenient to behave."

Homework dispatched, it's on to the lecture, which at first doesn't seem to have much to do with economics, let alone

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crony capitalism. The first image in Zingales's slideshow: a painting of Prometheus holding a burning torch and casting a worried glance at the sky. "There is a strong analogy between knowledge and fire," he says. The next slide lists the similarities: Both spread naturally, can be shared at no cost, and are powerful, even potentially dangerous. *Lucifer*, Zingales notes, means he "who brings light."

He flips swiftly through the slides—many could have been borrowed from an art history class or European Civ—tracing the history of knowledge and its preservation and dissemination. Speaking without notes, he shares anecdote after anecdote of how human knowledge builds on itself. Arabic numerals and the concept of zero, for example, made calculus possible: "With the Roman numerals, you cannot do that," he says. "It is a pain in the buttock."

But once human beings figured out how to preserve, share, and monetize knowledge, life was transformed. Here is the connection with economics.

One slide, titled "The Acceleration of History," shows the growth of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in China, India, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States from 1000 to 2000 CE. For 700 years it's roughly flat. Beginning around 1700, it skyrockets. In the case of the United States, it's just one steeply increasing line.

"What Happened?" the next slide asks. Zingales rattles off a list of explanations. In the 15th century the printing press and patent law had been invented—the latter by Venetians, Zingales points out with a hint of Italian pride. Knowledge could be widely disseminated, and now that scholars could build their reputations by sharing knowledge, "modern academia" came into existence.

He cites Fra Luca Pacioli (another hint of pride), who in 1494 published *Summa de Arithmetica, Geometria, Proportioni et Proportionalita*, the first book that explains double-entry accounting. "For all the accountants," he says (if there are any in the room, they do not self-identify), "this is an important masterpiece." It's also an early example of monetizing an idea, by writing a book that could be sold.

A final reason for the steep growth in GDP: Military competition inspired governments to invest in research. "One of the big, big ideas of America after World War II," he says, "is to continue to subsidize universities to do research."

Next comes a rapid-fire history of the effects of the printing press. Before its invention, books were expensive, the Bible was available only in Latin, and the linguistic landscape was extremely diverse. Every little area spoke its own dialect, and being illiterate "wasn't a big loss," he says.

Afterward, seismic changes. Books were written in national languages—to appeal to the largest possible group of readers—and therefore "created, to some extent," the notion of nationality.

The printing press brought newspapers, which the internet—in a parallel seismic process—disrupted. The slide "A Paradox of the Information Age" points to the current dire situation for both legacy media and democracy: More information is easily available, but there is a greater diffusion of low-quality information.

With just a few minutes left in the three-hour lecture (which also covered the history of censorship, propaganda, cancel culture, social media, artificial intelligence, and more), Zingales brings his troublemaking home. He's already covered how regulators can be captured—influenced to make decisions that benefit certain industries. His astonishing claim: "Academics are not very different from regulators."

Academics—paid by universities and protected by tenure—are subject to capture?

The issue is data, he says. Research in his and many other fields requires data: "So these days, if you have an IQ above 90 and you have access to a proprietary set with fantastic data, you get tenure at the top university," he quips. But who controls the data and how they use that control shapes the research.

Bob Woodward—the crusading journalist of Watergate fame—is now known for writing "biographies that are clearly tilted in favor of the person," Zingales says. That's because famous people don't want to share their information with a biographer who would be critical: "You need to be nice."

Just like famous people, organizations have reputations to protect. Data is shared "with an implicit quid pro quo," Zingales says. "If you find results we like, we keep giving you data, and if you don't find results we like, we stop."

"What is funny," Zingales says, is that when he makes this argument to other economists, they claim to be immune from such corrupting influences. "I say, 'Wait a minute. You're an economist and not affected by incentives?'" ◆

SYLLABUS

Crony Capitalism, ECON 28620, "analyzes what makes capitalism work and what distorts it." Assigned texts include books and book chapters, academic papers (old as well as new), reports from think tanks, newspaper and journal articles, podcasts, and more.

For the class meeting described here, required readings included two articles from *ProMarket* (a publication of the Stigler Center at Chicago Booth): "The Present and Future of Journalism: How the News Media Lost Its Purpose" (2021) and "'Doubt Is Their Product': The Difference Between Research and Academic Lobbying" (2020). In addition, students read "Preventing Economists' Capture," a chapter Zingales contributed to the 2013 book *Preventing Regulatory Capture: Special Interest Influence and How to Limit It* (Cambridge University Press).—*C. G.*

LIFE ITSELF

Nobel laureates and nuclear experts urge action on a looming threat.

BY SUSIE ALLEN, AB'09

On July 16, 1945, the United States detonated the world's first atomic bomb at a remote air force base in New Mexico. Eighty years after that event, called the Trinity test, Nobel laureates, security experts, and thinkers from around the world came together at the University of Chicago to call for an end to the era of nuclear weapons and warfare.

"You have nothing to lose and life itself to gain," said David Gross, a 2004 Nobelist in physics and one of the organizers of the Nobel Laureate Assembly for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

The July 16 public gathering capped two-and-a-half days of behind-the-scenes learning, discussing, and writing by the assembly's 80 or so attendees. The group, which included some 20 Nobel laureates, had arrived in Chicago with hopes of drafting a declaration that would make concrete proposals for the prevention of nuclear war—and they did, just under the wire.

"We easily could have ended up with no declaration, no consensus. And until the very end, it was unclear," says assembly co-organizer **Daniel Holz**, SM'94, PhD'98. But through thoughtful discussion, the group arrived at a document with nine recommendations its diverse membership could stand behind (see excerpt, page 28). Since the release of the declaration, 129 Nobel laureates, including five with UChicago affiliations, have signed it.

Holz, a UChicago professor of physics and astronomy and astrophysics, is not new to thinking about the possibility of global destruction. As chair of the science and security board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, he is responsible for helping set the Doomsday Clock, a symbolic measurement of how close humanity is to self-annihilation. Holz also founded UChicago's Existential Risk Laboratory, a research group dedicated to studying threats to humanity's long-term survival—including nuclear war.

Holz found equally concerned compatriots in his fellow physicists Gross and Brian Schmidt. Both Gross and Schmidt, a 2011 Nobel laureate, had come to believe that public awareness of the nuclear threat has waned to the point of complacency. Together the trio began work on

Photography by John Zich



Below, from left: David Gross, Alexandra Bell, Francesca Giovannini, Karen Hallberg, and Brian Schmidt at the Nobel Laureate Assembly for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

planning the assembly, which they hoped would bring renewed attention to the issue. The University of Chicago, with its deep connections to the Manhattan Project, felt like a fitting site for the gathering.

The assembly continued a long tradition of Nobelists working together to address global threats. Over the years, the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings, held (in part) on Germany's Mainau Island, have served as the backdrop for those efforts. The 1955 Mainau Declaration against the use of nuclear weapons was followed by a 2015 Mainau Declaration focused on the dangers of climate change. In 2024 Gross helped initiate a new antinuclear Mainau Declaration but knew he still wanted to do more.

The UChicago event began with a somber reminder of the topic's grave stakes. Masako Wada, a survivor of the Nagasaki bombing in 1945, sent a video message from Japan. She argued that deterrence, which relies on fear and threat, is not sufficient to save humanity. "We the *Hibakusha*"—the people affected by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—"will tell ... our stories," Wada said. "We will also urge domestic and international policymakers to take the leadership in working toward a human society free of nuclear weapons and war."



Robert Floyd, executive secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization, gave the afternoon's keynote address. After offering a capsule history of nuclear tests and treaties, he arrived at an assessment of the present moment: "The threat of nuclear disaster is back, back in a way I hoped that I never again would have seen in my lifetime." Important treaties are expiring, world leaders have threatened the use of nuclear weapons, and global stability is low. To move back from the brink, he argued, countries must focus on rebuilding trust and reducing conflict and uncertainty.

How to do that? A panel discussion following Floyd's remarks outlined some of the key recommendations in the declaration that aim to shore up that needed trust and stability. Alexandra Bell, president and CEO of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, spoke of the urgent need to improve US-Russia relations—and especially for the two countries to negotiate a successor agreement to the 2011 New START Treaty, which limits US and Russian nuclear forces. The treaty is set to expire this winter.

Francesca Giovannini, executive director of the Project on Managing the Atom at the Harvard Kennedy School, reminded the audience that "in a time of crisis, when everything is sliding, just stopping the slide is good enough." For that reason, she explained, the declaration calls on states to reiterate their commitment to a moratorium on nuclear explosive testing and to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

But all of this, said physicist Karen Hallberg, the secretary general of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, requires popular support. That's why, Hallberg noted, the declaration includes a recommendation for "'scientists, academics, civil society, and communities of faith to help create the necessary pressure on global leaders to implement nuclear risk reduction measures.'" After all, as Gross reminded the audience, "our recommendations are great, but without the political will behind them, nothing will happen."

Cardinal Silvano Maria Tomasi, who has been active in the Catholic Church's nuclear nonproliferation efforts and spoke earlier in the day, saw in the assembly and the Trinity test anniversary not just an occasion for fear and sadness but also a chance for renewal. "The Trinity explosion taught us what we are capable of destroying," he said. "The task before us now is to rediscover what we are capable of preserving and building."

ON THE PRECIPICE

An excerpt from the Nobel Laureate Assembly Declaration for the Prevention of Nuclear War. To read the full declaration and its list of recommendations, visit mag.uchicago.edu/nobeldeclaration.

In this 80th year of the nuclear age, the world finds itself at a reckoning point. Distrust and discord mark the international discourse, and the volume of challenges facing the global community is overwhelming. But there is only one challenge that could end civilization in an afternoon.

In 1955 and 2024, Nobel Laureates gathered at Mainau to issue warnings to the world about the existential threat posed by nuclear war. Tremendous progress has been made in reducing global nuclear stockpiles and nuclear risks, but we are now heading in the wrong direction. Poised at the beginning of a new, complex, and dangerous nuclear arms race, Nobel Laureates and nuclear weapons policy experts must now speak together.

We do not deny that the fear of nuclear war has played a role in preserving some stability among nations, but a global security structure forever dependent on fear is ultimately a reckless gamble. Despite having avoided nuclear catastrophes in the past, time and the law of probability are not on our side. Without clear and sustained efforts from world leaders to prevent nuclear war, there can be no doubt that our luck will finally run out. ...

There is no greater obligation than to prevent the catastrophe of nuclear war. ... We ask that [global leaders] each be guided by the words of Nobel Laureates Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein: "We appeal as human beings to human beings: remember your humanity, and forget the rest."

WE APPEAL AS HUMAN BEINGS TO HUMAN BEINGS: REMEMBER YOUR HUMANITY, AND FORGET THE REST.



Assembly attendees gathered at the site of the first human-made self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction.

Photography by Jean Lachat

A WORLD WORTH SAVING



A Q&A with assembly co-organizer Daniel Holz, SM'94, PhD'98, a professor of physics and astronomy and astrophysics at UChicago. This interview has been edited and condensed.

What do you think is powerful about having Nobel laureates, in particular, involved in an event like this, even if they aren't nuclear experts?

For decades there have been groups worried about nuclear risk and what can be done, which is great—there's a lot of expertise and understanding—but that community can be a little bit insular. Sometimes it's good to get an outside perspective and new ideas. A Nobel laureate is not going to be afraid to say to a nuclear expert, "I don't understand what you're saying" or "This doesn't make sense, and here's why." That added a certain dimension to the conversation.

Nobel laureates also have respect in the global community. The voices of laureates still matter, and I think they capture a lot of the best of humanity through their accomplishments in literature or peace or physics or chemistry. We have about 120 laureates who have signed the declaration now, and when you have 120 laureates agreeing that these things must be done, I think that sends a strong message—at least, that's our hope.

We have to make these recommendations happen, and the laureates are working with us to help get the word out—both to the public and to the people who make the decisions.

What do you hope will happen a year from now with the declaration?

Well, hopefully we're all still around a year from now. That would be Step One.

The declaration has many different suggestions. Some are short-term—like, we should study the climatic effects of nuclear war. That's something we're already working on, and I hope very much that work continues and accelerates.

One of our recommendations is that nations should not resume nuclear testing. We've had a moratorium on testing that has worked very well, and that should continue. Nonaction does not sound like a big win, but in the current climate, if we can resist the temptation to slide back into testing, that would be a win.

One of the most important recommendations—and this is one of the more nebulous ones, but it's absolutely critical—is that there needs to be dialogue between the United States, Russia, and China. One thing all nations agree on is that we don't want a nuclear war. We just need to find a way for leaders to have discussions about this topic. There are ways to do that, and we learned how during the Cold War.

I hope a year from now at least some of these things will have been done, and if the declaration helps in any small way, it will have been a great success. Because I do think this is one of the most important issues facing civilization in the history of civilization. The threat is real, it's right in front of us, and even though we don't want to think about it, it's still there. It's a much more dramatic threat than anything else: An hour from now, civilization could be toast.

Sometimes when I think about this stuff, I just want to go eat ice cream.

I've eaten a lot of ice cream over the last years. That's a totally reasonable response. Just don't go into an ice cream coma and do nothing. Eat the ice cream, and then do something. It's important to do both.

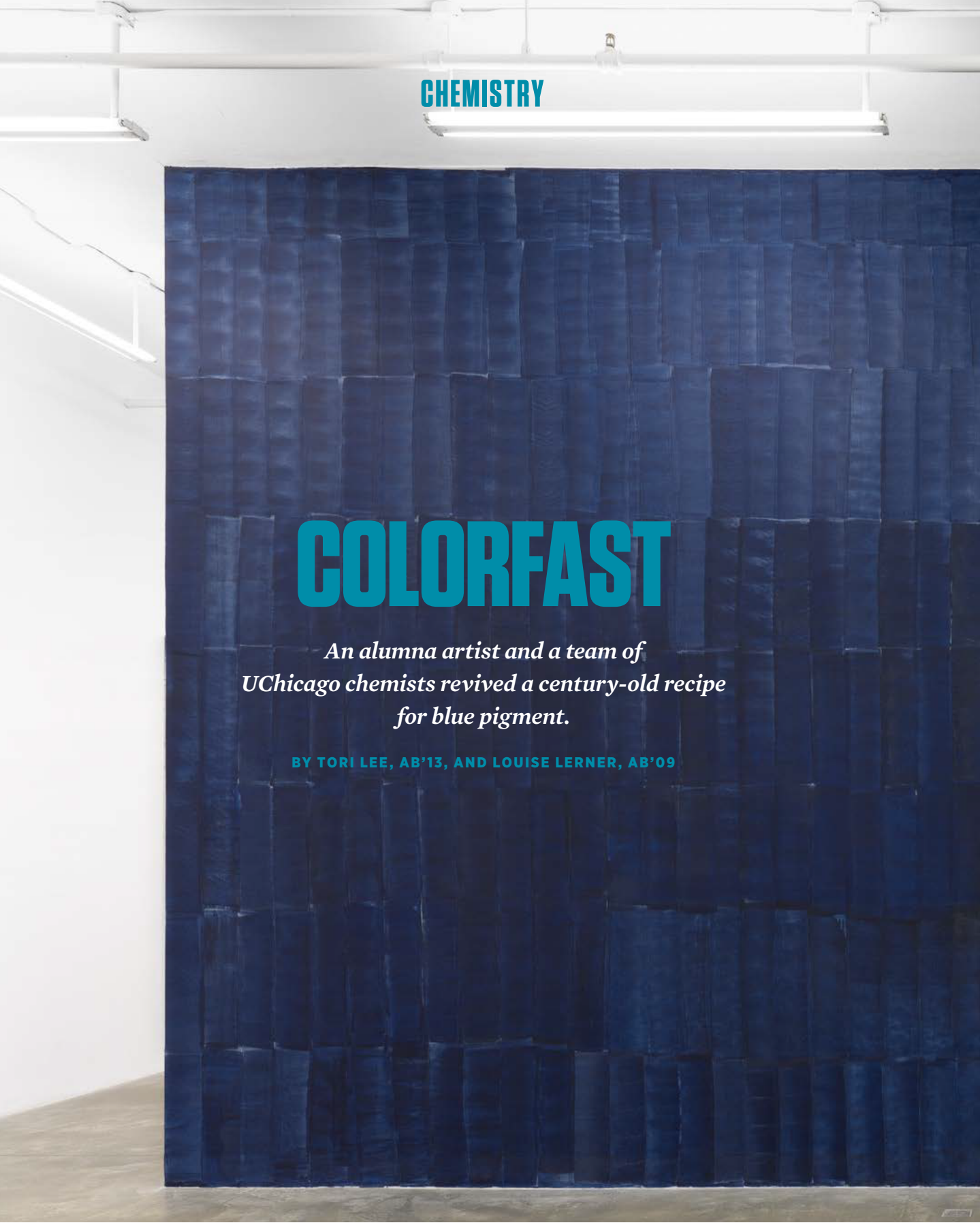
I don't want to terrify people and reduce them to a fetal position on the sofa, unable to move. That doesn't help anyone. This stuff is alarming. We should be terrified and freaked out. But also, there's plenty we can do, and it really is in all of our interests to do these things. It's not an insoluble Gordian knot. There are lots of commonsense measures that reduce risk, and the lesson from the Cold War is that it can be done.

The risk of nuclear war is a risk we can address. Otherwise we wouldn't bother—and there's no way the laureates would be spending their time on this if it was hopeless.

What, for you, was the most meaningful moment of the assembly?

The event ended with a concert by the Kronos Quartet and Allison Russell, and the final piece included readings by different conference participants about nuclear close calls. After two-and-a-half days of really intense discussion about this topic, it does start to become somewhat abstract. And these readings about moments when civilization teetered in the balance, with strings playing, were so powerful. It captured the insanity of what we're talking about, but also the beauty of humanity and civilization. This is what we're trying to preserve. ◆

Photography by Robert Kozloff



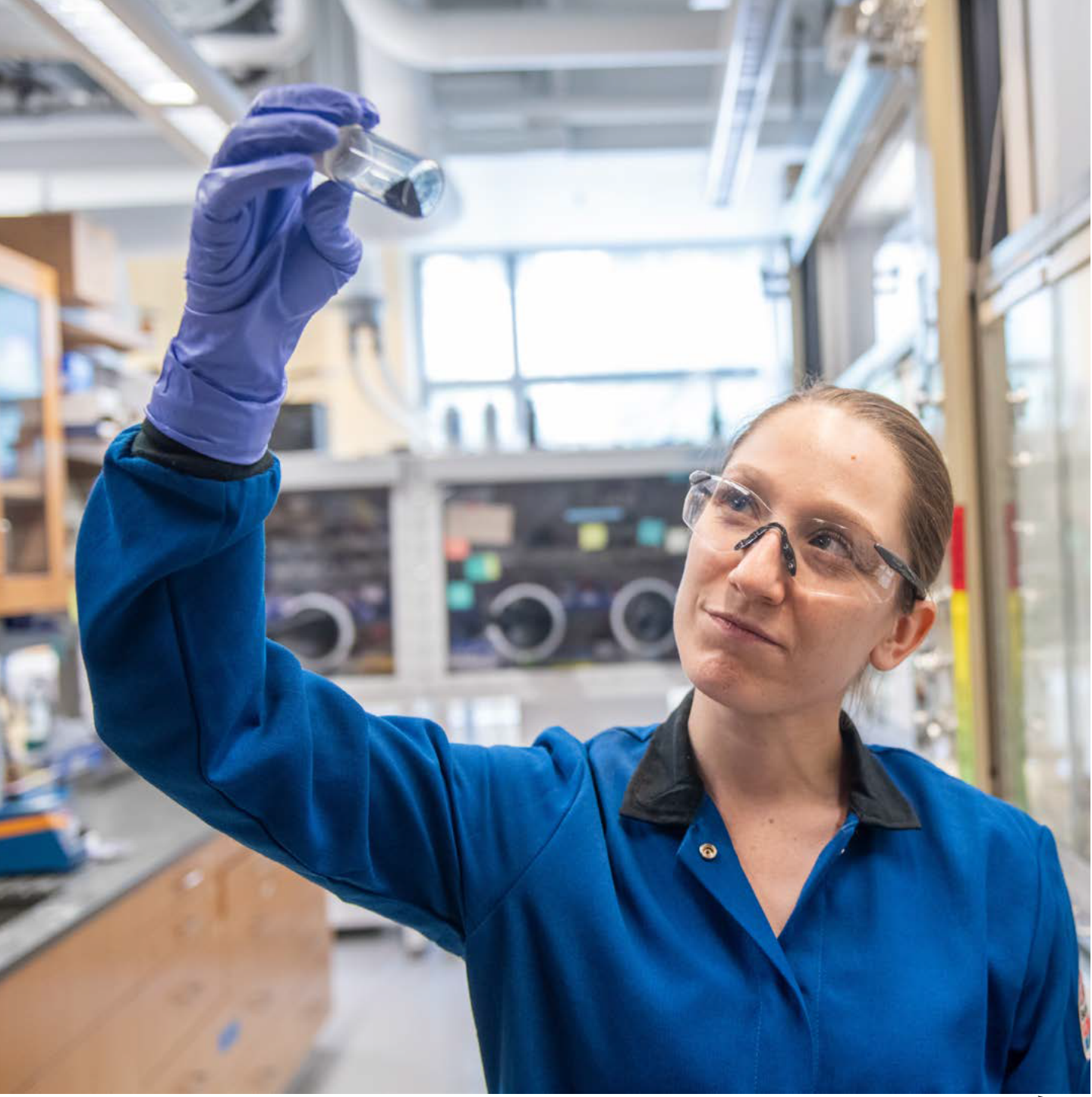
COLORFAST

An alumna artist and a team of UChicago chemists revived a century-old recipe for blue pigment.

BY TORI LEE, AB'13, AND LOUISE LERNER, AB'09



Amanda Williams, LAB'92, used a re-created blue pigment developed by George Washington Carver in this recent work.



Previous pages: Installation view: Amanda Williams: *Run Together and Look Ugly After the First Rain*, Casey Kaplan, New York, February 28 – April 26, 2025. Photo: Dan Bradica Studio.

In a University of Chicago lab, chemist **Amanda Brewer** pours two clear liquids together in a beaker. Instantly, almost magically, the contents turn a rich blue.

Once one of the most difficult colors to capture in paint, blue was available to pre-19th-century artists only by grinding up the prized stone lapis lazuli. By the 1900s blue was still difficult enough to produce that inventor George Washington Carver received a patent for his process in 1927.

Carver's method had been largely forgotten when, nearly a century later, artist **Amanda Williams**, LAB'92, stumbled across it. Fascinated by both the method and its creator, she decided to re-create his formula and reached out to chemists at the University of Chicago for help.

"The synergy of those brains and points of view

Left: Chemist Amanda Brewer at work in the lab. Below: Inventor George Washington Carver with a clump of the Tuskegee soil he used to create his formula for blue pigment.

overlapping constantly was really interesting to see," Williams says of working alongside UChicago scientists and students. "There has to be some discipline, but there also has to be a little bit of risk. Innovation has to be a little bit of both of those things."

Williams is in love with color. The artist, architect, and 2022 MacArthur fellow credits this early fascination to growing up when *Black* first became prevalent as a racial term. Since then she's been struck by the multifaceted nature of color—as material, as racial signifier, as emotion.

In her *Color(ed) Theory* series a decade ago, Williams painted abandoned buildings on Chicago's South Side in hues significant to the Black community—colors inspired by things like Pink Oil Moisturizer hair lotion and Flamin' Hot Cheetos. The series' cheeky humor celebrated cultural experiences many Black Americans share even as it highlighted systematic erasure and urban disinvestment.

Williams first came across Carver's hue while conducting archival research into Reconstruction-era patents. "What did Black people make when they didn't have to just think about survival?" she wondered.

When a friend mentioned that Carver held a patent for blue pigment, Williams was shocked. "I said, 'The peanut man?'"

More digging revealed that Carver, a Tuskegee University professor, held only three patents with the US government, despite being a prolific inventor (including of uses for peanuts). One of those patents was for making blue pigment from iron-rich clay.

"He was using this Alabama red clay, which is in abundance in the soil on Tuskegee's campus," Williams says. "This idea of one of your source materials being free seems to reinforce a hypothesis that this is why the patent was necessary, because he was going to streamline the production."

Williams thought, "Why not try to re-create it?" However, Carver's process would prove more complicated than simply following a formula: Some parts were intentionally vague to protect the patent.

During a chance meeting at the opening reception for the Smart Museum of Art's *Monochrome Multitudes* exhibition in 2022—another celebration of color—Williams mentioned the project to University President **Paul Alivisatos**, AB'81.

"We'd love to help," Alivisatos said.



Opposite: Photography by Jean Lachat. This page: Photography by Frances Benjamin Johnston, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC 20540 USA, loc.gov/item/95507555

When Brewer first saw the original 100-year-old patent, she remembers shaking her head. The formula calls for large quantities of very concentrated acids mixed together for months at a time.

"I was like, 'Oh my god, we're not doing it in this exact form, just for safety reasons,'" says Brewer, a postdoctoral scholar in Alivisatos's lab. "[Carver] must have been doing this outside, because it's going to create fumes for months."

Over the summer of 2023, Brewer, with the help of three students—**Sarah Thau**, Class of 2026; **Nathan Berhe**, AB'24; and summer researcher Nadia Ceasar—adapted Carver's formula to make it safer and more manageable.

The formula calls for separating the iron from clay using strong acids. Then the iron is mixed with other reagents, and the blue precipitates out—appearing dramatically from a combination of two yellowish solutions.

Below: Artist Amanda Williams, LAB'92, in her studio in Bridgeport. Right: Williams used Carver blue in her recent exhibition *Run Together and Look Ugly After the First Rain* at Casey Kaplan Gallery.

Experimenting with various soils, including jars of Alabama dirt sent by a cousin of Williams's, the team consolidated the formula to use just one type of acid. They also took advantage of modern equipment like centrifuges (normally used in the Alivisatos lab to isolate quantum dots) to more quickly separate out components.

By the end, the team had a reliable formula that could be achieved in hours rather than weeks or months.

To investigate the crystal structure of the blue pigment, Brewer tested samples using a technique called powder X-ray diffraction. Interestingly, Carver's creation was chemically identical to Prussian blue, one of the first pigments achieved through modern chemistry, which caused a sensation when it was accidentally invented in the 1700s.

Curious about what kinds of clay could work, the team also tested Carver's formula on soil from Bronzeville, a historically Black neighborhood in Chicago, and from the University of Chicago campus. All produced the same startling blue.

For Thau the experience was "the best project I could have hoped for as an undergrad," she says. "It was so incredibly cool. And I notice color and pigment much more now. It's





Opposite: © John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation–used with permission. This page: Amanda Williams, *The Dream Is the Truth. Then You Act and Do Things Accordingly*, 2025. Innovation Blue pigment, Alabama red clay gesso, distemper, watercolor on wood panel. 47.75 x 71.25 x 2" / 121.3 x 181 x 5.1cm. Three parts, each: 47.75 x 23.75 x 2" / 121.3 x 60.3 x 5.1cm. © Amanda Williams. Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York. Photo: Dan Bradica Studio.

around you all the time. It crops up in the oddest places. You're painting your nails, or seeing a blue car on the street and wondering how that pigment works."

There is one other lasting consequence too. Some parts of the chemistry lab are now permanently stained blue.

THE LEVEL OF EFFORT CARVER MUST HAVE HAD TO ENDURE TO EVEN RECEIVE THE PATENT WAS A TESTAMENT TO INNOVATION AND PERSEVERANCE.

With the formula in hand, a German manufacturer was able to scale up the process and produce 100 pounds of pigment for Williams's studio so that she could begin to experiment with the next step: turning the pigment into paint. Paint requires a binder to help the pigment adhere to the surface being painted; Williams decided on milk, which is what Carver would likely have used.

Last year, for the New Orleans arts triennial Prospect.6, Williams used the paint to coat two buildings in Carver blue: an arts building at Xavier University and a shotgun-style house on the campus of the New Orleans African American Museum.

Williams wanted the structures to serve as a pop of joy amid the already color-saturated city. She also wanted to highlight Black ingenuity.

"The level of effort Carver must have had to endure to even receive the patent was a testament to innovation and perseverance," Williams says.

Williams continues to experiment with the pigment in her work. She recently opened a solo exhibition in New York City titled *Run Together and Look Ugly After the First Rain*, a collection of 20 paintings and 10 collages using paint she created from the Carver blue pigment.

"George Washington Carver wanted to make sure knowledge extends itself, that it builds on a network of people learning from each other," Williams says. "So it's been really nice that the project, in some ways, embodies that at its elemental level." ◆



A FIGHTING CHANCE

A new book challenges conventional wisdom on gun violence and suggests new approaches to solving the problem.

BY SUSIE ALLEN, AB'09

Gun violence, seemingly one of the most intractable problems of American life, is more solvable than we think. That's the hopeful and surprising message of a new book by **Jens Ludwig**, the Edwin A. and Betty L. Bergman Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and Pritzker Director of the University's Crime Lab. In *Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of American Gun Violence* (University of Chicago Press, 2025), Ludwig brings together academic research and personal experience to make the case that many shootings are not as calculated as we've long assumed. Instead they stem from a common form of human interaction: conflict. Most shootings, Ludwig writes, are arguments that end in tragedy because someone has a gun. Yet he sees reason for hope in a series of

Photography by John Zich

Jens Ludwig, the Edwin A. and Betty L. Bergman Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, has spent more than two decades studying gun violence.

inexpensive and often scalable policies, rooted in behavioral economics, that could prevent a surprisingly large share of shootings. This interview has been edited and condensed.

In the book you challenge much of the conventional wisdom on gun violence. How would you summarize that conventional wisdom, and what does it miss?

If you ask Americans what causes gun violence, most people will give one of two answers. A bunch of people will say, *I think gun violence is due to morally bad people who are just not afraid of the criminal justice system.* This leads them to conclude that the only thing you can do is disincentivize gun violence by threatening people with bigger sticks.

Other people will say, *No, gun violence is actually due to economic desperation, so the only thing you can do is disincentivize gun violence by making the alternatives to crime better through jobs programs or social policy.*

Both of those perspectives share an implicit assumption that before anybody pulls a trigger, they're engaging in some sort of rational benefit-cost calculation.

Back when we started the Crime Lab, one of the lightbulb moments for me came when we sent my friend **Harold Pollack** [the Helen Ross Distinguished Service Professor at the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice and in the College] over to Chicago police headquarters. We said, "Harold, don't come out until you've read every homicide case file that involves a victim or a shooter under 18."

Harold came back and said, "These shootings are not what we think. It really looks like most of these shootings are arguments—arguments that go sideways and someone's got a gun."

That led us to look at more data. It turns out that this finding—that most homicides in America don't stem from gang wars over drug-selling turf or robberies or any other economically motivated cause—is something that criminologists like former Law School professor **Franklin Zimring** [JD'67] had discovered as early as the 1960s. This is a fact we keep forgetting and so keep having to rediscover.

You point out in the book that although we tend to think of all the illegal behaviors that dominate the news as one thing—crime—they're actually quite different. How?

Seeing the impact of gun violence on New Brunswick, New Jersey, where I went to college, at the peak of the crack cocaine epidemic in the late 1980s got me to think, "I would really like to work on crime." But over time I realized that the word "crime" is about as helpful as the word "disease." Are you talking about cancer? Sepsis? COVID-19? These are all radically different things with radically different causes and consequences and cures.

The same thing is true for the word "crime." Car thefts and burglaries are driven by economic considerations. Murder is driven by heat-of-the-moment arguments. Jaywalking is driven by impatience. To say that these are all three versions of the same thing makes no sense from the perspective of understanding and solving the problem.

I'm trained as an economist, so I read the canonical paper by our beloved University of Chicago colleague, the late Gary Becker [AM'53, PhD'55], that says crime is rational behavior and incentives are the cure for the problem. I think that is totally right for property crime—which accounts for most crimes—but I don't think that's right for most gun violence, which accounts for most of the harm from crime that society experiences.

How else has your thinking about gun violence evolved?

I thought for a long time that the path out of the gun violence problem in the United States was through gun control. My research suggests that gun availability is an important part of the story, but after years of working on this I could see that it is going to be very, very difficult to change gun availability or nationwide gun regulation in the foreseeable future. The nearly 400 million guns in America are not going anywhere anytime soon.

What I've learned through our work at the Crime Lab with local nonprofits and government agencies is that gun violence equals guns plus violence. And if the gun environment isn't going to change for the foreseeable future, the good news is that there's a different margin we can push on. We can try to change the willingness of people to use these widely available guns to hurt others and start making progress on this terrible public health crisis sooner rather than later.

The argument I try to make in the book is really an argument of diversifying our policy approach to the problem: It is possible that gun politics might change rapidly in a totally unexpected way, but it seems like madness to me to bet only on that. I do not want to say that people should not be working on gun control. My argument is, let's not *only* be thinking about gun control.

How do arguments become shootings? What's going on?

I remember visiting the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center and hearing a staff member say that 80 percent of

It is possible that gun politics might change rapidly in a totally unexpected way, but it seems like madness to me to bet only on that.

the kids wouldn't be there if you could give them back 10 minutes of their lives.

Behavioral economics gives us a way to understand what people are doing in those 10-minute windows. [Psychologist] Daniel Kahneman has a wonderful book called *Thinking, Fast and Slow* [Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011], which explains that our minds work in two different ways, of which we are aware of only one. There's our slow-thinking, deliberate, rational self—Kahneman calls that System 2. It's very powerful but mentally taxing, so we do as little of it as possible. And then our minds have developed another kind of fast, effortless, below-the-level-of-consciousness thinking that Kahneman calls System 1. We rely on System 1 to deal with routine things we do over and over again. We couldn't live without those automatic responses, but the price we pay for fast and effortless thought is often in terms of accuracy. System 1 responses aren't always perfectly accurate. System 1 responses, which are usually adaptive, can get overgeneralized and deployed in the wrong situation. That can lead to trouble for people in situations where the consequences of making a mistake are very high.

Many people assume gun violence, especially urban gun violence, is related to gangs. How true is that?

The people involved in gun violence in Chicago are disproportionately in gangs. That connection has led a lot of people to assume that the gun violence problem is like what they've seen in *The Wire*: It must be the result of some gang war over drug-selling turf. But while it's true that lots of people involved in shootings are gang involved, it doesn't seem to be true that the motivation for most shootings is to further some organizational objective of the gang.

I saw this firsthand a few years ago going around with a detective on the South Side. I asked him about the most recent case he'd worked on, and he described it to me: Kid in Gang A gets off the CTA train and is walking down the sidewalk and steps on the sneaker of kid in Gang B. Kid in Gang B says, "I think you should apologize." Kid in Gang A says, "I don't feel like apologizing." Somebody ends up dead. It is true that the kids are in opposite gangs, but it's also clear, once you understand the event, that gang affiliation is incidental to the underlying cause, which is, *I stepped on your shoe and called you a motherfucker instead of apologizing.*

If you think of gun violence as gang wars over drug-selling turf, you think, "How in the world do we solve this?" But if instead you realize it's one kid stepping on another kid's sneaker, that feels much more like something we could do something about.

You write in the book about the importance of bystanders who can interrupt arguments before they become shootings—what the urbanist Jane Jacobs called "eyes upon the street." Why does this matter so much?

In the book I tell a horrifyingly embarrassing story about me getting into an argument with a neighbor. I was saved by a private security guard driving around, who said, "Is everything all right? Or do I need to call a cop?"

That's an example of what Jane Jacobs meant about "eyes upon the street"—some prosocial adult who is willing to step in and de-escalate conflict. Under the conventional wisdom that shootings stem from deliberate weighing of pros and cons, eyes upon the street shouldn't matter—if you are strongly motivated toward gun violence, you'll just wait for the eyes upon the street to go around the corner. It's only the behavioral economics perspective that helps you understand how the motivation for the most serious crime there is could be so surprisingly fleeting, and why violence interrupted isn't just violence delayed—it's violence prevented.

If we look at gun violence through this new framework—as bad decisions in stressful situations—what role should police have in preventing it?

You can see in the data that when you put more police out on the street, crime goes down and arrests go down. The police are doing something preventive. But what is it? People have implicitly assumed it must be deterrence, but this book argues that cops can be eyes on the street too.

I spent a lot of time going around with the Chicago police, trying to understand what policing and gun violence look like in a complicated city. When a Chicago cop makes an arrest, it can take one or two or three hours to process.

Especially for low-level misdemeanor arrests, the public safety benefit is not very great, and it can really lead somebody's life to go sideways, because now they're enmeshed in the criminal justice system.

In contrast, this book suggests that you want cops to make arrests when they really need to, but not for their own sake, and mostly to be out on the street, de-escalating conflict when it happens. I've seen a lot of examples of cops basically being eyes upon the street and stepping in and deconflicting things without making an arrest in a moment when nobody other than a cop would really be willing or able to step in.

You also talk about youth intervention programs—including some the Crime Lab has been involved with—designed to help with de-escalation. How do those programs work?

I think of these really as decision-making programs. Who would benefit from better decision-making? You, me, and literally everybody I know or have ever met.

Most of us learn things largely through trial and error. There are a lot of things that you can learn in life through trial and error, but if you are a 16-year-old kid growing up in Englewood, trial and error is a very, very difficult way to learn to navigate your neighborhood, given the consequences of making a mistake in that setting. These programs are giving kids opportunities to go through simulated situations where they can learn, through trial and error, more about how their minds work and more about how to avoid common decision-making pitfalls in settings that don't have the high stakes of real life. And the evidence suggests these programs can really help.

One of the reasons I'm so bullish on this way of addressing the problem is that there are ways to deliver these sorts of programs at really low cost, which is so important from the perspective of public policy, given that the City of Chicago—like so many other cities around the country right now—is in a disastrous budget situation.

We did one study a few years ago in partnership with a juvenile detention center. A new administrator had come in, and he didn't have any money to do any programming. The kids would go to school in the morning, and in the afternoon they would sit around watching TV while a guard stood against the wall, watching the kids watch TV.

So the juvenile detention center trained the guards to deliver one of these decision-making programs to the kids. It was practically free. The costs were mimeographing the booklets and a week of training for the guards. When we studied the effects, we saw a 20 percent reduction in recidivism by these kids who are at really high risk for violence involvement. That is a free win.

There have been criticisms of some of these decision-making programs from people who argue that we're essentially treating Black and Brown boys like a problem that needs to be fixed. What do you think of those criticisms?

One of the reasons I tell so many stories about myself in the book is that I'm really trying to underscore the idea that this is not about any particular person or group of people. Everybody has a slow-thinking System 2 self and a fast-thinking System 1 self. What differs is the situations in which we find ourselves and the consequences of making a fast-thinking mistake in those situations.

You can see this looking at young people across the country. When you look at causes of death, homicide is disproportionately the problem for adolescents in low-income minority communities. But in other communities, you see that the leading causes of death for teens are suicide, drug overdoses, and car crashes, which share a lot of the same underlying causes.

It's a universal problem. But the form it takes depends on the neighborhoods we're talking about. That suggests the potential value of universal solutions.

These sorts of decision-making programs only take something like 15 to 20 hours to have an impact. Why are we not capturing two or three weeks of every health class in every school across the country, rich neighborhoods, poor neighborhoods, rural neighborhoods, urban neighborhoods, suburban neighborhoods? We can save a bunch of young peoples' lives.

Who do you hope will read this book?

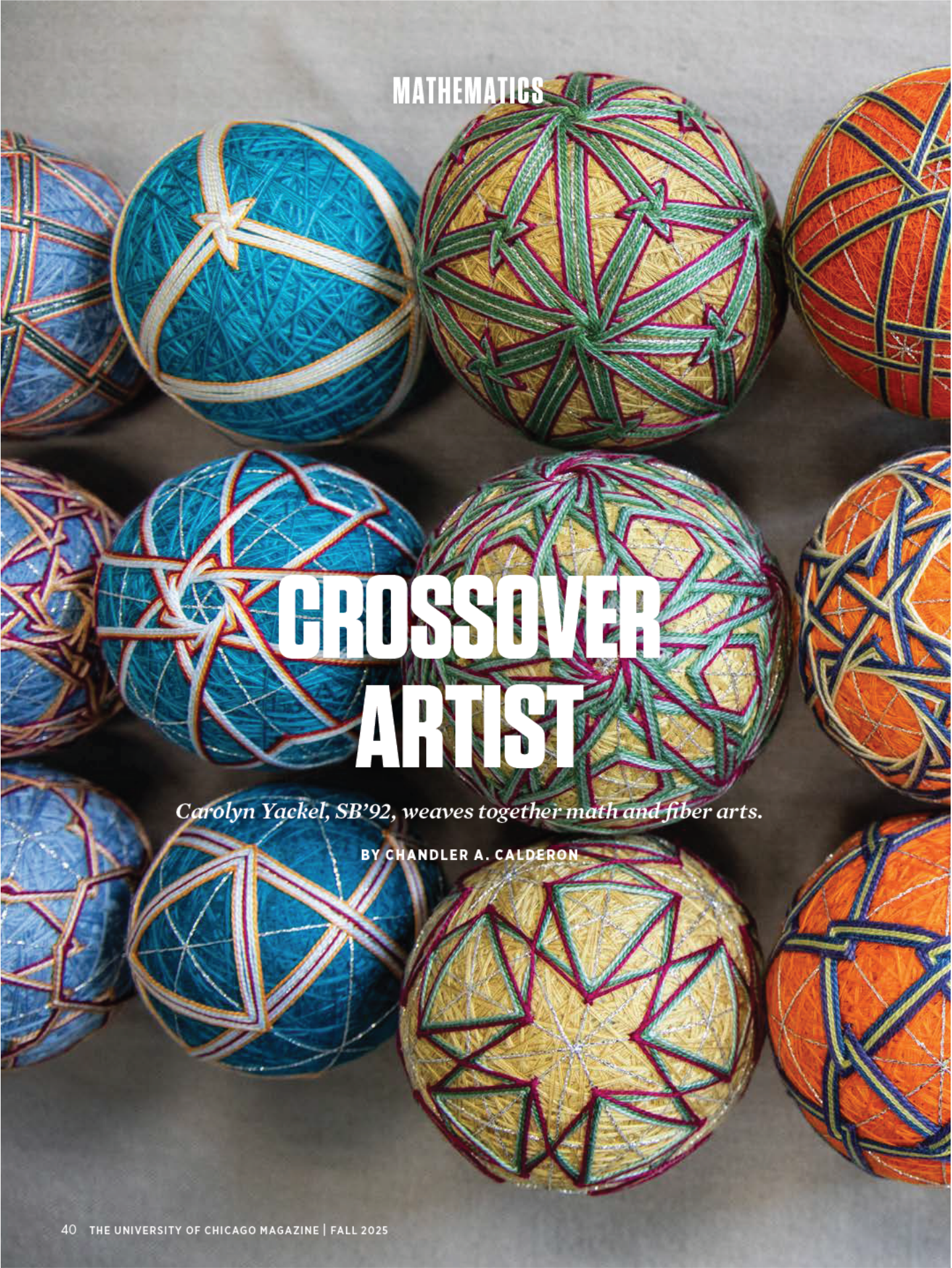
One audience is policymakers. I've been working at the Crime Lab for 18 years now, and I've spent a lot of time talking to people in local, state, and federal government who want to do the right thing and make the world better. They just don't know what the right thing to do is. Very little public policy has any evidence behind it. I hope what this book does, for starters, is communicate that there are a bunch of evidence-based things you can do about one of the most important and seemingly intractable public policy and public health problems in America.

I realize that American politics are complicated in different ways across different places. The right policy in Chicago is different from the right policy in Texas. I do not have an ideological axe to grind. And what I try to say in the book is, Depending on the local politics in your city, here's a menu of things that you can try. I really don't care what you pick. Just please pick something that will save lives. That's the spirit of this work.

The second audience is the public, who could easily be forgiven for concluding that the problem of gun violence in America is hopeless. It's a never-ending stream of heartbreaking stories in the news. I hope the book convinces people that they shouldn't give up. There really is hope. ◆



TO READ MORE, VISIT MAG.UCHICAGO.EDU/LUDWIG.



CROSSOVER ARTIST

Carolyn Yackel, SB'92, weaves together math and fiber arts.

BY CHANDLER A. CALDERON



Photography by Christopher Jan Smith

Carolyn Yackel, SB'92, intricately embroidered *temari* balls to represent each of the 13 Catalan solids three different ways.

Right: Yackel used the *itajime shibori* dye technique to decorate fabrics with different types of symmetry. Below: A professor of mathematics at Mercer University, Yackel brings creative problem-solving to her research and teaching.

I've never been in the fashion show before," says **Carolyn Yackel**, SB'92, flipping through digital photos of herself sporting brightly dyed, handsewn garments—a red pleated skirt, a blue sarong, a pink tunic. She'll get to show off some of these pieces on the runway at the annual Bridges conference for mathematics and the arts.

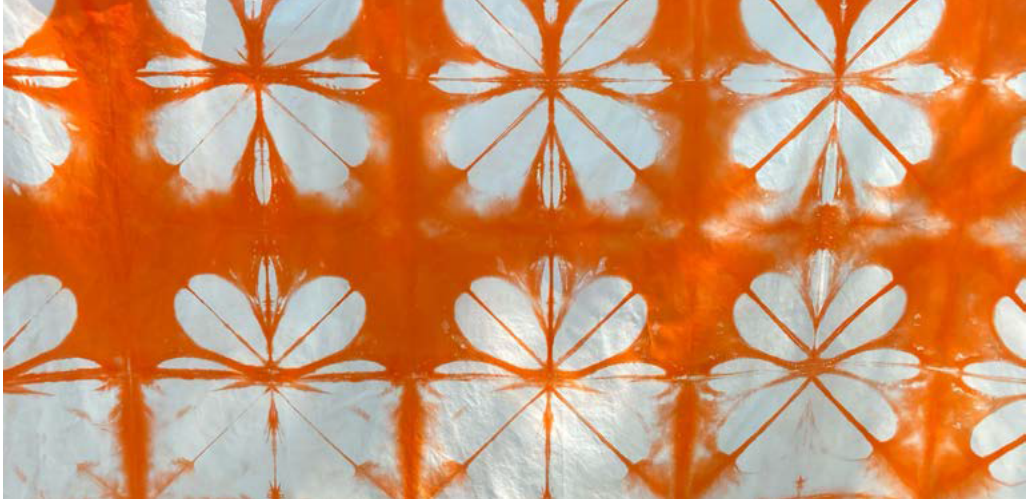
Yackel, a math professor at Mercer University, dyed these fabrics using the Japanese *itajime shibori* technique to reproduce wallpaper groups, a mathematical classification system that describes symmetry patterns. An expert in mathematical art, she works in different fiber arts—*shibori*, *temari*, and knitting among them—exploring mathematical problems through the unique constraints of each craft.

Raised by two mathematicians, Yackel incorporated math into creative play from an early age. And when her grandmother taught her to crochet, she found joy in deciphering complicated instructions and puzzling out how to correct mistakes. She brings this same curiosity to her research today—starting from questions of how and to what extent she can reproduce a mathematical concept in a handicraft.

Her research often revolves around symmetry, which Yackel has been drawn to since childhood: "My mom used to tease me when I was a little kid. Like with blocks, I would always make these really symmetrical arrangements and be like, 'Please come take a picture of this!'"

Yackel is part of a small but passionate mathematical art community. In 2001 she cofounded a knitting circle at the Joint Math Meetings, the American Mathematical Society's major annual conference, where she and her compatriots have now gathered for 25 years. The circle's meetups have led to several special sessions at the Joint Math Meetings as well as a special issue of the *Journal of Mathematics and the Arts* and three books, all of which Yackel coedited. In the books, readers can explore all manner of concept and craft—socks with algebraic structure, group actions in cross-stitch, Gosper-like fractals and intermeshed crochet, tessellations and quilting.





Opposite: Photography by Christopher Ian Smith. This page: Photo courtesy Carolyn Yackel, SB'92.

Next year a new journal dedicated to mathematics and fiber arts, *Interlace*, coedited by Yackel, will publish its first issue, providing another forum for this research. Yackel hopes the open-access journal will make questions at the intersection of math and art accessible to those outside the academic math community, allowing as many people as possible to engage with these new ways of understanding and describing—and creating—the world around us.

It's a mathematical outlook that many share, even if they don't realize it. As Yackel writes in the dedication to her 2008 edited volume, *Making Mathematics with Needlework: Ten Papers and Ten Projects*, "To my grandmothers, who were excellent needleworkers but didn't know they were mathematicians."

Read on to learn how Yackel brings together math and art.

TO MY GRANDMOTHERS, WHO WERE EXCELLENT NEEDLEWORKERS BUT DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE MATHEMATICIANS.

Into the fold

"I dreamt of all the symmetry types I would produce using shibori, even before I had tried the technique," writes Yackel in the introduction to a 2021 paper about reproducing mathematical wallpaper symmetry groups on handkerchiefs through the *shibori* fabric dyeing technique.

For this project, Yackel chose *itajime shibori*, a kind of *shibori* that involves folding fabric and applying "resists" to prevent the dye from penetrating certain areas of the textile. Traditional resists might be made from pieces of wood; in Yackel's case, coins and washers secured with binder clips worked just fine. She wanted to understand how many of the 17 total wallpaper symmetry groups she could re-create with this dye process.

You can think of wallpaper groups as all possible patterns you would get from orienting a patterned tile in different ways across the floor. One, for example, involves simple translation: You keep the tiles oriented the same way as you place them in horizontal and vertical rows. Some wallpaper groups exhibit reflection: The tile is mirrored across a vertical or horizontal axis (or both). And others involve rotational symmetry, or turning your tile by, say, 90 degrees.

Some of the wallpaper groups were immediately out because they can't be reproduced in three-dimensional space (they would require passing a handkerchief through itself). And others, which would require creating cone points, were also impossible without cutting the fabric. Given these constraints, Yackel was able to reproduce seven of the wallpaper groups. The fabric above (out of which Yackel later sewed an apron) has a wallpaper pattern that involves a pattern repeat over an isosceles right triangle, where the pattern reflects across each side of the triangle.

Dualing solids

Temari, a Japanese folk art of intricately embroidered balls, evolved from handmade balls used centuries ago for a game akin to hacky sack. Today the core of the balls is made of scrap fabric or Styrofoam, which is wrapped in fabric batting and then in layers of thread. Guidelines—threads laid down at even distances measured with a





Left: *Temari* balls exhibit spherical symmetry. Center: Two *temari* balls show different ways of representing the same Catalan solid. Right: A knitted wall hanging displays 14 symmetry types.

strip of paper—then set the stage for geometric patterns to be stitched around the ball.

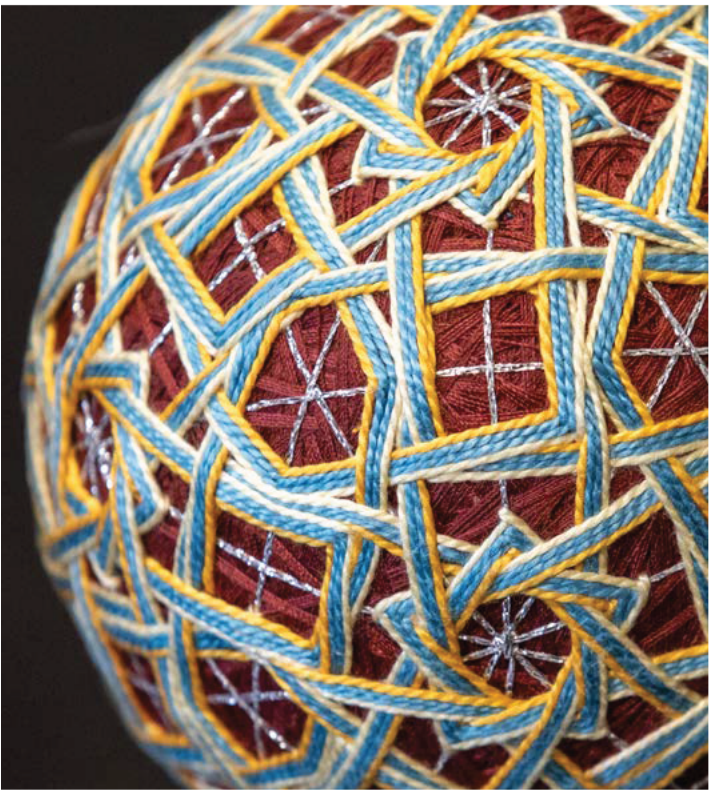
"One of the things that's considered really beautiful about *temari* balls is when you make these symmetric motifs all around the ball. And you just don't have a shot at doing that unless you make some lines on your canvas," says Yackel. For those with a mathematical eye, the guidelines used in *temari* naturally generate Platonic solids. These are five three-dimensional shapes—the tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron, and icosahedron—made of the same regular polygons, which meet at identical angles at the vertices. As you embroider symmetric designs around a *temari* ball, it's common for both a Platonic solid and its dual—a kind of counterpoint shape—to emerge. A solid's vertices correspond to the midpoints of its dual's faces (and vice versa), and the two shapes share the same number of edges: The cube and the octahedron, for example, are duals.

Just as there are 17 wallpaper groups, there are 14 discrete spherical symmetry groups. Yackel and her frequent collaborator sarah-marie belcastro proved that you can represent all of them using *temari* balls (above, left). Six involve dual Platonic solids projected onto the surface of the ball. Seven exhibit frieze patterns—symmetric patterns that repeat in a line, as do many friezes along the roofline of a building—wrapped around the ball. A "bonus ball" features patterns reflected over the edges of an octahedron.

They found that while all spherical symmetry groups were possible in *temari*, this mathematical classification system wasn't a sufficient way to describe the art form: Two balls could exhibit the same symmetry even while representing different solids. As a result of the project, they proposed a more precise classification system for spherical symmetry in *temari*.

Temari, and *temari*, and *temari*

Yackel's latest project involves projecting the 13 Catalan solids onto *temari* balls (above, center). Catalan solids are the duals of Archimedean solids (on which the same number of regular polygon faces meet at each vertex; unlike Platonic solids, the faces of Archimedean solids do not need to be the same shape). This work started as part of *Mathemalchemy*, a traveling exhibition of whimsical math-related art—including a cryptographic quilt, a knit tortoise with heptagonal tiling on its ceramic shell, and a cat serving pi-shaped cookies—created by a team of 24 mathematicians and artists. For the exhibition, Yackel designed two





Opposite and above, left: Photography by Christopher Ian Smith. Above, right: Photo courtesy Carolyn Yackel, *SB92*.

giant arches made of more than 120 *temari* balls, some of them embroidered with Catalan solids.

Since working on *Mathemalchemy*, Yackel has expanded her treatment of Catalan solids on *temari* balls, creating three balls to depict each solid, each using a different stitch pattern. On one ball she outlines each edge of the solid; on the next she outlines each face; and on the last she connects the midpoints of the edges. The third technique has produced some weird results, especially because choosing to make a stitch on one side of a piece of thread versus the other side can completely throw off the ball's symmetry. Some of these balls have turned out a little chaotic from an artistic perspective, Yackel admits, but they are perhaps even more mathematically interesting: In connecting the midpoints of edges, she has created some truncated solids—what you get when you chop off the points of a Catalan solid—generating a new set of faces.

Spin a yarn

There are multiple ways to create colorful patterns with knitting. Stranded color work, also called Fair Isle knitting, involves working multiple colors within the same row, and carrying the yarn not in use across the back of the work—these strands are called floats. If not "caught" properly—tacked down by your working yarn every few stitches—you can end up with a floppy mess on the back of your sweater.

A color work technique called mosaic knitting avoids this unfortunate situation. Mosaic knitting involves working one yarn color per row, using slipped stitches to pull a color up from one row to the next. You end up with colorful patterns on the front of your work (the right side), and a neat wrong side with fewer floats.

Yackel and her collaborator Susan Goldstine set out to make mosaic knitting not only neat but also symmetrical. One thing they wanted to know was if they could reproduce all 17 two-color frieze symmetries. But they found that the rows of alternating working color and slipped stitches that characterize mosaic knitting introduced some complications.

Three of the frieze symmetries proved impossible to produce with mosaic knitting, either because the slipped-stitch technique constrains how colors stack on top of one another or because they would require some stitches to be two colors at once. The wall hanging *Float Free, Bumblebee* (above, right), which Goldstine knitted, exhibits the 14 attainable two-color frieze symmetries. ◆



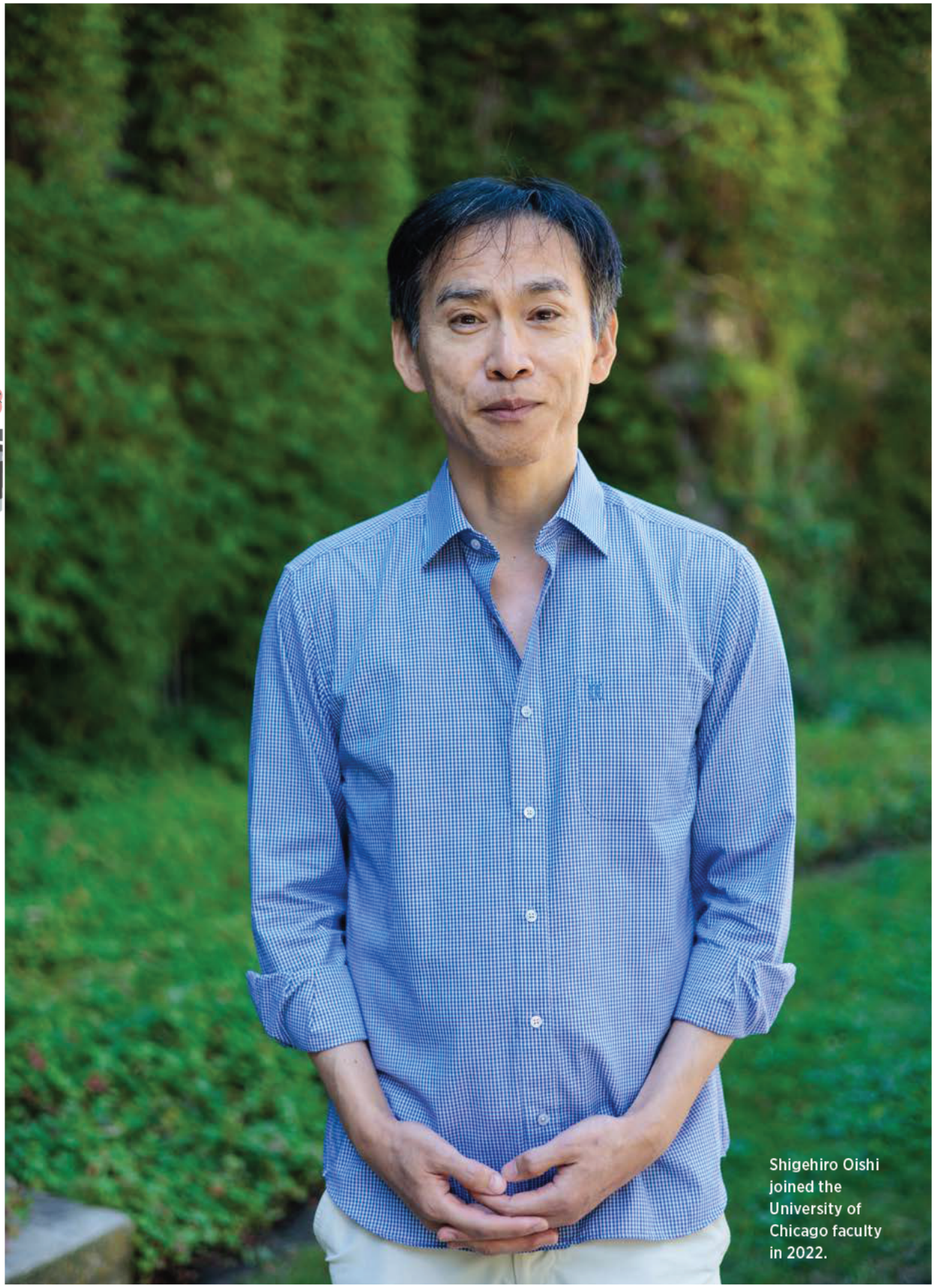
SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

Beyond seeking pleasure or meaning, the writer argues, a third path to a good life is to embrace its complexity.

BY SHIGEHIRO OISHI

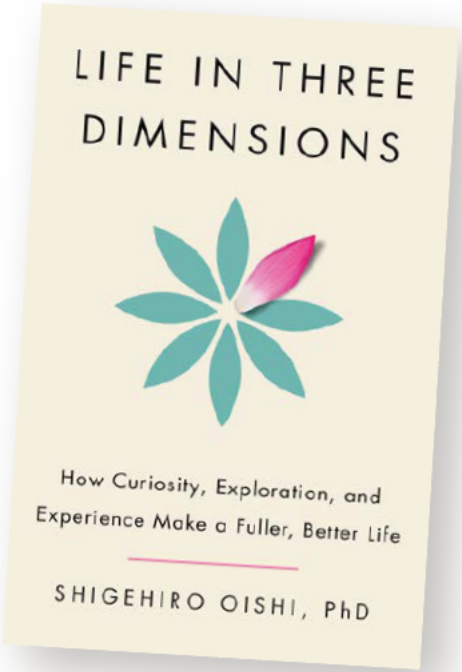
What do we mean when we talk about a good life? **Shigehiro Oishi**, *the Marshall Field IV Professor in the Department of Psychology and the College, has centered his career on understanding human well-being, including what factors predict a happy life and what benefits follow. In his most recent book,* Life in Three Dimensions: How Curiosity, Exploration, and Experience Make a Fuller, Better Life *(Penguin Random House, 2025), excerpted here, Oishi proposes a psychologically rich life as one worth pursuing.*—L. D.

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Shigehiro Oishi joined the University of Chicago faculty in 2022.

Photography by John Zich



Yoshi was born in a small mountain town on the island of Kyushu, Japan, known for its green tea and clementines. Like his father, grandfather, and every male ancestor before him, Yoshi has lived his entire life there, cultivating rice and tea. He chose this path after just a year of agricultural high school, when he dropped out to become a farmer. At the age of twenty-seven, Yoshi married a woman from a neighboring town and had three children. He played in a neighborhood softball league into his fifties and enjoyed annual neighborhood association trips to various hot springs. He still lives in the same town; he still has the same wife; and he still has the same close friends he has known since elementary school. In making these choices, Yoshi followed the path laid out by his ancestors, connecting with them through common threads of not just blood, but occupation, place, expectations, and way of life.

Yoshi is my father, and I am his son a world away. After my eighteenth birthday, it took me exactly eighteen days to leave our small town for college in Tokyo. In my fourth year of college, I got a scholarship from Rotary International to study abroad in Maine. Before I started the program in Maine, I attended a summer English program on Staten Island in New York City. I had just broken up with my girlfriend in Tokyo and was tired of being in a relationship. I simply wanted to improve my English. Yet, I met a student from Korea and fell in love. She was about to start graduate school in Boston. I was about to start a year in Lewiston, Maine. During the 1991–1992 academic year, I took a Greyhound bus to Boston to see her every weekend. In May, I had to go back to Tokyo. Though my career plan before studying abroad was to work for the Ministry of Education in Japan, and I hadn't had any intention of attending graduate school in the U.S., by then I was determined to come back. In June 1993, after graduation, I left Japan for good. Next were stops of varying lengths in New York City; Champaign, Illinois; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Charlottesville, Virginia, before moving onward to Chicago. Along the way, I married the Korean woman I met on Staten Island and we had two children, born in two different cities. I have not seen any of my elementary school friends in years.

Three decades after leaving my hometown, as I get older and try to maintain what remains of our family connection, I often find myself wondering how my life could have diverged from my father's to such an extraordinary extent. I wonder why he didn't move away when he had the chance, and why, in contrast, I have moved so many times.



MY FATHER'S LIFE HAS BEEN STABLE, FAMILIAR, AND COMFORTABLE.

My father's life has been stable, familiar, and comfortable. An annual cherry blossom party in spring, the Obon dance festival in summer, a foliage tour in fall, and hot springs in winter. It's a cozy life, a good life. My life, on the other hand, has been far less stable, far less familiar, and far more stressful with constant deadlines for lecturing, grading, and writing mixed with countless rejections (e.g., grants, papers, book proposals, job applications). Though I love my job most days, I do envy my father's simple, convivial life sometimes; I wish I could spend an evening drinking sake with my old friends every week, reminiscing about our school days and talking about life on the farm. But in my most honest moments, I know that I could not have lived like this: I had an intense yearning to see the outside world, too intense to follow the well-trodden life path of my ancestors.

I think back to when I was graduating high school, when I was faced with the question framed in the immortal words of The Clash: "Should I stay or should I go?" It was easy, then. Just go. As I get older, though, it has become more and more difficult. This question has been at the center of both my personal life and my academic research for decades. I imagine most of you have also asked yourselves that very same question, not just once or twice, but many times over. Some of you might be like my father: loyal, prudent, and nostalgic, prioritizing a stable life. Others may be more like me: impressionable, whimsical, and risk-taking, embracing an adventurous life. There are, of course, trade-offs between a stable life and a mobile life, a simple life and a dramatic life, a comfortable life and a challenging life, a conventional life and an unconventional life. But which one gets us closer to a *good* life?

MY LIFE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS BEEN FAR LESS STABLE, FAR LESS FAMILIAR, AND FAR MORE STRESSFUL.

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Ed Diener, my graduate school advisor, was one of the first researchers to study happiness. He published a paper entitled "Subjective Well-Being" in 1984. Ed and his students, such as Randy Larsen and Bob Emmons, went on to publish a series of papers on subjective well-being throughout the 1980s, legitimizing the scientific study of happiness within psychology. Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi [AB'60, PhD'65] then built and popularized positive psychology based on the study of happiness as well as other related topics like hope, optimism, and flow.

Then, in 1989, Carol Ryff published a paper entitled "Happiness Is Everything, or Is It?," presenting an alternative model of a good life that focused on autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose, positive relations, environmental mastery, and personal growth. Along with Ed Deci and Richard Ryan's self-determination theory, Ryff's approach to the good life has come to be called the "eudaimonic approach"—a meaningful life, in short—in contrast to Ed Diener, Daniel Kahneman, Dan Gilbert, Sonja Lyubomirsky, and others' approach to the good life, which has come to be called the "hedonic approach"—a happy life.

Over the last two decades, well-being researchers have debated the relative importance of hedonic vs. eudaimonic well-being. For example, people who say their lives are easy tend also to say they are happy, but don't necessarily say their lives are meaningful. Workers are happier during a break than during work. However, they feel more engaged during the work than during the break. Some researchers even claimed to have found different epigenetic patterns between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, suggesting that our very genes are expressed differently.

OTHERS ARGUE THAT BOTH HAPPINESS AND MEANING IN LIFE ARE SO IMPORTANT THAT THERE IS NO POINT DEBATING WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT.

However, other researchers found that almost all people who say they are happy tend to also say that their lives are meaningful, and vice versa. The overlap between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being is so great that some researchers argue that they are virtually the same thing. Others argue that both happiness and meaning in life are so important that there is no point debating which is more important.

My own take is that happiness and meaning are both important. But they do not capture an adventurous, unconventional, and dramatic life. So psychologists have never had the adequate vocabulary to describe such a life. In a way, the happiness vs. meaning debates parallel debates in psychology over the most important factor in predicting intelligence: nature (genetics) or nurture (environment). In the end, both nature and nurture are important. Then Carol Dweck proposed and popularized a third idea: the growth mindset. How we think about our intelligence—specifically, whether we believe that intelligence can be improved—is also important in predicting intelligence and human performance, she showed.

Over dinner one day, my wife asked me if I could fix the broken window sash cords in our living room (our late-nineteenth-century Victorian house had original double-hung windows that still operated with sash cords). I answered, "We should just hire someone. I'm not handy." Our second son, who was in middle school, immediately responded, "Dad, that's a fixed mindset! You can get better!" It turned out he had just learned about Dweck's growth mindset in school. My son's suggestion motivated me to fix the window and become a better handyman, a small example of how concepts like growth mindsets broaden the way we think about the self, others, and the world. Just as the growth mindset revealed a new dimension of human intelligence and ability, I hope that psychological richness can reveal a new dimension of a good life.

How, then, is psychological richness different from happiness and meaning? The main body of my book answers this question in detail. But, very briefly, happiness is a subjective feeling that rises



A PSYCHOLOGICALLY RICH LIFE IS NOT FOR EVERYONE. IT SUITS THE CURIOUS MORE THAN THE CONTENT.

and falls to indicate where one's life stands. It is a bit like a balloon. With the right wind and air pressure, it floats high. Smooth sailing. Life is going well. But when the weather is bad, it deflates. Grounded and stuck. Life is not going well. In another sense, happiness is like your batting average in baseball. It goes up and down, but what matters most is the frequency of your hits. An infield hit is as worthy as a huge home run when it comes to the batting average. You should aim for as many hits as possible. In other words, frequent small, pleasant social interactions add up to long-term happiness more quickly than occasional big promotions.

The snag is that happiness—like the batting average—changes over time; one season you hit well; another season not so well. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James declared, "To begin with, how *can* things so insecure as the successful experiences of this world afford a stable anchorage? A chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and life is after all a chain. In the healthiest and most prosperous existence, how many links of illness, danger, and disaster are always interposed?" So it goes. The fragility of happiness.

Meaning in life, on the other hand, boils down to whether your life has a "point." When you're devoted to making a difference in the world, your life certainly has a point. You see the fruits of your labor, your legacy. There is a reason for your existence. But when your efforts are not making a clear difference, it is harder to see the point of your life. The Scottish singer-songwriter Lewis Capaldi sang in the song "Pointless": "Of all the dreams I'm chasing … Everything is pointless without you." Imagine that he broke up with this woman. His dedication would be wasted, and his life would feel pointless.

Tolstoy was happy and productive. Yet, without any obvious loss, he had a sudden existential crisis at about the age of fifty (years after the publication of *War and Peace*): "I had a good wife who loved me and whom I loved; good children and a large property which was increasing with no pains taken on my part. I was more respected by my kinsfolk and acquaintance than I had ever been; I was loaded with praise by strangers; and without exaggeration I could believe my name already famous. … And yet I could give no reasonable meaning to any actions of my life." So it goes. The precariousness of meaning.

Psychological richness is different from happiness and meaning in the sense that it is not about an overall feeling of where life is going or what the point of your life is, but about an experience, or more precisely the *accumulation* of experiences over time. In the same way that material richness can be quantified by money—the more money you have, the richer you are materially—psychological richness can be quantified by experiences. The more interesting experiences and stories you have, the more psychologically rich you are. Just as you can accumulate wealth and become materially rich, you can accumulate experiences and become psychologically rich. If happiness is like the batting average that changes with every game, psychological richness is more like the total number of career home runs: it adds up.

A psychologically rich life is not for everyone. It suits the curious more than the content. The comfort and security of a happy or meaningful life provide a safety net that a psychologically rich life, with all its unknowns, often lacks. Yet the paradox of happiness and meaning is that the complacency they foster *can* make for an incomplete life with major regrets, doubts, and unanswered questions. Thankfully, our lives are not zero-sum games in which we must choose a single path to a good life; some people lead happy, meaningful, *and* psychologically rich lives. Therefore, anyone can benefit from the lessons of psychological richness research. By reminding ourselves that what counts is not just the destination but also the journey, we learn to find value in seeking new experiences and new knowledge, hopefully leading to a life without regrets, or at least fewer regrets. ◆



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From the book: *LIFE IN THREE DIMENSIONS: How Curiosity, Exploration, and Experience Make a Fuller, Better Life* by Shigehiro Oishi, PhD. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday, an imprint of The Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. **Copyright © 2025 by Shigehiro Oishi.**

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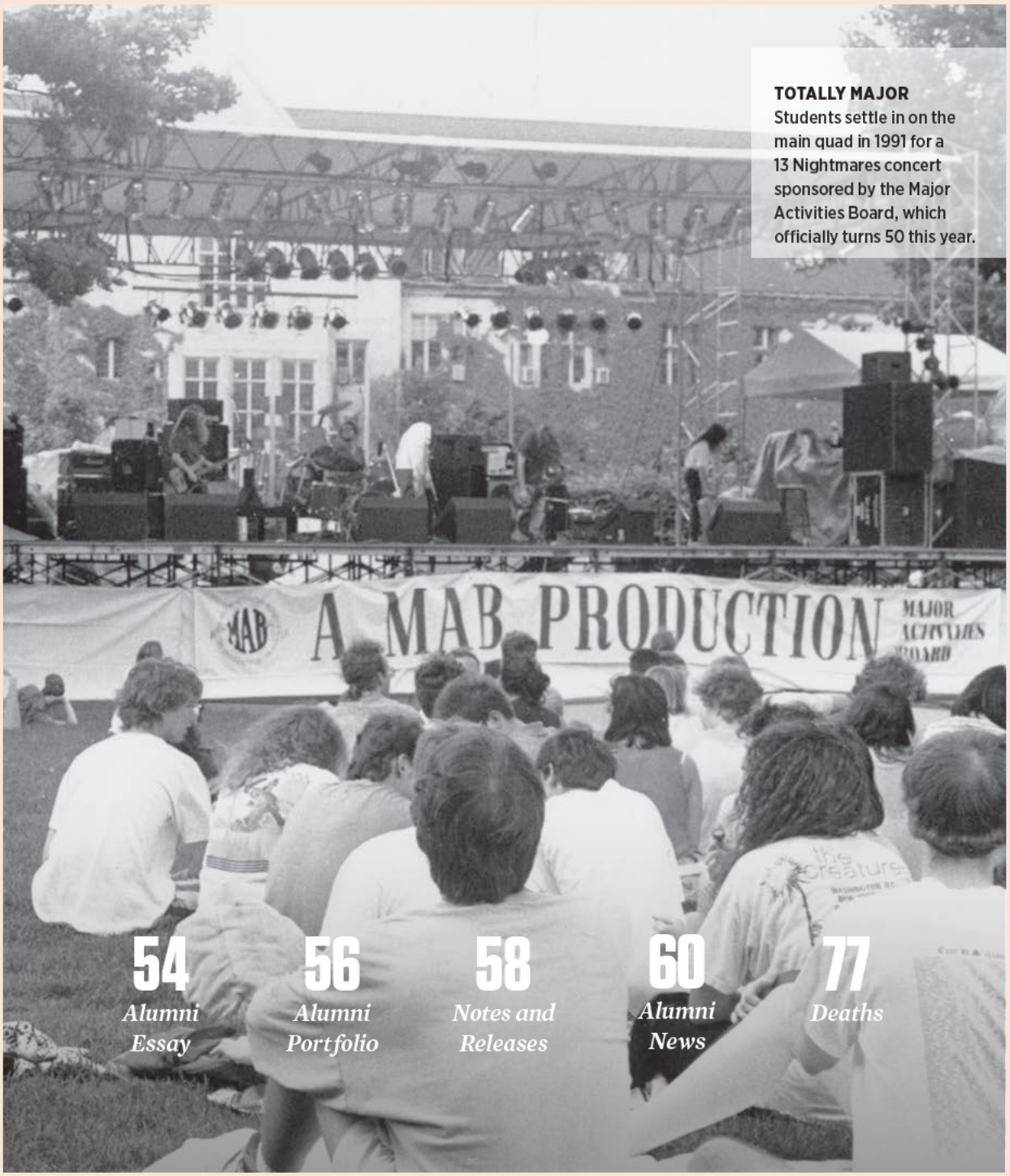
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PEER REVIEW

WHAT ALUMNI ARE THINKING AND DOING



TOTALLY MAJOR
Students settle in on the main quad in 1991 for a 13 Nightmares concert sponsored by the Major Activities Board, which officially turns 50 this year.

54 *Alumni Essay*

56 *Alumni Portfolio*

58 *Notes and Releases*

60 *Alumni News*

77 *Deaths*

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LIFE AS A TEAM SPORT

An alumna reflects on her husband's legacy and the community he created.

BY MADELINE DE FIGUEIREDO, AB'19

I am not sure whether my competitive spirit came from nature or nurture.

My parents often recount a story from when I was about six years old and my grandmother mercilessly beat me in a game of Scrabble, scoffing at my three-letter words that came exclusively from *Henry and Mudge* books (I was a late reader). Besides having decades of literacy on me and a graduate degree from Oxford, my grandmother always played to win. So perhaps nurture?

Around the same age, I tried out for a YMCA swim team that I was entirely unqualified to join. To make the junior team, I had to successfully swim freestyle for 250 yards. I remember the burning in my lungs as I fought to stay afloat, my legs stubbornly sinking as I passed the 100-yard mark. I was the slowest kid at tryouts—by far—but my instinct to fight until the end blinded me. I made the team. So perhaps nature?

Wherever the competitive spirit came from, it came on strong. It fueled my persistent race to climb higher, seek more, and find my self-worth at elevation. I traded family movie nights for study sessions in high school, scheduled early meetings over breakfast in college, and always cared more about the destination than the journey (and resented any suggestion to do otherwise).

As I grew up and learned more, I grasped the ways in which my ambition was inevitably tethered to a capitalist and deeply American mindset that centered narratives of individualism and accumulation. After all, I was reading Karl Marx, Frantz Fanon, Simone de Beauvoir, and W. E. B. Du Bois in my SOSC classes at the University. But my growing awareness did embarrassingly little to quell my impulse to chase the high of traditional success in the *Lean In* era.



He pushed me to question my assumptions, to interrogate my beliefs, and to think more deeply about who I was and how I wanted to grow.

But just as my peers were beginning their ascents up glamorous corporate ladders, collecting acceptances to prestigious graduate schools, and packing their bags for fancy fellowships abroad in our postgraduation lives, I found myself in completely uncharted territory: At 24, I became widowed.

Let me rewind.

When I was attending the University of Chicago, I met Eli Alperin, AB'19, a fellow student who cracked my world open in a way I had never experienced. Eli and I met on the first night of Orientation Week, thrown together in a house icebreaker group. We connected right away, and our friendship quickly took root, eventually growing into a relationship during our second year.

From the start, Eli challenged me. He pushed me to question my assumptions, to interrogate my beliefs, and to think more deeply about who I was and how I wanted to grow. I found his persistent questions annoying and sometimes offensive. At the same time, he believed in me with a strong, steady conviction I didn't always understand—and that faith anchored me to the wobbly world.

In so many ways, Eli was my foil. Where I clung to self-reliance, determined to solve all my own problems, Eli asked for help. While I prioritized self-preservation, Eli lived by a fierce commitment to mutual care. When I hesitated, taking stock of our resources, Eli gave, instinctively and without calculation. He eagerly built his life in community—find-

Photo courtesy Madeline de Figueiredo, AB'19



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ing his path as a social worker, being an always friendly neighbor, and never letting a phone call go unanswered.

Eli showed me the magic of practicing care and solidarity in concert with a community. He stayed up late cooking meals for his clients, joyfully hosted an endless stream of friends and family, and drove our neighbors' kids to soccer practices and games in Jackson Park when their parents worked on weekends—always packing extra orange slices and cheering from the sidelines.

As we wrapped our identities and futures around one another, eventually getting married a few months into the COVID-19 pandemic, I had to cede some of my stubborn individualism and determination. But it wasn't until Eli died in an accident at age 25 that I understood the true magic that he'd kindled in all the spaces he traversed.

After Eli died, I could not bear returning to the apartment we shared, so I spent nearly eight months couch surfing. The parents of the children Eli once shuttled to soccer games now helped me edit a eulogy, clients he'd brought food to now sent me freshly baked date cookies and bread—not just once, but weekly—and all the people we'd hosted now put fresh sheets on their guest beds for me as I wandered the world without a place to call home.

I was held, fed, and cared for by a team of people so vast that I realized my survival was not my own: It was a collective survival. A survival that Eli had built in his life and that this community fostered in his death.

I wish he could have seen it, but I know this is what he believed in all along.

It's now been a decade since I began my undergraduate studies at UChicago and nearly four years since Eli died. Both my 18-year-old self and 24-year-old self would be profoundly puzzled by the shape of my life today.

My life is no longer just my own. It's built around my team—the people I care for, support, and move through each day with. The choices I make now are grounded in the reality that nothing is certain, that the next moment isn't guaranteed. They are grounded in a world where perhaps what I need more than any promise of success is the promise of survival.

Winning means something entirely different to me these days. Winning means gathering mismatched chairs from around my home to make space for others at a crowded dinner table. Winning is the quiet hope of growing old in the company of people I love. Winning is bearing witness to the joys and sorrows that each day brings. And above all, winning is showing up, day after day, to be there for my team.

Even now, Eli is a part of that team. His memory and legacy continue to challenge me, teach me, and show me just how expansive and extraordinary life can be—even when I have my doubts. ◆

Madeline de Figueiredo, AB'19, is a writer and journalist in Austin, Texas. Her work can be found in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Slate*, *The Boston Globe*, and elsewhere.

ANIMAL ARCHIVE

Meredith Miller, AB'98, combines archival materials and everyday objects to rethink our relationship with endangered species.



***The Tigers Are Burning,* 2024. Archival inkjet print with pen, marker, and pastel, 16 × 20 in.**

As a senior photographer at Yale's Beinecke Library, **Meredith Miller**, AB'98, has taken hundreds of thousands of photographs of archival materials. Working quickly, she often doesn't know much about the pieces' history. Instead she gets to know each object "through its physicality," she says.

As she turned the pages she was photographing, she started to notice the way illustrations remained visible through the backs of the pages. Long preoccupied by the precarity of endangered species, Miller was especially moved by the shadowy reverse images of animals, which she came to see as ghosts of disappearing species.

Such materials became the basis for the still-life series *Dreaming Animals*, begun in 2020. Each photograph highlights one species and is paired with a poem by Miller's Beinecke colleague MJ Millington. Miller's most recent work, *The Tigers Are Burning* (2024), the companion to Millington's "What Dread Hand," draws on the collection of Yale's Peabody Museum, including the images of a Chinese woodblock calendar that line the background.

The way most of us interact with endangered



species, Miller notes, is through objects, often toys. She has incorporated game elements throughout the series to comment on this commodification of the natural world. In *The Tigers Are Burning*—the work's name borrowed, like the others in *Dreaming Animals*, from a board game—checkered cards litter the ground; an aloe plant holds a wooden snake and an eye Miller's dog ripped from a stuffed toy; a plastic toy found on a beach stalks in the foreground. Like paper dolls, the paper tigers stand on folded tab feet among tufts of tissue paper.

After photographing the composition, which she set up on a corner of her kitchen counter, Miller experimented with color, drawing over the image with pastels. The hues she ultimately chose for *The Tigers Are Burning* stand out among the 16 other photographs that currently make up *Dreaming Animals*. She added shocks of red, orange, and yellow: a fire in the foreground, representing our present, against a background of ash—the future.—*C. C.* ◆

HEAR MJ MILLINGTON'S POEM "WHAT DREAD HAND" AT MAG.UCHICAGO.EDU/ANIMALARCHIVE.

NOTES

A SELECTION OF ALUMNI WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE NEWS

FINANCE FILM

The documentary *Tune Out the Noise* (2023), released on YouTube this March, follows a group who met at the University of Chicago and developed the science of data-driven investing. With this approach, they went on to found the investment firm Dimensional Fund Advisors. Directed by Academy Award–winning documentarian Errol Morris, the film features Nobel laureates **Eugene Fama**, MBA'63, PhD'64, the Robert R. McCormick Distinguished Service Professor of Finance at Chicago Booth, and **Myron Scholes**, MBA'64, PhD'70; Trustee Emeritus **David Booth**, MBA'71; **Rex Sinquefield**, MBA'72; **Jeanne Sinquefield**, AM'71, PhD'72, MBA'79; and **Roger Ibbotson**, PhD'74. Produced by Fourth Floor Productions and Moxie Pictures, *Tune Out the Noise* won the 2023 Los Angeles Documentary Film Festival's DOC LA Cinephile Award and the 2023 Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival Award for Best Feature Documentary.

BEARD WINNERS

Nicola Twilley, AM'01, and **Ian Urbina**, AM'97, were each honored with a 2025 James Beard Media Award. The awards recognize excellence in food- and drink-related writing and broadcast media. Twilley won the Literary Writing prize for her book *Frostbite: How Refrigeration Changed Our Food, Our Planet, and Ourselves* (Penguin Press, 2024), a chronicle of the history and present-day challenge of keeping food cold. Urbina was recognized alongside the staff of the Outlaw Ocean Project—a nonprofit journalism organization focusing on human rights and environmental issues in maritime industries, which he founded and directs—for two articles highlighting labor abuse in the seafood industry.

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

Carla D. Hayden, AM'77, PhD'87, has been appointed a senior fellow at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In this yearlong role, she will conduct research and advise the foundation's leadership on strengthening support for libraries and other public knowledge institutions. From 2016 to 2025 Hayden served as the 14th Librarian of Congress, expanding digital initiatives and broadening public engagement. Prior to that she led Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library system for 23 years and served as president of the American Library Association from 2003 to 2004.



A STORIED LEGACY

South Side historian Timuel Black, AM'54, has been inducted into the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame. Born in Alabama and raised in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood, Black taught high school and led the Chicago chapter of the Negro American Labor Council, helping organize the city's participation in the 1963 March on Washington. He was an early supporter of Harold Washington, Chicago's first Black mayor; advised Barack Obama on South Side politics before his first run for office; and fought against discriminatory voting practices in the 2000 presidential election. His oral history *Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Black Migration* (Northwestern University Press, 2003) collects interviews with Black Chicagoans who fled Jim Crow segregation in the South, while his memoir *Sacred Ground: The Chicago Streets of Timuel Black* (Northwestern University Press, 2019) recounts his life as an educator and activist. Black died in 2021 at the age of 102.

VETERAN VIM

Three alumnae were named to *Forbes*'s 50 Over 50, the magazine's list of women business owners, investors, entrepreneurs, artists, and cultural leaders at the height of their careers. On the Investment list, **Sheffali Welch**, AB'94, was recognized for her leadership at the Clearing House, a banking association and payments company, and **Karen Kerr**, PhD'95, was honored for founding the investment firm Exposition Ventures. On the Lifestyle list, **Katherine E. Fleming**, AM'89, president and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust, was cited for protecting the Getty Villa during the Palisades wildfire in Los Angeles and launching a relief fund for artists and cultural workers affected by the fires.

RUNNING STAR

Rob Gagliardi, AB'99, earned the Abbott World Marathon Majors Six Star Medal after completing the Tokyo Marathon in March in just over three hours. The medal is awarded to those who complete the original six major marathons, held in Tokyo, Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago, and New York. The Tokyo Marathon, held annually since 2007, had over 36,000 finishers this year, only about a quarter of whom completed the race in under four hours. Gagliardi completed all six Majors in four years, starting with the Chicago Marathon in 2021.—*C. F.* and *C. C.*

Photography by Robert Kozloff

RELEASES

ALUMNI BOOKS, FILMS, AND RECORDINGS



WOMEN AND THE JET AGE: A GLOBAL HISTORY OF AVIATION AND FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

By Phil Tiemeyer, AM'01; Cornell University Press, 2025

Histories of the jet age have tended to focus on the United States and Western Europe, writes **Phil Tiemeyer**, but the rise of commercial aviation during the Cold War decades was a global phenomenon. Tiemeyer explores the impacts of this new industry in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in the Soviet Union and the Global South. Taking Yugoslavia and Jamaica as case studies, he argues that countries used commercial aviation to assert themselves on the international stage as cosmopolitan and modern. The women who served as flight attendants, in particular, had a major role to play in determining how their home country was perceived abroad. Tiemeyer analyzes the complex position they navigated as informal ambassadors of their countries.

MOONRISING

By Claire Barner, AB'08, MAT'09; Diversion Books, 2025

Billie Eilish has announced her farewell tour, self-driving cars buzz around Chicago, climate refugees shelter in Hyde Park, and the United Arab Emirates just invested $1 billion in a lunar colony. In this near-future sci-fi debut novel, **Claire Barner** introduces agronomist Alex Cole, who is developing controversial "mutagenetic" food. With funding for her lab drying up, Alex moves to the moon to engineer a sustainable food source for a lunar hotel. She comes to love life on the moon and falls for the hotel owner, Mansoor. But as tensions rise due to political fights on Earth and ecoterrorist threats to the colony, her values are put to the test.

MAGIC'S TRANSLATIONS: REALITY POLITICS IN COLONIAL INDONESIA

By Margaret J. Wiener, PhD'90; Duke University Press, 2025

Far from being a universal concept, magic, argues anthropologist **Margaret J. Wiener**, was an idea that European colonizers brought around the world. It became a useful tool to draw lines between Europeans and colonial subjects, contrasting "real" European ideology with magical thinking. Wiener focuses on magic's role in the Dutch East Indies—present-day Indonesia—where, she says, the concept was imported by Dutch colonizers. Wiener explores how magic changes as it is carried through space and time: What is absorbed under its umbrella and what, in contrast, comes to be defined as real?

TRADE IN WAR: ECONOMIC COOPERATION ACROSS ENEMY LINES

Mariya Grinberg, AM'13, PhD'19; Cornell University Press, 2025

People commonly assume that economic interdependence between countries will deter war. Historically, however, this has not been the case. In fact, states at war often continue trading with one another. **Mariya Grinberg** studies this phenomenon in wars throughout the 20th century, exploring how governments balance the short-term demands of conflict with the long-term need to ensure economic stability. She finds that states at war have set trade policies on a product-by-product basis in response to the projected duration of the conflict, continuing trade in goods they do not believe will give military benefit to the other side and pausing trade in goods that could contribute to the war effort.

PSYCHEDELICS IN PALLIATIVE CARE

Edited by Marcia Glass, AB'98; Oxford University Press, 2025

Psychedelics have shown promise in the treatment of addiction and chronic and terminal illnesses. Editor **Marcia Glass**, a professor of medicine at Tulane University, brings together diverse perspectives from physicians, therapists, researchers, spiritual guides, and entrepreneurs. In each chapter the contributors break down the origins, political and cultural context, legal status, and bodily effects of a major psychedelic—including psilocybin, LSD, ketamine, and ayahuasca. The book offers insight into the substances' potential use in new avenues of treatment in palliative care.—*C. C.*

ALUMNI NEWS

FROM THE CLASSES, SCHOOLS, AND DIVISIONS

To protect the privacy of our alumni, we have removed the class notes from this section. If you are an alumnus of the University and would like class notes from our archives, please email uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.

What's new? We are always eager to receive your news, care of the Alumni News Editor, *The University of Chicago Magazine*, 5235 South Harper Court, Chicago, IL 60615, or by email: uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. No engagements, please. Items may be edited for space, clarity, civility, and style. As news is published in the order in which it arrives, it may not appear immediately. We list news from all former undergraduates (including those with UChicago graduate degrees) by the year of their undergraduate affiliation. All former students who received only graduate degrees are listed in the advanced degrees section.



Race to the bottom: Held annually between 1910 and 1940 (and several times in years since), the Mustache Race was a roughly monthlong competition between senior men to see who could grow and maintain the University's most magnificent set of whiskers. Originating from an informal senior tradition requiring all men to grow out their facial hair, the Mustache Race eventually became an institutional event held under the auspices of Blackfriars, the men's musical theater club. Contestants were judged by select women students and the campus barber for excellence in "mustachery." Winners were awarded prizes and featured in the *Maroon*; losers (as shown here in 1935) were thrown into Botany Pond. (Though winners occasionally found themselves "ignominiously propelled into the murky waters of the botany pond" too, as the *Maroon* described the 1934 event.) After petering out in the late 1940s, the race has been revived multiple times, with varying degrees of success. Did you participate? (More importantly, did you win?) Share your story at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. (UChicago Photographic Archive, apf4-02787, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library)

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Work studies: In this 1956 photograph, Elin (Ballantyne) Christianson, AB'58, AM'61, pours a cup of coffee for English professor Mark Ashin, AB'37, AM'38, PhD'50, in Green Hall's dining room. Green Hall opened in 1899, connecting the two original women's dormitories, Kelly and Beecher Halls, which, with Foster Hall, had opened in 1893. Today Kelly, Beecher, and Green Halls anchor the east side of the Social Sciences Quadrangle and house the Department of Psychology. Did you live, work, or eat in Green Hall? What was the best meal you had there? Send your memories to uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. (Photography by William M. Rittase; UChicago Photographic Archive, apf4-02841, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library)



Day of Reg-oning: Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a cement mixer? The latter could be correct in this 1968 snapshot of builders at work on the University's key construction project of the era: The Reg. Named for industrialist Joseph Regenstein, the Regenstein Library shook up the look of campus with its rough, brutalist style when it was finished in 1970—though architect Walter Netsch declared it to be "more gothic" than other University buildings. How did the Reg change your time on campus? Share your memories with us at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. (Photography by David Travis, AB'71; Copyright 2025, *The Chicago Maroon.* All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.)



One student's University: In June 1974 this magazine ran a story by Frank Gruber, AB'74, on University life and culture, titled "One Student's University." A photographer with *The Chicago Maroon*, Gruber chose representative photos of campus life to go with the story, including this one of a percussion concert on the main quad in celebration of Malcolm X's birthday. Other photos show a group of rugby players, a parade for the rededication of Harper Memorial Library, and one of Gruber's roommates washing dishes. In his story, Gruber describes how he and his friends explore Chicagoland, direct and screen original films, and put on jazz concerts for the community. He notes that arranging the concerts was "very stimulating," though they "also lost a fair amount of the University's money"—especially during a weekend when "the temperature was minus twenty." Have any photos of your University experience? Share them at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. (Photography by Frank Gruber, AB'74; UChicago Photographic Archive, apf4-04055, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library)



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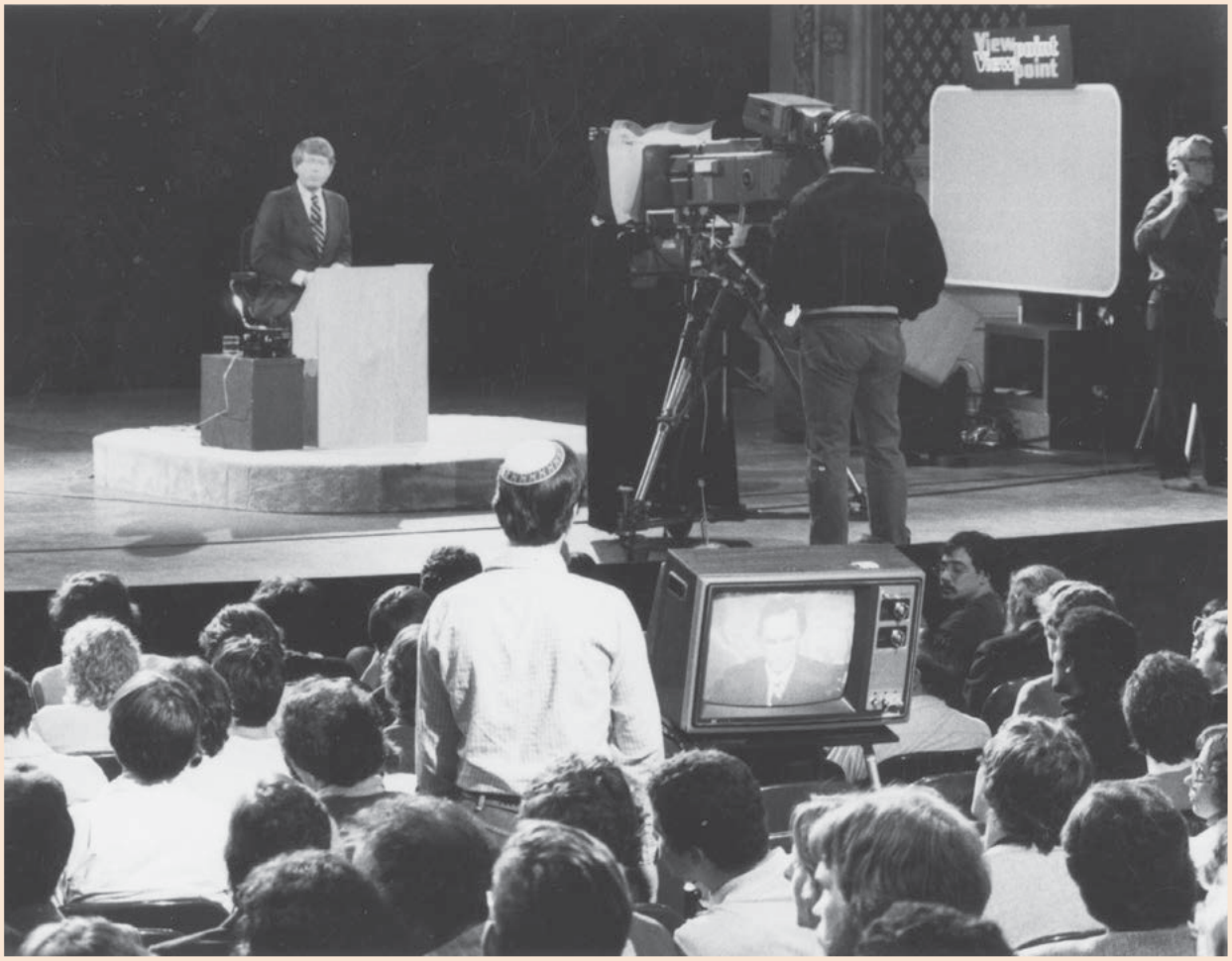
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Campus views: ABC News filmed an episode of *Viewpoint* at Mandel Hall on April 28, 1982. The series began in July 1981 and was moderated by longtime anchor Ted Koppel. *The New York Times* described the show as an "experimental effort to provide 'a forum for criticism and analysis of television news.'" The episode recorded at UChicago explored media coverage of international affairs, with a particular focus on conflicts in the Middle East and Central America. Producers chose UChicago as the broadcast location for this episode due to the University's strong roster of faculty experts in global politics, including Marvin Zonis, an expert on Middle Eastern politics and later professor emeritus of business administration. Did you attend the taping or watch the broadcast? Share your point of view at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. (Photography by Bill Mudge, AB'83; Copyright 2025, T*he Chicago Maroon*. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.)

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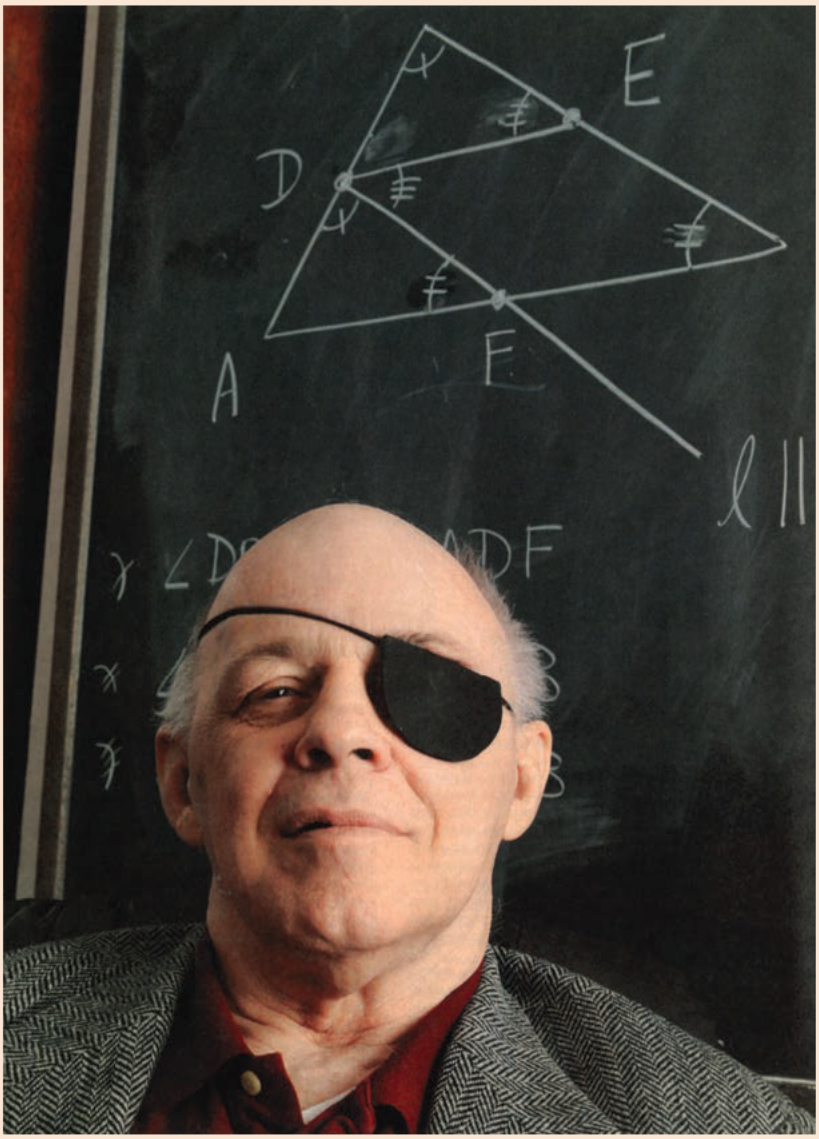
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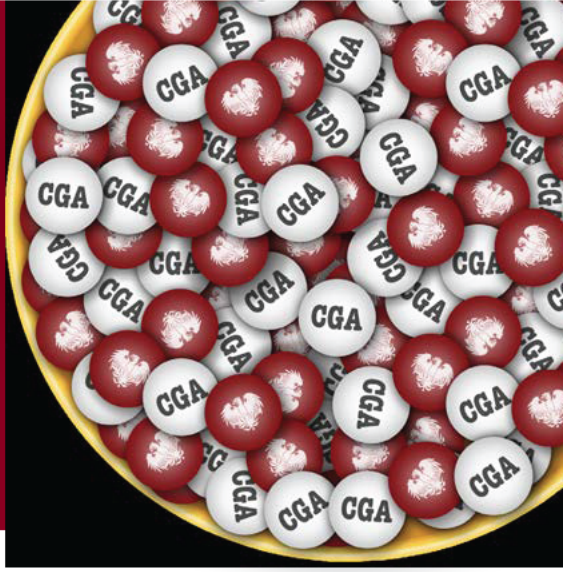


Hubble's repairman: NASA astronaut and mission specialist John M. Grunsfeld, SM'84, PhD'88 (left), is shown aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour alongside payload specialist Ronald Parise in 1995. Beginning in 1999, Grunsfeld was involved in three separate missions to repair the Hubble Space Telescope (named for Edwin Hubble, SB 1910, PhD 1917), which earned him the nickname "Hubble's repairman." During these missions, Grunsfeld installed new gyroscopes, cameras, sensors, and batteries that extended Hubble's life and sharpened its view of the cosmos. In recognition of his contributions, Grunsfeld was inducted into the US Astronaut Hall of Fame in 2015. (UChicago Photographic Archive, apf1-13821, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library)



Classroom legend: Paul J. Sally Jr. (1933–2013) was a professor of mathematics at the University of Chicago from 1965 until his death in 2013, specializing in *p*-adic analysis and representation theory. A teacher since the age of 21, Sally won a Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in 1967 and served as director of undergraduate studies in the math department for 30 years. He was known as the "Math Pirate" or "Professor Pirate" for the black patch that covered his left eye, which he lost due to diabetes. The nickname suited not just his appearance but also his personality. Sally loathed cell phones, once calling them "an interference to human existence." Legend has it that he even encouraged students to help destroy phones that rang during class. Did you study with Sally? Share your memories at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. (Photography by Dan Dry)

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DEATHS

FACULTY AND STAFF

David Tracy, the Andrew Thomas Greeley and Grace McNichols Greeley Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Catholic Studies, died April 29 in Chicago. He was 86. An ordained priest and influential Catholic theologian, Tracy studied theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome during the 1960s. He taught in the Divinity School and the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought from 1969 to 2007, after being fired from the Catholic University of America along with others for dissenting from papal doctrine on birth control. Engaging with both the Christian tradition and contemporary thought, Tracy's writings offered a vision of theology as public discourse, accountable to the academy and the broader world. His many writings—including the book *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (1981)—bridged systematic theology, hermeneutics, and postmodern philosophy while always returning to questions of human meaning and the divine.

Roberto Lang, the A. J. Carlson Professor of Medicine in the Section of Cardiology, of Wilmette, IL, died June 10. He was 73. A distinguished cardiologist, Lang pioneered the development of 3D transthoracic and transesophageal echocardiography, a noninvasive technique used worldwide to diagnose and treat heart disease. After completing his medical studies at the University of Buenos Aires and both his internship and residency in Israel, Lang did his cardiology fellowship at UChicago and then joined the faculty in 1985. He published widely in the field of cardiac imaging and served as director of the Cardiac Noninvasive Imaging Laboratory and Cardiac Imaging Center at UChicago Medicine. An award-winning teacher, Lang also mentored many students, fellows, and physicians and held leadership roles in the American Society of Echocardiography. He is survived by his wife, **Lili Lang**, MBA'87; two children; and two grandchildren.

Holly J. Humphrey, MD'83, former dean for medical education and Ralph W. Gerard Professor in the Pritzker School of Medicine, died April 17 in Hinsdale, IL, of pancreatic cancer. She was 68. Humphrey's career at Pritzker began with a residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in pulmonary and critical care. She directed the school's internal medicine residency program for 14 years, coleading the nation's first White Coat Ceremony to welcome first-year medical students to the profession. In her 15 years as dean for medical education, Humphrey strengthened diversity and inclusion, mentorship, and medical education scholarship. She received the Favorite Faculty teaching award from Pritzker students more than 25 times and was elected to the National Academy of Medicine. In 2018 she stepped down as dean to lead the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation. She is survived by her husband, Duane Follman; three children, including **Sarah Follman**, MD'21; and two brothers.

Edward Anders, the Horace B. Horton Professor Emeritus of Chemistry and in the Enrico Fermi Institute, died June 1 in San Mateo, CA. He was 98. A trailblazer in cosmochemistry, Anders played a key role in advancing our knowledge of the solar system's formation by analyzing meteorites, presolar grains, and lunar samples. He began his tenure at the University of Chicago in 1955, earned the Quantrell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in 1973, and retired in 1991. His distinguished career included election to the National Academy of Sciences and honors such as NASA's Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement. A survivor of the Holocaust, Anders authored a memoir about his experiences and created a database of the names and fates of about 7,000 Jews who were living in his birthplace, Liepāja, Latvia, before World War II. He is survived by two children, including **George Anders**, LAB'74; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Choudhri M. Naim, professor emeritus of South Asian languages and civilizations, died July 9 in Chicago. He was 89. Naim was a prolific translator and scholar of classical and modern Urdu literature and a pioneering pedagogue who helped establish South Asian studies as an independent academic discipline. Born in the Indian province of Uttar Pradesh, Naim earned graduate degrees from the University of Lucknow and the University of California, Berkeley, before moving to the University of Chicago, where he served on the faculty for four decades, eventually as chair of the department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations. He was also founding editor of the *Annual of Urdu Studies* and what is now the *Journal of South Asian Literature* and the author of a noted Urdu textbook for English speakers. After his retirement in 2001, he continued to publish widely in his field and on current affairs in South Asia, most recently releasing *Urdu Crime Fiction, 1890–1950: An Informal History* in 2023. He is survived by a daughter, a son, two sisters, and a grandchild.

Priscilla Diane Chapman Frisch, a research professor in astronomy and astrophysics, died April 2 in Chicago. She was 81. A leading authority on the heliosphere and the local interstellar medium, Frisch served on the University of Chicago faculty for nearly five decades, authoring over 160 scientific papers that explore the sun's galactic surroundings. She spearheaded an international effort to map the interstellar magnetic field and edited the influential book *Solar Journey: The Significance of Our Galactic Environment for the Heliosphere and Earth* (2006). She was deeply involved in local education reform, cofounding the Teachers Academy for Math and Science and the Chicago Education Federation. She is survived by her husband, **Henry J. Frisch**, professor in the Department of Physics, the Enrico Fermi Institute, and the College; two daughters, **Sarah Frisch**, LAB'92, and **Genevieve Frisch**, LAB'95; and three grandchildren.

1940s

Malkah Tolpin Notman, PhB'46, SB'47, of Brookline, MA, died May 3. She was 97. Notman studied physiology in the College and took classes with Enrico Fermi and Bruno Bettelheim. Graduating from the Boston University School of Medicine in 1952, Notman became a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and a training and supervising analyst at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute. Her scholarship centered on adult development, gender and identity, and the psychological dimensions of women's reproductive lives, and she practiced psychiatry well into her 90s. She is survived by three children, including **Laura Notman**, AB'85, and four grandchildren.

Herbert J. Gans, PhB'47, AM'50, died April 21 in New York. He was 97. Gans, a refugee from Nazi Germany, studied under UChicago sociologists who stressed the importance of urban fieldwork. With his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, he joined the sociology department at Columbia University and published a dozen books and hundreds of articles on American communities and cultural institutions. His writing—including *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (1967) and *The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy* (1995)—reached wide audiences and shattered popular myths about urban and suburban life, poverty, ethnic groups, and the news media. Survivors include his wife, Louise Gruner; a son; and a grandchild.

Florence Baumruk Otstot, PhB'48, SB'49, of Richmond, VA, died April 2. She was 98. Otstot met her husband, Charles M. Otstot, PhB'48, SB'50, SM'50, who died in 2001, at the University. They were longtime residents of Arlington, VA, where she was active in the community, especially the Rock

To request an obituary for a faculty member, staff member, or former student, please send a previously published obituary or a note that includes their accomplishments, surviving family members, and significant facts care of the Alumni News Editor, *The University of Chicago Magazine*, 5235 South Harper Court, Chicago, IL 60615, or by email: uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.

Spring Congregational Church and Rock Spring Garden Club. She is survived by two children, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Richard L. Garwin, SM'48, PhD'49, died May 13 in Scarsdale, NY. He was 97. Garwin was a former student of Enrico Fermi's and an assistant professor of physics at UChicago when, in 1952, he designed the world's first hydrogen bomb as a summer consultant at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Few knew of his role, and over the next 40 years at what was then IBM's Watson Laboratories, Garwin undertook research leading to 47 patents, many scientific publications, and technological advances in computers, communications, and medicine. A recipient of the National Medal of Science and Presidential Medal of Freedom, Garwin advised a dozen US presidents on national defense and taught at Columbia, Harvard, and Cornell. Survivors include a daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

Alan D. Kimmel, SB'49, died March 27 in Massachusetts. He was 98. From an early age, Kimmel loved maps; he earned undergraduate and master's degrees in geography after time in the Army Air Corps. He worked as a city planner and cartographer and became a researcher, writer, and editor for Encyclopedia Britannica, Scott Foresman, IBM, and other companies. A self-described "hope-ist," Kimmel volunteered for many political campaigns and was active in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood and with the Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago. He is survived by three sons, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Alexander "Alex" Polikoff, AB'48, AM'50, JD'53, died May 27 in Keene, NH. He was 98. A Chicago native, Polikoff devoted his life and career to integrating the city's public housing. He argued *Hills v. Gautreaux* before the Supreme Court in 1976, successfully challenging Chicago's racially segregated public housing policies. In addition to practicing law, Polikoff published five books and served as executive director and later housing director of Businessmen for the Public Interest (now Impact for Equity), engaging in nonprofit work and activism until his 90s. In his spare time Polikoff maintained a butterfly collection and was an avid outdoorsman. His wife, Barbara Polikoff, AM'52, died in 2022. He is survived by a daughter, a son, and five grandchildren.

Helen (Biederman) Snider, AB'43, AM'48, died August 6 in Northbrook, IL. She was 102. After studying political science and earning her master's degree at the School of Social Service Administration (now the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice), Snider embarked on a career in social work that included positions with the American Red Cross in Chicago and in Kansas City. She later became certified as a teacher and taught primary school in Chicago for 20 years. She enjoyed playing bridge and swimming. She is survived by two daughters, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

1950s

Joseph Patrick "Joe" Muldoon, EX'51, died March 27 in Blacksburg, VA. He was 98. The son of Irish immigrants, Muldoon was drafted into the US Army and served in World War II. Drawn to the great books program, he enrolled in the College in 1947 but completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Muldoon eventually earned three master's degrees, and he taught, directed libraries, and coached wrestling and tennis at high schools in Connecticut, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Florida. He is survived by his wife, Joyce; two sons; and 12 grandchildren.

Joanne "Joey" (Taubman) Medlinsky Gibson, AB'53, SM'55, MD'58, died January 31 in Arlington, VA. She was 94. With her master's degree in pharmacology, Gibson was one of three women in her medical school class. She also was one of the first faculty members at what is today Rutgers Health's Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, where she served as associate dean for student affairs until her retirement. Moving to Arlington, Gibson took adult education classes and enjoyed gardening, making clothes, and dancing. She is survived by a son, three stepchildren, and five grandchildren.

Max Kozloff, AB'53, AM'58, died April 6 in New York. He was 91. Trained as an artist and art historian, Kozloff left his doctoral studies at New York University to cover the city's art scene. In the 1960s and '70s he wrote for *The Nation* and worked his way up to executive editor of *Artforum*, as he shifted his focus to photography. Kozloff became a prominent street and portrait photographer who also organized photography shows and authored 16 books on subjects including Jasper Johns, Cubism, and New York photography. Survivors include his wife, Joyce, and a son.

Charles Tamotsu Kito, MBA'54, of Woodside, NY, died May 17. He was 101. Born in South Dakota, Kito moved to Japan as a child and later graduated from Waseda University in Tokyo. He worked as a journalist and bureau chief for Fuji Television and served as president of both the Japan International Satellite Organization and Entel Communications. Kito was also a black belt in judo. He is survived by a daughter and a son.

Roy L. Prosterman, AB'54, died February 27 in Seattle. He was 89. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Prosterman left a prestigious corporate law firm to teach law at the University of Washington; soon after, he began championing land reform in developing countries. Years of partnering with governments to strengthen landownership among poor rural families led to his cofounding Landesa, a land-rights institute that has worked with people in more than 60 countries—including Vietnam, El Salvador, and India—to effect land reform. Among his many honors, Prosterman received a UChicago Alumni Public Service Award in 2010.

George E. Smith, SM'56, PhD'59, died May 28 in Barnegat Township, NJ. He was 95. A US Navy veteran, Smith completed his doctorate in physics with a dissertation on electronic properties of semimetals. Working in the research division of Bell Laboratories in New Jersey, Smith earned 30 patents and collaborated with Willard Boyle to invent the charge-coupled device—a sensor used in nearly every telescope, medical scanner, photocopier, and digital camera today. Their contribution was recognized with the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physics. Retiring in 1986, Smith traveled the world in a 31-foot sailboat. He is survived by three children, two sisters, five grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

1960s

John Buchanan, DB'63, died February 3 in Chicago. He was 87. Following his Divinity School studies, Buchanan led churches in Indiana and Ohio before serving as senior pastor at Chicago's Fourth Presbyterian Church from 1985 to 2012. As a leader in the Presbyterian Church USA and editor and publisher of *The Christian Century* magazine for 17 years, Buchanan was an early voice for equality, advocating for the ordination of gay and lesbian clergy and for same-sex marriage. He is survived by five children, a brother, 13 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Ronald J. Przybylski, PhD'63, of Pepper Pike, OH, died April 19. He was 89. With his doctorate in zoology, Przybylski taught anatomy and cell biology at Case Western Reserve University for 58 years, retiring as an associate professor emeritus. Known to his students as "Dr. P," he used his sense of humor and artistic talent to make anatomy memorable, helping generations of medical, dental, and graduate students and postdoctoral scholars learn through creative drawings and acronyms. Survivors include his wife, Ning Tsu Kuo; two daughters; a son; two siblings; and two grandchildren.

Jean Maclean Snyder, LAB'59, AB'63, JD'79, died April 27 in Chicago. She was 83. Snyder worked in the nonprofit sector before pursuing a legal career, first with D'Ancona and Pflaum, a corporate firm in Chicago. Later, through the MacArthur Justice Center and in private practice, she shifted to defending the rights of incarcerated and wrongly accused clients, many of whom were abused by the penal system. The daughter of Norman Maclean, PhD'40, Snyder was a lifelong Hyde Park resident who enjoyed summers at the family cabin in Montana. She is survived by her husband, **Joel Snyder**, SB'61; two sons, **Jacob Snyder**, LAB'90, and **Noah Snyder**, LAB'93; a brother, **John Maclean**, LAB'60; and two grandchildren.

Jeremiah P. Ostriker, PhD'64, died April 6 in New York. He was 87. Ostriker graduated from Harvard and completed his doctorate in physics under Nobel laureate Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar. During his 47 years at Princeton, Ostriker published groundbreaking studies on how galaxies form and evolve; he explored the nature of pulsars, the role of black holes in the evolu-

tion of the cosmos, and what the universe is made of. He also chaired Princeton's astrophysical sciences department, served as provost, helped set up the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, and in 2000 received the National Medal of Science. Survivors include his wife, Alicia; three children; a sister; two brothers; and three grandchildren.

Robert J. Poor, PhD'64, of Minneapolis, died February 11. He was 93. Poor's path to becoming an art historian began when his childhood interest in Asian art deepened during his US Army service in Kyoto, Japan. After teaching at Dartmouth, he spent 45 years at the University of Minnesota, concentrating on Chinese and Japanese painting, Asian ceramics, Indian art, and his specialty, Chinese bronzes. Poor published exhibition catalogs of museum collections featuring artworks from Asian antiquities to modern Japanese prints; he also circumnavigated the globe twice, collected art, and served on the board of the Minnesota Bonsai Society. He is survived by his wife, Gerry Schmitt; a daughter; and three sons.

Guruswamy Rajasekaran, PhD'65, of Chennai, India, died May 29, 2023. He was 87. After training at Madras Christian College and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai, Rajasekaran earned his doctorate in physics. A theoretical physicist, he published over 200 papers on quantum field theory and high energy physics. Rajasekaran taught at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences in Chennai and the Chennai Mathematical Institute and was a longtime advocate for experimental physics research in India, especially the India-based Neutrino Observatory. Survivors include his wife, Suthandra Devi Rajasekaran; two daughters; and three grandchildren.

William A. "Bill" Kuperman, SM'66, died June 30, 2024, in La Jolla, CA. He was 81. After graduate studies in physics, Kuperman worked at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, DC, and what is today the Center for Maritime Research and Experimentation in La Spezia, Italy. In 1992 he joined the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, as a professor and director of the Marine Physical Laboratory. A member of the National Academy of Engineering, Kuperman was widely recognized for his expertise in underwater acoustics, acoustical oceanography, and computational ocean acoustics. He is survived by his wife, Gaby; two children; and three grandchildren.

Donald H. Carlisle, MBA'67, of Toronto, died March 26. He was 83. Carlisle studied science and engineering physics prior to completing his business degree, and he spent his career in the financial industry. A lifelong Toronto resident, he loved sailing, playing the piano, and attending symphony, ballet, and opera performances. He is survived by his partner, Jan; three children; a stepdaughter; a sister; and nine grandchildren.

Robert N. Staley, AM'67, died March 27 in Coralville, IA. He was 89. Educated at the University of Minnesota College of Dentistry, Staley came to UChicago for a dental internship, where he studied the humanities, studio art, and anthropology and worked as a dental physical anthropologist. Staley also served in the US Army Dental Corps. As a member of the University of Iowa dentistry faculty from 1970 to 2016, Staley treated patients, consulted, and coauthored a textbook, *Essentials of Orthodontics: Diagnosis and Treatment* (2011), which was published in five languages. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen; a daughter; a son; and seven grandchildren.

Virginia (Cook) Aronson, AB'69, AM'73, JD'75, of Washington, DC, died March 2. She was 77. A Washington state native, Aronson was recruited to the College by the Small School Talent Search. With her sociology and law degrees she joined the Chicago firm Sidley Austin, led its real estate practice, and became the firm's first woman managing partner before retiring in 2010. Outside of her legal work, Aronson loved magic, art, and cooking. She and her husband, Simon Aronson, AB'64, AM'65, JD'73, who died in 2019, were known for their mind-reading act, which they performed worldwide. Survivors include a sister and a brother.

Mario Ferland, AM'69, of Quebec City, died April 5. He was 93. Following his UChicago graduate studies in education, Ferland earned a doctorate in education from the University of Rennes in France. He was employed for his entire career at Laval University in Quebec City as an administrator and teacher, retiring in 1993. He is survived by his wife, Yvette Chouinard; a daughter; a son; a sister; five grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Donald L. Lawler, PhD'69, of Raleigh, NC, died March 25. He was 90. Lawler earned degrees at Georgetown and Columbia Universities before pursuing his doctorate in English. A specialist in Victorian literature, fantasy, and science fiction, he taught at East Carolina University from 1968 to 1998 and introduced generations of students to the writings of Oscar Wilde; J. R. R. Tolkien; Kurt Vonnegut, AM'71; and others. When he wasn't reading, Lawler enjoyed stained glass craftsmanship, music, and baseball. Survivors include four children, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1970s

Ronald Filak, AB'75, of Callawassie Island, SC, died January 19. He was 81. Filak spent 22 years in the Field Artillery of the US Army, with service in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal; Germany; Korea; Oklahoma; and at the University of Massachusetts as head of ROTC. Retiring from the Army in 1989 as a lieutenant colonel, Filak became a project manager in the private sector. He retired again in 2007 and dedicated his time to golf, travel, books, and family. Survivors include his wife, Mary; a daughter, **Meredith Filak Rose**, AB'08, JD'13; a son; a stepson; a sister; a brother; and six grandchildren.

Scott Teissler, MBA'77, died April 16 in Atlanta. He was 71. A graduate of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Chicago Booth, Teissler served as UChicago's vice provost for information technology from 1987 to 1993. He spent more than two decades as chief technology officer for Turner Broadcasting Systems, ushering the traditional media company into the digital age. Retiring to San Francisco in 2015, Teissler became principal at Teleologistics, a firm focused on technology-oriented business problems. He is survived by his wife, **Paula Ruth Markowitz**, LAB'74, AB'78; three children; a sister; and a grandchild.

Thomas W. Weidenbach, AB'81 (Class of 1975), of Ann Arbor, MI, died January 7. He was 72. In the College, Weidenbach was an architecture aficionado and a cinephile who cofounded the Contemporary European Film Society, which later merged with Doc Films. Weidenbach worked at UChicago's medical facilities before pursuing a career in law and teaching that took him all over the world—including, notably, to China.

1980s



Diane (Smith) Ativie, AM'89, of Skokie, IL, died January 4, of ovarian cancer. She was 66. Raised in Chicago's Ida B. Wells housing projects, Ativie trained as a social worker at Loyola University Chicago and at the School of Social Service Administration (now the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice). For more than 25 years she was a medical social worker and case manager at Endeavor Evanston Hospital, winning awards for innovation and leadership. Ativie also helped other Chicagoland clients as a care manager at Centene Corporation, a mental health counselor at Thresholds, and a foster care/adoption specialist at Children's Home & Aid. She is survived by a son and four siblings.

Eugene Valentine Sitzmann Jr., PhD'89, of Wyandotte, MI, died March 11. He was 71. A graduate of Saint Thomas Academy in St. Paul, MN, Sitzmann studied chemistry as a Northwestern University undergraduate and at UChicago. He was a faculty member at Columbia University before working for nearly 20 years at the chemical companies CIBA and BASF in Europe. Survivors include three sisters and a brother.



THE UCHICAGOAN

CLAUDIA GOLDIN

AM'69, PHD'72

Questions for the Nobel Memorial Prize–winning economist and friend to golden retrievers.

What surprising job have you had in the past?
"Track layer" for dog tracking events. Tracking is the sport version of search and rescue. It involves having a dog track a person, and my job was to walk the track.

What book—or other work or idea—do you relish teaching?
Any book that makes an important historical point and does so with simple, elegant economics and believable empirical work.

What person, alive or dead, would you want to write your life story?
I would want my story told by one of my childhood friends. They won't know anything about me as an adult, but that part is better known. I'd like to know what I was like as a child.

What's your least useful talent?
Correcting other people's grammar. No one seems to care.

Tell us the best piece of advice you've received—or the worst.
The best: Write, rewrite, and rewrite again (and again). And the corollary: If you haven't written something, you can't rewrite it.

What advice would you give to a brand-new Maroon?
Follow your passions. Don't worry about changing direction if you discover something new.

Who was your best teacher, and why?
My best teacher was Mr. Kotkin at the Bronx High School of Science, who taught a course in microbiology dubbed "Piss and Pus."

What UChicago classroom moment will you never forget?
Being in Milton Friedman's (AM'33) macroeconomics class and realizing that I didn't understand the role of money in the economy. That was what the entire course concerned. It took me a while, but I caught on (somewhat). I adored Milton!

TO READ THE FULL Q&A, VISIT MAG.UCHICAGO.EDU/UCHICAGOAN.

Illustration by Julia Plath



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