
**Q&A: MEET THE PRESS HOST CHUCK TODD
TALKS ABOUT JOURNALISM, POLITICS AND
THE FIGHT FOR**

PROTESTS

"SOMETIMES I THINK WHEN YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, YOU DON'T FULLY APPRECIATE THE MASSIVE CHANGES THAT ARE TAKING PLACE."

"I wish I could fall back on some historical context to know how another generation of journalists dealt with similar situations, but I don't think we've had a similar situation."

"I THINK THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM AS WE KNOW IT IS ACTUALLY AT STAKE IN SOME WAYS."

Inside on...



"We're so much more combative in some ways with people today, and I think people think we're not combative enough."

"YOU HAVE TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS AND ACCEPT THE FACT THAT YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE PEOPLE MAD."

"At the end of the day, I'm pretty cynical, but I don't like to be as cynical on TV."

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Laredo, Texas, started the Washington's Birthday Celebration in 1898 as a way to Americanize a historically Mexican area. This WBC photo is from circa 1910.

WEBB COUNTY HERITAGE FOUNDATION

GW MAGAZINE SUMMER 2019

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

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Meet the Press host Chuck Todd, who attended GW in the 1990s. Q&As with *GW Magazine* about political journalism, "both sides" and the slow death of good faith.

/ By Matthew Stoss /

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For more than a century, a U.S. border town and its Mexican counterpart have thrown a festival to mark George Washington's birthday. GW professor Elaine Peña went home to understand why, and what it says about people and dividing lines.

/ By Matthew Stoss /

48 / Any Place of Worship

As a Muslim, Sana Ullah, MA '17, is required to pray five times a day. That can be hard, for example, in a 9-to-5. In 2015, Ullah started photographing Muslims praying, like her, wherever they could. Now that project—"Places You'll Pray"—has become so much more.

/ As told to Julyssa Lopez /

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On the cover:

Design by Dominic N. Abbate, BA '09, MBA '15;
Chuck Todd photo by Sally Montana / Redux



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GW
TODAY

GW MAGAZINE

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Danny Freedman

FROM THE EDITOR

After nine years at *GW Magazine* and the past five as editor, I'm signing off—my family and I are headed to Memphis, where a new job awaits my wife and where that new-place tangle of thrill and melancholy stands by to help us unpack.

Like for many of you, GW will be near to me wherever I am, for the experiences of this job and for much more: It's where as a student I learned my trade and where I met my wife; it's where our children were born; it's where my dad was an administrator and still teaches journalism. GW doctors saved his life, and later the life of my newborn daughter, dragging a beat from her stubborn and hesitant heart.

I'm grateful to our readers for sharing with me your time and stories and support, and to the leadership here, straight to the top, for believing in this publication, believing in our team and for challenging us by saying "yes" far more than "no." It's been a wonderful ride—and there's so much more on the horizon for *GW Magazine*. Stay tuned.

Danny Freedman, BA '01



Familiar Faces

Wow! Wow! Was I surprised when I opened up your latest spring 2019 mag and saw pictures and comments of my teammates Corky [Devlin], Elliot [Karver], Joe [Holup], John [Holup] and George [Klein] ("They Had What We Would Call Today Attitude," spring 2019). At the time, I was a scrub who was honored to play two years ('55, '56). I was eventually cut, but guess what? GW continued my scholarship until graduation—what a gift!

You were right-on regarding Coach [Bill] Reinhart. I just had to tell you how happy you made me regarding the article. I wonder how many are still around?

Howard Frushtick, BS '55



Peer Review



"One judge wants to subscribe!"

That was the word that came back from one group of adjudicators in the international awards contest run by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. This spring, *GW Magazine* won a silver award in the overarching "general interest" category for its slate of issues last year; a bronze in the "special issues" category for the spring 2018 "Power Issue"; and a bronze in feature-length profile writing for Samantha Cole's article "To Simply Name It Aloud" (fall 2018) about alumna Helena Bala's "Craiglist Confessional," an index of trauma that strangers ask Bala to divulge. Find that story and all of the 2018 back issues at GWMagazine.com.





Memory Bank

Recently we asked: **What keepsakes—objects, photos, etc.—do you keep around as reminders of your time at GW?** We heard from **Susan McGuire Smith, BA '69, JD '73**, about a cut-glass window that she saved from the student seizure of Maury Hall in April 1969:



I graduated with my undergraduate degree a semester early and, with a few months on my hands before beginning law school that fall, I took a temporary job at the Institute for Sino-Soviet Studies. My desk was in the lobby in front of the beautiful entry door, a remarkable solid-wood double door with two sidelights and one window over the entire door, each with a hand-cut beveled glass insert that dated from the family home of the famous U.S. naval officer Matthew Fontaine Maury, which housed the institute. I used to love the beautiful rainbow pattern that resulted from the morning sun shining through that magnificent historic door.

That spring, the local chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society marched on the building and seized it late at night. In the process, all but one glass side panel were broken beyond repair. When we finally were able to return a few days later, I was heartbroken to see the damage. It took several days to put what we could back together—files dumped in every office, trash everywhere, damage to walls, doors, books, fixtures. Later, a custodian arrived and began destroying the broken glass from the front door. He replaced it with “bathroom” glass. Quite a comedown for

such a beautiful and unique door. I asked him about the one sidelight that was still intact and he told me he was to remove it and toss it, too. I asked if he could remove it in one piece and I would gladly rescue it. He was happy to do that, and my bosses told me to take the pane home. I stored it, and when I later bought my first home, I proudly stood it in the window. It has now graced six windows as I moved around the country. It currently resides in Florida.

Several years ago, I wrote the university president and offered to deliver it to GWU, thinking they might want to preserve this piece of history. I never got a response. My offer still stands.



Runs in the Family

Brains and brawn can pass from generation to generation, and so too can Colonial pride. If you have family members who have attended GW before or after your time here, we'd like to hear from you. Contact Marie Treanor, director of legacy family engagement, at mtreanor@gwu.edu. And for more about GW's Legacy Alumni Network, visit: go.gwu.edu/legacyfamilies.



The Ghosts of Thurston Past

In honor of a planned \$80 million interior renovation of Thurston Hall, *GW Magazine* is cracking open the time capsule of Thurston's past, and we need your stories for an upcoming feature: tales from too late and from bleary dawns; of shenanigans and fizzled plans and what-are-the-odds wins that became legend; of roommates and laundry and classes and life inside the dorm.

Send your memories to magazine@gwu.edu or mail them to us at the address below.



All Write!

We want to hear from you, too. Contact us through our website, gwmagazine.com, on Twitter ([@TheGWMagazine](https://twitter.com/TheGWMagazine)) or send a note to:

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magazine@gwu.edu

Please include your name, degree/year, address and a daytime phone number.

Letters may be edited for clarity and space.



Have a keepsake you want to tell us about? Write us at magazine@gwu.edu or on Twitter at [@TheGWMagazine](https://twitter.com/TheGWMagazine); we'll feature some of them in this space in future issues.



Prelude

NEWS AND INSIGHTS FROM CAMPUS AND BEYOND



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“

**When I look back over my life,
I've often been the first, and
many times I have been the
only—the only woman, the
only African American—in
the positions I've achieved.**

Grace Speights, JD '82,
who took over in June as the chair of
the GW Board of Trustees

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GUTHRIE, SPEIGHTS: WILLIAM ATKINS /
FINGERPRINT INSTALLATION: SIENNA LONG, JOHN MCGLOSSON / PHOTOS: MATT HODGKINS /
HEART: HAND KNIT BY ANNETTE M. THOMSON, MSIST '08, FROM A PATTERN BY TEAL LARSEN VIA ETSY.COM

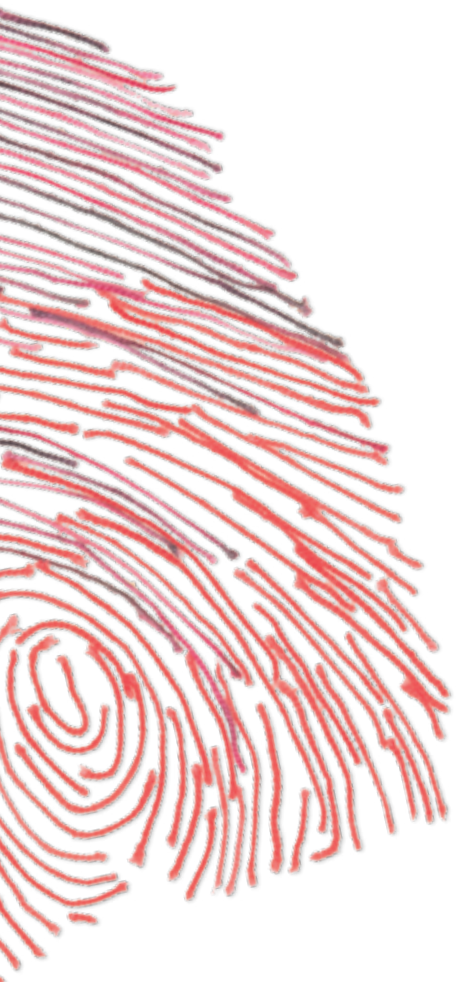


RESEARCH

More of You

As 3D printing comes of age, researchers turn to 4D printing and the possibility of building replacement organs from patients' own stem cells.

BY SARAH C.P. WILLIAMS





Lijie Grace Zhang



S

She wants to build a beating human heart.

Not just a heart-shaped blob of cells and not an organ that beats to an off-kilter cadence. She wants to make from scratch—using something not far removed from an inkjet printer—a heart that surgeons can transplant into a person’s body to keep them alive. This heart, Lijie Grace Zhang imagines, could be personalized with a patient’s own cells and be created on-demand by a 3D printer in

a matter of hours to treat heart failure.

Zhang, an associate professor in the School of Engineering and Applied Science, admits the goal of a printed, transplantable heart is likely decades away. But as she works toward it, the smaller feats along the way carry their own potential to revolutionize medicine. Zhang’s lab is among just a few in the country using a cutting-edge 4D bioprinting approach to create moving, responsive shapes that can carry out myriad tasks in the human body. Her approach might allow engineered blood vessels implanted into a child to grow as they age, or a drug-delivery device to open like a blooming flower when it reaches the right organ.

In 3D printing, three-dimensional solid objects are created, layer by layer, based on a design plugged into a computer. In place of standard ink, a 3D printer can extrude a variety of materials, from plastics and resins to foodstuff—chefs have used 3D printing to concoct uniquely shaped candies and pastas. And when scientists discovered that living cells can survive the trip through a 3D printer, they began printing layers of cells in the shapes of organs—heart cells in the exact shape of a human heart and liver cells in the shape of a liver, for instance.

“People have bioprinted hearts already,” Zhang says. “But the problem is functional: How can we make that 3D heart work? How can we make it beat?”

To make these inert organs more versatile and useful, Zhang’s team is adding a new dimension to bioprinting—a fourth dimension: time, or more precisely, the ability to change over time, shifting shape or rearranging molecules.

By printing in 4D with unique nanomaterials, the scientists can design shapes they’re able to control using external forces—light or heat, for instance. Then

human cells can be layered onto that shape-changing scaffold.

BEFORE 2010, when she became a GW faculty member, Zhang had never used a 3D printer. She studied chemical engineering in China, then flew halfway around the world for a graduate program at Brown University in Rhode Island, where—despite never having worked with living cells before—she joined a biomedical engineering lab in which culturing cells was an everyday task. By the time she arrived at GW, she had jumped around two more times, with postdoctoral positions at Rice University and Harvard, developing nanomaterials for cartilage and bone regeneration.

At GW, Zhang became part of the Department for Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, another unlikely move—they'd been looking for expertise in biomaterials, she says—that shaped the arc of her research ever since.

"I was suddenly surrounded by these mechanical engineering students with very different backgrounds than my own," Zhang says. "They excelled in mathematics and design and modeling. They already had expertise in using 3D printing to make device prototypes."

For Zhang, it was more intriguing than intimidating. She immediately saw the promise in applying the new 3D technology to tissue engineering—she could take material similar to the injectable bone substitutes she'd engineered, for instance, and print it in the shape of a bone to create entirely new types of artificial joints and prosthetics. So Zhang's inventive students built a custom 3D printer (and then another and another) for her lab. And as she forged ahead into 3D—and then 4D—printing, Zhang branched out

from bones and cartilage.

"She tells everyone that they can pick any organ they want to study and she'll support them," says PhD student Timothy Esworthy. "So we have people join the lab and get really excited about new organs; livers and muscles and hearts and brains."

That diversity, and the knack Zhang has for bringing together expertise in so many areas, is part of why the Zhang lab has gained a reputation as a hot spot of innovation.

"I'd certainly describe her as a top-caliber researcher," says Michael McAlpine of the University of Minnesota, whose 3D and 4D bioprinting work overlaps with Zhang's in many areas. "She's brought a lot of high-quality work to the field."

TODAY, the closest thing that the Zhang lab has made to a beating heart is a thin patch just half a centimeter in diameter. It contains a mixture of stem cells isolated from human bone marrow and, despite its diminutive size, could someday change the way people recover from heart attacks. Other researchers have tried injecting similar mixtures of stem cells into injured hearts, but the very power of the organ keeps that approach from being successful—as the heart beats, even weakly, it pushes cells out to the rest of the body instead of keeping their healing power close. But a bioprinted patch, Zhang has shown, can hold the cells in place on the heart as they form new tissue.

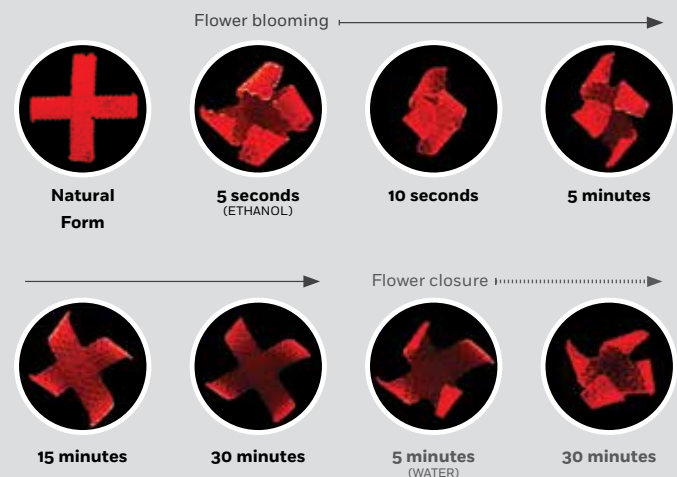
A perfect scaffold for harnessing stem cells and encouraging them to grow into mature heart tissue has two qualities that are hard to achieve: tiny—really tiny—grooves and the ability to bend and move.

The grooves, which must be mere fractions of a millimeter wide, help align cells so they can

"WITH 4D PRINTING, WE CAN NOT ONLY SPECIFY HOW CELLS ARE PLACED TO MIMIC THE ACTUAL CIRCUITRY OF THE BRAIN, WE CAN NOW CONTROL THIS SHAPE CHANGE AS WELL."

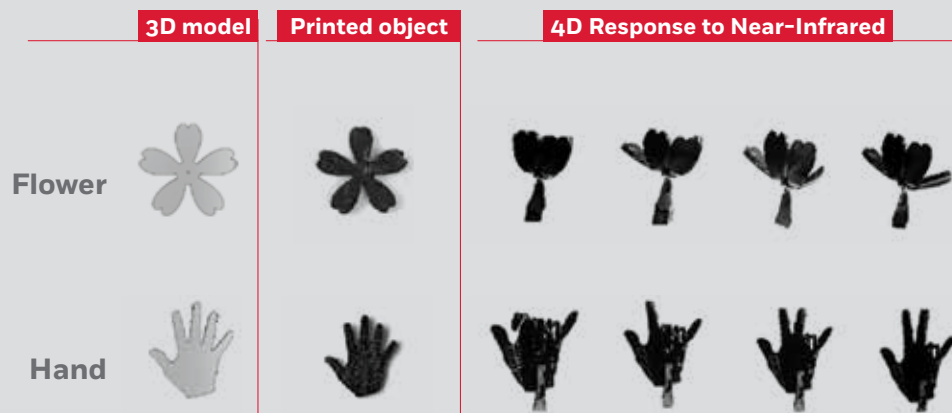
FROM FLAT TO FLOWER BUD

Zhang and her colleagues demonstrate the reversible, shape-changing effect of their process with this 4D-printed structure that opens and closes like a flower, published in a cover article last year in the journal *Advanced Biosystems*. The structure is shown first in its natural form, then scrunching and slowly flattening as it's immersed in ethanol, then gradually recoiling again in response to immersion in water.



A SAFE, NIMBLE APPROACH

This year in the journal *Nano Research*, Zhang’s team demonstrated a 4D-printing nanomaterial that could be controlled using near-infrared light, which would be safe for human tissue—unlike the use of temperature, solvents or ultraviolet light—and brings the research a step closer toward reality.



form a continuous, unbroken sheet. And the motion—ideally close to that of a beating heart—helps coax the stem cells to become heart cells rather than other kinds of cells.

To build a patch with those qualities, Zhang starts with an ink developed by her lab in 2016 called smart soybean oil epoxidized acrylate, or SOEA. It’s considered safe in the human body and, importantly, it turns from a thick liquid into a solid in response to light from a laser. That means it can be used in a type of 3D printing called photolithography. In that type of printing, rather than extrude an ink directly, the computer-controlled printer directs a laser in precise patterns into a vat of liquid resin, such as SOEA. As the laser moves, it solidifies section after section of the resin, creating a three-dimensional solid object that emerges from the liquid.

SOEA has another property that makes it ideal for 4D printing: When a solid, printed SOEA scaffold is cooled, the temperature change affects the way its molecules link together, pulling them taut and flattening the shape. But when it’s warmed again, the scaffold spontaneously curls up, like a roly-poly bug hiding from danger. While there are other photolithography inks that can change shape, few are safe in humans and other animals.

Making a cardiac patch using photolithography and SOEA gives it the

ability to flex, but the technique isn’t ideal for creating micro-sized grooves. For that, Zhang and her colleagues use a second type of 3D printing—stereolithography, which uses a more precise laser beam of a different intensity to form channels in the patch after it’s been formed by photolithography.

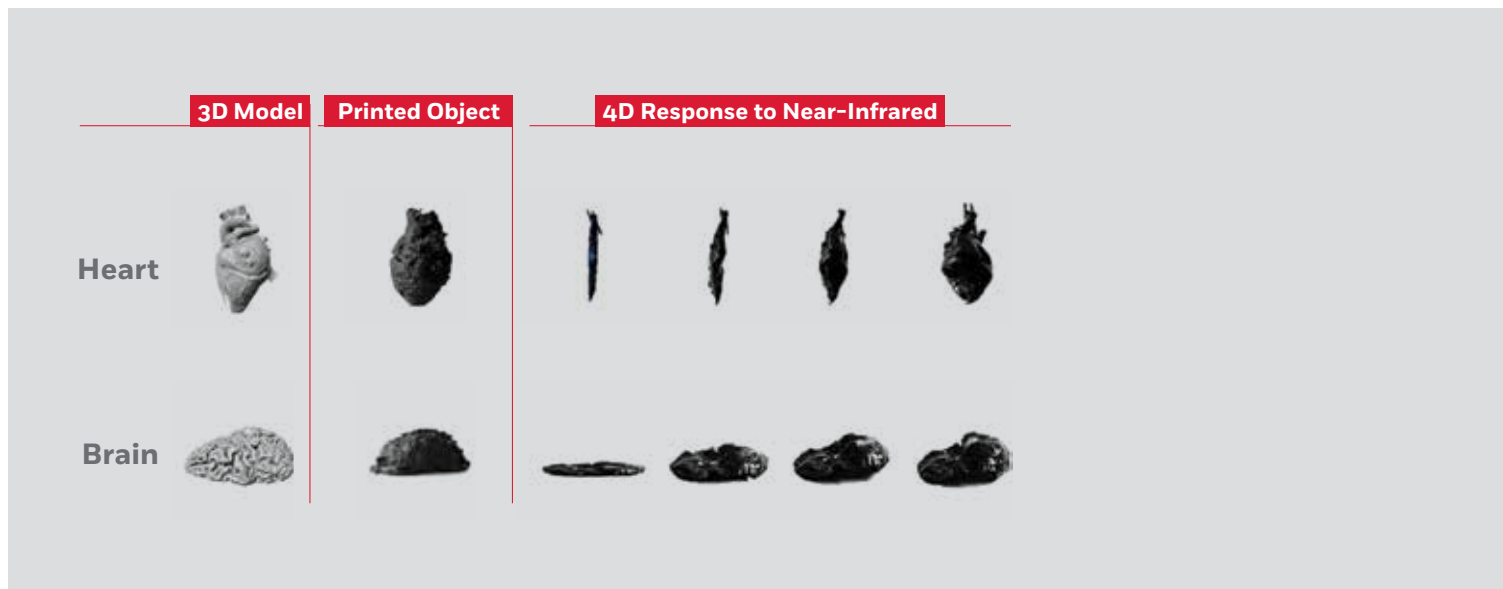
In 2018, Zhang reported in the journal *Biofabrication* that stem cells grown on these double-printed 4D cardiac patches are more efficient at maturing into heart cells than those grown on other types of scaffolds. Her lab has already tested one 3D-printed patch—although not the bendable, SOEA version—in mice with heart injuries similar to those seen in the aftermath of a heart attack, and the patch helped the mice recover normal heart function.

“With the 4D patch, we’ll be able to have these shape-changing effects that might move in conjunction with a beating heart,” says Zhang. “So I think the success we’ve already seen with the 3D patch will be amplified with the 4D version.”

A PRINTED OBJECT that can furl and unfurl—and at the same time act as a scaffold for living cells—has a plethora of other uses in the human body. For instance, Zhang is one of the only researchers in the U.S. applying 4D bioprinting technologies to brain tissue. In a developing embryo, the surface of the brain buckles and folds as it grows, eventually resulting in the organ’s wrinkly texture. This folding signals neural stem cells to differentiate into mature brain cells. And folding is just the kind of motion that a printed nanomaterial can achieve.

“The brain is arguably the most complicated tissue that exists in the body,” says Esworthy, who helps lead brain tissue projects in the Zhang lab. “But with 4D printing we can not only specify how cells are placed to mimic the actual circuitry of the brain, we can now control this shape change as well.”

To that end, the researchers have 3D-printed a scaffold in a



kinked shape that mimics the brain's folds. With heat, they can pull the resulting shape flat to seed it with stem cells. Over the course of a few weeks, the scaffold begins to refold, eventually assuming its original shape. Cells proliferate and mature in the troughs of each kink—the same pattern seen in developing embryos. It's an approach that may improve methods for growing brain cells for research and clinical use.

To really effect change in the human body, though, researchers still need better ways to remotely, and quickly, control the 3D-printed organs.

Temperatures and solvents affect structural change slowly—over hours or days—and aren't ideal for use in the body, where temperatures and chemical conditions need to remain stable. The use of light is an option, and a number of other responsive materials use ultraviolet light to effect change over mere seconds, but it can damage human cells. So Esworthy, Zhang and others have developed a new nanomaterial, which they described this year in the journal

Nano Research, that changes shape in response to infrared light instead, which Esworthy says is safe for human cells. Engineered neural tissue that's implanted in the brain would still be reachable by infrared, too, he says.

INSIDE THE NEXT DECADE,

Zhang predicts the emergence of 4D-printed tissues that can help guide the treatment of diseases, albeit without being transplanted into a person. Organs-on-chips have already gained notoriety as tiny, often very simplified replicas of human organs that can be used to test the effects of drugs. With 4D printing, more complex replicas could be built from a patient's own cells to determine whether a particular drug works to treat conditions like heart disease or neurological, gastrointestinal or breathing disorders, Zhang says, or whether it might carry side effects.


"The future is now," says Esworthy. "We're really entering

into the age of personalized medicine, and 4D tissue models like this could allow doctors to do more accurate drug testing so we're not just playing the game of prescribing one thing after another."

4D bioprinting, of course, is still very much in its infancy. 3D printers now appear in elementary schools, libraries and co-working spaces, and are being used to make everything from shoes and bicycles to robotic hands. But Zhang and McAlpine, of the University of Minnesota, were two of the first researchers to integrate 3D printing into tissue engineering less than a decade ago.

"At the time both our groups started in this field, there were not many people doing it," says McAlpine. "We got into it early and are both recognized as early pioneers. But now there's been an absolute explosion in interest. Things that were really novel a year or two ago are commonplace now."

There still are challenges. Zhang says she'd like to come up with more versatile inks that are safe for use in humans, and printers with better resolution are needed for more precise control over nanomaterials. And even if the devices that Zhang is producing now are small, and don't yet operate within the body, her ideas loom large.

"I think printed organs that we can fabricate and put in patients will be realized within our lifetimes," she says. "And it will be a significant milestone in human history." 

Calendar

31 / AUGUST

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The exhibit “Woven Interiors: Furnishing Early Medieval Egypt” opens at the George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum (through Jan. 5), bringing together rarely displayed artworks from the fourth to the 12th centuries to reveal how textiles infused warmth and beauty into Egypt’s interior spaces. (museum.gwu.edu)

3 / SEPTEMBER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ahead of watching the Washington Nationals take on the New York Mets, hear from Nationals leadership and connect with fellow Colonials at a GW alumni pregame reception. (alumni.gwu.edu/events)

5 / SEPTEMBER

ONLINE

The GW Alumni Association executive committee wants to hear from alumni before it enters a strategic planning process this fall. Share your ideas during this listening tour, or via an online survey—you could win a GW gear bag. (go.gwu.edu/gwaalistsens)

25 / SEPTEMBER

ONLINE

Connect with alumni around the world during a free, hourlong virtual networking event through GW’s Alumni Industry Networks. (alumni.gwu.edu/networking)

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER

WORLDWIDE

Events are taking place across the globe to welcome local members of the Class of 2019 into the GW alumni community. (alumni.gwu.edu/events)

THROUGH OCTOBER 6

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Corcoran School of the Arts & Design exhibition “6.13.89: The Cancelling of the Mapplethorpe Exhibition” presents never-before-seen archival materials that explore the highly politicized and publicized cancellation of the 1989 exhibition, “Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment,” at what was then the Corcoran Gallery of Art. The show’s closure reverberated throughout the city and the wider museum community, and has long sparked discussions on the role of artistic freedom and the dangers of censorship. (corcoran.gwu.edu)

16 / OCTOBER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The eighth annual Blush Lunch benefits the GW Mammovan—a self-contained, mobile breast cancer screening site committed to making early detection possible for all women in the D.C. area, regardless of their ability to pay. The Mammovan travels to corporate and community sites, screening more than 2,500 women each year. (go.gwu.edu/blushlunch)

21/ OCTOBER

NEW YORK

Come meet GW students interested in the fields of media, communications and journalism, who will be in New York City over fall break as part of a career development program, GW Career Quest. (alumni.gwu.edu/events)

THROUGH DECEMBER 15

WASHINGTON, D.C.

A diverse group of emerging and established contemporary artists and filmmakers scrutinize the garment industry in “Fast Fashion/Slow Art,” an exhibition films and video installations at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design. (calendar.gwu.edu/fast-fashionslow-art)


COLONIALS WEEKEND

20-22 / SEPTEMBER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Celebrate the people and places that make GW unforgettable at this year’s redesigned and enhanced Colonials Weekend, which includes the events below plus many more. (colonialswweekend.gwu.edu)



FRIDAY, SEPT. 20

-  **50th Reunion Reception:** Join classmates from the Class of '69 for a special day of activities planned to mark the occasion.
-  **Deans' Receptions:** Mingle with fellow alumni, reconnect with faculty and hear updates from your school’s dean.
-  **Kickoff Party:** Connect with friends and classmates at an evening of food, drinks and dancing under the main-attraction tent in the heart of campus.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 21

-  **Legacy Admissions Info Session:** Alumni with college-bound children can hear about the wealth of opportunities and programs available at GW, then enjoy a tour of the Foggy Bottom Campus.
-  **A Conversation With President Thomas LeBlanc:** In an intimate, interview-style conversation and audience Q&A, GW President Thomas LeBlanc shares his vision for the university as it approaches its bicentennial.
-  **Buff and Blue BBQ:** Wear your spirit attire to University Yard and meet the men’s basketball team and new coach Jamion Christian while enjoying some acoustic blues music and barbecue.
-  **Vern Harvest:** Check out a family-friendly, fall-themed event on the Mount Vernon Campus quad, featuring pumpkin carving, hot cider and lawn games.
-  **Classes From GW’s Best:** Informative and engaging TED Talk-style presentations feature prominent GW alumni and faculty members discussing unique themes and timely topics.
-  **Acapellapalooza:** See high-energy performances by GW’s student a cappella groups at their first concert of the season.
-  **Class Reunion Parties:** Members of the milestone reunion classes of '94, '99, '09 and '14 gather to dance and celebrate memories and friendships at unique venues in D.C.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

-  **Jazz Brunch:** These live jazz performances showcase GW’s talented students and faculty, coupled with a buffet brunch.
-  **Political Discourse:** It’s a lively, theme-driven panel discussion by alumni and faculty on the hottest topics shaping today’s political landscape.

**Final schedule subject to change prior to the event. Visit colonialswweekend.gwu.edu for the latest information.*



INNOVATION

Waste Not

New businesses addressing food surplus, throwaway corporate gifts and plastic trash in landfills topped GW's annual New Venture Competition.

In an effort to alleviate both the strain of people facing food insecurity and of restaurant food waste, a GW alumna and a student have designed a tool to bring together the two groups' complementary needs.

The online marketplace Last Call works with restaurants to offer surplus meals at

a discount—\$5 or less—and alerts its users to the deal. It was born out of the experience of co-founder and CEO Erin McGeoy, BBA '18, an athlete and scholarship recipient who skipped meals and relied, in part, on free food from university events to help fill her plate.

"Businesses face huge barriers to getting food from their restaurant to a food pantry, resulting in millions of meals going to waste each year while millions of Americans go to bed hungry every day," co-founder Chloe King, a senior at the Elliott School of International Affairs, said in April during the final round of GW's New Venture Competition. "We help businesses sell out instead of throw out."

The team won big in the finals, topping the competition's social-venture track and taking home \$45,000 in cash prizes, plus a \$100,000 Google Cloud package.

The competition—organized by GW's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship within the Office of the Vice President for Research—offered teams the

chance to compete for a portion of \$200,000 in unrestricted cash prizes, as well as more than \$600,000 in in-kind prizes.

The New Venture Competition this year drew more than 215 teams. Winners were selected from three tracks: social, tech and new ventures. Each of the first-place track winners was awarded \$20,000 to fund their ventures.

Corcoran School graduate student Edith Leiva represented Dulceology, which won the new-venture track. The online bakery sells caramel sandwich cookies for corporations to give to clients, as opposed to traditional small items like pens, key fobs or lanyards. One-third of corporate promotional gifts and keepsakes are discarded, Leiva said.

Manyung Emma Hon's Plast-Ways won the tech track. The junior mathematics major's startup uses naturally occurring, plastic-eating microbes that would expand the lifetime of landfills by reducing the time plastic takes to degrade, from 1,000 years to as few as six weeks. —Tatyana Hopkins

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Too Often The First And Only

#MeToo attorney and new Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights, JD '82, has spent years working for equality and inclusivity for others—and herself.

By Ruth Steinhardt



In late 2017, when PBS cut ties with anchor Tavis Smiley over multiple allegations of sexual misconduct, it was an early sign that the #MeToo movement—then in its infancy—would reveal exploitative behavior by some of America’s most established cultural figures. Few people knew that sooner than Grace Speights, JD '82, a partner in the labor and employment practice at Morgan Lewis, which was brought on to defend the public broadcaster against Smiley’s suit for breach of contract.

“When the #MeToo movement broke, I think the biggest surprise for most people was that so many cases of sexual harassment and abuse had gone unreported for so many years,” Speights says. “But there was a power dynamic there. These were women dealing with men who were very powerful in their organizations relative to them. Men had the ability to control almost every aspect of their

work environment: pay, whether you got a role, whether you worked again.”

Speights has been in a number of rooms where the people in power didn’t look like her. And when she took over as chair of the GW Board of Trustees in June, Speights became the first woman and the first African American to do so.

“When I look back over my life, I’ve often been the first, and many times I have been the only—the only woman, the only African American—in the positions I’ve achieved,” she says.

Her goal now is to try to ensure that doesn’t remain the case. At Morgan Lewis, she leads a team that investigates and assesses organizations’ culture, including allegations of sexual misconduct. The intent of these

investigations is to create safe, inclusive work environments—conditions under which employees from all backgrounds can flourish.

Speights’ own background differs from many of her peers. Growing up in South Philadelphia in the 1960s and '70s, Speights and her best friend were known as “the step sisters”—not due to a family relationship, but because the two studious girls couldn’t be enticed further from home than the front steps of the Speights family’s rented row house.

“To tell you the truth, I was afraid of letting my mother down, so while everybody else was running around, I did not get into any mischief,” she says.

Speights’ mother, Ellen Venters, whom she calls her

“hero and role model,” was a single parent who had kicked out her abusive husband when Speights was a small child. Venters worked long hours six days a week at a local drapery factory. Still, only as a young adult did Speights become aware of the extent of her family’s poverty.

“Despite the conditions I grew up with—the gangs in the neighborhood, clothes made from scrap, scratching and itching every day—despite all of that, I thought we were rich,” she says. “I had a mom who worked hard and cared for me, and I had a lot of love.”

Speights’ hard work eventually landed her a spot at the University of Pennsylvania, but not without a lucky intercession.

She had been accepted to, and planned to attend, a small state school. Then, at a luncheon where she was to receive a scholarship from a local organization, she happened to sit next to a man named Bill Brown, one of only a few African American partners at major law firms in Philadelphia at the time. Speights says that Brown believed she was attending a university beneath her academic achievement. So, she says, Brown arranged for her to meet with officials in the admissions office at the Ivy League’s UPenn. That spring, Speights was accepted and received a scholarship that paid for her tuition and campus housing.

“That whole experience taught me about the need to give back,” she says. “My motto is: It’s important to be the Bill Brown in someone’s life.”

As an undergraduate, she flirted with medicine and teaching as vocations, but quickly settled on the law.

“I really was looking to come out and do good,” she says. “I’d seen gang warfare in my neighborhood; I’d seen the conduct of police in my neighborhood. I saw how hard

my mom worked in that factory and how workers there seemed to have no real rights. So I wanted to basically right the wrongs.”

That drive brought her to GW Law, which offered her a full scholarship. As a law student, she liked clinical work for the practical good it did and the hands-on experience it gave her with clients. Outside of class, she and best friend Donna Hill Staton—now a fellow GW board member—went to “I can’t tell you how many” Prince concerts. And in 1981, she landed a summer associateship with Morgan Lewis, where, except for a two-year clerkship for a federal judge, she has spent her entire career.

At Morgan Lewis, Speights began in the general litigation group, where she eventually made partner, specializing in commercial litigation.

“Frankly,” she says, “I hated general commercial litigation.”

But when the Civil Rights Act was amended in 1991 to allow people in protected categories to sue for discrimination before a jury (previously all such suits went before judges alone), the firm had a sudden need for attorneys with both an understanding of labor and employment law and experience trying jury cases. Speights had both, and her position was strengthened, for once, by her demographics.

“Rightly or wrongly, clients believed if a woman or a black person is suing us in a discrimination case and we have to go before a jury, it may help to have a woman or a black person representing us,” Speights says.

At first, Speights was leery of the implication: that she had been hired, cynically, for the optics of her race and gender. But she came to see both as substantive, not superficial, advantages.

“I can say to a client, ‘You’ve got problems here,’ because

GRACE SPEIGHTS ON...

ENROLLMENT

“Our goal is to reduce the size of the undergraduate class by 20 percent over the next five years. If you have a smaller class, the student experience should be a lot better. We are bursting at the seams right now.”

STEM

“We have to think about STEM broadly and take a cross-discipline approach. The work that we do in terms of politics and political science—there’s a big data piece to that, and that’s technology that goes with STEM.”

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

“We have a lot of graduate programs—how many of them are great and how many of them are preeminent? We need to do that inventory. Are there maybe some programs we don’t need to have?”

HER

“I want to spend more time on campus. The students are very important to me, and I do want to find a way to interact with them more. I also want to interact more with the faculty, with the professors, with the staff. I’m a people person and I like to learn from talking to people.”

I can see through the lens of the woman, of the African American, and can understand why they would

believe they were being discriminated against,” she says. “So I have been able—and that’s what I have enjoyed most—not to teach my clients how to discriminate and sexually harass people without getting in trouble, but how not to do any of that in the first place.”

Speights’ three decades in the trenches of workplace discrimination entered a new context in the last few years when the #MeToo movement began to expose entrenched toxicities in corporate culture. Around the time PBS hired her to represent it in Smiley’s suit, Speights realized that such cases were likely to increase: With the movement amplifying their stories, women were more likely to feel empowered to name longtime offenders.

So Speights assembled a group of several dozen women in Morgan Lewis to work on culture assessments for clients. The group interviews corporate leaders and employees, noting problems and recommending change. In 2018, *The American Lawyer* magazine named Speights “Attorney of the Year” for her work on “many of the investigations of the organizations whose #MeToo stories have made headlines in the past year,” including the Humane Society, NPR and PBS.

Now, Speights and the group spend much of their time traveling, working with companies that want to discreetly assess and, if necessary, correct their culture before a public scandal forces them to do so. That corporate proactivity has given Speights hope that the days of unreported harassment and slaps on the wrist are over.

“I really do believe #MeToo is a watershed movement,” Speights says. “It’s a new paradigm.”

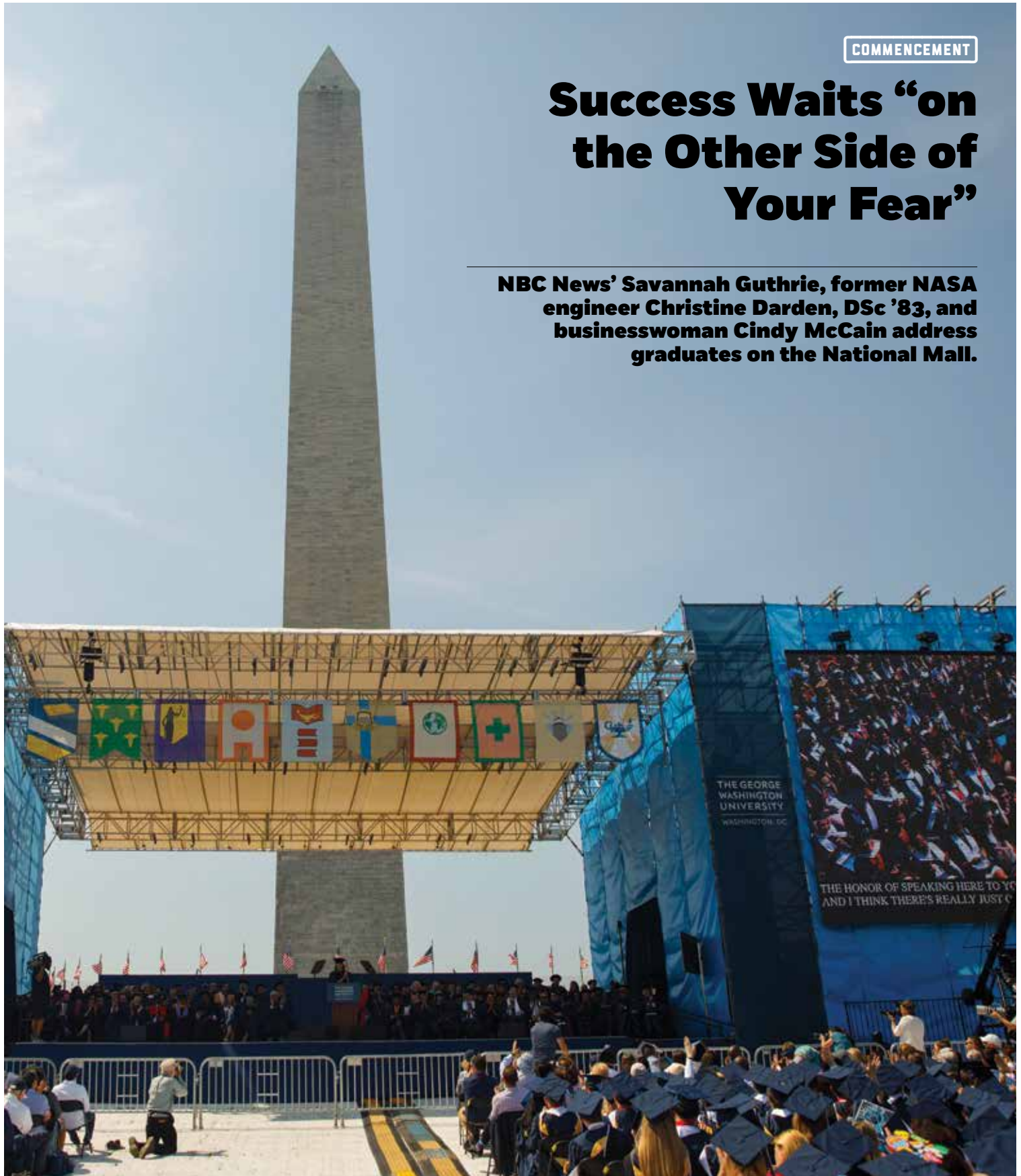
But there are also unintended negative consequences. Speights says she talks to some leaders who say they’re afraid to travel or network with female employees as a result of the movement. Her response? “Guys, stop it.”

“We can’t use the #MeToo movement as an excuse for not mentoring or professionally developing women,” Speights says. “All you have to do is, one, behave yourself—How do you talk to your sister, mother, grandmother? Make sure you respect the women you work with. And two, have faith in your HR system. In all the years I’ve been practicing, there have only been approximately two cases in which I believe the claim of sexual harassment was made up. Two. In 35 years.”

COMMENCEMENT

Success Waits “on the Other Side of Your Fear”

NBC News’ Savannah Guthrie, former NASA engineer Christine Darden, DSc ’83, and businesswoman Cindy McCain address graduates on the National Mall.



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One of the “biggest, craziest jumps” Savannah Guthrie made came just after law school, when she thought she had her future planned. She had a clerkship lined up with a federal judge, but she realized she didn’t want it.

“I still had that nagging hope that one day I could really make it in television news,” the co-anchor of NBC News’ *Today* show and chief legal correspondent for the network told GW graduates at their Commencement in May on the National Mall. “And so, what I did next was insane and unthinkable: I quit, before I even started.”

It was a moment of truth, she said; a moment to jump.

A few months later, Guthrie found a job with a legal network looking for a lawyer with TV experience. Opportunities and challenges like those illustrated a point she wanted to make to the graduates: Life doesn’t follow a straight line.

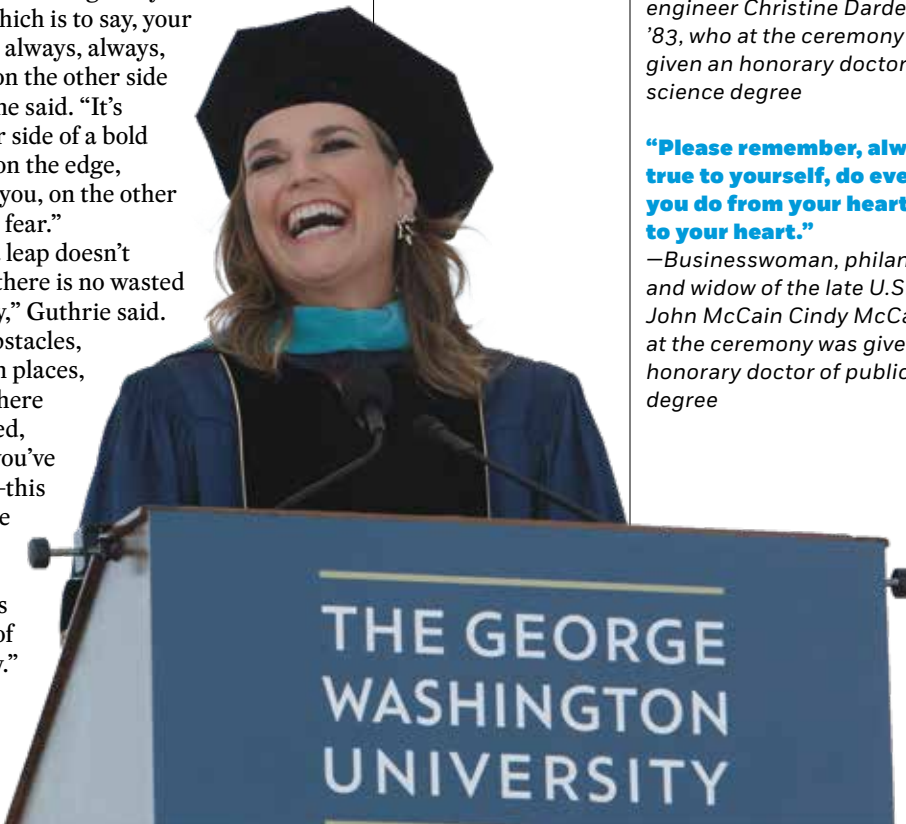
“It was a zig-zagging, dotted, sometimes broken line, with pauses and detours and beginnings that ended too soon and endings that turned out to be beginnings,” she said. Guthrie advised graduates to think big and then head in that “general direction.”

“Your blossoming and your growth—which is to say, your success—is always, always, inevitably, on the other side of a risk,” she said. “It’s on the other side of a bold choice. It’s on the edge, waiting for you, on the other side of your fear.”

Even if a leap doesn’t work out, “there is no wasted opportunity,” Guthrie said.

“Your obstacles, your broken places, the spots where you’ve healed, the things you’ve overcome—this is the source of your strength, and it also is the source of your beauty.”

GW



Watch Guthrie’s speech and the full ceremony at commencement.gwu.edu.



More Graduation Wisdom:

“As you graduate and move into the future, if you haven’t already found your passion, try to perceive what it is you really enjoy. Try to move in that direction and to remove or go around any roadblocks or detours that you may encounter. Most important, however, keep moving and persist.”

—Former NASA “human computer” and lauded aerospace engineer Christine Darden, DSc ’83, who at the ceremony was given an honorary doctor of science degree

“Please remember, always be true to yourself, do everything you do from your heart. Listen to your heart.”

—Businesswoman, philanthropist and widow of the late U.S. Sen. John McCain Cindy McCain, who at the ceremony was given an honorary doctor of public service degree

“The next time you hear fear whispering into your ear, remember your time at the George Washington University and every lesson learned that taught you to be brave, to look fear straight in the eyes, to say never again will you cause me to doubt myself and tell me I’m not good enough. Because that is not true.”

—Student speaker Tyriana Evans, BA ’19

“I charge you to develop greater empathy every day, in your personal and professional interactions and as part of your lifelong journey of learning. I believe that what you discover—from others, about others and with others—will have a positive influence on you and your community. Each of us has something important to contribute to our society. Make your contributions while lifting up others, too.”

—GW President Thomas LeBlanc

Q&A

'An Ever Tightening Gordian Knot'

A new report finds the fate of spent nuclear fuel in the U.S. hopelessly tangled and calls for a radical "reset."

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The spent nuclear fuel, more than 80,000 tons of it, sits at dozens of sites across the U.S., waiting for somewhere to be. It's supposed to be deep beneath the surface, a thousand-year-to-all-time solution, but decades of effort and billions of dollars have led only to political stalemate. So last year, a group of experts—including Allison Macfarlane, a GW professor and director of the Institute for International Science and Technology Policy—convened five public meetings hosted by GW and Stanford University. In a report last fall, the group concluded that the nation's spent nuclear fuel is "caught in an ever tightening Gordian Knot," an impossible tangle of science, law and politics, which won't be untied. Instead the group calls for a "reset," a new start. And this time they want to bypass politicians altogether.

Macfarlane, who chaired the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission from 2012 to 2014, discussed the nuclear knot and what may be the nation's best shot at beating it.

—**Danny Freedman, BA '01**

How did we get into this mess?

Well we created the mess—all the waste—and we created it without having a plan for what we were going to do with it.

In the 1980s, there was a concerted effort for the government to do something with this waste, and so they did, with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. And it was actually quite a well-thought-out piece of legislation.

In 1986, when the Department of Energy got down to three top candidates—one was in the Texas panhandle, one was at the Nevada test site where



Yucca Mountain is, and one was in Washington state—Congress balked at the price tag associated with characterizing those sites and then started to have political battles. The congressional delegates from Washington and Texas were pretty senior and they basically shoved it all off on Nevada, which had a very junior congressional delegation. They amended the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1987 and basically said the only place we're going to look is Yucca Mountain.

Nevada has adamantly opposed that legislation. They call it the "Screw Nevada" bill. And Congress really hasn't had a stomach to go forward: The licensing process was only half completed, and even if it were completed, Nevada would still oppose it, and you need access to water and other things that the state has power over.

What are we doing with this stuff, if we're not storing it?

It's all at the reactors where it was produced, and some high-level waste is at the Department of Energy nuclear weapons complex facilities. So it's at 65 sites around the country. And that doesn't seem like a good plan, does it?

Every nuclear power plant has to have a cooling pool for spent fuel. But the pools were never intended to have the spent fuel very long. Most pools are full, or close to full, so most plants have these steel-lined, concrete overpack storage casks where the fuel can go after about five years in the pool, until some of the radiation has dissipated.

This is totally temporary. They're licensed for 20 years, and we don't know how long they'll last. Of the early ones that were licensed in the 1980s, their licenses have been extended once. Maybe they're going to be extended twice, we'll see. We're still trying to understand some of the aging issues associated with these casks.

Is a "reset" possible?

Sure. If we didn't think it were possible, we wouldn't have done this. What really struck us is, if you look at other countries that are making much more progress—like Canada, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland—it's not their governments that are managing the spent fuel, it's the utility companies that made the spent fuel. They're the ones in charge of managing and finding a final disposal facility. It works a lot better because they have a financial incentive and they own all the stuff—they know where it is, they know how old it is, they know its status.

In the past, groups in the U.S. have offered up different models of managing this material. The Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future that President Obama put together, which I was a member of, recommended a federal corporation, like New York's Port Authority or the Tennessee Valley Authority, which are corporations but still government entities. What we're saying in this report is: Don't bother with that. Just give it over to the nuclear industry. They made this, they know what it is, they should manage it.

Of course, companies have their own interests. Were there concerns about that?

Initially I think some of us had those concerns, but it will all be regulated, right? So it just sort of dawned on a lot of us that, well actually, maybe this is a really good idea. Maybe this is the one way to make it work. Because right now, politicians aren't really interested in solving this problem, they're interested in getting elected again.

It would have to be established by the nuclear industry, but also be independent from them; you can't have the CEOs meddling. It would have a CEO, a board structure, a

management structure. That will last a lot longer than having it be a federal agency where you have changing faces every two to four years. And then you would still have a role for congressional oversight, and it would be regulated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, just like reactors. We're comfortable with nuclear power plants being run by corporations, why shouldn't we be comfortable with this?

The other panels, as you said, have sounded the alarm and called for similar changes. What's different this time?

With all the other ones there was some kind of government role. Now we're saying: Let's forget about the government. After 30 years of failure, that's pretty good evidence for me that they're not succeeding.

The report also advocates for a more participatory approach, one that gives communities the chance to consent or even volunteer. Will they volunteer?

Well, they already have. That's kind of the sad thing about this whole situation. There's a site in southeastern New Mexico and one in Texas, and they're sort of ready to dip their toes into this process. But because Congress is just so focused on Yucca Mountain, we're going to lose these people. I think a combination looking for volunteers, but also approaching communities that are comfortable with nuclear technology, is important.

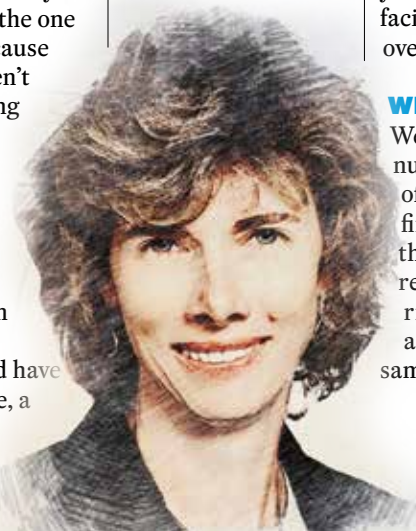
What's the incentive for those communities?

Well, they'll have jobs. These projects take a long time. First you have to do years' worth of technical analyses, then it's going to take a while to construct it and load the fuel, and then you want to monitor it for a hundred years. There are not many industrial facilities that you're sure will provide jobs for over a hundred years.

Where do the recommendations go?

We've been to Congress. We talked to the nuclear industry folks. The next step is to offer more detail about the legal and the financial piece of this; those were questions that we got. It's a long shot, but I think really we need outside-of-the-box thinking right now, because we're not getting anywhere just hammering away at the same old arguments. ☐

Allison Macfarlane



ARTS

My Faire Lady

When Virginia's Renaissance festival folded in 1999, alumna Cornelia Rutherford put up her \$52,000 retirement to save it.

By Matthew Stoss

D

Dismayed by the folding of Virginia's Renaissance festival in 1999, Cornelia Rutherford, MFS '86, a refugee "cast member," decided to resurrect what had been made dead.

"I found out what a drug it is to make people smile," says Rutherford, who turns 68 in September and is retired from careers in health care information systems and working at a pathology lab. "When you can make people laugh, it feeds your soul. And when they closed that fair after four years, they left a lot of us dressed up and nowhere to play. We went the whole year with nothing, and it was like withdrawal, and every time we got together, we'd fall into a pattern of bouncing bits off each other.

"They need this art form to make them whole, and part of the art form is sharing it with the people. That's what compelled me to start this fair. It was killing me not to do this anymore because in my regular job I did a lot of sad things, and this was a happy thing."

So Rutherford helped save it.

On April 19, 2002, she and a handful of her fellow fair 1.0 veterans restarted the festival, dubbing it the Virginia Renaissance Faire. Seventeen years later, the VaRF is a self-sustaining nonprofit with hundreds of thousands of rainy day dollars in the bank.



▲
Virginia Renaissance Faire founder Cornelia Rutherford dressed as Mildred Cecil, Lady Burghley (1526 to 1589), an English noblewoman who served as an adviser to Queen Elizabeth I.

Operating on about a \$170,000 budget, the handmade and largely volunteer event draws, depending on how much it rains, 17,000 to 21,000 "patrons" every year for five weekends in May and June.

The VaRF has lately outgrown its leased home of 15 years—a sloped clearing with limited parking just outside Fredericksburg in the Lake Anna Winery's backyard—and is thus trying to move to a nearby 500 or so acres. There, for a price of around \$2 million, Rutherford can establish a permanent home for the VaRF and, ideally, build a year-round common-use space for Spotsylvania County, 60-some miles south of Washington, D.C. She and the VaRF continue to raise funds, but Rutherford is the force that made it all happen. At 50 years old, she just had to cash out her, at the time, \$52,000 retirement stash and blow the limits on several credit cards to debt herself up by around

\$90,000.

"If I had known what I know now, there would be no Virginia Renaissance Faire," says Rutherford, who also has a bachelor's degree in physical anthropology from Ohio State. "It would've scared the living daylight out of me—and I should've been scared but I didn't know enough at the time to know how daunting a task it would be. All I knew was that I really missed it."

Rutherford's daughter, Emily Whittacre, got her into Renaissance fairs. Whittacre worked the VaRF's predecessor, which ran from 1996 to 1999, and Rutherford, with her affinity for history and performing, got recruited. She made friends and found a real world application for her affected English accent that, she claims, has passed for the real thing among our former Colonial potentates.

Seems plausible. Rutherford is as entertaining as she is quotable, speaking in aphorism,

discouraging in adage. She detests snakes—“Locomotin’ without legs ain’t natural,” she says, the native Ohioan summoning a Southern accent—and she describes one man as looking “like an unmade bed.” Ideas to her can be “intellectually orgasmic” and she says that dressing like an English woman from 1568—the year the VaRF is set—is tantamount to “wearing a sofa for hours.”

At the fair, Rutherford does a little bit of everything. Stacey Hamilton, MFA '19, who plays a 30-something Queen Elizabeth, called Rutherford their “Faire mom.”

On the second to last day of this year’s fair, Rutherford even gives directions to lost and would-be patrons when they call the main VaRF number. It is also Rutherford’s number.

“I’m sorry,” she says, reaching for the non-Apple smartphone playing the Ohio State fight song inside her shirt. “My bosom’s ringing again.”

The early years of the resurrected fair weren’t as good as these. Before 2004, it was an itinerant happening. A small troupe roamed Virginia putting on makeshift shows wherever they could, entertaining themselves as much as their patrons—fields, parks and wineries among their bivouacked venues.

“One day,” longtime production director Chris Pantazis says, “we had five people.”

Pantazis, a biology professor at John Tyler Community College in suburban Richmond, says three of them ended up joining the VaRF. Typical crowds in those years were in the low hundreds, peaking in Northern Virginia where most of the cast and crew lived.

The old fair also was near Fredericksburg and it left a vestigial cachet, boosted by the proximity of the Maryland Renaissance Festival in not-so-far-away Annapolis. So it’s an

area with a taste for the English Renaissance—the meat of which happened, roughly, between Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

“I’d think it was a big deal if we got more than 400 people to show up one day,” says Meredith Eriksen, the VaRF’s general manager and budget master for about 15 years. Eriksen is known as “She Who Says No,” the business degree-bearing realist to Rutherford’s fluttering dreamer. Just ask her about the Faire’s early days.

“I would’ve smothered it in its cradle,” she says, laughing. “I would’ve said, ‘There’s no way we will ever make it work. This is dumb. This is impossible from a financial perspective.’ ... But Cornelia is just irreplaceable. Her strength of belief makes you want to believe. It’s like, ‘Well, I gotta help her make this happen. Look at her. She’s going to do it anyway.’”

Slowly, the staff and cast made it work by adopting some version of *We’ve got to save Cornie’s golden years since she mortgaged them for our fair*. They established a five-person board of directors anchored by Eriksen, Pantazis and Rutherford, who kept the VaRF together in its first years with sheer hustle and mulish will.

When the Faire lost \$32,000 worth of tents, props and costumes—someone cut the lock on their self-storage unit—during the Faire’s penurious travelin’ days, Rutherford made a handshake deal to secure new tents from a Northern Virginia vendor. Over the next several years, Rutherford bought and paid off the tents. They’re still used today. Rutherford also has recouped her retirement (and more). She says it took her 12 years.

“It’s only money,” Rutherford says. “After all that, I made something special. I did it with the help of a lot of people and



Stacey Hamilton, MFA '19, has for years portrayed Queen Elizabeth I at the Virginia Renaissance Faire. In this issue's installment of "Institutional Knowledge," she teaches us how to dress like an Elizabethan. Page 64.

I jumped off a cliff and they followed. For whatever reason, they followed—and look what we did. We did that. We did this thing from nothing. We did it. And if I hadn't, I would go to my grave wondering if I could have.”

The Virginia Renaissance Faire, one of hundreds nationwide, operates with a complement of about 150, depending on the year. This includes the staff—first aid, groundskeepers, vendors—and the costumed performers who do 16th-century-flavored improv and instruct at the various tents, giving the VaRF its educational emphasis. There’s an armory, a scullery, pillories, and tents where you can learn about, among other period things, naval navigation and bookbinding. There’s also food of the English Renaissance—

even the grownups giggle at the “fartes”—and stage acts: dancers, jousters, minstrels and magicians. A few are paid performers. They professionally ride the “fair circuit” to pry a living from a hobby.

Back on the second to last day of the 2019 Faire, Rutherford is making her morning rounds. She’s not dressed as the historical Mildred Cecil, Lady Burghley—an adviser to Queen Elizabeth I—as she will be when she closes the day with a reverent peroration of that *Tempest* soliloquy you may remember from a high school English class.

We are such stuff as dreams are made on...

That’s a tradition at Cornelia Rutherford’s show.

“People are not going to remember me as the world’s worst housekeeper—although maybe they should, because I am,” she says later. “They’re not going to remember me as an oboe player or someone who got a forensic science degree from GW or went to *The Ohio State University* or the crazy cat lady or the lady with the goofy fingernail polish I get when it’s not fair season. They’re going to remember that once upon a time there was a lady that made this thing happen.

“As long as my fair exists, I will live and people will be smiling because of something we did, that everyone said we couldn’t do—it wouldn’t work. They were wrong. I just think it’s an example to anybody that if you have an idea and you really believe in it and you’re willing to cast fear aside and just put your head down and go for it, you can do it. And you know what? If it hadn’t worked out, and at the end of the year everyone said, ‘Screw you lady, this sucked,’ it was just money and I’ll make it back, and I tried. What the hell.”

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HISTORY

Surveying Diplomacy

In 1986, geodesist Robert Russman, BS '80, had a role in finalizing a lingering component of the Camp David Accords: a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

By Matthew Stoss

F

For years after the signing of the Camp David Accords—the 1978 talks stewarded by President Jimmy Carter that in 1979 put peace in writing between Israel and Egypt—the treaty had loose ends. Robert Russman, BS '80, helped tie one of them.

In 1986, Russman, then a 48-year-old high-ranking geodesist in what was then called the Defense Mapping Agency, performed an act of micro-diplomacy. He persuaded rival survey teams to coexist long enough to plot their respective versions of the Egyptian-Israeli border, which had been contested since 1967 when Israel seized the Sinai Peninsula during the Six-Day War.

Each country would later pitch its borders to a tribunal in Geneva. The tribunal ruled in 1988 for Egypt and forced Israel to return seized lands, including the very coveted gulf-side resort town of Taba.

“Without having this settled, there was not going to be an agreement and the ambassadors would not be exchanged,” says

Russman, now 81, by phone in June from his home in Harrisonburg, Va., three months after the 40th anniversary of Egypt and Israel’s peace treaty. “That was the bottom line. This was a very important part of the agreement.”

The United States acted as mediator, shipping an all-star team of diplomats to Cairo. Russman joined them as a technical expert and he would oversee and assuage the feuding survey teams, each with a roster of five or six men. At the DMA, now called the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the Rockville, Md., native did defense maps but says he rarely dealt with boundaries. And if he did, the boundaries weren’t separating enemies.

“Two of the [surveying] marks between the countries were only a meter apart,” Russman says. “And I said something one day—I think it was to the Israeli team—I said, ‘Why don’t you just divide the difference in half and call that the boundary?’ And he said, ‘Well, our blood’s in this sand and we’re not going to do that.’ So, I never brought that up again.”

To shore up the treaty parts still dangling, Egypt and Israel had to agree on a border and, very notably, to whom Taba belonged. When Russman arrived in July 1986 for what was supposed to be a weeklong assignment, distrust had forced a standoff. Russman says the survey teams were afraid to do

their jobs because they would have to cross the disputed border. This was a potentially lethal risk, and theodolites make poor weapons.

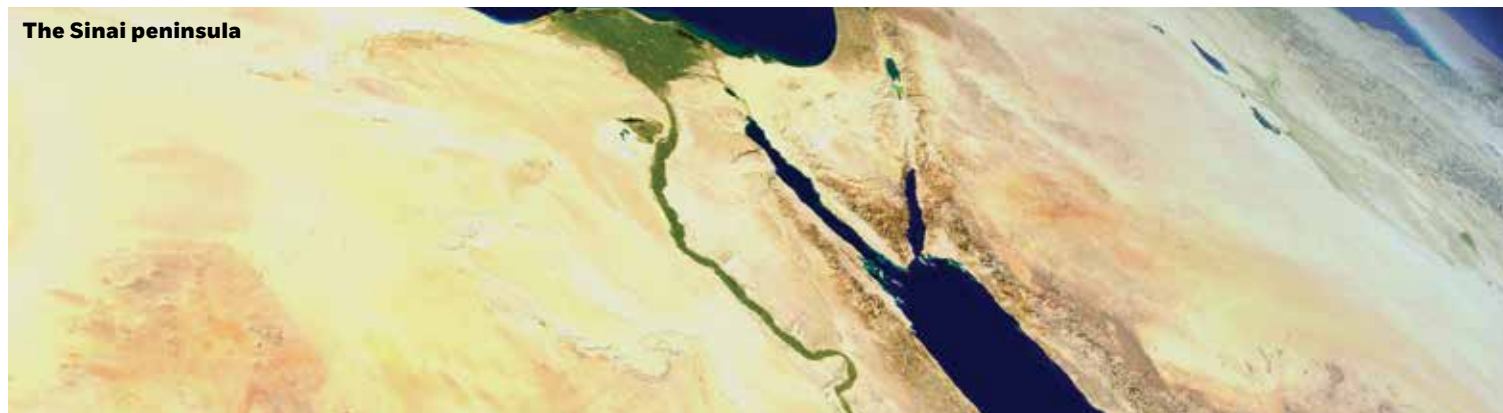
The sides, Russman says, eventually found detente in the shared tongue of surveying.

“They talked the same language—and these weren’t political guys,” Russman says. “These were technical guys.”

When the two sides proceeded after a mollification, it was with a Russman-proposed arbitrary “datum,” or neutral starting point, from which each side could plot its border. Since maps at a high enough magnification are classified for military purposes, Russman’s arbitrary datum meant that neither country would need to let the other peek at its cartographic intel.

With their data safe, Russman says, the surveying progressed amicably. He ended up staying for 52 days as the teams, relieved of peril, surveyed and made their borders, and the first treaty between an Arab country and Israel eventually went final.

“I thought it was a really great experience,” Russman says. “Most of the time we were in the field, climbing and surveying, and we were working with people on a very sensitive situation. I think it was one of the most exciting jobs I’ve ever been on.”



The Sinai peninsula

ISTOCK.COM/HARVEPINO



ART

A Glimpse of What's 'NEXT'

At the Corcoran School's annual thesis exhibition, students in disciplines from dance to photography display their work.

M

Margaret Wroblewski, MA '19, has been a daily Metro commuter for years, and like other riders, the Olney, Md., native has

For her master's thesis, Margaret Wroblewski photographed people who have been harassed on public transportation. Wroblewski says her personal experience inspired the project.

had unpleasant experiences. But a particularly frightening encounter with an aggressive man a few years ago pushed her from discomfort to action.

"It was a fairly small incident, but it got me really angry," she says. "I thought, 'I have to do something about this, it's disgusting.'"

Her master's thesis project at the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, entitled "Underground," is the fruit of that resolution. It features 25 large-scale portraits of riders who have been sexually harassed on public transit, most in Washington but some from other cities on the East Coast. Alongside the portraits, the victims share a short excerpt of their stories.

Wroblewski's work was among those featured in NEXT 2019, the Corcoran's annual thesis exhibition—including the work of graduate students and senior undergrads in programs ranging from digital media design, fine art and photography to theater, dance and exhibition design—which ran in the Flagg Building for about three weeks this spring.

As part of the exhibition, the building's rotunda was occupied by large-scale installations like senior Kelly Tumulty's "A Place to Rest," a dreamlike forest diorama where bones peek through moss. Downstairs, senior Seung Hyun Rhee's "Homesick" explored the tension between his adopted hometown of Washington and his home country of South Korea via photographic collages of Korean pop stars superimposed on spaces like his D.C. apartment.

Upstairs on the building's bridge, visitors at the show's opening sat meditatively in real Metro seats installed next to Wroblewski's photographs. The effect was to create a sense of intimacy by putting viewers alongside survivors.

"I've had women reach out to me and say, 'Thank you for creating this project—now I know I'm not alone,'" says Wroblewski, who solicited stories and sitters via Instagram beginning in 2017. "I want to give space for women to talk about what happened to them and share it." —Ruth Steinhardt



Nate Fasnacht

BASEBALL

Phillies, Red Sox Draft Fasnacht, D'Alessandro

The Philadelphia Phillies drafted Atlantic 10 Player of the Year and GW junior shortstop Nate Fasnacht in the eighth round of the 2019 Major League Baseball draft. Fasnacht, who hit .372 with 11 home runs and 60 RBIs this season, went 240th overall, becoming the highest drafted GW player since Eric Cantrell went in the seventh round in 2010.

Senior first baseman Dom D'Alessandro—who had the second highest batting average in Division I (.423) and led the A-10 in home runs (13), slugging percentage (.668) and on-base percentage (.506)—got drafted by the Red Sox. Boston picked D'Alessandro in the 22nd round. He went 677th overall. The MLB draft has 40 rounds.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Rizzotti again on U.S. national team coaching staff

GW women's basketball coach Jennifer Rizzotti will again serve as an assistant coach on the USA Basketball Women's National Team when it competes in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. This will be Rizzotti's eighth stint as a national team assistant. South Carolina's Dawn Staley is the national team's head coach.

SOFTBALL

Jenna Cone Named A-10 MVP

After leading GW to a program-record 42 wins and a share of the Atlantic 10 title, Jenna Cone was named the league's 2019 Softball Player of the Year. The junior third baseman hit .381 (72-for-189) with 20 home runs and 67 RBIs. She is the program's all-time leader in home runs, RBIs and total bases.

PHILANTHROPY

New, \$5 Million Institute to Fight Online Misleading Information

Knight Foundation is funding GW's Institute of Data, Democracy, and Politics.


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A new research institute at GW will fight distorted and misleading online information and work to educate policymakers and journalists on how to grapple with the threat to democracy posed by digital propaganda and deception.

The Institute for Data, Democracy, and Politics—supported by a \$5 million investment from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation—will be a research hub for tracking the spread of distorted information online, sharing research and hosting events on combating disinformation.

IDDP researchers will produce timely publications about the role of online content related to current events to better inform public policy debates. They also will assist journalists in developing stories that help correct distorted public narratives.

Steven Livingston, professor of media and public affairs and of international affairs, will be the inaugural director of the institute, which is a cross-disciplinary initiative of the School of Media and Public Affairs. IDDP will bring together GW faculty members specializing in data analysis and the study of technology and media and will collaborate with the Poynter Institute. Poynter's PolitiFact is the largest political fact-checking news organization in the United States and winner of a Pulitzer Prize.

Knight Foundation was founded nearly 70 years ago by the late Knight brothers, John and James, of Knight-Ridder Newspapers. Today, Knight Foundation invests in fields spanning journalism, technology and the arts to foster informed and engaged communities and promote democracy. 

Briefly...

In April in Washington, D.C., the inaugural GW Leadership Advisory Council held its first meeting. This group of presidentially appointed, distinguished alumni advises GW President Thomas J. LeBlanc and university leadership on strategic initiatives intended to further GW's efforts to achieve preeminence. Learn more about the council: go.gwu.edu/gwlac.



UPDATES AND ARRIVALS

Museum studies professor and Assistant Director for Academic Affairs at the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design **Kym Rice, PhD '15**, will serve as interim director of the school following the departure of **Sanjit Sethi**, who became president of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor of Law **Christopher A. Bracey** will serve as interim dean of GW Law, following Dean **Blake D. Morant** stepping down to return to the faculty after five years in the post.

John Lach, an electrical and computer engineering professor at the University of Virginia and director of its engineering school's cross-cutting initiatives, has been named dean of GW's School of Engineering and Applied Science. Associate Dean **Rumana Riffat** has served as interim dean since **David Dolling** stepped down last summer after 10 years in the role.

The Columbian College has named **Mary Tschirhart**, a professor at the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at Ohio State University, the new director of the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration. She succeeds **Kathryn Newcomer**, who will return to full-time teaching and research.

And joining the senior administration are: **Jared Abramson** as GW's inaugural vice president for financial planning and operations, who previously served as vice chairman for administration and finance for the University of Miami's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; **Patricia Carocci** as senior associate vice president of alumni relations and annual giving, who most recently served as director of advancement at the Spence School in New York; and **Dana Bradley** as vice president and chief people officer, who arrives from Northwestern University where she was associate vice president for human resources.

62

The number of awardees this spring of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship—including junior political communications major **André Gonzales**—from a pool of 840 students nominated by nearly 350 colleges and universities. Recipients receive \$30,000 toward their graduate studies.

42

The number of years Professor of Theatre **Leslie Jacobson** served on the faculty before announcing her retirement this spring. Jacobson's work as a director, producer, writer and teacher, on campus and off—from Horizons Theatre, where she was the founding artistic director; to writing, producing and directing at the U.S. Capitol; to leading workshops with D.C. students, the homeless, and incarcerated women—made her a widely respected presence in the city's theater community.



A gift from former Board of Trustees member **Jay Katzen, BA '67, MD '72**, and the Dr. Cyrus Katzen Foundation will establish an endowment to name the top post at the GW Cancer Center after Katzen's late father and to help fuel the center's growth. The Dr. Cyrus Katzen Family Director of the GW Cancer Center will be filled by the center's current leader, **Eduardo Sotomayor**. The endowment follows a \$10 million, cancer-related gift from Cyrus and Myrtle Katzen in 2008.

MEANWHILE, DOWN THE STREET ...

PENNSYLVANIA AVE NW ★ ★ ★

The Senate in late July confirmed **Mark Esper, PhD '08**, by a 90-8 vote as the U.S. secretary of defense. Esper succeeds James Mattis, who resigned in December. Esper, a West Point graduate, was most recently the secretary of the Army. He also served as the deputy assistant secretary of defense under President George W. Bush.

In July, President Trump announced that two researchers from the School of Engineering and Applied Science are among the recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers: **Chunlei Liang**, an associate professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, and **Volker Sorger**, an associate professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. According to a news release, the award is the "highest honor bestowed" by the government to early career researchers.

George Welcomes

Headliners at University Events



“If you happen to be one of the nearly 700 million people that still live in extreme poverty today, this success means nothing to you.”

World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva offering the flipside of the coin after noting recent gains against extreme poverty: While 36 percent of the world lived in extreme poverty in 1990, she said, the estimates for 2018 indicate it’s now just over 8 percent. She spoke on campus in April as part of the School of Business’ “George Talks Business” series.

“Democratic socialism means, to me, requiring and achieving political and economic freedom in every community in this country.”

Presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) in a speech on campus in June, defining the label that’s often applied to him as a pejorative, and contrasting it with what he called “corporate socialism,” by which the rich avoid taxation and large corporations get taxpayer-funded bailouts. Sanders proposed an “economic bill of rights” that would codify Americans’ right to a living wage, health care, education, affordable housing, a clean environment and a secure retirement.



“Unfortunately, progress will come at the expense of mistakes that will almost pull us apart as a society, and my goal here is to get the conversation going ... before we have our own version of Hiroshima.”

Manoj Saxena, the first general manager of IBM Watson, from 2011-2014, and now executive chairman of CognitiveScale, warning of the dangers of artificial intelligence systems if they’re not designed responsibly and are given too much authority over complex decisions. Saxena spoke on campus in April as part of the School of Business’ “George Talks Business” series.

“In international cooperation, there’s always a tension between sovereignty and defense.”

Director of Europol’s counterterrorism center Manuel Navarrete in June on threats the European Union faces from, notably, the Islamic State and right-wing ideology. The event, sponsored by the Program on Extremism, was held in the Jacob Burns Moot Court Room at the GW Law School.



“It might slow us down a little bit in some cases, but I’m not sure speed is the paramount goal in mind. I think getting the job done, getting it done by all inhabitants that are able, inhabitants of the globe, is more important.”

Michael Collins on the United States taking a unified, worldwide approach to space exploration, spoke as part of the Computer Science Department’s Internet Distinguished Speaker Series

The astronauts spoke in July at Lisner Auditorium during “One Giant Leap: Space Diplomacy Past, Present, Future,” an event co-sponsored by the Elliott School of International Affairs and its Space Policy Institute in partnership with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum and the U.S. State Department. It marked the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission that landed Buzz Aldrin and the late Neil Armstrong on the moon. Michael Collins was the command module pilot.



“Neil’s words were a small step and a giant leap. I think a number of us are still waiting for that giant leap.”

Buzz Aldrin on the future of space exploration, referencing Neil Armstrong’s first words on the moon

Chapter 1

TIPPING POINTS

December 10, 2000—Sunday

Phones should not ring on Sunday mornings. I rolled across the bed, scooped my battered Nokia from the nightstand, and burrowed back under the covers. Our English basement apartment reminded me of winter camping trips I'd gone on as a Boy Scout. The single-pane windows trapped about as much heat as a canvas tent.

These words paint a very detailed image. I was an Eagle Scout.

This sentence captures everything about that cold, little apartment.

My goal in the Hanssen case was not just to hunt a master spy, but also to make sure I did not lose my wife while doing so. The case caught me up in an immense web of lies and deceit. In many ways, Gray Day is an apology letter to Juliana.

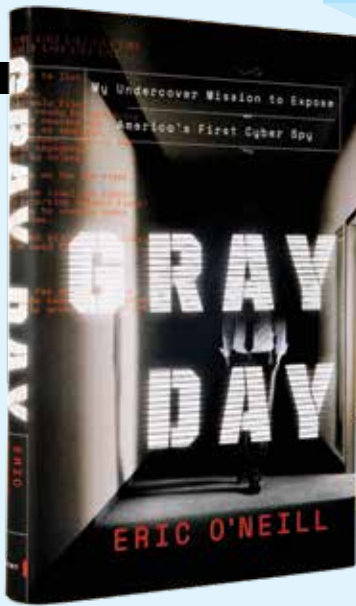
Gene would later tell me that the decision about who to put in room 9930 with Hanssen sparked a minor war among the small squad of FBI agents responsible for the case. Numerous agents desperately wanted the career-making job—but Gene proposed me from the start. None of those covert agents knew enough about computers to do the overt job of cybersecurity.

I agonized over the first line of my book, especially because this first chapter was not originally the first chapter. I initially started the book with Hanssen triumphant on the bridge at Foxstone Park after his final drop of secrets to the Russians. I ultimately decided to start my story where stories usually start—at the beginning.

Gene was in a rush to meet with the FBI director. He must have assumed I would say yes, but he'd still have to argue the case to the director. I sometimes wonder how my life would have turned out had I told Gene no.

Juliana peered at me over the thick comforter. Her eyes were glazed with sleep, and her blond hair was piled around her head like windblown thistle. We'd been married four months, and each morning I woke beside her was a revelation. I checked the time—8:00 a.m. I was about to slap the phone down on the receiver when the voice on the other end made me freeze. All thoughts of a lazy morning flushed out of my mind. It was Supervisory Special Agent Gene McClelland. "Don't bother getting dressed up," he said. "Just lace up your shoes. I'm parked out front."

As I fumbled for my pants, my mind raced through possible scenarios, all of them grim. It was unheard-of for an FBI supervisor, the man in charge of my entire squad, to show up at a private residence on a Sunday morning. To put this into perspective, imagine your boss—the president or manager of your company—arriving at your house early one weekend morning. If you are the boss, imagine the chairman of your board parked in your driveway. If you are the chairman, imagine POTUS



Gray Day: My Undercover Mission to Expose America's First Cyber Spy (Crown, 2019) By Eric O'Neill, JD '03

Spy vs. Spy

The memoir begins with Eric O'Neill of the FBI rushing out to meet a supervisor who showed up unannounced at his home on a Sunday morning. The supervisor had a new assignment for O'Neill: Investigate FBI agent and computer expert Robert Hanssen. Code-named "Gray Day," Hanssen turned out to be one of the most notorious moles in U.S. history. As the supervisor tells O'Neill, "Kiddo, this is the biggest case we've ever run," or as O'Neill puts it himself, "Catching Hanssen was the intelligence-community equivalent of dredging Nessie from Inverness's deepest loch." With all the deceit along the way, O'Neill had to be careful that he didn't lose his marriage, too. — **Menachem Wecker, MA '09**

The Great War in America: World War I and Its Aftermath (Pegasus Books, 2018) By Garrett Peck, MA '96

More than 116,000 Americans were killed in World War I, during which more than 4 million Americans served. The country took a while to enter the so-called Great War, whose cause divided the nation even after the war had ended. The U.S. also discovered other things stateside in the aftermath of the war: race riots, a Red Scare, women's suffrage, and prohibition. The book tells the story of "a nation that was rapidly growing up—and yet not mature enough to accept its global responsibilities."

The Hill to Die On: The Battle for Congress and the Future of Trump's America (Crown, 2019) By Jake Sherman, BA '08, and Anna Palmer

The culmination of 26 months of reporting by co-authors of the *Politico Playbook* newsletter, this narrative-driven book puts readers beside politicians at key moments—Donald Trump phones a congressman to ask about Mike Pence, only to reveal Pence is sitting with him; the moment before John McCain votes against repealing Obamacare; and Trump seeing Brett Kavanaugh as too D.C. and too akin to the chief justice. Throughout, one gets the impression that Congress (and perhaps Washington at large) is "one of the pettiest collections of adults the planet has ever seen."

Winnebagos on Wednesdays: How Visionary Leadership Can Transform Higher Education (Princeton University Press, 2018) By Scott Cowen, MBA '72, DBA '75, with Betsy Seifter

The author, a former Tulane University president, explains the title in the

introduction. He once offered a prospective football coach a higher salary than the coach at powerhouse Clemson, only to be rebuffed. What did the coach want? "Winnebagos on Wednesday." Scott Cowen is stumped, so the coach explains: He wants a football program so good, people start camping in their RVs on Wednesdays for games on Saturdays. It made Cowen think long and hard about higher education's ultimate purpose.

Never Lose a Customer Again: Turn Any Sale into Lifelong Loyalty in 100 Days (Portfolio, 2018) By Joey Coleman, JD '98

"All business is ultimately the same, because all business boils down to humans dealing with humans," writes the author, who advocates for an H2H (human to human) mindset. That approach considers not only people who buy a product, but also the others who interact with it. Perhaps nothing shows the author meeting his customers where they are more than his guarantee: He will refund the book to anyone who disagrees with his mentality.

Where Epics Fail: Meditations to Live By (Unbound, 2018) By Yahia Lababidi, BA '96

Among the more than 800 aphorisms in this small book are: "There's nothing casual about intimacy, or passing through a temple without bowing." And, "If we gaze deeply into our own wound, we also see the wounds of others." And, "Whether or not we are aware of it, our biography is perpetually being written—by the books on our shelves." A reader is inclined to add one more: Reading this book without thinking long and hard about the short observations would be an underestimation of its thoughtfulness. ☐





SALLY MONTANA/REDUX

SOMETIMES I THINK WHEN YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, YOU DON'T FULLY APPRECIATE THE MASS

EXCLUSIVE

'A

COMPETITION

FOR FACTS'

MEET THE PRESS *HOST*
CHUCK TODD Q&As WITH
GW MAGAZINE ABOUT POLITICAL
JOURNALISM, 'BOTH SIDES' AND
THE SLOW DEATH OF GOOD FAITH.

// BY MATTHEW STOSS

IVE CHANGES THAT ARE TAKING PLACE. // I WISH I COULD FALL BACK ON SOME HISTORICAL CONT



EXCLUSIVE

TEXT TO KNOW HOW ANOTHER GENERATION OF JOURNALISTS DEALT WITH SIMILAR SITUATIONS, B

CHUCK TODD FEARS THE FUTURE.

THE MEET THE PRESS HOST WONDERS WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IF PARTISAN REALITIES AND WILLFUL DERANGEMENT CONTINUE TO DEFINE U.S. POLITICS—ALTHOUGH, HE CONCEDES, THAT WHAT'S LEFT OF THE PLANET MIGHT JUST MELT BEFORE ANY OF US SEES IF POLITICS GETS WORSE OR BETTER.

IN JULY, TODD, WHO ATTENDED GW IN THE EARLY 1990S, CHATTED WITH GW MAGAZINE ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A JOURNALIST TODAY. OCCASIONALLY EXASPERATED AND RELUCTANTLY FATALISTIC, ALL WHILE SUPPRESSING A CYNICISM THAT FEELS MORE AND MORE RATIONAL, TODD COVERED THE FLOURISHING OF PARTISAN MEDIA, THE FIGHT FOR ANY KIND OF OBJECTIVE TRUTH AND HOW CLOSE JOURNALISM (AND US) MIGHT BE TO CALAMITY.

THIS Q&A IS LIGHTLY EDITED FOR CLARITY.



CHUCK TODD: NBC NEWSWIRE / CONTRIBUTOR / TV EQUIPMENT: ISTOCK.COM/DPMIKE

BUT I DON'T THINK WE'VE HAD A SIMILAR SITUATION. // WE'RE SO MUCH MORE CONSERVATIVE IN S...

What's it like to cover politics today?

It certainly feels a lot different than it did just four years ago, which is a lot different than it did four years before that. Sometimes I think when you're in the middle of it, you don't fully appreciate the massive changes that are taking place. You sort of deal with the incremental, in the moment. You don't appreciate what is actually taking place until a few years later and you're like, "Oh wow, I think I know what happened."

So for instance, we're in a place now—and part of this goes back to the essay I wrote in *The Atlantic* [in September 2018]—where I think there has been a campaign against the media and journalism in general. It was mostly from the right for a generation. Basically, it's what I grew up with. My entire lifetime has seen this. It started at the end of the Nixon era when I was born, and you could argue that it's culminated today in this modern conservative echo chamber. But it has successfully, I think, put the press more in the crosshairs.

There have been other times when the press has been caught in the middle of plenty of political disputes and plenty of issues, but I do think with partisanship so acute, there's this idea that information itself is part of the warfare. It's just made a unique challenge.

I wish I could fall back on some historical context to know how another generation of journalists dealt with similar situations, but I don't think we've had a similar situation. I think we're all just feeling our way around right now, but it is definitely changed. I think who watches and engages with political media has changed and I think we're still trying to figure out what journalism is going to look like in the next decade.

During the Nixon era, you had a handful of television networks, radio and the major newspapers, and that was about it. At that point, all of those entities pretty much agreed, more or less, on what was happening. But today you have I don't know how many other outlets, and there's competition for a perspective—

Well, there's competition for facts. This is the problem. It used to be there was a competition for ideas. Now we have a competition for facts, and I think we have such a fear of losing that competition that it has changed almost how some people engage in journalism. This is our biggest challenge yet. Just the fact that there's a competition for the truth—for facts right now. In a way, that sounds alarmist when I say it out loud, you repeating it back, but what else do you call it? How would you round that edge?

But it does feel like that's where we are right now, and you have a group of consumers who have made a decision on what to believe based on what culturally makes them comfortable, not on the merits of whether that news organization has been right or wrong more often than not. It's, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, but they get me, so I believe that."

Have you made adjustments? Have you seen adjustments in the field?

We're so much more combative in some ways with people today, and I think people think we're not combative enough. But I think in some ways we're much more antagonistic collectively as a press than we were just five years ago, and you know what? That, I think, is kind of healthy.

I came to my own sort of philosophical zen about this a few years ago, at the beginning of the Trump administration. It was like, look, you've got to make a decision. You can do your job, and you realize when you do your

job, you're going to make people mad and people aren't going to like you, and you have to get over the personal. I think the problem with too many of my colleagues is they worry too much about their social media likes. And I think that there are too many people that are trying too hard to please a group of people. And there's comfort in pleasing a group of people.

You have to make adjustments and accept the fact that you're going to make people mad, and you're going to make people mad in different ways. I didn't know it was going to come in the form of death threats and I didn't know it would come in the form of character assassination and things like that. That just sort of comes with the turf if you're going to cover American politics in the 21st century right now, because it's brutal with what's happening. We've got to prove—those of us that care about keeping this Fourth Estate held up a little here—I think we have to prove that we can cover this honestly and fairly and aggressively and knowledgeably.

We covered the campaign as a referendum on Donald Trump when it was a referendum on Hillary Clinton. We should've framed the election the way the voters framed the election. We were framing the election in our point of view. We had dealt with Donald Trump. We realized what we were getting in Donald Trump because I think we all knew him better than the public did, especially those of us who had covered him for a long period of time. But that wasn't what the voters were doing. In political journalism, you can't tell the voters how to think. You gotta, at times, also report what they're thinking, too.

Voters were having a different conversation. For them, it was a referendum on Clinton, but it was a referendum on Clinton for even different reasons than we thought. It was a referendum on the establishment. It was a referendum on the politics of the last 25 years. It was a referendum on that. We were framing it another way than the voters were framing it.

I think that Trump's personality so consumed the press corps that we missed that big of a reminder. And the fact is is that clues were all over the place. Bernie Sanders crushed Clinton in places like Michigan and Wisconsin, so then we're surprised that she can't cover places like Michigan and Wisconsin. You know what I mean? It's not as if it wasn't staring us in the face.

EXCLUSIVE

THE WAYS WITH PEOPLE TODAY, AND I THINK PEOPLE THINK WE'RE NOT COMBATIVE ENOUGH. // YOU

Do you have any thoughts on 2020 and how it's going to go for the media?

I want to be careful, in that I think it's pretty consequential. Meaning, I think the future of journalism as we know it is actually at stake in some ways. Look, in the 19th century, our media was very partisan. There's a reason why there are all these legacy newspapers that have Democrat and Republican in their name. Some communities were three newspaper towns. There were the Whigs, the Republicans and the Democrats. That was the primary means of political communication then, and I think there's a chance that we're going to go much deeper down that road, depending on which direction things go.

Here's what I do know: The losing party is going to go through a set of recriminations that we have never seen before. The internal fighting in that party—it will drag the press into it in some ways—but the losing party is just going to have, an epic, epic civil war.

You talked about facts. It used to be, at least the way I thought about it, that people were afraid to look bad or get caught lying, and that offered some recourse for journalists because their subjects' reputations held them accountable.

That's right. What was our ability to get results? We shamed people. What happened? What did Trump hack? How did he hack the system? By being shameless. If you don't feel shame for your actions, and the bad press doesn't bother you or you can live with it or explain it away—that is Trump's superpower. I don't know if another politician can pull it off. Every other politician that has tried to be as aggressive as he can be sometimes, denying what is obvious, it has not gone well for them.

Now, politics is a copycat industry. And if Trump succeeds a second time—one term is an anomaly, but two terms would be: *You've got to emulate*. There are two things that will make the next four years, 2021 through 2025. I can't fully envision how it's going to work but I know it's going to be nuts. Either Trump loses and as an ex-president constantly backseat tweets America and basically stays the general of his army, completely keeping the Republican Party at odds with itself, or he wins and the

Democratic Party starts to have splintering aspects to it that say, "You know what? Maybe we've got to start fighting fire with fire," and we start to see tactics that we condemn today being embraced.

Whoever is winning, somebody is trying to copy how they did it and do it again. That to me is what makes 2020 so consequential, because the fallout for the losing side has major implications for my industry but also major implications for how politics is practiced and how honorable politics is or isn't over the next decade.

Where would journalists fit in that? To me, it seems like there's very little good faith left. Even the spokespeople they put out, while they're on TV, you could show video of them saying something contradictory, and it wouldn't faze them.

My concern about all this is that you'll see more and more journalistic organizations pick a side. So you might be really good at reporting on the Democratic or Republican party civil war from liberal or conservative points of view, but trying to cover their policy proposals more honestly, your own point of view might get in the way. That is, I think,



**IT USED TO BE THERE
WAS A COMPETITION
FOR IDEAS.**

YOU HAVE TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS AND ACCEPT THE FACT THAT YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE PEOPLE MAD

where you run into some problems—where policy coverage can look very propagandist very quickly if it doesn't look like you're challenging it at all.

My concern is that more journalists and more organizations decide it's financially better to go down a partisan road because you have a built-in audience. My concern is that the financial incentives for journalists over the next 10 years may pull them in a more partisan or a more ideological direction, and that is just going to make it where everybody asks, "Are you a journalist on my side? Or are you one of those journalists who covers the other side?" and where everything becomes an antagonistic relationship—and it isn't clear where legacy media fall in this.

We're the ones that end up looking like dinosaurs because, at the end of the day, our business incentive is still to have a broad audience. But if your incentive is to have a niche audience, which of course is what social media and cable have created, then that moves you down a certain road and especially if the politicians decide that's how they want to roll. Then you can see how this becomes radically different in a decade. Not to say it will.

I think that there is a silent middle, and that's who I believe my audience is on Sunday morning. The Sunday morning audience is a lot different than the cable audience, and I think your Sunday morning audience is people who generally care about being citizens but also worry about their mortgage, worry about their kids going to school, worry about basic safety in their neighborhoods, things like that, and they watch once a week to just sort of keep up. They probably have a traditional lean that they vote, but they're not real hard-charging ideologues or partisans. They're just trying to get along.

I still think there's an audience that wants a certain type of coverage, but they don't watch TV all day and they don't go on social media all day. I think another thing that is happening is that you end up writing for who is reading, and the more you write for who is reading, the more it's likely to go deeper and deeper down rabbit holes.

Do you think that politicians and political operatives have exploited the "both sides" idea?

Oh god, yes, I do. Look, I think the politicians have done more to exploit division here than anybody, not the voter, not the press. They know exactly what they're doing whenever they play the game of going on Fox [News] to do one thing. It is a bit exploitive. You're caught in a bind because on one hand, you can sit here and say it's totally obvious what they're doing. And you can say on the other hand, there's a part of me, as a person who's working for the public airwaves, who feels obligated at the same time to let this person have their say—it's like you're exploiting my goodwill. You're exploiting my aspiration that I believe Sunday morning is supposed to be a certain type of thing. So I get frustrated by this. And I do think the worst actors are the politicians who know what's happening and are taking advantage in order to deflect criticism. They're just taking advantage of the fact that they know how to provoke.

I imagine that that must be incredibly annoying—the good faith/bad faith thing. Is there a way to make that better? It just seems so futile sometimes.

It's funny you put it that way. That does get frustrating. At the end of the day, I'm pretty cynical, but I don't like to be as cynical on TV as I am because I know there are genuinely people who believe what that person is saying and they take it to heart. So I try not to be that cynical, and yet, you're like, *They're totally playing you.*

But do I have the credibility to say it, or say it that way if I'm actually defeating the purpose of what I'm trying to point out? If I pointed it out, oh, well, you get some cheers from one side going, "Yeah, way to call them out!" But what have I accomplished? I've instead played into this narrative of what they want to say, which is the media is hostile toward the right. These are the landmines that I think about: Which landmines are

worth trying to step on and which ones are worth avoiding?

Has anyone been blacklisted? At some point, you're watching and it's like, why are you even putting this person on TV? It seems like it becomes more damaging to interview them than it does to not.

Here's the thing: The answer is yes. There are people who have been on a "we're not booking them anymore"—or "we're not booking them for a while" list. But I would never tell you who they were and I would never tell you they were permanently banned, because at the end of the day, I think about two things. No. 1: the public airwaves. I do technically work for broadcast airwaves, right?

Second: If there are people who regularly mislead, but they are the only people with information perhaps that you want to share with your viewers on a particular Sunday, you can't [ban them]. So the fact of the matter is, yeah, it matters. We don't keep bringing people back that are regularly disrespectful to the viewer or disrespectful of us. I'll just leave it at that.

I would never publicly say it. I think it's been a mistake by some of my friends and colleagues who have publicly said it because I just think, Why draw attention to yourself? I know the counterargument would be, well, how are you going to teach a lesson to the others if they know that? Yes, I take your point, but we are in a very hot-take atmosphere, and it's like, you know what, I do want to avoid being the story if we don't have to be the story.

EXCLUSIVE

I THINK THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM AS WE KNOW IT IS ACTUALLY AT STAKE IN SOME WAYS. /



What I was building toward with that is the journalist's role to act as a filter. Certain things in the past were just so nuts, they wouldn't get covered, like some flat-Earther yelling. That sort of thing would get filtered out. But today with so many outlets, something that is a fringe and wrong idea can very quickly go mainstream. That's where I was going with the certain people you wouldn't book, or you wouldn't quote if you're a print journalist. I'm wondering if the mechanism of acting as a filter for bad ideas has been damaged.

You know who first discovered this problem was Eli Pariser. He wrote a book [*The Filter Bubble*] about seven years ago sort of warning of this siloed news culture that we were all about to head into. It's just a small book but it was just really thoughtful on this issue. He was the first person to get at this problem. He said to get the fringe, crazy ideas before the internet, you had to go basically to the high end of AM radio.

That's where you found it if you were looking for crazy ideas. Or maybe a newsletter you subscribed to or you also got a certain magazine or something. And then the internet came, and the example he used was the 9/11 truthers. I'm sure there were Pearl Harbor truthers back in the day. You laugh but I'm—

It's a gallows laugh because I'm sure you're right.

I'm sure they existed but we didn't know about it, and you know, my god, if you think about every major event that's happened in our history, the more people that have access to media, the more conspiracy theories have gotten mainstreamed, if you think about it—whether it's the Kennedy assassination or the moon landing.

The point is that the internet allows people to think and social media allows people to think and Reddit allows people to think—you name it, you can find like-minded individuals no matter how cuckoo you are, and it makes your cuckoo seem less cuckoo when you get to hang out in the community of like-minded individuals. And then, who are the cuckoo people?

So I do think it is that much easier. And it's funny. I've seen, particularly in the conservative echo chamber, the way these conspiracy theories start to creep in. They almost all back their way in. They start in

talk radio, they back into primetime on Fox and then seep their way onto the news side of Fox. That's how it moves. There isn't a similar place on the left that can move it as efficiently as the right does.

I was building back toward the idea of there being no common reality. If you're arguing with or debating or interviewing, for example, a flat-Earther, it's going to inevitably end at: "The world is flat." "No, it's not." And there's just nothing you can do about that. And when I've seen interviews on TV and read them in the newspapers, that seems to be the problem. If you can't agree the world is round, there's nowhere else to go. So you're fighting the ultimate uphill battle.

There is a dystopian future that it sounds like you're concerned about—that I'm concerned about—that I'd like to think isn't going to happen, but it's more possible than I think we realize. ☑

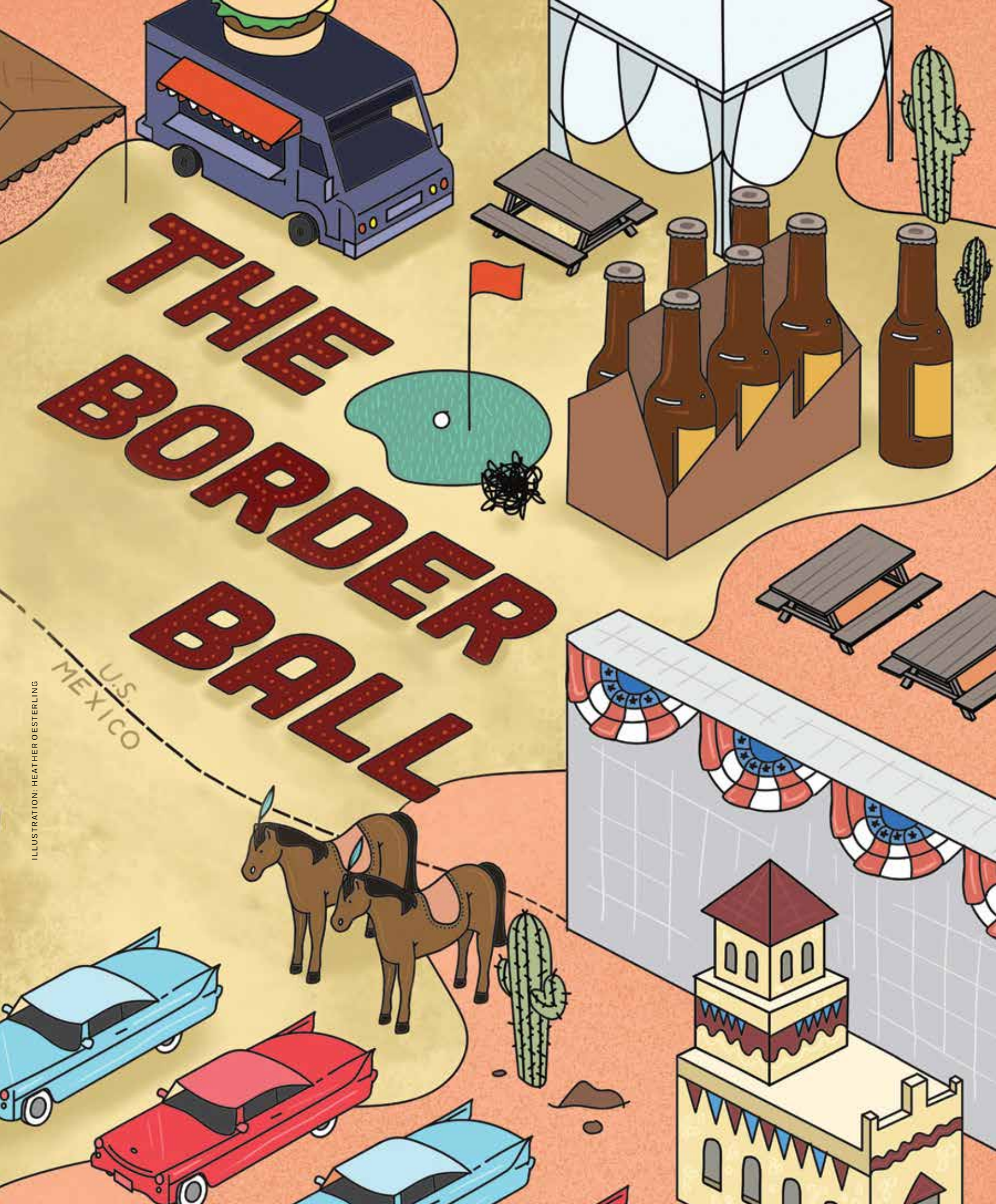
/ AT THE END OF THE DAY, I'M PRETTY CYNICAL, BUT I DON'T LIKE TO BE AS CYNICAL ON TV.



THE BORDER BALL

U.S.
MEXICO

ILLUSTRATION: HEATHER OESTERLING





Noche Mexicana, a WBC event that celebrates Mexican culture, in the 1940s

For more than a century, a U.S. border town and its Mexican counterpart have thrown a festival to mark George Washington's birthday.

GW professor Elaine Peña went home to understand why, and what it says about people and dividing lines.

Story
Matthew Stoss

Illustrations
Heather Oesterling



Since 1898, border town and busiest U.S. inland port Laredo, Texas, and its twin city across a curlicue in the Rio Grande, Nuevo Laredo, have thrown a joint party for George Washington's birthday.

Born out of efforts to Americanize a historically Mexican area, the Washington's Birthday Celebration has grown from a two-day event to a February-long festival. Now it fetes the southern border's binational culture as much as our founding-est of Founding Fathers, if not more. It is, to an outlander, a strange occurrence—it can even be strange to the initiated.

GW American studies associate professor Elaine Peña grew up in Laredo, and the bizarre to-do—it stews together July the 4th, Mardi Gras and a very large county fair—has puzzled the 40-year-old her whole life.

The WBC itinerary is as vast as it is incongruous. There are about 30 events every year. Among them are the expected and obvious (George and Martha impersonators, a carnival, a parade), the less expected but understandable (a jalapeño

eating contest, a classic car show, an air show, two debutante balls, a 5K) and the not at all expected and also very weird (a comedy jam, Pocahontas being given a key to the city in a ceremony that kicks off the parade).

Peña has been around the WBC since she was a kid. She and her three siblings moved around a lot but never seemed to live more than a few blocks from the parade, during which Peña would sometimes sell soda and bottled water to make extra money. As she got older, Peña found the WBC more and more confusing, especially its bedizened portrayal of Native Americans.

“I felt uncomfortable watching the pageant,” Peña says by phone from Scotland, where she spent the spring semester as a visiting scholar at the University of Edinburgh. “I had questions about it and I didn’t know who to talk to because everybody seemed to take its content for granted. It was something that I wanted to understand, and then it was something that ended up being extremely complicated.”

An anthropologist who specializes in religion and ritual, Peña has researched professionally the origins, implications and form of the Washington’s Birthday Celebration for more than a decade. She’s explored Laredo’s and Nuevo Laredo’s town archives and those of local organizations like the Webb County Heritage Foundation—Laredo is the county seat of Webb County—and the Washington’s Birthday Celebration Association, even helping the WBCA catalogue some of its old-timey photos along the way.

Peña is the first person to academically and so exhaustively study the WBC, becoming perhaps *the* expert on the event. Along the way, she broke news about the fraternal order that founded the WBC and, most notably, the beginnings of *paso libre*, a now retired tradition that from the 1950s to the 1970s allowed people to move between the United States and Mexico without a passport.

Peña’s also attended several WBCs in an ethnographic capacity, most recently in 2017. She wanted to see if the festival would be different in a world where noted wall enthusiast Donald Trump is president of the United States.

“Everything went just the same, even with all of this anti-border politicking that had really informed the campaign,” Peña says. “It just went on as usual.”

Peña says her research started with her trying to figure out how and why the WBC’s less than politically correct depiction of Native Americans had persisted into more enlightened times. But the research morphed to become a more encompassing study of the festival.

Thirteen years later, after \$11,000 in seven grants—notably she was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant and a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship—\$20,000 from GW and quite a chunk of her own money, Peña’s got her second book.

In fall 2020, University of Texas Press will publish the tentatively titled *The Festive Border: Ritual, Infrastructure, and Cooperation at the Port-of-Laredo*.

“It took me 10 years to figure out that I didn’t know what I thought I knew,” says Peña, whose first book, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe*, spun out of her PhD dissertation. She got her doctorate in 2006 from Northwestern. Postdoctoral fellowships at Illinois and Yale followed. “It’s not just one thing or the other. It’s not just caricature. It’s not just class. It’s not just citizenship. Those two cities, although they’re on different sides of an international boundary line, they’re connected in deeper ways. It may seem like these kind of performances undermine that bond, but the thing is, that bond is actually linked to both of the cities as a port of entry.”

The halcyon moment of the WBC is the *abrazo* (embrace) ceremony in the middle of the Juárez-Lincoln International Bridge. There, officials and children share a few hugs in the name of amity between abutting countries that in 1848 exchanged custody of Laredo after the United States won the Mexican-American War.

“What the book figures out is, yes, on the surface and even deep into these traditions, as misguided as they seem, there is a logic to it—an economic logic to it,” Peña says. “But then there’s another part of it which is, yeah, it may seem bizarre to celebrate George Washington’s birthday, but for me that became more a question of not, ‘What’s wrong with it?’ but, ‘How is this related more to our general thinking about patriotism? Proper geography? About where American history thrives? The proper place for American history?’

“In other words, you can find America everywhere, in theory, but where do you expect to find it in a way that persists in its proper place?”



The 2019 Washington’s Birthday Celebration, officially the 123rd—Peña discovered proto versions as early as the 1870s—attracted House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. She is the highest ranking U.S. official to attend a WBC, which always has drawn local and state poobahs while their national equivalents essentially have standing invites. Two sitting presidents, Dwight Eisenhower and Jimmy



“An efficient border—a border without a wall—is a win-win for everyone and it doesn’t have to undermine national identity. I think that’s the point of the book and that’s why it was so important for me to work on and develop the story in a way to cover all my bases and leave no stone untouched as best I could.”



Elaine Peña



Washington's Birthday Celebration BY THE NUMBERS

A look at some
facts and figures

400,000

The average attendees a year



\$150,000

What the Washington's Birthday
Celebration Association spends to
advertise the festival,
including about

\$73,000

in out-of-town markets
such as Austin, Dallas
and San Antonio as well as
border cities in Mexico

\$30,000

The annual amount Laredo
spends in hotel expenses for
participants and dignitaries



11-15%

The percentage of parade
participants who are
from out of town

\$15 million

The approximate annual revenue
for Laredo generated by the WBC



Carter, flirted with a pop-in. Neither made one.

Pelosi's appearance was overtly political. With the Trump administration's focus on the U.S. southern border and its walling off, the once largely anonymous—at least beyond the Texas borderlands—and innocuous WBC is drawing national glances.

"Even with everything going on, it hasn't affected the celebration," says U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar, a Laredo native who's been his hometown's congressman since 2005. A Democrat, he serves Texas' 28th District. He also years ago played the baritone and marched with his high school's band in the WBC parade. "In fact, it's still very strong. This rhetoric—it's just the wrong rhetoric. People who live further away from the border are usually the ones who don't understand the border."

Trump visited Laredo in July 2015 while campaigning for president and he met with local officials, including Mayor Pete Saenz, a Laredo native and Democrat elected in 2014.

"We took it as an opportunity," Saenz says, "to visit with him and tell him how we live here and how we do business here and how important commerce and trade is and about our relationship with Mexico."

Trump got 22.8 percent of Webb County's vote in the 2016 presidential election. Hillary Clinton got 74.3 percent.

Laredo, a town regularly immortalized in cowboy fiction and country song, is about 150 miles south of the closest major American city, San Antonio, and it's one half of an international metro area. Combined, Laredo and Nuevo Laredo have a population of more than 630,000, only about 70,000 people fewer than Washington, D.C. Laredo's population is about 260,700, 95 percent of it Latino.

The city is home to the second busiest of the United States' 328 ports, 29 of which are in Texas. In 2018, Laredo handled \$235 billion in trade, 98 percent of it with Mexico, and accounted for 5.6 percent of all U.S.-international trade. Los Angeles, the busiest U.S. port, saw \$299 billion in trade, 7.1 percent of all U.S.-international trade.

More than 11 million pedestrians, cars and trucks move from Mexico to the United States through Laredo every year, and the port of Laredo is responsible for more than 360,000 jobs and contributes more than \$52 billion to Texas' GDP. Mexican tourism alone accounts for up to 50 percent of Laredo's retail sales. In 2017, the most recent year for which complete figures are available, that amounted to about \$1.7 billion.



The Washington's Birthday Celebration remains vital. It continues to be well

and thoroughly partied, drawing about 400,000 people each year and generating tens of millions of dollars for Laredo while replenishing and sustaining the old and commodious relationship between two countries and two Laredos, for which the border has always been the most invisible of lines.

"It's like everything goes into [high definition]," Peña says of the festival. "All of a sudden, everything becomes sparkly, and the things that are being done on a day-to-day basis, they're done in a more perfect way. ... It's the best version of the port."

The Improved Order of Red Men, a still-extant fraternal society founded in 1834 and modeled on the Sons of Liberty, invented the WBC in 1898. The idea was to use a birthday party for Washington, whose birthday became a federal holiday in 1879, as a fun way to nudge Laredo's Mexican residents toward a more alacritous Americanization. (A George Washington birthday party, Peña discovered, was something the Baltimore-founded Red Men tried to institute wherever it had chapters.)

As they did for their then-64-year-old organization, the Red Men again co-opted Native American imagery, devising facsimiles of Native American rites, rituals and terms and inserting them into the budding WBC. The Red Men believed the Indian motif to be uniquely American (and therefore non-European because Europe had no Indians), which made it useful to a group of people claiming patriotic urges trying to sell another group of people on Americanism.

The original Laredoan observing of George Washington's birthday included a reenactment of the Boston Tea Party—another time in history when white people "played Indian"—and a staged Native American raid on city hall. It ended with the townsfolk surrendering, turning their other cheeks and giving Pocahontas a key to Laredo.

So, to review: A group of (mostly) white guys calling themselves the Improved Order of Red Men decided that to make a Mexican town more American, they would dress up like Indians and invoke Pocahontas in the deified name of George Washington. But then the festival got subsumed by the Mexican influence it was meant to dilute and today the WBC above all else promotes multicultural goodwill and positive international relations. You can kind of see why *all this* took Peña more than a decade.

"There a lot of disparate parts about this that don't really make any chronological sense—or geographical or historical sense," says Margarita Araiza, who for 23 years has been the executive director of the Webb County Heritage Foundation.

This 1910s photo shows a woman dressed as Pocahontas as part of a ceremony during the Washington's Birthday Celebration in Laredo, Texas.







1



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toll dispute.) Unofficially, *paso libre* ended because there was too much immigration-related political pressure to continue the tradition.

Years before all that, the WBC planners canceled the bullfight. They long ago abolished the Boston Tea Party reenactment and the Indian raid. But the Native American imagery endures, albeit more befitting a Vegas residency than living history, and Pocahontas retains her starring role.

One of the debutante balls is named for her (the other for Martha Washington), even though Pocahontas never went anywhere near Laredo, which the Spanish founded in 1755 as a ferry crossing. The Powhatan princess—the Lipan are the Native American tribe natural to the region—died 138 years earlier.

George Washington, born Feb. 22, 1732, never visited Laredo, either, but he was nevertheless made an agitprop in its service.

The WBC planners marketed Washington as a kind of syncretic demigod—the “only white man in Indian heaven”—to make him, the most American of Americans, as saleable as possible to the most people. Pan-Americanism’s popularity in the late 19th century made this easier.

Ostensibly the Washington’s Birthday Celebration is still about celebrating George Washington’s birthday, but it’s evolved to be more.

“It’s kind of hard to have a purely, I suppose you’d say, Anglo American-type celebration without it morphing into a Mexican American celebration,” Araiza says.

“The Hispanic population has always been dominant economically, socially, politically, like other parts of Texas, and so it was not a rebellion by any means. At that point, the immigrants were Northern Europeans, so they were the ones who wanted

to create the American holiday, but [the relationship] was always very friendly. The, shall we say, ‘social elite’ were always dominated by ethnic Mexicans, so they were always included in the whole planning and execution of the celebration, and after a couple of years, George Washington was ethnic Hispanic as well as Anglo American—whoever portrayed George Washington [in the WBC].”

Now the WBC dominates Februaries

OPPOSITE **An aerial view of the parade in the late 1940s, early 1950s** 1. **A car decorated for the parade in the 1920s** 2. **A dancer at Noche Mexicana in 1939** 3. **A woman and man in Martha and George Washington costumes at a Colonial ball in 1964**

“But that’s what you get when you have a people desperately trying to create a holiday that doesn’t fit. What had been celebrated prior to that were all the Mexican holidays because everybody here was ethnically Mexican and still felt that way.”

The WBC has been adjusted and audited since its inaugural throwing to fit the wants and times of its celebrants. Starting in 1957, it featured the aforementioned *paso libre*—the “free pass.” For four days in February, Americans and Mexicans could, without paperwork or the haranguing of Customs, move at their festal leisure between Mexico and the United States. The two governments ended that in 1976. Officially, it was for safety reasons. In 1977, they opened a new, Interstate 35-feeding and pedestrian-unfriendly bridge, the Juárez-Lincoln, and the governments wanted to use their shiny new thing for all WBC-related ceremonies. (Formerly the Gateway to the Americas International Bridge had been used. It was pedestrian friendly, and the Mexican and U.S. governments, Peña found, started *paso libre* to promote goodwill after a years-long



1

1. Laredo Mayor Pete Saenz gives the key to the city to the woman portraying Pocahontas in the 2016 parade
 2. Children embrace during the 2014 abrazo bridge ceremony
 3. Children dressed in traditional Colonial attire ride a float during the 2018 parade
 4. A woman dances during the 2018 parade

in Laredo. Formerly it reached not much outside the vicinage of Texas. Once in a while, though, a curious media outlet will mosey down for a story about the festival's grab bag origins and how George Washington came to be commemorated so ebulliently so far from where it seemed ethnographically eloquent. Araiza says the point is often missed.

"They kind of come toward it with a patronizing attitude—"What would a bunch of Mexicans want to have to do with George Washington?" Araiza says. "Most people realize, 'Oh yeah, I get it,' after they hear about it, but sometimes they try to spin it as if it were an Anglo versus Mexican thing, and the Anglos were all in charge and the Mexicans were somehow subservient or oppressed, but that's historically inaccurate. And I just hope that with the exposures of the whole thing and through Elaine's book and everything else, that that comes through."



Some in the United States would like us to believe that the southern border is hell's

frontier and that the Rio Grande might as well be the Acheron.

On one side of this line is America, where things are American, and on the other side is Mexico, where things are not American.

This, Elaine Peña says, mustering the might of a lifetime's study, is very, very not true.

"It wasn't necessarily like, 'Oh, this is what Anglo Americans do and this is what Mexican Americans do and this is what Mexicans do,'" Peña says. "In a border environment, mostly everyone is bilingual. Before Sept. 11, it was way easier just to cross back and forth—or at least for someone with a U.S. passport or a border crossing card. It wasn't really like, 'Well, this is America and this is Mexico. America is white and Mexico is brown.' It wasn't really like that, ever. But I was just fascinated by how these things that were American could be American and echo Mexico in the same conversation."

"One of the points of this book," Peña continues, "is that you can have these regional expectations. But the fact of the matter is that we are absolutely



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interconnected. When you think about trade, when you think about the things that we take for granted—the price systems.

All of that is made possible by efficient borders that take care of trade while taking care of security. Immigration in the larger scheme of things is not the border's first and foremost problem. Immigration always takes center stage—or illegal immigration, I may say—but that is part of the dysfunction of American politics and it has been for a very long time."

Too many nuanced issues, Peña says, are debased to talking points.

"It allows them to get into the story of the border without having to manage the way the rhetoric around immigration has been weaponized for centuries," she says. "Then once they get into the story, maybe they'll be able to see the economics of it, that the economics of it aren't actually that

perplexing.

"An efficient border—a border without a wall—is a win-win for everyone and it doesn't have to undermine national identity. I think that's the point of the book and

that's why it was so important for me to work on and develop the story in a way to cover all my bases and leave no stone untouched as best I could."

When Peña started officially researching the Washington's Birthday Celebration, it was to assuage a childhood bewilderment. The festival didn't make sense, and she found its lingering use of Native American imagery antiquated and discomfiting. But like everything else about the WBC, it's a blending of almost a century and a quarter of customs from new and older eras. It's a natural agglomeration of two familiar sides in an isolated place. It's as organic as it is unavoidable.

"It goes on because there's so much to celebrate," Peña says. "There's so much

expectation about the celebration that it transcends whether something is politically correct or not or whether something is in its proper place or not, whether patriotism is in its proper geography. It's something that is so deeply entrenched in the families, in the leisure time activities, in the character of the port of entry. Too many things will be lost if something comes undone."

The WBC now honors Mexican identity and culture alongside George Washington and American history. It in recent decades added a Miguel Hidalgo stand-in to the bridge ceremony. He joined the traditional arrangement of four children—an American boy and girl in Colonial clothes, and a Mexican boy and girl in traditional Mexican clothes—hugging at the bridge's midpoint. Borders, in a cultural sense, are imaginary, and if they aren't, they're made more of air than steel.

"Even if they wanted to separate the United States and Mexico," Peña says, "they never really figured out how to do that." **EW**



Any Place of Worship





As a Muslim, Sana Ullah, MA '17, is required to pray five times a day. That can be hard, for example, in a 9-to-5. In 2015, Ullah started photographing Muslims praying, like her, wherever they could. Now that project—"Places You'll Pray"—has become so much more.



Sana Ullah



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In 2015,

alumna Sana Ullah, a multimedia journalist from Davie, Fla., who has worked for the Smithsonian, PBS and Discovery, started the Instagram account **@placesyoullpray**, posting photos she took of Muslims at prayer.

The second of the Five Pillars of Islam requires adherents to pray five times a day, a difficult feat when you have to work, shop, travel—just live in the world. So Muslims, Ullah included, have to not only be creative but also navigate potentially unaccepting environments.

“Places You’ll Pray” now has nearly 25,000 followers, its photography largely crowdsourced and submitted from Muslims all over the world. Below, Ullah tells *GW Magazine’s* Julyssa Lopez about how the project started, what it means and where it’s going.

“ There are five main pillars that are central to Muslim faith.

Because it's the second, "salat"—which is the Arabic term for prayer—is one of the most important. It's required practice for Muslims to pray at least five times a day, and those five prayers come at different times. About two or three happen during a regular, full-time schedule, from about 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and there are different ways of doing them. You could go home or pray at work if you have the luxury of doing that, or you could pray in public. My friends and I have talked about this, and if you're lucky and your boss is cool with it, they might say, "Sure, take a break." For me, it's always just depended on where I am. If I know the area is a safe space and that no one is going to give me issues, I pray where I am. Lately, with everything going on politically, it doesn't feel like the safest time for Muslims. I live in a small town, so normally I pray at home or I find a private area—like, if I'm at the mall, I go into a dressing room. But I don't think anyone has figured out how to pray during that window of time, which is one of the main reasons I started the "Places You'll Pray" photo series.

The project originally started as something I was doing on the side. I began taking photos of people praying in 2015, and it was more of a personal thing for myself, just to see if I was alone when it came to finding private places to pray or if other people were doing the same thing. I think the first image I took was at a local basketball court in Florida where I'd seen young Muslims praying. I started posting on Instagram and using my photos to get other people to share images. I didn't even have my name attached to the account at the time. The first person to submit a photo was from Indonesia, and I thought, "Whoa!" In my mind, the places I featured were going to all be in the U.S., but seeing someone in a Muslim country sharing from miles away was pretty exciting, especially for someone like me, who was living in a small place called Davie in Florida.

There were so many stories that made me realize that the project was a lot bigger than something just for me. I had this one man share his experience from 1970, when he was just learning how to pray. He went to the roof of his building because he thought that was the most private space for him and there was a security check right at the same time in the building. They saw him, and it became a whole alert. I had been wondering a lot about the misconceptions about prayer and people's fears of praying in public and I thought, Is it because of post-9/11 anxiety? Is it a post-Trump thing? But this man said, "These feelings were here before that."

Once I started at GW in the fall of 2016, one of our first assignments was to share some examples of past work we'd done, so I scattered a few of the prayer images in my portfolio. The minute one of them slid onto the projector in my class, my professor was like, "Wait, stop. Talk to us about that." Throughout my time in graduate school,













people kept telling me over and over that I should make the work my thesis project, and suddenly, what started as a small, silent effort became bigger. At first, I thought the focus of the project was mainly to have conversations with people who aren't Muslim and show them different portrayals of prayer. But I started getting messages from Muslims themselves, and they were starting their own dialogues. It made me realize there was a big discussion that the Muslim community was having, and the social media aspect of it broadened the ideas out even more.

There was one point where the project had reached France, and a lot of French Muslims messaged to say, "This is inspiring. Where we live, we're not even allowed to wear [face-covering] hijabs." For me, it was a moment where I saw people around the world connecting and feeling more comfortable talking about prayer.

There have also been people who have seen places on Instagram and left comments like, "Oh, I've prayed there before!" Or they'll see people praying in the library and they'll say, "I've done that so many times at school!" With the basketball image, all of the Muslim bros on Instagram were like, "I know this! I do it all the time."

The project has definitely changed my relationship to prayer. It inspires me to pray, and it's created a community that I can reach out to when I travel. It's also been a huge educational experience: I definitely had ideas of certain countries that are not what these images have shown. I remember a while ago, an image that shook me was of a man praying in the mountains of Pakistan. In my head, Pakistan was a super-busy place, filled with cars, like New Delhi, but this looked so serene and the shot was full of these beautiful, snow-capped mountains. There are moments like these when what you see in these pictures feels really incredible. I still take my own images, and I've shot Muslims praying in places like Cuba—friends have told me that I should make a photo book, so I'm playing with that idea. But as far as sharing them on social media, I've taken a step back. I have kind of let social media users take over the space, and I've just been watching to see where this goes. 📷



For more of Sana Ullah's photos and those she features, visit: [instagram.com/placesyoullpray](https://www.instagram.com/placesyoullpray)



Sana Ullah

PHOTO BY DELANEY BETH

CLASS NOTES

// 1960s AND EARLIER

Sidney O. Dewberry, BS '51, founder and chairman emeritus of Dewberry, served as editor-in-chief of and contributor to the fourth edition of the *Land Development Handbook* (McGraw-Hill, May 2019), a widely used reference for design professionals, students, and private and public land developers.

Howard S. Yager, BA '63, MD '66, was named "Best General/Family Doctor" in *My Buckhead* magazine's Readers' Choice Awards. He has a private practice in Atlanta, which he founded in 1977.

William Gralnick, BA '65, MA '68, authored *The War of the Itchy Balls and Other Tales from Brooklyn* (Barringer, 2019), a memoir of his childhood in Brooklyn during the 1950s and '60s. The book's title references a group of middle-class Jewish kids' ill-fated faceoff against a neighborhood gang. They weaponized "itchy balls"—the street name for the rock-hard American sycamore tree's seed pods.

// '70s

William H. Shawn, BA '70, JD '73, is the first American to be appointed to the executive committee of Germany's World Economic Council.

Leonard Benade, MPH '71, PhD '71, received the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award by *Marquis Who's Who* for his professional achievements in biomedicine and law.

Robert Blaemire, BA '71, MA '75, authored *Birch Bayh: Making a Difference* (Indiana University Press, April 2019), which chronicles the life and career of the late senator. It covers

Bayh's influence on landmark legislation, including Title IX, the 25th and 26th Amendments, the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act and the Bayh-Dole Act.

J. Phillip London, DBA '71, received the U.S. Naval Academy's 2019 Distinguished Graduate Award at ceremonies held March 22 in Annapolis, Md., in recognition of his lifetime commitment to service, personal character and distinguished contributions to the nation.

Peter W. Zinober, LLM '71, of Greenberg Traurig LLP in Miami, was recognized in the 2019 guide of *Who's Who Legal: Labour & Employment*.

Samuel Joseph Biondo, MEA '75, DSc '88, authored *How to Lose Weight and Sustain Weight Loss: An Autonomous Set Point Diet Guide* (Independently published, May 2019).

Scott Kingdon, JD '76, authored *Negotiating: The Art And Science Of Making A Deal* (Powerlines Press, May 2019), which offers a non-technical, practical guide to negotiating business contracts and resolving employee disagreements.

Gary Kirkbride, MURP '76, served as a reviewer on the fourth edition of the *Land Development Handbook* (McGraw-Hill, May 2019), a widely used reference for design professionals, students, and private and public land developers.

Lee Hurwitz, BA '78, MBA '82, co-authored with Tim Treanor *Capital City* (Astor+Blue, November 2016), a Washington, D.C.-set novel about a vice-loving, corrupt mayor's fall from grace.

Paul R. Ried, MBA '78, was named as one of the "Best-

in-State Wealth Advisors" in Washington state for 2019 by *Forbes* and one of "America's Top 1,200 Financial Advisors" for the 11th consecutive year by *Barron's*. He is the president and founder of the Paul R. Ried Financial Group LLC in Bellevue, Wash.

// '80s

Robin Stein Bernstein, MBA '81, was sworn in as the U.S. ambassador to the Dominican Republic in July 2018. She currently resides in Santo Domingo with her husband, Richard, and daughter, Julia.

Paul D'Ambrosio, BA '81, and his team won an Edward R. Murrow Award for investigative reporting at the *Asbury Park Press*. The 19-part series, "Protecting the Shield," helped change New Jersey law after exposing the secret agreements that allowed violent cops to remain on local police forces until they maimed or killed innocent people. He is currently the executive editor at *APP* and was the investigations editor during the development of the series.

Sharon Armstrong, MEd '82, co-authored *The Essential HR Handbook, 10th Anniversary Edition: A Quick and Handy Resource for Any Manager or HR Professional* (Career Press, January 2019).

Lynne Buchanan, MA '83, authored and photographed *Florida's Changing Waters: A Beautiful World In Peril* (George F Thompson Publishing, April 2019), which chronicles the environmental damage being done to Florida's waterways and the devastating plight of her home state.

Elliott Kugel, MS '83, was recognized on *Financial Times*' "Top 400 Financial Advisors" list. He was also listed in *Barron's* as one of the "Top 1200 Advisors in America" and was ranked No. 15 in New Jersey. He was ranked fourth

in New Jersey for "Best-in-State Wealth Advisors" by *Forbes* in 2019. Kugel is a managing director of investments at Merrill Lynch in Bridgewater, N.J., and resides in Skillman, N.J.

David Samuels, MBA '84, received the National Outstanding Eagle Scout Award from the National Eagle Scout Association. The reception was held in March at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Va.

Luis J. Fujimoto, BS '85, was elected president of the Academy of Dentistry International. He is currently the president of the American Association of Dental Boards and has a private practice in New York City.

Michael La Place, BA '85, MURP '89, was named the planning director for Princeton, N.J. He was previously the director of planning and economic development for 12 years in Passaic County, N.J.

Jill Liberman, BA '85, co-authored *Success Factor X: Inspiration, Wisdom, and Advice from 50 of America's Best* (Cedar Fort, May 2019), which investigates the elusive quality that makes some people wildly successful. The book features tips, stories and advice from, among others: billionaire Mark Cuban, actress Susan Lucci, TV host Jerry Springer and rapper Darryl McDaniels of Run-DMC.

George F. Indest III, LLM '86, was selected to the 2019 Florida Super Lawyers list for the 11th year.

Sandra G. Sheets, JD '87, was elected to the GiveWell board of directors for a one-year term, which began in July.

Paul Muessig, MBA '87, was named vice president of Long & Foster Real Estate's commercial property management division. He's been a commercial real estate professional for more than 40 years.

David A. Goldstein, BA '88, co-authored the article, "Changing



the Paradigm: Creating Scale and Keeping Local Expertise in Nonprofit Affordable Housing Development—How to Stop Competing with Fellow CDCs and Embrace a Joint Ownership Structure,” in the *Journal of Affordable Housing and Community Development Law*. He is also a co-founder and managing partner at the real estate law firm Goldstein Hall in New York.

Robert Carter, BA '89, joined Deforche Construct—which develops and sells scientific and large commercial greenhouses—as its regional account manager for Canada and the east coast of the United States.

Peter M. Wendzel, BA '89, joined Jackson Lewis, P.C., as a principal in the firm’s Orlando office.

// '90s

Amy Chazkel, BA '91, a historian of Brazil, was appointed as the Bernard Hirschhorn Associate Professor of Urban Studies in the Columbia University Department of History.

Ron Fricker, MA '91, was named associate dean for faculty affairs and administration in the Virginia Tech College of Science.

Shelley Sharp, MBA '91, is the chief executive officer of the Ryan Nece Foundation, an organization focused on developing the next generation of community leaders in Tampa, Fla.

Thomas Dardarian, BA '92, was inaugurated as the 2019-'20 president of the American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians & Gynecologists.

Jonathan “Johnny” Friedman, BA '92, was named to the 2019 list of Georgia Super Lawyers.

Michael Rekstad, MS '93, authored *Cadat Decoded* (Barnes & Noble Press, January 2019), which follows how a small, mysterious red device left in the woods of the Rocky Mountains brings together the vacationing Chris Lewis and otherworldly, Earth-stranded propulsion engineer Tag.

Susan Davis, MPH '96, was welcomed as the new global coordinator for Agenda for Change, an international collaboration between organizations working for universal water, sanitation and hygiene services around the world.

Andrew McNeill, MFS '96, retired from the Monroe County (N.Y.) Sheriff’s Office after a 20-year career in crime scene investigation and collision reconstruction. He is now the director of forensic education for L-Tron Corporation, a technology company in Victor, N.Y., where he teaches forensic photography and provides training and support for the company’s OSC360 spherical photography system.

Christopher Atkinson, BA '98, MPA '00, authored his second book, *Semiotic Analysis and Public Policy: Connecting Theory and Practice* (Routledge, March 2019). The book, drawing on the work of Saussure, Peirce and others, evaluates key areas of public policy that are dependent on narrative, naming, sign and branding to create meaning. He was also appointed in 2018 as

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GW Alumni Association



an assistant professor in public administration at the University of West Florida.

Michael Price, EdD '99, authored *Murder on the Disoriented Express: How Laity May Be Killing Their Congregation* (IndigoSea Press). The book investigates potential reasons for the decline in membership of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), which has lost half of its membership over two decades. Price offers a comprehensive list of programs to assist churches of all sizes, settings and denominations to better manage this trend affecting nearly every mainline Protestant denomination.

// '00s

Mary Gill, CERT '00, authored *Angel in the Basket: A Personal*

Story of Surviving Cancer (Opus Self-Publishing, 2019). Through a compilation of emails sent to friends and family, she documents her life after being diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer in 2008, expressing how moments otherwise daunting were filled with love and joy thanks to her friends and caregivers. Having beat her cancer, she has since returned to landscaping, teaching yoga and enjoying life.

Melissa E. Scott, BA '01, was promoted to partner at the Exton, Pa., office of Fox Rothschild LLP.

Christine Tarr, JD '01, was appointed the senior assistant director in career services at Southwestern Law School.

Jennifer Wisdom, PhD '01, authored *Millennials' Guide to Work: What No One Ever Told You About How to Achieve Success and*

Respect (Winding Pathway Books, June 2019), which includes advice on how to clarify goals and values and how to deal with everyday challenges in the workplace.

Brett A. Berman, BBA '03, a partner in the Philadelphia office of Fox Rothschild LLP, was named to the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* "40 Under 40" list.

Malena Crawford, BA '03, was recognized in June at the Next Generation Indie Book Awards for her novel, *A Fistful of Honey* (Independently Published, February 2017). Just as protagonist Alena Ford's life is falling apart and traumas begin to resurface, she is expected to save humanity when a neighbor's stunning amethyst necklace and Black Madonna painting draw her into a world of ancient secrets,

dark forces and powerful magic.

Jim Walther, EdD '03, was named the executive director of the Tampa Bay Library Consortium. Previously, he was an assistant professor at Emporia State University in the School of Library and Information Management and the director of staff development at the New York Public Library.

Tania Ali, BA '04, was named general counsel and corporate secretary for Travelex North America.

Kou Moore, CPH '04, joined the German Development Cooperation as a technical adviser. Previously, she worked as the director of strategic alignment at Liberia's Ministry of Health and as a technical adviser to Liberia's Minister of Health.



Q&A

A Chat with New GWAA President Richard Jones, JD '84

Richard Jones seems to be at home in, or at least breezily unperturbed by, outsized organizations. The Atlanta native is No. 10 of a dozen siblings, has four children of his own ("We have to rent recreation centers to have our family get together," he says), and since 2000, he's helped run the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, which monitors the banking system in six Southeastern states, as its senior vice president and general counsel.

This spring, Jones, JD '84, also became president of the GW Alumni Association, which counts more than 290,000 members.

Four decades after he arrived at GW Law—a new Morehouse College grad who showed up to pay tuition and realized he'd misplaced his entire savings—Jones spoke with *GW Magazine* about his dubious start at GW and his outlook for the GWAA. —Danny Freedman, BA '01

How did you end up at GW?

I wanted to go to law school in Washington. I had gotten married the summer before my senior year, and my wife was already attending Howard Law School, and there had been a long line of Morehouse graduates who had gone to GW, so I had a good feeling about the university.

And you were here on a scholarship?

Yes, but I didn't get the scholarship till after I got there. I had saved some money because I worked through college at UPS. My mother passed away in the summer after I graduated from undergrad, and I had gotten tied up with her illness and being a newlywed, so I really

GW Alumni Association Executive Committee

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Kristen Barnes, BA '16

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Christine Brown-Quinn, MBA '92

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Michelle Rubin, BA '91

Los Angeles

John Sirek, MA '89

Chicago

Mallory Staub, BA '10

New York

For more on the GWAA, visit: alumni.gwu.edu/about-gw-alumni-association

had not followed through on any of the scholarship or financial aid information. I just went to GW, quite honestly, on faith, and I had enough money saved up to pay for the first semester.

I had put all my money in a money order, and I went to register [for classes] and somehow lost the money order. I searched everywhere—the car, the shrubbery and the landscaping. It had to have blown away somewhere. I explained my story to the dean and told him that I was going to just continue to go to class and do the work until something came through. And about two weeks later I received a letter informing me that I had been given a full-tuition scholarship for the three years of law school.

Wow. Were you surprised?

It was astounding. My wife and I were thrilled. We were basically just floating on a wing and a prayer, without any expectation—didn't even know that that was in the cards, that it was a consideration. I never even completed a financial aid application. To this day, I don't even know what happened, how it came about.

I had [a partial scholarship] to go to Georgetown; I chose GW instead based on the feeling I had for it. I'd had this pretty sad experience with my mother, and I had two younger brothers at home, and I just wasn't altogether sure that this was supposed to be, or what was supposed to happen at this time. Getting that scholarship in spite of everything that had happened with losing the money order, it was confirmation that I was, in fact, in the right place at the right time.

And the strangest thing happened: About two months later, I get another little package in the mail from the

bank that I used in Atlanta. Someone had found the money order, brought it in, and they sent it back.

That's incredible.

It was. Totally unexpected.

What interested you in this opportunity to lead the alumni association?

It was a combination of things. I really do owe a lot to GW. I haven't shared that story with many people. It's a very personal story. I think about it, and I think about feelings I had as a result of the school extending an open door to me when I needed it, and I don't think I had done anything that unique as an undergrad to get accepted at the school. So I feel I owe an incredible debt to the university and to the alumni. That was one of the reasons why I'd wanted to stay involved in the law school and was serving on a law school advisory committee.

Are there initiatives you'd like to see happen?

I'm very motivated by the listening tour [a series of online GWAA events in August and early September]. Any initiatives would benefit from understanding what alumni look to the university for, and that's the purpose that the alumni association serves: to reinforce that connection, enrich it, make it stronger. I think that ends up making the university stronger and giving people more reason to appreciate the GW community and the value of a GW education.

I want to turn the involvement up a notch—the enthusiasm, the pride in the university and support. I also want to find out in what ways alumni can be inspired and enthused that would benefit the cause of the university, the goals and objectives that the president has. That is a way to create some cohesion behind the vision for the university, and the closer we are to that, the more we feel a part of it—part of the progress, part of the growth—and it all makes for a stronger GW community. ☐



Richard Jones

Adam Chandler, BA '05,

authored *Drive-Thru Dreams* (Flatiron Books, June 2019). Exploring the link between fast food and American life for the past century, the book tells an intimate and contemporary story of America—its humble beginning, its innovations and failures, its international charisma, and its regional identities—through its beloved roadside fare.

Stephen Fuller, BBA '05, was promoted to partner at Ernst & Young in its People Advisory Services Practice. He works in Ernst & Young's Tysons, Va., office.

Meg Little Reilly, MA '06, authored her third novel, *The Misfortunes of Family* (MIRA, February 2020). When a documentary crew comes to film a retired senator's family reunion at a lake house, jealousies and secrets arise and the seemingly perfect image of the Brights begins to shift. Reilly previously authored *Everything That Follows* (MIRA, May 2018) and *We Are Unprepared* (MIRA, August 2016). She is a writer at Bennington College, an essayist, public radio commentator and outdoor enthusiast.

Ashley Spillane, BA '06,

co-authored the Harvard University case study "Civic Responsibility: The Power of Companies to Increase Voter Turnout," which analyzes eight companies that participated in voter-engagement programs in 2018, including Gap, Target, Twitter and Spotify, and found that these programs were effective in increasing voter turnout while also creating additional business value. She spoke about the findings at a panel discussion, which was moderated by **Kerry Washington, BA '98,** in Washington, D.C., in June.

Sara Hubbs, MFA '08, was awarded a research and development grant by the Arizona Commission on the Arts that will support her work on a series of three sculptures called "The

Gift." Trained as a painter, Hubbs will experiment with complex sculpture-casting methods as well as new methods of viewer engagement.

Meredith Ralls, BA '08, JD '11, an attorney at S&R Law Firm PLLC in Fairfax, Va., was selected as a 2019 Virginia Super Lawyers "Rising Star."

Gary Kraiss Jr., BA '09, married his best friend, Torrey Ford Shallcross, on Feb. 9 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Washington, D.C.

Ivie Guobadia Serieux, BA '09, was selected as a 2019 Super Lawyers "Rising Star" and 2019 New York City Bar Associate Leadership Institute Fellow.

// '10s

Frederico Bartels, MA '11, graduated from the yearlong Public Policy Fellowship, which is sponsored by The Fund for American Studies. The fellowship allows young professionals to foster connections with peers working in public policy while building an understanding of the principles of government through deliberation and debate.

Cameron Brenchley, MPS '11, founded Final Draft Strategies, an Alexandria, Va.-based public affairs and marketing strategy firm focused on customer experience.

Anthony Crisafio, BA '11, was awarded the Clouston Memorial Trust Award by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh for his essay focusing on the mortality gap in patients with schizophrenia. His essay built on his experience volunteering at GW Hospital.

Brianna Kilcullen, BBA '11, founder of Anact, developed a 55-percent hemp, 45-percent organic cotton bath towel as a sustainable alternative to towels that use conventional cotton, which depletes the Earth's water supply. She's launching a Kickstarter campaign on Sept. 3.

Marianne Olaniran, MS '11, and her husband, Kabir Olaniran, in December 2018 welcomed their second child, Jeremiah.

Amanda N. Pickens-Ewell, JD '11, joined Blank Rome LLP's Los Angeles office as an associate in the labor and employment group.

Julia B. Gordon, JD '12, was promoted to supervisor of the Criminal Enterprise Bureau of the Bronx County District Attorney's Office. She's responsible for overseeing firearms-trafficking investigations and prosecutions. In December 2018, she and her husband, **Arthur G. Prystowsky, JD '12,** welcomed their second child, Audrey Sam Prystowsky.

Timothy Savoy, BS '12, MPH '14, was named one of the "30 Under 30" realtors by the National Association of Realtors and was the only Washington, D.C., realtor to make the list. His profile was published in the May-June 2019 issue of *REALTOR Magazine*.

Timothy Caron, BA '13, JD '16, attorney by day, musician and actor by other days, created a rock musical, *The Knights of Salisbury*, which debuted at Washington, D.C.'s Capital Fringe Festival in July. Set along the North Shore of Massachusetts in the 1960s, it follows a teenage rock band as they take on the local music scene with the help of their straightlaced, married neighbors.

Sloan Dickey, BA '13, and **Travis Jordan, MPS '10, JD '16,** climbed Mount Moran, the Teton's second largest mountain, in August. Although they now live in different states, the pair met through connections in Washington, D.C., and formed a friendship based on camping and hiking, bonding over a shared appreciation for nature and their lives beyond the beltway. Sloan currently is an anchor for K2 News in Wyoming, and Travis is an associate attorney at Faegre Baker Daniels LLP in Denver.

Ryan Rambudhan, JD '13, an attorney at S&R Law Firm PLLC in Fairfax, Va., was selected as

a 2019 Virginia Super Lawyers "Rising Star."

Michael Maglio, MPS '14, was named by *ProSales Magazine* as one of the "Four Under 40" for his work in the lumber building materials industry. He is the vice president of NuStar Building Materials in Lantana, Fla.

Barbara Mica, CERT '14, MPS '15, joined Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck in Denver as its chief operating officer.

Anthony Glosson, JD '15, joined Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP as an associate at the firm's Atlanta office.

Benjamin Katz, MA '15, was presented with the 2018 Hugh Morton Photographer of the Year Award for weekly newspapers at the annual North Carolina Press Association convention in March. He is a staff photographer for *The Cherokee Scout*, a community newspaper in Cherokee County, N.C.

Ethan Lee Rosenfeld, JD '15, joined Ulmer & Berne LLP in its Cleveland office as an associate for the firm's business department.

Mark Dang, BA '16, was promoted to software engineer II at Twitter.

Jasmine Jaros, BS '16, graduated with a Master of Science degree in computer science and was promoted to data scientist II at Instagram.

John R. Brophy, MSHS '17, joined the faculty of Saginaw Valley State University. He was also recently named a fellow in the American College of Paramedic Executives.

Cameron Swann, MA '17, joined the Institute for Defense Analyses as a research associate in its Joint Advanced Warfighting Division.

Emily N. Catron, JD '18, joined Fox Rothschild LLP in Washington, D.C., as an associate in the litigation department.



IN MEMORIAM

Harry R. Hughes, JD '52, (March 13, 2019, Denton, Md., 92), was the 57th governor of Maryland and served in the U.S. Navy Air Corps during World War II. Pledging to restore integrity to the state following the scandal-ridden administrations of two of his predecessors, he was elected governor in 1978 after a huge upset in the Democratic primary and a landslide victory in the general election. During his lifelong tenure in public service, he advocated for the protection of the Chesapeake Bay and helped develop the state's modern tax code that replaced the flat tax with a progressive tax structure.

John Lester Chaney, Jr., BA '53, LLB '57, (April 7, 2019, Tomball, Texas, 92), served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War and in the reserves until 1965. He went on to serve 40 years in the U.S. government, retiring as chief attorney of the Office of Compliance and Consumer Assistance in 1994. He also served for many years on the Board of the General Alumni Association of GW, starting in 1982. This included a stint as president, and in 1987, he received a Distinguished Service Award. He also was a gifted artist—preferring pencil and charcoal—and drew many beautiful portraits for family and friends.

William "Bill" Ferguson, MD '53, (April 25, 2019, Flagler Beach, Fla., 91), served as a flight surgeon based at Warner Robins Air Force Base near Savannah, Ga., and later opened his own ophthalmology office in a pre-Disney Orlando, Fla., where he practiced for 30 years. A man of many interests, he loved telescope building, birdwatching, beekeeping and amateur ham radio—he was a licensed amateur extra ham operator with the call sign W4DSR. He was also a fan of woodworking, having crafted grandfather clocks, a catamaran sailboat, and customized workbenches; he even enrolled at the University of New Hampshire to study violin-making.

Lawrence E. Lerner, BS '54, (Feb. 27, 2019, Boca Raton, Fla., 86), developed real estate for over 30 years in the Washington, D.C., suburbs, building hundreds of homes, thousands of apartments and two regional shopping centers. He later founded BankAnnapolis, a community bank serving the state capital and central Maryland. He served on its board of directors for more than 20 years. He was married to Iris Cohen Lerner, BA '57, for 60 years, and together they had three children and two grandchildren. He was a friend and loyal supporter of many charitable causes. In his younger years, he enjoyed playing basketball, baseball and football and was always an avid sports fan, but his true passion in life was golf, which he was content to practice and play for hours on end.

Frances Burka, BA '56, (Feb. 24, 2019, Chevy Chase, Md., 84), an advocate for the arts, was a Friend of the Brady Art Gallery and with her late husband established the Frances and Leonard Burka Fund for the Arts at GW. They also established the Frances and Leonard Burka Social Action Fund at Adas Israel Congregation in D.C.

Barbara Wolin Sincoff, BA '56, (Dec. 17, 2018, Potomac, Md., 84), dedicated her life to her community, having served as an elementary school teacher in Silver Spring, Md., the office manager and principal assistant for a member of the city council of Montgomery County, and a human resources specialist for the county. She also taught in and led nursery schools, taught Sunday school and was active at The Arc Montgomery County for 55 years. She founded the Arc's nursery school and established the first Girl Scout troop for developmentally handicapped girls in the Washington, D.C., area. She also was president and a board member of the sisterhood of Har Shalom synagogue in Potomac. She met her husband, Richard, at GW, and had three daughters and two granddaughters.

Herbert Suesserman, MD '64, (Aug. 30, 2018, 80), had a lengthy and successful career practicing obstetrics and gynecology in the New Haven, Conn., area after completing a residency at Yale New Haven Hospital. One of his greatest joys was his work, and he saw patients as recently as July 2018.

He also enjoyed his appointment as a community-based faculty member in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University. He was a devoted family man and is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years, Ellen; son Michael; daughters Julie and Jennifer; and four adoring grandchildren.

Anita Gutnick Greenwald, BA '67, (May 8, 2019, Macon, Ga., 73), focused her career on helping children with severe learning disorders while serving on the faculty of Thomas Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and while living in Georgia. She was active in many professional, educational, and charitable organizations throughout the years.

Jerry L. Coffey, PhD '71, (Dec. 30, 2018, Winchester, Va., 76), was, until his retirement, a senior mathematical statistician in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget in the executive office of the president. He served on the board of the American Statistical Association and as the chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform, analyzing the census. Jerry loved his children, Laurel and Jay, and his wife of 51 years, Gretchen.

Jeffrey Haskins, MD '79, (April 16, 2018, Tappahannock, Va., 64), was a urologist for Riverside Health Systems in Virginia. He loved University of North Carolina basketball and was passionate about golf, sailing, cars and history. Despite a series of personal tragedies, he is remembered for his zest for life, positivity, generosity and his loving soul.

Charles E. Freeman, MS '80, (Jan. 10, 2019, Greenwood, S.C., 86), served in the 1st Cavalry Division of the U.S. Army as a sergeant during the Korean War and was a recipient of the Purple Heart. Throughout his life, he was an active member of the Trinity Episcopal Church, the American Legion Post 2 and Korean War Veterans. Soft-spoken, loyal and forgiving, he is remembered for his awareness of the good in everyone and his assistance to his community.

Robert Scott Hauser, JD '95, (Oct. 8, 2018, San Francisco, 54), served in the U.S. Air Force and later made his home in San Francisco, specializing in intellectual property law and working for companies such as Sun Microsystems, Fitbit and Google Nest. Born in Illinois, Scott grew up a military brat moving from base to base in the United States but found his way back to California to study computer engineering (before it was a thing). He was an avid sailor, spending many days sailing around the San Francisco Bay and hanging out at the South Beach Yacht Club. He was a self-professed super tech geek, but he also enjoyed traveling abroad, baking and Burning Man. He is survived by his parents, Robert and Judith Hauser, and his partner of 13 years, Austin Wallace.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Doris Elsie Baker, (Jan. 16, 2019, Annapolis, Md., 93), began working at GW in 1980 and eventually became the director of the Office of Fellowships and Scholarship in the GW School of Business and Public Management until her retirement in 1994. After marrying U.S. Army Captain John W. Baker in 1954, she frequently moved around, setting up 13 homes in three countries and four states while raising four children. During this time, she learned German, Arabic and Thai. She is remembered for her love of mystery novels, crosswords, puns, music and, of course, travel. She had a notorious sense of direction (or lack thereof). While living in Germany, she got lost for hours while driving around Berlin, never once finding the wall that then enclosed the western half of the city.


Jannet E. Nolan, (June 26, 2019, Washington, D.C., 67), was a research professor at the Elliott School of International Affairs and chair of the Nuclear Security Working Group. Though she was pragmatic and urged bipartisan cooperation, she also lamented the tendency of officials to avoid voicing concerns about policies once they had been adopted by the general public. She called this the "tyranny of consensus." She believed that decisions made without regard for morality and ethics were likely to be disastrous. She is remembered for her intelligence, wit and humanity.

Institutional Knowledge

Wisdom and How-Tos from Experts in the GW Community

Getting A Faire Look

Costume designer and Renaissance fair veteran Stacey Hamilton, MFA '19, tells us how to dress like an Elizabethan.

Alumna Stacey Hamilton has played Queen Elizabeth I of England at the Virginia Renaissance Faire since 2013. She also just completed her master's at GW in costume design. Here, she offers seven tips for making your own authentically Elizabethan era (1558-1603) costumes for your next—or first—trip to a Renaissance fair. 

Wear a hat!
It was not only fashionable to wear a hat outdoors in Elizabethan England, it was the law. Consider your modern hairstyle and color when choosing headwear. If you have bangs, choose a style that allows you to pin them back underneath your hair covering. One side of my head is shaved, so I wear a hood or caul under my hat that covers the shaved side of my head. I wouldn't want the populace to think my head had been shaved to treat lice!

Know your fabric.
The most common fabrics in Elizabethan England were wool, linen and silk as solid fabrics or woven in a damask pattern. I frequently use synthetic alternatives to silk damask because they are more affordable. When shopping for synthetic fabrics, be wary of what I call the "synthetic shine"—a crisp, bright shine that is too perfect to be natural. When shopping online, order swatches first.

Look for patterns.
There are many historical patterns commercially available. Check out Margo Anderson, Lynn McMasters and The Tudor Tailor. Books by Janet Arnold and the Modern Maker can guide you through making your own patterns. There's also ElizabethanCostume.net.

Find your actual waistline.
Put your hand on your hip and bend like you're a little teapot. The point where your waist creases is your natural waistline and is usually your narrowest point. That's where the waist of your period garment should sit. Ladies, you want a narrow waist. Gentlemen, you want long, lean legs. Both were fetching in Elizabethan England.



Stacey Hamilton dressed as a 30-something Queen Elizabeth at the Virginia Renaissance Faire

Research primary sources.
The first step toward building an Elizabethan costume is research. I like to study the portraiture of the period, and museum websites are my favorite sources. Many provide high-quality digital scans so you can zoom in. Artists to look for: Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder and the Younger, Lucas de Heere, and Pieter Bruegel the Elder and the Younger. Their work has varied depictions of every societal class.

Avoid modern styles and conveniences.
Sunglasses or purses will instantly push your outfit from the 16th century to the 21st. Instead, wear a hat with a wide brim to shade your eyes, and carry your belongings in a pouch or your pockets. (Yep, they had pockets back then.) Don't forget shoes are a part of your ensemble, too. Simple, leather ankle boots or Mary Jane-style shoes are period-appropriate and widely available.



Mind your proportions.
Pay attention to proportions. Perhaps the most egregious mistake I see amateur costumers make is layering modern proportions on a period silhouette. Become familiar with period proportions. If you feel your garment doesn't look quite right, try adjusting your proportions.



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