

GW

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
MAGAZINE
WINTER 2024







Students in full swing (pun intended, sorry) at GW's First Night. The annual event celebrates the start of the academic year and welcomes the GW community back to campus.

GW MAGAZINE WINTER 2024

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

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WILLIAM ATKINS



At GW, every gift fuels transformative experiences—scholarships for talented students, cutting-edge research, world-class athletics, innovative fine arts, and a dynamic, inclusive community.

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hear from you**

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Prelude

NEWS AND INSIGHTS FROM CAMPUS AND BEYOND



MASTER STROKE

GW Club Swimming offers an outlet for swimmers who want to maintain their passion for the pool without the pressure of varsity-level competition.

📍 SARAH HOCHSTEIN

THRIFTING AWAY

The Loop is GW's new free clothing exchange store on the Mount Vernon campus. The inventory is sourced from clothing donations from university community members.

📷 JORDAN TOVIN



Edward P. Jones

The Worlds of Edward P. Jones

English Professor and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jones shapes worlds of fiction in his head. And now his work has been ranked among the century's best.

By John DiConsiglio

Professor of English Edward P. Jones has characters walking around in his head. They take up residence there for years—sometimes decades—before he gets them down on paper.

Some—like the grocers, mothers, bus drivers and doctors in his renowned short story collections “Lost in the City” (Amistad, 1992) and “All Aunt Hagar’s Children” (HarperCollins, 2007)—reflect the working-class lives he saw growing up in Washington, D.C.

Others—like the Civil War-era Black slave owner in his 2003 masterpiece, “The Known

World” (HarperCollins, 2003)—settled in his imagination for years before he felt the time was right to let him out.

“Over 10 years, I was creating this world in my head,” Jones said. “I typed maybe six pages because I wanted to see what it looked like on paper. Up until then, it had just been in my head. And you really can’t see it very well in your head.”

Those six pages turned into a runaway success. “The Known World” won a slew of literary awards, including the Pulitzer Prize. And this summer, it ranked fourth on “The New York

Times” list of the 100 Best Books of the 21st Century. “All Aunt Hagar’s Children” also made the list at 70.

In a joint statement, English Department Chair Antonio López and Assistant Professor of English Lisa Page congratulated Jones for his remarkable achievement. “The brilliance of Edward’s literary work is matched by his excellence as a teacher and colleague,” the statement read.

For the soft-spoken Jones, who generally avoids the spotlight, the accolades haven’t changed his life much. He doesn’t

drive or use a cell phone. He’s accepted more invitations for readings—and now sometimes treats himself to a cab to the airport instead of a bus ride. After “The Known World,” he moved “across the river,” as he puts it, from Arlington, Virginia, back to D.C.—a locale as central to his fiction as James Joyce’s Dublin or William Faulkner’s Mississippi. “By the time I was 18 years old, my mother, my sister and I, we lived in 18 different places in D.C.,” he recalled.

Jones teaches creative writing at GW. And Page, the director of creative writing at the

“When you write a book, the only thing you are really concerned about is yourself, your book. And that’s it. You can’t think about any possible reader out there anywhere in the world. No one.”

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences and a graduate student of Jones’ at George Mason University in the ’90s, welcomes him into her own classrooms each semester. “Nobody—and I mean nobody—gives feedback like Edward Jones,” she said. “He doesn’t miss anything. He always respects the intelligence of the reader and the responsibility of the writer. He’s a genius.”

As a writing teacher, Jones sees his role largely as a cheerleader for students’ work. He rejects the idea that fiction writing is reserved for an intellectual elite. “My feeling is that we can all do this writing stuff,” he said.

In a Zoom interview from his home in Northwest D.C., Jones discussed creativity, his teaching methods and “The Known World’s” journey from a footnote in his head to an American classic.

Q: “The Known World” ranked as the fourth best book of the 21st century in “The New York Times” survey of hundreds of authors, editors and critics. It was the highest rated book among American writers. What is it about that book that resonates with readers?

A: I cannot answer that. In the last 25 years, there have been hundreds and hundreds of pieces of fiction published. And there are some wonderful, wonderful writers. I’m very fortunate that I had even one book on the list, let alone two.

But when you write a book, the only thing you are really concerned about is yourself,

your book. You’re putting into it everything you’ve learned about writing fiction. And that’s it. You can’t think about any possible reader out there anywhere in the world. No one. So I do not know. You would have to ask them why they chose my books and all the other 98.

Q: How did “The Known World” come about—the idea for writing a novel about a Black person who owned Black slaves?

A: I finished [“Lost in the City”] in 1992, 1993, and I was looking around for another project. I remembered some footnote back in college that there had been Black slave owners. And I went with that.

I had about 50 or so books on American slavery, and I started in on one book. But I didn’t get any feeling from reading those first pages, so I stopped. I’m probably very fortunate in writing this fiction stuff, because I could never be anyone’s researcher. I could never be a reporter. I could never do any sort of going to the library and looking things up. Making it up is much easier for me.

I had these 50 books, and I never got around to reading them. Luckily, I was born with a serviceable imagination. The brain, I suppose, is made up of two aspects. One is the logical side and one the creative side. So the logical part was telling me I needed to read those books. And the creative side could not be held back by the logical part. And over those 10 years when I was not doing research, I was creating this world in my head.

Q: Can you tell me what you remember about writing “The Known World”? What was

happening in your life at the time?

A: I had a day job with this esoteric tax magazine, “Tax Notes.” And then in 2001 on Christmas vacation, I thought just maybe I wanted to start working on this book even though I had not done the research. So I had about two weeks or so of vacation time and I gave myself five pages a day—actually more because on the typewriter it was single-spaced.

And then in January, [the magazine] called me and said after some 20 years I didn’t have a job anymore. So luckily I had the book worked out in a very general way in my head. And for the rest of the month I just continued working. I forget how many chapters there are, but I worked toward making every chapter about 25 pages. And when I finished each chapter, there was another mountain to climb.

Q: Is that how you generally treat writing—like a 9-to-5 job?

A: With the novel, I probably did. I had a calendar where I charted the number of pages I wrote every day. But, no, I don’t as a rule. Now I certainly don’t do that.

Q: And I don’t suppose you expected your writing to be so successful.

A: I think there are people out there in the world who do. But that was never me. You know, when you go into bookstores and you see the table for books under a dollar? If I had any thought about it back then, it was probably that maybe if I managed to get a publisher, the book would last several months before it was consigned to that remaindered table.

Q: I want to ask you about writing about a Black slaveholder. How are readers supposed to feel about him?

A: I don’t know, and I don’t care. If you start thinking about, “OK, what does this group think? What does that group think?” then you’re writing for all those people out there, not for yourself. I really didn’t give any sort of thought whatsoever about how the world would accept this. My only concern was that I write the best thing that I could at that point in my life.

Q: Let’s talk about teaching writing. How do you demystify the writing process for students?

A: When you have a mother, like mine, who can’t read or write, you tend not to see [writers] as people over there on a mountaintop. I was the first person in my family to go to college. I never felt that I was any better than any other writer out there.

At the very first class, I tell [students] everybody is at the top of the mountain. Everybody has an A. If you don’t do 56 pages of fiction during the course of the semester, if you don’t come to class and let me know that you’ve read your fellow students’ work, then you begin to slide down the mountain.

But I don’t want them to come to class with their story and think I didn’t like this part or that character and that means they won’t get a good grade. That’s never the case. The best thing that I can do is be a cheerleader and an editor. Creative writing is subjective. I tell them: This is not a physics course. This is not a math course. There are no certain answers. ☐

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

A GW STAFF MEMBER'S GRAPHIC (DESIGN) STORY

John McGlasson is managing art director in the Office of Communications and Marketing. By Greg Varner

It's not unusual for alumni to return to GW as faculty or staff members, but **John McGlasson, B.A. '00, M.F.A. '03**, never left. Immediately after earning his bachelor's and master's degrees in visual communication, McGlasson joined the university as a graphic designer and is now managing art director in the Office of Communications and Marketing.

In that role, he oversees the day-to-day operations for the in-house design team of five full-time people but still finds time to design. Now approaching the end of his third decade as a member of the GW community, McGlasson subscribes to the saying, "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

His years as a GW student broadened him in two major ways, he said. First, he grew comfortable doing creative work on the computer, and second, he learned from and enjoyed interacting with the diverse campus community.

"Working on a computer sounded like the worst thing in the whole world," McGlasson said. "It wasn't a career choice I thought about."

McGlasson had long been interested in art, having filled multiple notebooks with doodles as a boy. He had been trained

in fine art—drawing, painting and sculpture—at Calvert Hall College High School in Towson, Maryland, and always assumed he would work in a creative field, perhaps as an illustrator of children's books. But his father's playful experiments with Photoshop, then new, had not particularly excited him.

"He would put his head on bodybuilders' bodies and stuff like that," McGlasson said, "and I played with it a little bit, but it really had no interest for me."

One of the classes he most enjoyed in his first year at GW was a drawing class taught by Bradley Stevens, a renowned portraitist.

"He was a professional artist who pushed and had a really good influence on me," McGlasson said. "Brad was laid back, a quiet kind of guy who taught by example—more of a guiding than a directing type of approach."

McGlasson was an eager student, coming into the art studio to work after hours. That dedicated work and the example of his highly talented classmates helped him improve his skill too.

Majoring in fine art felt a bit "pie in the sky," he said, given the necessity of finding a job after graduating, so he hedged his bets and took a course in graphic design.

"I love art, but felt I'd have

"It was the college freshman experience that you would hope anyone would have."



a better chance of finding a job as a graphic designer," he said, "so I took some 3-D design classes, and at first, I was terrible at it. I was trying to force my fine art skills into my graphic design on the computer with mixed results. But then it all kind of clicked."

Again, the support and example of talented classmates helped. His comfort and skill designing on the computer improved to the point where today he can't resist imagining how to improve the designs he sees in the world at large.

"It's part of my DNA now," he said. "I'm the annoying person who points out fonts when credits roll in the movie theater."

His artistic growth was mirrored by his personal growth. He applied to live on the arts floor at Mitchell Hall, where he joined a diverse community of actors, musicians and artists.

"Coming from the suburbs of Maryland, I was probably the straightest, whitest suburban guy on that floor," McGlasson said. "I was exposed to all types of lifestyles, different races, different religious backgrounds, there were LGBTQ+ people—all people that I never really spent any time with before. Being exposed to all these different groups and identities, and living with them night and day, was an amazing experience. It was the college freshman experience that you would hope anyone would have."

Hanging with his artsy friends broadened McGlasson's horizons too. He designed theater programs and even acted in a couple of productions, including a musical version of the Dracula story. McGlasson played the vampire hunter Van Helsing but didn't sing the part himself—his singing, he said, is like "nails on a chalkboard." The solution was having him lip sync, which McGlasson did badly on purpose to heighten the fun. "It was clearly not me singing," he said.

His favorite place on campus was the Marvin Center (since renamed the University Student Center), where he and other members of his circle would gather throughout the day.

And after more than 20 years, he said, campus "looks pretty different but feels pretty much the same." **GW**

Briefly...



A study led by **GW BIOLOGY RESEARCHERS** revealed how an unexpected genetic mechanism influences the evolution of butterfly wing coloration.

A new **CENTER FOR INTERFAITH AND SPIRITUAL LIFE**

has a goal of enhancing interfaith and spiritual efforts at GW by promoting and supporting spiritual development, theological reflections, religious expression, social justice and social awareness.

Kristen Glass Perez (left) will serve as the university chaplain, and Simran Kaur-Colbert (right) is the center's inaugural director.



Over the summer, **MICHAEL LIPITZ** (pictured here with his family) was appointed GW's associate vice president and director of athletics. Lipitz most recently served as director of intercollegiate athletics at the University of Illinois–Chicago.



Michael and Lori Milken Dean of Public Health **LYNN R. GOLDMAN**, who has helmed the Milken Institute School of Public Health since 2010, announced that she will step back. Under her leadership, the school rose in national rankings from 19th in 2010 to 11th in 2024. Its endowment has grown from \$1.1 million to more than \$130 million.



CORCORAN HALL, the first building constructed on GW's Foggy Bottom campus, celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Known for housing groundbreaking discoveries, from George Gamow's Big Bang theory to Niels Bohr's announcement of the Atomic Age, the building continues to foster innovation in its state-of-the-art facilities and remains a vital part of GW's academic legacy.



A GW STUDY found that over a third of cocoa products in the U.S., including organic varieties, contain levels of lead and cadmium exceeding safety guidelines. Researchers advise consumers to limit their intake to one ounce of dark chocolate per day to minimize the risk of heavy metal exposure.



JONQUEL JONES, B.A. '19, was named most valuable player of the WNBA finals for powering the New York Liberty to its first championship. During the finals, Jones averaged 17.8 points and 7.6 rebounds while shooting 56% from the field.

'It Is Fundamentally Wrong'

Alumna painstakingly chronicles the brutal and surprising history of the for-profit prison system.

In the early 19th century, three men in Auburn, New York, landed on the idea of a prison as a means of enriching themselves and their nascent village. In these men's eyes, a prison was a way to attract state funds, grow commerce and employment, and—with repercussions that have lasted for two centuries and counting—manufacture goods with free labor.

So sets the stage of "Freeman's Challenge: The Murder That Shook America's Original Prison for Profit" (University of Chicago Press, 2024), the extraordinary new book by Robin Bernstein, M.A. '99, that brings to painful and vivid life the origins of a system that continues to serve as a model for prisons everywhere.

What came to be known as the Auburn System had a clear goal of profit over redemption or justice. Prisoners toiled all day every day in factories on the premises. Infractions real or perceived were met with extreme violence.

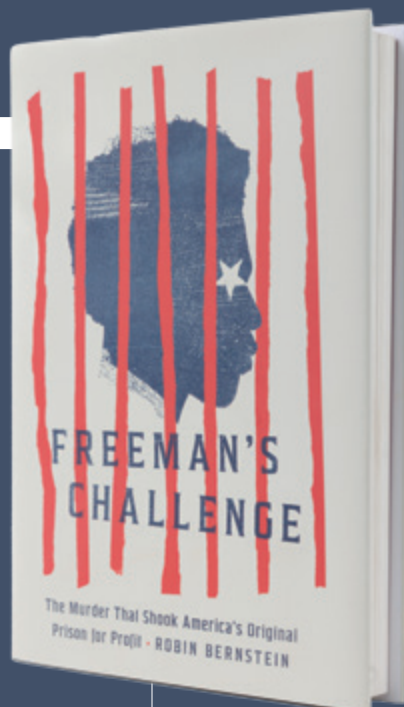
After serving five years in Auburn for a charge he denied, a Black man, William Freeman, demanded payment for his labor. The lengths he went to, including multiple murders, shocked Whites and Blacks alike—and resonate to this day.

GW Magazine talked to Bernstein, the Dillon Professor of American History at Harvard University, about the legacy of Auburn, what she wants readers to take away, and how what she learned at GW informs her research and teaching.

Q: How did you come across the story of William Freeman, and what drew you to tell his story?

A: *I saw a footnote about a 1846 theatrical performance in Albany, in which a Black character killed a White family. I knew that something extraordinary had happened. In the 19th century, White people absolutely did not want to see images of Black-on-White violence. It was too frightening. And yet in Auburn, people were lining up and paying money to see it. I found that the performance was a dramatization of Freeman's story. I started researching him and learned he had been incarcerated in Auburn in the 1840s and forced to work in factories where his labor was leased to local companies.*

I had thought, like so many, that prison for profit and convict leasing were invented by the South after the Civil War as a way of re-enslaving Blacks. However, the system was created much earlier in the North. When we start the story of the prison for profit with the South and the Civil War, we're starting the story in the middle. And the problem with starting the story in the middle is that it lets the North off the hook. I



Freeman's Challenge: The Murder That Shook America's Original Prison for Profit (University of Chicago Press, 2024) by Robin Bernstein, M.A. '99

wanted to put the North back on the hook.

Q: How has the Auburn System influenced the development of for-profit prisons?

A: *It was the primary influence. It established the idea that a prison can function primarily and fundamentally as an economic force. It's a bizarre idea, but there is no prison in the world that is not affected by it. When we think about some of the most famous prisons in the United States—San Quentin or Angola—they were self-consciously created in Auburn's image.*

Q: What do you hope readers take away from the book?

A: *I hope they take away a sense of the weirdness of the idea that a prison should be an economic force. Why should anybody profit economically off another person's incarceration? I also hope people take away a respect for William Freeman's bravery and for his core point that it is fundamentally wrong to steal somebody's labor. He was a teenager, and he was in prison for a crime he swore he did not commit. We might not approve of his methods of resistance, but he resisted bravely, and he tried to resist legally.*

Q: How do you reconcile the murders Freeman committed with his bravery and the justice of what he was demanding?

A: *The way I think about the murders is that they were an act of terrorism, and what we know about terrorism is that it succeeds in terrifying. It's very important that the murders do not fit into an easy, narrow, revenge narrative. If they had, it would have been much less terrifying. But because it denied people the comfort of an easy ending, they had to grapple with the crime. What they did not want to do is listen to what Freeman was saying. So they had to come up with their own story about why Freeman killed these people. And the story they came up with was race. White people in Auburn made the racist argument that Freeman killed because he was Black (as well as Native American). This is one of the earliest criminalizations of Black people, one of the most vicious forms of racism that we continue to live with today.*

This criminalization explains why White people in Auburn, unlike their counterparts elsewhere, wanted to see Black-on-White violence on stage. As frightening as this story was, it reinforced a newly formed racist libel that itself was a means for White people to manage the terror they felt when William Freeman challenged the Auburn prison.

Q: Finally, could you talk a bit about your GW experience?

A: *I got a master's degree in American studies. I studied with Professors Melani McAllister and Gayle Wald, who are both still teaching at GW. They rocked my world! I still depend on what I learned in their classes every day for my research and my teaching.*

— Rachel Muir



“Beyond Vanity: The History and Power of Hairdressing” (MIT Press, 2024)

by Elizabeth L. Block, B.A. '94

Block, a senior editor in the Publications and Editorial Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, combs (not literally) through the complex cultural meaning of late 19th-century hair in America. In the years after the Civil War, hair was inherently entangled in the social strata of the nation, influencing everything from ideologies to economies (and going so far as to include a taxidermized kitten headdress). Against a backdrop of high society salons, then called “hair rooms” or “saloons,” Block also uncovers the stories of Black and mixed-race business owners forging independent paths in the burgeoning hair industry.



“Plentiful Country: The Great Potato Famine and the Making of Irish New York” (Little, Brown and Company, 2024)

by Professor of History Emeritus Tyler Anbinder

Anbinder and a small army of GW student research assistants spent more than 10 years following 15,000 immigrant names through troves of official records—through bank account balances, census data, and birth and death certificates. The result is a new immigrant story, one that traces their journey from the fields of Ireland to the streets of New York City while telling a wider tale that rescues Potato Famine immigrants from the margins of history and restores them to their rightful place at the center of the American story.

“After 1177 B.C.: The Survival of Civilizations” (Princeton University Press, 2024)

by Professor of Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies and of Anthropology Eric H. Cline

A follow-up to Cline’s bestselling history “1177 B.C.,” “After 1177 B.C.” picks up at a point when many of the Late Bronze Age civilizations of the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean were in ruins, a result of a perfect storm of natural disasters, climate change, invaders and disease. Cline traces the aftermath across the region over four centuries—a time often referred to as the “first dark age”—as a new world order slowly emerged and, despite its moniker, inventions, including the use of iron and the alphabet, forever changed the world. “It is a story of resilience, transformation and success, as well as failures, in an age of chaos and reconfiguration,” writes Cline.

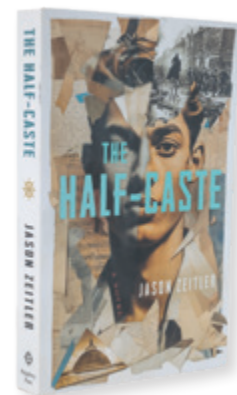


“Autocrats Can’t Always Get What They Want” (University of Michigan Press, 2024)

by Elliott School Professors

Nathan J. Brown and Julian G. Waller

Brown and Waller—and their co-authors Steven D. Schaaf and Samer Anabtawi—go beyond autocrats themselves to explore how the systems that support their regimes operate. Focusing on three structures—parliaments, constitutional courts and official religious institutions—the book’s authors find that autonomy hinges on forging key alliances both inside and outside the state and on developing strong institutional patterns. Those that do “are better equipped to realize a meaningful degree of autonomy over their internal affairs and may even be able to pursue their own sense of mission in politics,” they write.



“The Half-Caste” (Polyphony Press, 2023)

by Jason Zeitler, M.S. '97

Zeitler’s new novel begins in 1930s London, where fascism is ascendant and war looms. Against this backdrop, two men forge an unlikely friendship over tea. But both Vernon, a mixed-race postgraduate student, and Saul, a Jewish intellectual, hold secrets back in their wide-ranging discussions. When the setting shifts to a bucolic jungle in Ceylon a decade away from independence, their secrets slowly come to light amid a backdrop of political intrigue, love and loss. **EW**

It's



Uncle Jerry's Pretzels

a





These eight alumni are utilizing their talents—from food and wine to art and skin care—to create the perfect holiday wish list.

BY CAITE HAMILTON

No one gets into entrepreneurship without a certain amount of passion, and these eight small business owners are no exception. This year's gift guide features GW alums who are giving it their all—designing high-end watches, creating the perfect-fitting T-shirt, selling olive oil that rivals flavors of fine wines—so you can gift like a pro.

In full color

Who is the perfect client for abstract artist **Jen Sterling**? Someone, she says, who makes bold choices. Lives their life to the fullest. Takes risks. In other words, someone brave.

That's not because Sterling, B.A. '91, creates such outside-the-box work. It's because, while most home decor trends err on the side of muted tones, Sterling's over here smearing the canvas with deep reds.

"It takes some nerve to buck the neutral design trends prevalent today and add a splash of bright color to your home or office," she says. "But [my clients] are also the people who tend to take risks in business, push themselves past their comfort zones to try new things."

Sterling herself is someone who loves bright colors and expressive brush strokes. And she's no stranger to taking risks. While a student at George Washington University, she'd planned to study genetics. But a required art class introduced her to typography—and the possibility of making a living by being creative. So she switched gears.

From there, she spent 30 years building and running her own Maryland-based design and branding firms ("I loved helping clients define themselves and grow successfully," she says) but in 2018 decided to pivot to fine arts, selling her firm to her staff and taking her artwork full time.

Today she's helping clients in a different way: by creating one-of-a-kind works of art that reflect who they are and that complement the wall space where they'll hang. Often, she says, the pieces end up just as meaningful to her as they are to the client.

"About a year after I moved into my current studio I received a call from a commercial real estate agent. She had just been diagnosed with breast cancer," Sterling says. "She said she wanted one of my colorful and joyous pieces to hang in her living room to see every day and motivate her while she fought through recovery. I was incredibly honored to receive this request and felt the pressure of getting it right."

Sterling ended up painting two pieces and allowing the client to choose which one most resonated with her, and while that's not a typical method of operation for the artist, it is indicative of her commitment to the purpose of each piece—to bring joy, to bring peace, to foster inspiration.

Sterling starts by viewing the home or commercial space and deciding what size and composition she'd recommend. She provides a rough mock-up of how the piece will fit into the space and then (after some paperwork, deposits and supplies ordering) she gets started.

"I take in any and all stories and information they share with me about their intent for the piece—sometimes even listening to specific songs that have meaning to them," Sterling says. Occasionally the pieces will have hidden messages or images, but she says it's rare that she includes them on purpose. Mostly, she says, "I am focused on evoking the feelings or emotions that the commissioner has requested."

Mention GW Magazine when contacting Jen Sterling for 20 percent off commissioned or existing works at jensterling.com.



COURTESY OF JEN STERLING

Get it twisted

"Uncle" Jerry Skolnick opened his eponymous pretzel business in 1988 out of a rural Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, bakery using a recipe that, today, is more than 50 years old. Since then, co-owner **Misty Skolnick, B.A. '03, M.A. '07**, (Jerry's daughter) estimates the business has churned out sourdough pretzels in the millions, at a rate of more than 25,000 per day.

"Growing up, I watched how hard [my dad] worked to build and sustain his business," says Skolnick, who was 7 when he opened Uncle Jerry's. "I really admired him for that."

Jerry has woken up at 4 a.m. each day to make deliveries for 35 years (and does to this day!), and Skolnick started working for

the business in 2008 while transitioning to workforce development in New York City.

"At the time, my dad didn't have a website, and so, while I was looking for work, I decided to build the website," she says. Eventually, she got a job working at a men's homeless shelter helping program participants find employment. But the Uncle Jerry's website continued to grow, and slowly it made sense for Skolnick to come on board full time.

As co-owner of the business, Skolnick oversees everything from strategic planning to packing pretzels for shipment. And, she says, she's involved in the fun part: product launches, which include dreaming up new flavors and taste testing.

"Both my dad and I work hard to develop new flavors," Skolnick says. "We get a lot of inspiration by watching food trends and what we see at our own local grocery stores. ... There's no set process—we just look for and try different flavors and see how they turn out!"

Skolnick says her personal favorite is the special low salt, a classic sourdough pretzel with a medium-brown finish and just a touch

of salt, but customers prefer the extra dark regular salt (followed closely by the extra dark low salt).

"I remember one customer emailed about the extra dark pretzels and said how much he loved them because they reminded him of his mother, who also burnt his toast," Skolnick says.

Nostalgia is a main ingredient in Uncle Jerry's pretzels. Each 7-ounce bag of crunchy snacks is made the old-fashioned way: About 25 people hand-roll and hand-twist the pretzels every day, baking them in a hearth oven. And unlike many others, Uncle Jerry's pretzels are 100 percent natural with no oils, preservatives or added sugars.

Still, Skolnick and her dad are focused on the future. She says a new chocolate pretzel with a hint of peppermint is in the works and—longtime customers rejoice!—their everything pretzel might make a return to the menu.

Use code **GWU24** for 15 percent off your order at unclejerryspretzels.com through Dec. 31.





Mae's Eden

You glow, girl

By day, **Vinicia Perkins, J.D. '19**, is a senior associate at a Washington, D.C.-based law firm. By night, she's the founder of Mae's Eden, a line of skincare products inspired by her beloved grandmother, Shirley Mae Taylor.

"Mae sparked my interest in holistic healing and taught me natural remedies she learned from her African American and Blackfoot Native ancestry," says Perkins. "When Mae fell ill from rheumatoid arthritis and congestive heart failure, I began to further my knowledge of natural remedies, making Mae pain-relief balms, fresh juices, and other herbal remedies to alleviate her pain and heal her sores."

Perkins came by the hobby honestly. Her mother, she says, never relied on Western medicine, instead turning to natural remedies like goldenseal, echinacea and cayenne for illnesses, lemon tonics and bitter crystals for detoxing, and a variety of teas for other needs. "Her influence taught me that there's always a natural solution to everyday issues," Perkins says.

The attorney spent 14 years developing the recipes for what would become Mae's Eden, but not before she tested them on her grandmother, who by the time Perkins started law school was very ill and eventually bedridden. Mae's doctors had prescribed OxyContin for her chronic pain, but Mae would wind up in the hospital anyway, the medication having made her feel even worse.

Perkins cared for her grandmother while

attending GW Law, administering natural juices and pain-relief oils. After Mae passed, Perkins decided to turn the product line into something that could benefit others too.

"It's a blessing to honor my grandmother's memory in this way by continuing to help others and not letting the years of healing I provided her go to waste," Perkins says.

She develops each product, designing everything from the formulas to the packaging. And when it comes to ingredients, she has a strong hand in those too—bringing back native plants from countries she's visited (soursop, cinnamon and sea moss from Jamaica; jasmine and green tea from Vietnam) and growing some at home in what she calls her Eden Lab.

The eight-product line includes body oil (a super-hydrator that includes powerhouse herbs like calendula and nettle leaf), Face Card oil (a must for those suffering from acne or eczema), and moisturizing hand sanitizer (an anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antibacterial spray that promotes collagen and heals wounds). Perkins says those are her bestsellers (and "they're the products I use every single day"), but as she enters her second year in business, she's adding a few new products to the lineup: Mae's Sweet Fix Sugar Scrub, beard oils and healing butters.

"I love when customers send me messages or reviews raving about how my pain relief oil has helped their grandmother or how my oils have cleared up their chronic skin conditions," she says. "As a full-time attorney, this brings me the most joy, because I often make these products in the middle of the night after a long day at work because I love to help people."

For 10 percent off your order at maeseden.com, use code **GWGlow.**

C'mon, get happy

You could probably call the circumstances that led to **Alexandra Rusyniak, J.D. '23**, working for (and, later, helping run) The Happy Olive a, well, happy accident. The GW Law grad was in high school when she found the olive oil store while looking for a part-time job.

"I worked at the store until I went to college in 2015," she says. "After I left for college, the owners at the time asked my mom if she was available to work part time." Rusyniak's mom, Sue, took the position and in 2020 bought the business.

The Rusyniaks had never owned a business before—Sue was retired from a career in nursing and her husband, George, had been a physician. But they didn't let that stop them.

"My family, specifically my father with his strong Italian ancestry, always had a deep appreciation for Italian products and quality extra virgin olive oil," Rusyniak says. "As a family, we traveled extensively in Europe, especially Italy, and fell in love with the food." While traveling, they would learn more about the value of small-batch extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegars (like the ones they sell in the store). "We see our store as a way for people to travel the globe without having to buy a plane ticket!"

While Rusyniak's mom is really the face of the Alabama-based store these days, Rusyniak comes back to work during the summer and holiday seasons. And she supports her mom daily in decision-making discussions, monitoring the financials and ordering new products.

"One of my favorite times of the year is when my mom and I can go to the buying

WILLIAM ATKINS



markets,” Rusyniak says. “We are constantly looking for new products to keep the store fresh and interesting.”

Speaking of products, The Happy Olive stocks 20 different olive oils and 25 balsamic vinegars, with the Tuscan herb olive oil and cranberry pear balsamic topping the list of customer favorites (not to mention they’re a perfect pair on a charcuterie board). They source each one from a distributor in California—the same one The Happy Olive used when it originally opened 13 years ago.

“They have cultivated relationships with growers all over the world,” Rusyniak says. “We put our trust in them to choose the highest quality oils and present them to us each season.”

The trust has paid off—last May the store was able to expand into the retail space next door, doubling their floor space and allowing for a better in-store shopping experience (something that’s important to the family, who started the business at the height of the Covid pandemic). And bonus: The expansion allowed for more space to ship products across the U.S.

The Happy Olive stewards are hopeful about the future, an olive oil club on the wish list and tasting trips for mom and daughter on the calendar.

“[We’re] going ... to see the olives being harvested,” Rusyniak says. “A stop in Modena, where our balsamics are produced, is also on the books!” Many happy returns, indeed.

For 15 percent off at happyolive4.com, use code **GWU**.



About time

It took **Mathew White, B.S. '13**, two years to reveal his line of luxury watches to his parents, whose own fathers had inspired the company’s ethos. It wasn’t because he wasn’t sure how they’d react—he just wanted everything to be perfect.

“I spent almost two years designing our first model, having it produced, starting my business, and officially launching the sale of it with only a few people in the know—my wife and kids, who promised not to tell anyone,” White says. “Looking back, I did this because I was venturing into unknown territory and didn’t want to share it with too many people until I knew it was going to succeed.”

A surgical assistant by trade, White’s journey to watch design started in a roundabout way when he was a kid. Whether he was building forts in the woods, crafting small boats in his dad’s workshop or designing new ways to string his lacrosse stick, he says, he found joy in making something with his hands. So when Covid made his already stressful job even more so, he looked for a creative outlet to calm his busy mind. He decided to make his dad a watch.

He already had some experience with 3D printing, having designed a theoretical implant to combat complications from urological surgery as a capstone project at GW, so he got to work designing the components.

“What began as a fun side project turned into something more serious as I realized I had a dial design that I really liked,” he says. “That design needed hands, a case, and before I knew it, I was reaching out to manufacturers.”

Eventually, he turned his watch-designing hobby into

Richard-Harvey Watch Company, named for his Navy veteran grandfathers, Richard and Harvey. White says when he started the business, he envisioned an initial series of watches inspired by navigation. Accordingly, the Attitude (the first model in the line) incorporates design elements that evoke the look of an attitude indicator (the instrument in a pilot’s cockpit that shows the true horizon), needles on a cockpit gauge and propellers.

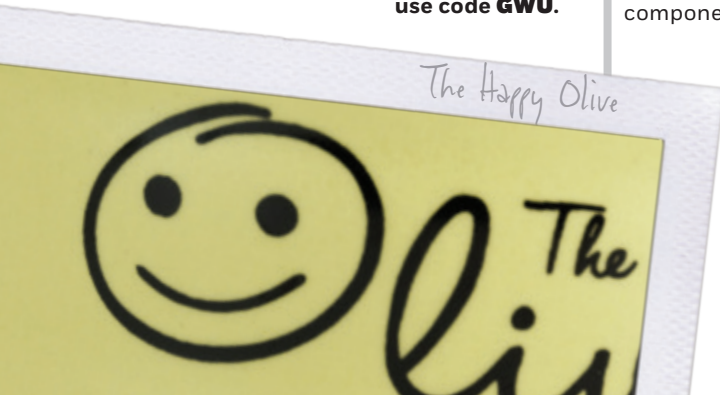
“Releasing our aviation-inspired model first was, in a way, a nod to Harvey, who served as an air combat controlman during World War II,” White says. The Attitude model comes in two colorways: the Patriot Edition, with its vibrant red, white and blue dial (a bestseller and White’s personal favorite), and the Blackout Edition, “which has a more subdued, tactical look.”

But what did his parents think?

“I presented my mom [Richard’s daughter] with a Patriot Edition and my dad [Harvey’s son] with a Blackout Edition—both serial No. 001,” White says. “They couldn’t believe it and thought it was so cool. The tie-in and incorporating the names of their fathers into the business was the cherry on top. I recall that moment vividly.”

White says he’s been at work on the company’s next model for a year now, balancing the project with his career in health care and raising a family. (“I’m taking my time to ensure it’s perfect, rather than rushing to release something just to stay relevant,” he says.) In the meantime, he’s handcrafting leather watch bands. Gotta keep the hands busy.

For 15 percent off at rhwatchco.com, use code **GWFAM**.



Beyond the flavor

Visit a traditional winery almost anywhere in America and you can ask the sommelier what dish to pair a given wine with. Visit Berkeley, California-based NORIA Wines and you'll need to pose the question in reverse. That's because winemaker Nori Nakamura takes a different approach.

"Our approach starts with a clear model or inspiration, which in many cases is a Japanese dish or the essence of Japanese cuisine," says NORIA co-owner **Atsushi Yanai, M.B.A. '96**. The inspiration for their Chardonnay, for example, is Japanese junmai-ginjo sake; the sauvignon blanc is modeled after Japanese dai-ginjo sake. "As you may know, sake is traditionally paired with Japanese dishes, and both Nori and I, being born and raised in Japan, understand this culinary harmony deeply. This cultural connection is our starting point."

Once they have an inspiration in mind, they work on identifying which grapes will produce the desired flavor, then source a vineyard where those grapes are grown. The longtime friends and business partners—they met while in undergrad at Keio University in Tokyo—work with nine vineyards in the Sonoma/Napa Valley wine region that grow high-quality grapes then deliver them to NORIA's winery where they handle the crushing, barrel aging and bottling. The unique approach, Yanai says, is a deliberate choice.

"Being Japanese, we have a deep cultural connection to Japanese cuisine, and we wanted to create wines that not only reflect that but also stand out in the highly competitive California wine market,"

Yanai says. "By focusing on crafting wines specifically designed to pair with Japanese dishes, we have created a unique niche that differentiates us from other wineries in the region."

The wines aren't considered "natural"—a classification that usually indicates the wine has been made without the use of pesticides or herbicides and with few or no additives—but Yanai says that's on purpose too.

"Through his experiences, [Nori] realized that natural wines do not always yield the results he aims for in terms of quality and taste," Yanai says. "Ultimately, Nori prefers to create wines that reflect his vision, which sometimes requires methods and practices that do not fall under the natural wine category."

Currently, the winery, a Japanese-inspired industrial space set among five other urban wineries in Berkeley, offers seven bottles: a rosé (available only to NORIA wine club members), sauvignon blanc, chardonnay and four pinot noirs: Russian River, Sonoma Coast, Chalone and Santa Cruz Mountains. Yanai says NORIA plans to add gewurztraminer, cabernet sauvignon and syrah to the list by the end of the year. And if you're flying first class to Tokyo after December, you'll notice two NORIA wines—the chardonnay and a pinot noir—on the menu for All Nippon Airways.

Yanai says eventually he'd like to see NORIA on wine lists in not only Japanese restaurants and retailers but also other Western and Asian cuisine restaurants.

"Our wine is, at the end of the day, California wine, so there is good potential to sell our wines to various restaurants throughout the United States," Yanai says. Or, he notes, hopefully, even to the world.

For 10 percent off your noriawines.com order through Dec. 31, use code DIS-GW.

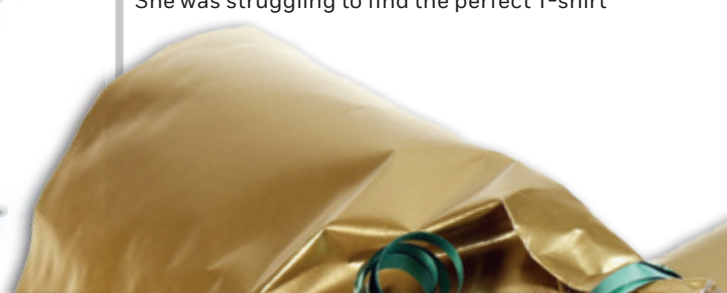


Easy does it

There's something infinitely cool about a classic jeans-and-white-tee outfit. But there's a fine line between "pulling it off" and "off-putting." For **Samantha Firestone, B.A. '00**, that line is in the fabric choice, which is why she started her upscale-casual clothing company, LELUXE.

"I wanted to create the pieces that I wanted and needed in my closet and felt other women do too," Firestone says. "The 'just right' style staples that transcend time and trends and quickly become your wardrobe essentials because they feel as good as they look, drape perfectly in all the right places and can take you from day into evening."

Firestone had been a stay-at-home mom for more than a decade following a career in counseling when she decided to turn her passion project into a full-fledged business. She was struggling to find the perfect T-shirt



or tank top that would look great alone—the kind of thing a harried mom who appreciates a flattering silhouette might reach for. So she went all in on what she calls a “huge learning curve” to launch the business.

“The LELUXE shopper is a busy woman who appreciates both high quality and fit,” she says. “Someone who enjoys being stylish yet doesn’t have the time to overthink getting dressed and automatically reaches for our tees, tanks and camis over and over again, easily pairing them with denim, pantsuits and skirts for both work and play.”

The current collection features tops—tanks, camisoles and T-shirts—as well as silk dresses and simple, classic-cool jewelry, which Firestone sources locally in Los Angeles, where the company is based. But the tank tops, she says, are LELUXE’s bread and butter.

The Charli tank, a lightweight, form-fitting sleeveless top, is “what dreams are made of,” says its website description. “Developed from a super-soft textured rib that hits in all the right places, this versatile staple is crucial to any closet.” Firestone shares that it’s her bestseller (“Anyone who tries it on purchases it,” she says) and one of the reasons the company is so focused on building out its T-shirt and tank top collection.

Firestone works with a dedicated team to design each of the pieces and source fabrics—like the vegan silk rib knit, which she says is “so soft and feels really special”—both domestically and from Italy and Asia.

“We have so many new styles dropping in this space,” she says. “Developing patterns in these fabrics that flatter and feel good on has been a slow but rewarding process as I am meticulous about every detail. I’m really excited about the finished product.”

For 15 percent off your [levuxe.com](https://www.levuxe.com) purchase, use code **GW15.**

Picture perfect

When it comes down to it, **Maizie Clarke, M.A. '14**, just wants to hear the story of your favorite place: the candy store where you met and fell in love as teenagers, your grandparents’ house where, in full spring bloom, they won yard of the month. She relishes learning about entrepreneurs’ restaurants, real estate offices, convenience stores—even funeral homes.

“I love hearing the stories behind houses—places that families are started and hold a lot of memories,” says the illustrator. “Any place that is special to people is really what interests me.”

It’s not totally why she became an illustrator—she’d been in creative roles her whole career, including as an event designer—but it’s a big reason. While at GW studying for her master’s in exhibition design, she’d use watercolors to render 3D drawings (“I loved how the watercolor softened the hard ink lines,” she says) and, as a 20-something on a budget, she’d gift illustrations to friends and family.

“The business idea really started forming when people would ask if I could paint something for their loved ones,” she says. She formed Maizie Clarke LLC in 2016,

working with clients to create watercolor house portraits. Today her line of illustrations has expanded to tea towels, scarves and gifts for hostesses and newlyweds, which she sells online and wholesale to museum stores, bourbon distillery shops and boutiques around the country. And last May her work was published on the cover of HarperCollins author Plum Sykes’ “Wives Like Us,” a career highlight for the artist.

But Clarke’s favorite thing is the houses. Ranging from 5”x7” to 11”x14” and priced accordingly, the house portraits (for which she typically closes custom orders at the beginning of December to ensure timely delivery) make a great gift “for anyone who has a special place,” Clarke says. And she takes special requests—a swing in the tree in the front yard, a cat peeking through one of the windows, a certain kind of flower in the front beds—“to honor the stories that make up that special place.”

She doesn’t recall the first house she ever painted (probably the one she grew up in, she says), but Clarke estimates she’s painted more than 1,000. That’s a lot of stories.

For 25 percent off at [maizieclarke.com](https://www.maizieclarke.com), use code **GW2024.**





CLOSING THE HEALING





GAP

Researchers at the GW Center for Global Mental Health Equity are working to treat mental illnesses and reduce mental health stigma in settings from Uganda and Nepal to New York City.

Story // Sarah C.P. Williams





The first time he went to Nepal, Brandon Kohrt was an undergraduate film and anthropology student.

It was the late 1990s, and the Communist Party of Nepal had recently launched a war against the monarchy and ruling political parties. Kohrt, who co-wrote an award-winning documentary on Nepal's child soldiers, spent several months at a small traditional healing temple in the rural southeastern part of the country. There he was struck by the extent of mental anguish among the people coming to the temple—many were struggling with severe mental illnesses and had been brought there by their families.

"It became hard for me to just document the challenges and suffering I saw and not in some way contribute to the alleviation of that suffering," recalls Kohrt. "I began to think that if I was going to bear witness to how people get through really difficult situations

around the world, I wanted to be able to contribute in a more meaningful way."

Something else caught his attention too: the degree to which the temple's priests could ease people's suffering through simple conversations and rituals. Every morning, people would arrive to speak with the holy men, who patiently listened to their worries, offering words of advice and light touches with feathers. Visitors seemed to leave happier.

Kohrt, who went on to earn both a Ph.D. in medical anthropology and an M.D., specializing in psychiatry, carried out his thesis research in the early 2000s on how to enlist community members in helping former child soldiers in Nepal recover from the trauma they had experienced. Kohrt knew that it would take more than a few trained psychiatrists like him to solve the growing mental health struggles of people in developing countries around the world, where mental health resources are scarce and stigma against mental diseases is rampant. But he thought if he could recreate the kind of supportive, empathetic, nonjudgmental environment he'd seen at the healing temple in other places, communities could become better at helping those with mental health issues.

Today Kohrt directs the GW Center for Global Mental Health Equity, which leads worldwide efforts to improve mental health training for people not typically experienced with delivering therapy or formal mental health support. The National Institutes of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and others have funded his work. Kohrt and his colleagues believe that, with the right tools, community health workers, volunteer aid workers at refugee camps, teachers, police officers, social workers and others can be vital players in identifying and treating mental illnesses—and easing the worldwide

burden of psychiatric diseases.

"I want to break down the divides between the healer and the healed," says Kohrt, the Charles and Sonia Akman Professor of Global Psychiatry in GW's School of Medicine and Health Sciences. "The goal is that in some ways everyone can be a healer toward others and, on the flip side, everyone should feel comfortable reaching out to those around them when they need support."

ALLEVIATING THE GLOBAL BURDEN

More than 80% of people worldwide who have mental health conditions live in low- and middle-income countries. Exposure to war, poverty, political upheaval and natural disaster in these places often leads directly to higher rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, yet these nations have the fewest mental health resources. According to the WHO, less than a quarter of all people with depression in low-income countries ever receive adequate treatment—mostly because of provider shortages. A handful of countries in Africa and Asia have less than one psychiatrist per million people, and even in urban areas with higher concentrations of trained professionals, cultural norms, religious beliefs and long-held stigmas can prevent people in need from seeking help.

Despite these dismal statistics, Kohrt made an observation as he traveled around the world, and it became a kind of mantra for his career: Everyone has the potential inside them to help heal other people's distress.

"I think it's incredibly problematic that we have this idea in our heads that only when you've been trained for years and have all these degrees can you really understand

"I think it's incredibly problematic that we have this idea in our heads that only when you've been trained for years and have all these degrees can you really understand someone's emotional experience."

Brandon Kohrt

Charles and Sonia Akman Professor of Global Psychiatry



GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH

By the Numbers

80

Percent of people worldwide with a mental health condition who live in low- and middle-income countries.

World Health Organization



12

Percent of people with psychosis in low-income countries who receive mental health care.

World Health Organization



1 Billion



Number of people in the world living with a mental disorder.

World Health Organization



1 in 5

Number of U.S. adults living with a mental illness.

National Institute of Mental Health

someone's emotional experience," says Kohrt. "It really devalues the fact that actually many people, with the right support, can be incredible healers and have a very strong emotional connection and understanding of others."

Kohrt's research began to focus on efforts to boost the capacity of community members in places experiencing war, poverty and natural disaster to provide mental health support to those around them.

Byamah Mutamba, a senior psychiatrist at Butabika National Referral Mental Hospital in Uganda and a longtime collaborator of Kohrt's, says that training people already immersed in communities to help triage mental health struggles can help ease the burden on providers like him. His 600-bed hospital, located in the capital city of Kampala, is a referral hospital meant to handle large volumes of patients referred from smaller hospitals and clinics. But even its resources are stretched. The hospital usually has more than 1,100 patients, Mutamba says, and is staffed by just 13 psychiatrists. (Uganda has one of the lowest rates of psychiatrists in the world, at just one per million people.)

"We need earlier intervention when it comes to mental health care," he says. "We're sitting downstream at the referral hospital waiting for all the problems to arrive, and we're very, very overburdened. Community health workers are a good upstream resource that can help prevent some of the problems from getting to us."

In Uganda, Kohrt, Mutamba and Sauharda Rai, a research scientist at the GW Center for Global Mental Health Equity, have been trying to do just that—training community health workers to provide basic mental health treatment in the home, in the community and at primary health facilities through a project supported by the Wellcome Trust.

570

Number of U.S. counties that are considered "mental health care deserts."

National Institute of Mental Health



1/3

Percent of people with psychosis in low-income countries who receive mental health care.

World Health Organization

EQUIPPED TO HEAL

At the time Kohrt began to look at training non-specialists, many non-governmental aid organizations were already boosting their efforts to give social workers and aid workers more mental health skills. But their programs varied drastically in effectiveness. Kohrt saw an opening to help by creating a tool that would gauge how well trained community workers were in providing mental health services.

The resulting toolkit, now called EQUIP (for Ensuring Quality in Psychosocial and Mental Health Care), includes a set of role play exercises that tests how effective trainees are at skills like showing empathy, using non-verbal communication, providing feedback to patients, and reflecting on and reframing their patients' problems. EQUIP works to ensure that non-specialists are well-trained before they begin working with patients but also provides feedback to the organizations carrying out the training on how to improve.

Rozane El Masri, a research coordinator with the non-governmental organization



Members of the GW Center for Global Mental Health Equity, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Sauharda Rai, Mansurat Raji, Chynere Best and Brandon Kohrt.



War Child, used EQUIP while training non-specialists to support teenagers affected by armed conflict in Lebanon. “EQUIP enables trainers to really zoom in on what our trainees need. We understand what areas we need to focus on during training and tailor our sessions accordingly,” she told the WHO in 2022.

In early pilot studies in Lebanon, Peru and Nepal, community health workers and other providers who were taught psychological interventions using EQUIP had better helping skills after just two weeks of mental health training compared to providers taught without the EQUIP platform. Studies in other countries have confirmed how well EQUIP assesses the skills of trainees and better prepares mental health workers.

Today Kohrt estimates that EQUIP has been used in more than 1,000 trainings across 37 countries. The toolkit is freely available through the WHO, and Kohrt’s team at the GW Center for Global Mental Health Equity helps interested trainers and

PhotoVoice helps those struggling with a mental health condition document and share their stories. Through a series of photographs and spoken words, the approach helps to reduce stigma among health care workers by building empathy and greater understanding.

program managers get started using EQUIP.

Mansurat Raji, a GW researcher who works closely with Kohrt on EQUIP, has traveled around the world helping with these efforts. She says the most rewarding part of the program is seeing the difference it makes for people who finally have access to mental health support.

With Raji’s help and the incorporation of EQUIP into mental health interventions, the non-governmental organizations Grow Strong Foundation and Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Nigeria trained their aid workers to carry out informal counseling sessions with caregivers in Nigerian refugee camps while also building playgrounds and establishing nutrition and education programs for children. Many people in the camps had experienced severe violence, upheaval and loss due to years of armed conflict that have led to more than two million displaced people in the northeast of Nigeria. Before the intervention, children and their mothers often sat silent and alone,

interacting with few people around them. Most were wary to ask for advice or help from anyone working in the refugee camps.

“The change after the program was implemented was incredible,” Raji remembers. “You saw kids starting to play again and to speak with each other. The mothers said that for the first time they felt safe talking to the health workers and the staff.”

When adults who participated in the programs were asked whether their mental health and well-being had improved, 97% said yes.

FIGHTING STIGMA

Even when community health workers can be trained to recognize psychiatric diseases, provide basic levels of support and refer patients to get treatment, there is a large hurdle that often remains: stigma.

On one of his earliest trips to the Nepali healing temple, Kohrt recalls a man who—thanks to the support of the priests—saw an improvement in the severe mood swings he

had been having. But when the man returned home, he was still shunned by his family, who believed he was cursed.

In most of the developing world, stigma against mental conditions is rampant—20 countries including Bangladesh, Uganda and Kenya still criminalize attempted suicide. Even trained health care providers often discriminate against those with psychiatric diseases, believe that mental illness is incurable or prefer not to work with those struggling with mental health conditions.

“The stigma works in a lot of directions,” says Rai. “People don’t seek mental health care because they don’t want to be stigmatized by their community and their family but also health care workers carry their own personal stigma. They might not want to work with patients who have mental health problems because they may think they’re violent, for instance.”

Kohrt, Rai and their colleagues are changing that. Recently, in collaboration with the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO Nepal), they created a program called RESHAPE (Reducing Stigma among Healthcare Providers) that involves integrating people with lived experience of mental illness into training sessions for community health workers.

“It’s important for them to see the real humans behind what they’ve been learning about,” says Rai.

Kohrt’s group found that when patients spoke with community health workers in Nepal during training, the health workers not only scored lower on a scale of stigma but also became more accurate at diagnosing mental health conditions. He thinks that is because they rely less on memorized checklists of symptoms and more on the nuances of a person’s experience and what they may be struggling with.

As part of RESHAPE, Kohrt and Rai have adapted a technique called PhotoVoice to help patients step into the role of advocates, sharing their stories through a series of photographs and spoken words.

In one PhotoVoice series, a Nepali man who is in recovery from alcohol use disorder clicks through photos of the local store where he spent his entire paycheck on alcohol, the bridge that he stumbled drunkenly over, and the community health workers who finally diagnosed him and helped him recover. In his last photo, he shows a beautiful and intricate ceiling mural that he painted of clouds and birds when he was able to return to his vocation as a painter.

“He says that when he was living in the throes of alcoholism, his hands shook so much that the most he could paint was a single color on a wall,” Kohrt recounts. “But

because of this treatment, he can create art. And that story really resonates with the health care workers who hear it.”

Today, RESHAPE and PhotoVoice have been expanded into studies in China, Ethiopia, India, Tunisia and Uganda, and the team has developed a freely available manual on it.

A CRISIS CLOSER TO HOME

For decades, Kohrt optimized his community-based mental health care approach for the developing world, where shortages of trained professionals are especially dire. But higher-income countries like the U.S. are also facing a mental health crisis, with rising rates of depression, anxiety, suicide and substance abuse over recent years. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, more than one in five U.S. adults lives with a mental illness, and 570 counties across the U.S. are considered “mental health care deserts,” with no psychologists, psychiatrists or counselors. When rates of mental health challenges increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, Kohrt and his team wondered if mental health care strategies they’d developed and validated in other countries could be applied closer to home.

In 2021, Kohrt received a five-year, \$3.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to bring his training strategies to underserved populations in New York City. There, his team, in collaboration with the New York City Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health, is working with organizations that provide youth mentoring, job training, housing assistance and other support.

“Imagine you’re someone working in a housing assistance office,” says Kohrt. “Your clients regularly come in to meet with you and fill out paperwork, and you might notice that one of them is really struggling. They’re perhaps too anxious to get their forms filled out. What can you do to help reduce their distress?”

Kohrt and colleagues are using a brief, five-session intervention called Problem Management Plus (PM+), originally developed by WHO researchers and tested by Kohrt’s team in Nepal. In PM+, community workers or volunteers take a two-week class to become a PM+ helper. Kohrt’s team collaborated with Adam Brown, an associate professor of psychology and head of the Trauma and Global Mental Health Lab at The New School in New York City,

to adapt the training to a part-time format for 12 weeks over Zoom. The ultimate goal of PM+ is not to have the trained helpers offer treatment for a specific disorder but to enhance their ability to help people who are struggling with their mental health.


“I’d say it’s like a soft introduction to therapy,” says GW senior research associate Chynere Best, who is on the New York City PM+ team. “We want you to be able to sit with a client for a dedicated period of time and work through a specific problem that the client is having.”

In developing countries like Nepal, studies have already shown that PM+ can significantly reduce psychological distress and depression symptoms. Best says data on whether those results hold true in a high-resource country like the U.S. are still being collected, but she has heard positive feedback from the organizations involved. One case worker at a low-income housing facility told Best she was skeptical that the course would be useful. But since finishing PM+ training, she’s been able to help clients better cope with challenges. One client explained that the deep breathing exercises learned in PM+ sessions were helpful in controlling their anger.

So far, Best and Kohrt have worked with 39 different organizations across all five boroughs of New York City to integrate PM+ into their social support efforts. But the team is already thinking bigger—they’d like to expand the program to other U.S. cities, including Washington, D.C.

“What we want is to integrate psychological skills into other daily things that people are doing, whether that is a community health worker providing postnatal care in Pakistan or a social worker in New York City,” says Kohrt.

Wherever Kohrt’s work brings him, he remembers what he first learned at the Nepali temple more than 30 years ago: Small shows of support and acts of kindness from the community around them can go a long way in easing people’s distress. For people around the world to embrace this idea will take a shift in ideas about mental health, a reduction of the stigmas surrounding mental health, and efforts to spread the training of mental health support skills. Slowly, he says, those things are beginning to happen. Recently, organizations in Gaza and Ukraine have begun using EQUIP to assess their mental health training efforts.

“Mental health seems like an insurmountable problem, so it’s easy to get demoralized,” Kohrt says. “But as I see more and more people get interested in solving these challenges, it really creates hope for the future.” 

RUNNING TOWARD A

FIRE



A man in a dark suit, light checkered shirt, and red plaid tie stands in front of a large digital display showing blue, wavy, light patterns. The background is a modern, dimly lit interior with other displays and lights.

FIRST AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND NOW LEADING AN ALLIANCE OF GLOBAL TECH COMPANIES, GW LAW ALUMNUS **ETHAN ARENSON, J.D. '00**, BATTLES TO COMBAT CHILD ABUSE ONLINE.

BY TOM KERTSCHER



Even Ethan Arenson, J.D. '00, who has been fighting computer crimes for more than a decade, can be shocked by how adults sexually exploit children online. He recalls a moment several years ago.

"To see politicians and firefighters and cops and priests routinely come across my desk who are engaged in trafficking in this material," he says, his voice trailing off. "And there was a day when a children's entertainer came across my desk. And I Googled him and found out that he had performed 100 yards from my house at an outdoor mall."

Arenson, who has a son in high school and another in middle school, is a former Justice Department computer crimes prosecutor and current board chair of the Washington, D.C.-based Tech Coalition. It's an 18-year-old alliance of global tech companies, including Google, Meta and TikTok, that combats child sexual exploitation and abuse online. That work is also part of his role as managing associate general counsel and head of digital safety at Verizon, where his responsibilities are more broad, including ensuring that content isn't objectionable or harmful to Verizon's brand.

"It's about platform defense. One of the most serious if not the most serious concerns for any platform is the possibility that the platform could become a hub for child exploitation material," Arenson says of his work at Verizon. "So every platform in the world that has user-generated content thinks about this issue because it is a huge potential reputational problem obviously. It is a huge ethical problem to be an unwitting party in disseminating this content and an unwitting party in the harming of children. This is an area where no legitimate platform will tolerate this content."

Arenson finds his coalition work especially gratifying.

"I like big challenges, and this is a huge challenge, and it's also a largely misunderstood area. This is an incredibly difficult thing for people to talk about," he says.

"It's a bit of running toward a fire. There is a need for folks to get together to fight this problem. I think anyone with kids understands just the visceral reaction to the idea that kids are being harmed on the internet and that people are profiting from that."

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The problem is widespread.

Sixteen percent of young adults in the U.S. experienced at least one type of sexual abuse online before age 18, according to a 2022 University of New Hampshire study.

In 2024, University of Edinburgh researchers estimated that 300 million children globally had been affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation in the previous 12 months. That study also found that 11% of U.S. men said they engaged in online behaviors at some point in their lifetime that could be classified as child sexual abuse offending.

Also in 2024, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul signed legislation that made her state the first to require social media platforms to display content chronologically by default for kids under 18, rather than using algorithms.

Arenson got some sense of the problem beginning in 2010. After four years of spam, malware and cybercriminal enforcement at the Federal Trade Commission, Arenson became a computer crimes prosecutor at the U.S. Justice Department. Cases involved data breaches, fraud and other high-tech crimes.

It was work presaged to Arenson when he was a kid.

"My father worked at Wang computers back in the day. So I got my first desktop computer when I was still in elementary school and have just been hooked on technology ever since and always wanted a career in technology," he says.

TECH COALITION

The focus on online sexual exploitation of children became a major part of Arenson's work after he joined the board of the Tech Coalition and particularly after he became the board chair in 2023.

The coalition of some 40 companies facilitates information sharing among platforms such as Google and Meta in order to identify people online who might do children harm, and it facilitates the development of best practices to prevent and detect exploitation.

The Tech Coalition started as a largely volunteer organization.

"These were just employees of various tech companies who were united in the fight against child exploitation. But there was no career staff. There were just a bunch of us working together as volunteers to try to fight this problem and talk between platforms about how to get better at it," Arenson recalls.

Then the Tech Coalition hired professional staff.

"I think it's unlike any other organization that I belong to in that it is really where

work gets done on child exploitation on a cross-company basis,” Arenson says. “It’s the kind of expertise that no company could buy. It is all of the really, really smart people volunteering their time to tackle really, really hard jobs.”

Katia Potapov, the coalition’s vice president of membership development, says “You’ve got companies that might be competitors or working on different priorities on the outside but coming together here and collaborating on this issue. You’ve got members from Google working with members from Amazon and everyone coming together to focus on a real-time need.”

Arenson says the coalition shares information even among companies that aren’t members.

“There’s no question in my mind that members and non-members who are mentored by members have significantly improved their ability to fight child exploitation because of the knowledge that is given away at the Tech Coalition,” he says. “This has been one of my big priorities as board chair, to give away as much as we possibly can of that knowledge that has been hard fought and earned by members.”

One of the coalition’s newest programs is Lantern. It enables tech companies to share signals of activity that violates their policies on child exploitation so that the companies can find and respond more quickly to such content. Companies using Lantern have taken action on more than 30,000 accounts for violations of policies prohibiting child sexual exploitation and abuse, and more than 1,200 individual uploads of child sexual exploitation or abuse material were removed.

In one case, Discord shared in Lantern information about a user it removed from its platform who appeared to be grooming minors to engage in sexual activity. Meta then found similar activity on its platform and removed multiple accounts operated by that user. Meta also determined that the user was likely involved in a sexual relationship with a minor and reported that to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

“That type of signal sharing has never been done in the child exploitation space, and I believe it is revolutionary,” says Arenson. He notes that in 2023, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children received 36 million reports of suspected online child sexual exploitation. Most reports to the center are about images that show the sexual abuse of children as young as infants, some of which circulate on the internet millions of times around the globe.

“When you think about how prevalent this

“IT’S VERY MUCH A DARK SIDE OF THE INTERNET THAT PEOPLE DON’T TALK ABOUT.”

Impact By the Numbers

300 MILLION

children globally affected by online sexual abuse.

16%

of children in the U.S. experience sexual abuse online by age 18.

Outcomes By the Numbers

40

tech companies, including Google and Meta, comprise the Tech Alliance.

1,200

uploads of child sexual exploitation or abuse material removed through the alliance.

30,000

actions taken on accounts for violations of policies prohibiting child sexual exploitation and abuse.

is, it’s very much a dark side of the internet that people don’t talk about,” Arenson says. “It is a huge, huge challenge. And this is the way to fight that.”

Other new initiatives include targeting financial sextortion and artificial intelligence.

The coalition developed a toolkit for members to address financial sextortion. Predators typically pose as young females, entice teen males into sharing sexually explicit images of themselves and then blackmail the males by threatening to share the images unless the males pay the predators.

The coalition is also working to understand how generative AI—the use of algorithms such as ChatGPT that can be used to create audio, images, text and videos—can be used to sexually exploit children.

“Through the Tech Coalition, we have a unique space to partner across industry with leaders committed to addressing this complex challenge and enhance our collective response,” says Tech Coalition board member Liz Thomas, director of public policy and digital safety at Microsoft, which is an original member of the coalition.

GW HELPED CAREER DIRECTION

Arenson feels fortunate to have been introduced to computers early in life. Besides his professional work, he’s also a gamer and has dabbled in computer programming. Arenson says his time at GW honed his writing and research skills.

Arenson says he enjoys his work so much that reading about things such as artificial intelligence in his off time doesn’t feel like work at all.

“One of the things I really like about the tech sector is just how fast things change,” he says.

“What I had always wanted to do was work on things that are on the front page of the newspaper, things that made a difference. What is more important than protecting children?” he says. “I just wanted to be in the middle of things that people read about that I could say I was working on. And at least during my career, technology has been that.

“The technology is changing so fast and is so central to our lives. It is what is being talked about on a daily basis,” he says. Above all, Arenson says, it’s gratifying to have the chance to be in the middle of it and aid in the critical work of keeping children safe. ☑

ALUMNI PRIORITIES

OUR ALUMNI CHAMPION RACIAL JUSTICE, ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN AND DRAW ON THEIR CREATIVITY TO CRAFT AWARD-WINNING DESIGNS.

HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR STORIES.



ADVANCING THE NARRATIVE

ADJOA B. ASAMOAH CHAMPIONS THE BLACK COMMUNITY, ONE STEP AT A TIME.

by CAITE HAMILTON

Adjoa B. Asamoah, Ed.D. '24 has been making what American civil rights leader John Lewis called “good trouble” her whole life. She attended her first rally at 2, started taking college classes in Africana studies at 5 (thanks to her father, then a university professor at New Hampshire College) and by 9 was, as she puts it, “full-blown organizing.”

“I was sort of born into ... the fight for civil rights and Black liberation,” Asamoah, Ed.D. '24, says. Her mother grew up in North Carolina during the Jim and Jane Crow era; her father came of age under British colonization in what would become the Republic of Ghana. “I was born into the movement, which is to work to advance the human condition but also specifically acknowledging the racial inequities and disparities and the need to be specific about making sure that Black people have their rights.”

She stirred up good trouble while getting her secondary education at Hopkins School, first by testifying at the Connecticut state capitol to change bus routes, then by lobbying the principal to change the language of “headmaster” to something less loaded. She stirred up good trouble while at Temple University when she protested against the school for displacing residents between its main and health science campuses as the university attempted to connect the two sites. She stirred up good trouble as the founding director of one of only two Black-owned mental health agencies in her district, advocating for students who had been misdiagnosed with behavioral issues.

In each case, her efforts were, if not rewarded, at least recognized as a step forward in the fight for racial equity. And each of those recognitions—national advisor for Black engagement with the

2020 Biden-Harris campaign; Black engagement director for the 59th Presidential Inaugural Committee; president of the Black Student Union at Hopkins; senior advisor for racial equity for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development secretary; president of her college sorority, Delta Sigma Theta; treasurer for Temple’s African Student Union and vice president of its NAACP chapter; member of Temple’s Board of Visitors—have raised her platform to focus on the good trouble she’s getting into these days as a co-founder of the CROWN Coalition, a national alliance that works to enact policies outlawing race-based hair discrimination.

There’s a photo of Asamoah at age 9 visiting the site of Elmina Castle (“Some people call them castles, I call them dungeons,” she says) in Ghana, where from the 16th to 19th centuries enslaved people were held captive awaiting their forced migration to the Americas. The spaces were cramped, and



the people held there were chained together, forced to endure inhumane conditions.

In the photograph, Asamoah wears a purple skirt and shirt, braids in her hair, and she carries a pocketbook—a typical getup for a young child but one that stood in very sharp contrast to what she was feeling at the time.

“I decided then that I wanted to spend my life working to improve the quality of life of my people,” she says. “I didn’t have the words [as a 9-year-old] to describe what that would look like, but I knew I didn’t like [what I was seeing].” Taking that trip, she says, ignited something within her.

“Adjoa’s superpower is, undoubtedly, her passion,” says Julienne Joseph, a friend and colleague in the office of Sen. Marcia Fudge. “She is unapologetically Black and lives her work. While most people put on their respective ‘work hats’ from 9 to 5, Adjoa constantly advocates for the advancement and empowerment of our people and never passes on an opportunity to educate, inspire and encourage our community to think and do better.”

Asamoah attended progressive schools in her hometown of New Haven, Connecticut, including storied Hopkins School, followed by undergrad at Temple University, where she double majored in African American studies and psychology.

“I wanted to understand how Black people were not just surviving but, in some cases, thriving, given our history in this country,” she says.

She also wanted to address the culture of silence around mental and behavioral health in the Black community, so she stayed to earn her master’s in educational psychology. Eventually, she became a sought-after advocate for Black and Brown kids whose schools had wrongly diagnosed them with behavioral issues.

That’s what brought her to the George Washington University.

Asamoah was a consultant conducting training sessions for the Philadelphia school district on unconscious bias when she realized she needed to take her advocacy to the federal level. She applied for GW’s doctoral program and, while working toward her degree, good trouble found her.

She was appointed as the senior advisor in the executive office of D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and, while there, worked to codify the nation’s first Office of African American Affairs, a feat that required her to gain the support of sorority and fraternity presidents, academics, activists, critics and clergy alike. Then with her reputation as an organizer solidified and her ABA Consulting firm established, Asamoah started getting calls

Adjoa B. Asamoah celebrates her graduation from GW last spring.



from national organizations needing her expertise. The first one? Emily’s List. Then came the Democratic National Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Third Way, the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, the Congressional Black Caucus Institute.

“I admittedly became more focused on my organizing work and trying to protect and preserve democracy, because that’s really important to me,” she says.

She appeared twice before GW’s Post-Master’s Appeals Committee to keep pursuing her degree despite the (good) troublesome delays, and Asamoah credits Professors Susan Swayze and Abebayehu Aemero Tekleselassie (“Dr. T”) for the patience and understanding that ultimately paved the way for her success.

“[Swayze] knew that I was passionate about the work, that I still very much cared about education,” Asamoah says. “I was fighting to get people in positions of power to improve educational outcomes.” She was awarded her doctorate earlier this year.

From the moment she was able, Asamoah has been applying her superpower to the CROWN Coalition in one way or another, even before it formally existed. The networks she had developed on Capitol Hill and the research on educational equity she had done prior to and for her doctoral dissertation, “The CROWN Act: A Qualitative Inquiry of the Racial Equity Policy and Its Impact on Black Girls’ Educational Experiences and Hair Liberation,” made her the perfect person to create the CROWN Act, a law that prohibits race-based hair discrimination in vocational and educational settings.

“[Asamoah] has always believed in the importance of giving back and uplifting her community, without any expectations in

return,” says Jamiylah Burns-Cooper, a friend of Asamoah’s from her Temple University days. “She relishes seeing the success of her peers and youth in the community. She makes significant efforts to foster opportunities to allow that success.”

Asamoah was attending Essence Festival in 2018 when she met three other Black women who happened to be talking about hair discrimination. Hoping to find a way to raise awareness, they suggested campaigns that included images of Black people wearing their natural styles.

“They were kicking around ideas that, in my view, wouldn’t do it,” Asamoah recalls. She’d been an advocate her whole career for kids like Daryl George, a student in Texas who spent a year in suspension for refusing to cut his locs, DeAndre Arnold, whom she testified alongside after he was barred from attending his college graduation for wearing his hair in locs, and a student in New Jersey who was forced to either forfeit a wrestling match or have his locs cut on site.

“[Hair discrimination] is an issue related to civil rights; it has to have statutory protection,” she recalls saying to the women at the festival. “We have to change the law.”

From her decades of work at the “intersection of policy and politics,” as she says, Asamoah had a wide network of contacts from whom to draw for support. Her first call was to Louisiana Rep. Cedric Richmond. The second was to Sen. Cory Booker. Together, their efforts have passed the CROWN Act in 27 states to date.

Asamoah is known as the “CROWN Act champion and scholar.” Still, she says, “I am most proud to have my legacy be teaching other people how to address issues and not thinking that you have to be an elected official to impact policy. If there’s an issue you care about, create a strategic plan and go at it.” In other words, stir up some good trouble.

DESIGNING DREAMS

DANE AUSTIN SHARES THE INSPIRATIONS, CHALLENGES AND INSIGHTS THAT HAVE SHAPED HIS JOURNEY IN THE WORLD OF INTERIOR DESIGN.

by LISA CONLEY-KENDZIOR

When **Dane Austin** visited a theme park near his hometown of Annapolis, Maryland, he had no idea that a chance conversation would change his life forever. Fresh out of high school and struggling to break into the interior design industry, Austin, B.F.A. '09, received crucial advice from a fine furniture maker: Move to a bigger city. This serendipitous encounter set him on a path that would lead to George Washington University and, ultimately, the creation of his own successful interior design firm, Dane Austin Design, based in Boston. Here, he talks about his creative process, the importance of personal style and how his experiences at GW laid the groundwork for his career.

What first inspired you to pursue interior design?

I moved in with my grandparents in Annapolis at the age of 6, and their lifestyle significantly influenced me. They

were stylish, gracious hosts who loved to entertain and travel, bringing back beautiful objects and art. They had a great collection of fine furniture and antiques, and their home was filled with design magazines. I would spend hours flipping through those magazines, dreaming of creating similar spaces and lifestyles for myself.

What sets your design approach apart from others?

I believe in mixing high-end custom pieces with flea market finds and catalog items. This blend creates a unique, personalized space that feels effortless. Comfort is the ultimate luxury, so I prioritize investing in quality upholstery and bedding. Custom pieces, surprisingly, often cost just a bit more than standard items from brick-and-mortar stores but offer much more in terms of personalization and quality. By approaching design as a form of curation, we elevate our clients' belongings and create spaces that truly reflect their personality and lifestyle.

How did your time at GW influence your approach to design and your career path?

I attended the Corcoran College of Art and Design [now part of GW], which was an incredible experience, especially studying at a school associated with an art museum. This environment taught me to look at design through a curatorial eye, considering composition, layering, lighting and color balance. I also received a well-rounded education. It was focused on the conceptual side of things, but we also had our hand in many different practices like printmaking, lithography, photography, stone carving, ceramics, drawing, 3D design and graphic design. Every aspect of that education fits into what I'm doing and creating now. I think of myself as an artist first, and interior design is my medium—I'm painting in 3D, and the client is my muse.





"I BELIEVE IN MIXING HIGH-END CUSTOM PIECES WITH FLEA MARKET FINDS AND CATALOG ITEMS. THIS BLEND CREATES A UNIQUE, PERSONALIZED SPACE THAT FEELS EFFORTLESS. COMFORT IS THE ULTIMATE LUXURY, SO I PRIORITIZE INVESTING IN QUALITY UPHOLSTERY AND BEDDING."

How would you describe your style?

When someone asks me my design style, it's easy to say it's about color and texture, but everyone says that. To give people a better image, I'd say think of Tom Ford meets Wes Anderson meets Billie Holiday—quality refinement, tailored elements, color, whimsy, sophistication, and a little bit of grit and soul. Embracing imperfections and celebrating them, knowing that nothing is perfect and never will be, is key.

How do you understand and meet the unique needs and preferences of your clients?

We take the time to get to know clients at the beginning of the process through a thorough lifestyle questionnaire. It covers their design aesthetic, needs, wants, and their definitions of quality and beauty. We also delve into minutiae like whether they drink tea or coffee, how they spend their time, their favorite charities, pets, children and

even their favorite vacation spots. We love to peek into their closets to understand their risk tolerance for color, pattern and texture, which reveals a lot about their taste. It's a very intimate process, but it helps us provide personalized and unique designs, and I love that I get to change people's lives for the better, one home at a time.

Is there a particular project that you've found especially enjoyable to work on?

The most fun project is always the one I'm currently working on. It's about being present and excited about current opportunities to be creative. I have many beautiful relationships and wonderful clients from the past, but it's always the ones with a positive attitude and gratitude that stand out. They share their appreciation, understand the work we put in and are open to conversations when issues arise. Treating each other with respect, kindness and

understanding makes the process enjoyable.

How do you stay current with design trends, and how do you decide which trends to incorporate into your projects?

Many designers are aware of the trends, but we don't necessarily utilize them. We know what's popular, but trends are often like fast fashion—not environmentally friendly, not timeless, and they become dated quickly. We don't want to provide clients with something that won't look good in a few years. I pay more attention to what resonates with clients over what's trending at the moment.

What advice would you give to aspiring interior designers?

Learn the business side of design early on. You are an entrepreneur first who happens to be in the business of design. It's not just about having a good eye; you need to know how to run the business. Get business



WHAT'S MY INTERIOR DESIGN STYLE?



LEFT AND TOP A sitting room and dining room in Washington, D.C.'s Spring Valley. Bottom: Green room in a Gambrel Shingle Style Colonial in Boston.

classes and regular coaching as you grow. Also, pay attention to your health and wellness. Maintain a balanced life, spend time with family and friends, travel and find inspiration outside of work. For me, it's yoga, meditation, Pilates and regular health appointments. Prioritizing your well-being will serve you in every aspect of life.

What's next for you?

We're in the process of expanding our business and want to be in multiple cities, potentially in Texas and California. I'd love to go international eventually. On a personal note, I've been in my current home [in Boston] since 2017 and used it as a tool for connection and community. It's been featured in magazines and a book, and I've hosted many wonderful events there. But I'm ready for my next personal project.

1. WHAT'S YOUR IDEAL SATURDAY AFTERNOON?

- a. Browsing through a vintage market
- b. Enjoying a minimalist art exhibit
- c. Hosting a garden party
- d. Relaxing in a cozy café with a good book

2. WHICH COLOR PALETTE SPEAKS TO YOU THE MOST?

- a. Earth tones and neutrals
- b. Black, white and gray
- c. Pastels and soft hues
- d. Bold, vibrant colors

3. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DREAM HOME?

- a. A charming cottage with a rustic feel
- b. A sleek, modern apartment
- c. A house with a large garden and plenty of natural light
- d. A vibrant, eclectic space filled with unique finds

4. WHAT'S YOUR GO-TO ACCESSORY FOR ADDING CHARACTER TO A ROOM?

- a. Antique or vintage pieces
- b. Minimalist sculptures or art
- c. Fresh flowers and greenery
- d. Colorful throw pillows and blankets

5. WHICH PATTERN APPEALS TO YOU THE MOST?

- a. Floral or botanical prints
- b. Geometric shapes
- c. Stripes or polka dots
- d. Bohemian or ethnic patterns

6. WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE TYPE OF FURNITURE?

- a. A well-worn, comfy armchair
- b. A sleek, low-profile sofa
- c. A classic, elegant chaise lounge
- d. A bold, statement-making piece

7. WHICH OF THESE DESTINATIONS WOULD YOU CHOOSE FOR A VACATION?

- a. A quaint countryside B&B
- b. A modern city hotel
- c. A coastal retreat with stunning views
- d. An exotic, culturally rich location

8. WHAT'S YOUR PREFERRED METHOD OF BRINGING PERSONALITY INTO A SPACE?

- a. Curating unique, high-quality pieces
- b. Incorporating sleek, functional designs
- c. Using natural materials and soft textures
- d. Mixing vibrant colors and global influences

9. WHAT TYPE OF ARTWORK DO YOU PREFER?

- a. Vintage posters or classic paintings
- b. Abstract or modern art
- c. Nature-inspired pieces
- d. Eclectic or mixed-media art

10. WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR LIFESTYLE?

- a. Cozy and relaxed
- b. Clean and organized
- c. Elegant and traditional
- d. Bold and adventurous

RESULTS

Mostly A's: Rustic/Traditional

You love a cozy, timeless look with lots of character. You appreciate the beauty in vintage and well-worn items and enjoy creating a warm, inviting space.

Mostly B's: Modern/Minimalist

You prefer clean lines, a neutral palette and a clutter-free environment. You thrive in a space that is sleek, functional, and sophisticated.

Mostly C's: Coastal/Natural

You are drawn to light, airy spaces filled with natural elements. You love the calming effect of nature-inspired decor and enjoy bringing the outdoors in.

Mostly D's: Eclectic/Bohemian

You have a bold, adventurous style and love mixing different textures, colors and patterns. Your space is a true reflection of your unique personality and diverse interests.

JENNA SEGAL, B.A. '98



BREAKING BARRIERS

BROADWAY PRODUCER
JENNA SEGAL
HAS DEDICATED
HER LIFE TO
CHAMPIONING
WOMEN BOTH ON
STAGE AND BEHIND
THE SCENES.

by LISA CONLEY-KENDZIOR

Jenna Segal, B.A. '98, has never shied away from a challenge. From political talk shows in Washington, D.C., to the bright lights of Broadway, her career has been marked by bold moves and daring reinventions. Yet, through it all, one thing has remained constant: her commitment to championing women's voices.

Segal's professional journey began at George Washington University, where she discovered her passion for media after attending an event featuring alumna Dana Bash, B.A. '93, then a CNN newscaster. After graduating from the Elliott School of International Affairs, Segal immersed herself in political talk shows at CNBC and CNN. But when the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal unfolded in 1998, she found herself rethinking her direction, a moment that would ultimately reshape her professional path.

"I quickly realized that news was turning into entertainment," she recalls. "It became clear to me that if I was going to be in the entertainment industry, I might as well fully embrace it."

With that, Segal packed her bags and moved to Los Angeles. She joined MTV's production management development and series department, which allowed her to merge her news experience with her desire for storytelling in a creative environment.

"I was able to use my news background and skills to work on pilots and new series," she says, helping to create the blueprint for what reality TV would become.

Segal's path took another turn when she relocated to New York and joined Nickelodeon, where she helped launch its digital channel Nicktoons. Here she was ahead of the curve, recognizing the early seeds of what would eventually become the streaming revolution. But the demands of the job were difficult to reconcile with her growing family life.

"The TV industry and the way it was working wasn't really conducive to how I wanted to raise my family," Segal admits.

After a few years as a stay-at-home mom, Segal felt drawn back to the entertainment industry, this time with a focus on theater. She founded her production company, Segal NYC, and embarked on her first major theater project: reimagining the 1958 movie "Gigi"—the story of a young Parisian girl groomed to become a courtesan—into a Broadway play that would resonate with modern audiences.

As the lead producer of the show, Segal was deeply involved in every aspect of the production, from raising funds to sitting in on casting calls.

"Broadway is really about doing everything," she notes. "In television and film, there are distinct departments, and producers often concentrate on just one facet

of the production. However, in theater, being a lead producer involves overseeing every single detail.”

“Gigi” took seven years to come to fruition, debuting at The Kennedy Center in 2015 before later finding a home on Broadway. However, despite Segal’s immense investment of time, energy and passion, the show did not yield the financial returns she had hoped for.

“I put my blood, sweat and tears into it ... and financially, it just didn’t return the investment,” she shares. The experience taught her a valuable lesson about the nature of responsibility and resilience in a high-stakes industry. “You can’t be responsible forever for something that didn’t work out. Sometimes shows just don’t work out. It’s a risky business.”

The situation also underscored a gender disparity in the world of theater. Segal noticed that while she beat herself up over the financial loss, her male peers, who faced similar setbacks, quickly moved on to their next projects without facing the same level of self-reproach.

This realization led her to a critical decision: If she was going to invest in or produce a show, it needed to serve a greater purpose. For Segal, that purpose was clear—to ensure that more women were represented in the creative teams on Broadway.

“I needed my risky investments to still be accomplishing something if they don’t pan out financially,”

she explains.

Segal’s pledge to amplify women’s voices resulted in the creation of the Heidi Thomas Initiative at Signature Theatre in Arlington, Virginia, named after the acclaimed writer of the long-running British

television series “Call the Midwife.” This initiative was specifically designed to increase the representation of female playwrights and directors in theater, and it has had a significant impact.

“We actually have statistics showing how it changed [Signature Theatre],” Segal explains, noting that the initiative resulted in a 60% increase in the number of shows produced by women.

Her dedication to elevating women in the industry has continued to shape her work, most recently through the Broadway production “Suffs,” a Tony Award-winning musical that powerfully recounts the story of the women’s suffrage movement.

“This is what I do,” Segal says of her decision to serve as a co-producer of the project, which not only features women prominently in its narrative but also behind the scenes.

For her, “Suffs” is not just a play—it’s a reminder of the often overlooked struggles and triumphs of women throughout history.

“The most important thing I want people to take away [from ‘Suffs’] is how much we don’t know about our own history,” she says. “People in this country have struggled so hard to get us to the places that we’re at, so it’s important to keep reminding ourselves of the history of the United

States and how it was built so that we don’t repeat the mistakes that have already been fought for and go backwards.”

Segal’s impact extends beyond the performing arts; as a founding investor in Angel City—a women’s soccer team in Los Angeles whose other investors include actress Jennifer Garner and tennis superstar Serena Williams—she has been instrumental in advancing women’s sports and establishing the team as a leader in the field.

“It’s elevated a women’s sport to a new level,” she proudly notes, highlighting Angel City’s status as the highest-valued women’s sports team.



A display case on the façade of the Music Box Theatre, where “Suffs” is playing.

Despite her numerous achievements—Segal’s productions have received 17 Tony nominations and 12 Drama Desk nominations—the multi-hyphenate remains driven by a desire to continually push the limits of what’s possible in the entertainment business. She rejects the notion of “balance” between her various roles, instead focusing on the importance of hard work, resilience and authenticity.

“If you want to achieve something, you gotta work for it,” she says. Success is not about finding a perfect equilibrium, Segal stresses, but about making strategic choices, setting personal boundaries and staying true to your values.

Looking to the future, Segal is committed to continuing her work in theater, film and beyond, always with an eye toward elevating women’s voices and stories. Her passion for her work remains as strong as ever, fueled by a love for learning and a relentless drive to innovate.

“The minute I start to look at something that I’m not that interested in, I know that it’s time to shift and move to a different avenue,” she says. **EW**

“I PUT MY BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS INTO IT ... AND FINANCIALLY, IT JUST DIDN’T RETURN THE INVESTMENT. YOU CAN’T BE RESPONSIBLE FOREVER FOR SOMETHING THAT DIDN’T WORK OUT. SOMETIMES SHOWS JUST DON’T WORK OUT. IT’S A RISKY BUSINESS.”

Philanthropy Impact Report

2024



↑
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nobel Peace laureate and former president of Liberia, speaks to the GW community as part of the Bridges Institute/Vivian Lowery Derryck Africa lecture series. **Vivian Lowery Derryck**, founder of the Bridges Institute and member of the Elliott School of International Affairs Board of Advisors, endowed the lecture series to help strengthen African governments and democracy.

NOTE FROM THE VP

Dear Friends,

As our world evolves in unpredictable ways and our lives encounter joy and challenge, I place increasing faith in institutions that form the foundation of our civic life. I am delighted to share GW's second Philanthropy Impact Report, highlighting the numerous ways donors to GW are making a tangible difference.

I am buoyed by the investments individuals, foundations, families, corporations and government agencies continue to make in this university. GW's base of donors is growing, as is the engagement of our alumni—a testament to our supporters' belief in the power of GW to change the world.

Few organizations have GW's talent, access and commitment to public leadership. This report reflects just some of the many ways these strengths, bolstered by your support, have an enduring impact.

Thank you for your commitment to GW.

For GW,



Donna Arbide
Vice President, Development
& Alumni Relations

GW's community of supporters is strong and getting even stronger. In 2024, we:



Grew annual giving by **8%** over the previous three-year average



Raised nearly **\$33M** in support of GW's talented students, **22%** over our previous three-year average



Grew our base of donors by **7.8%** over the previous fiscal year



Retained **69%** of our alumni donors, compared with an industry average of **59.7%**



Reached and engaged more than **84,000** alumni worldwide



In a true only-at-GW moment, **Yahya Aliyu, B.S. '23, M.S. '24**, > addresses an audience of 25,000 during the 2024 GW Commencement on the National Mall. Aliyu's GW experience was supported in part by the **Josephine R. Shepard Scholarship**, which was endowed by the largest one-time donation by an alumna or alumnus in GW's history.

Former Lindner Scholar Brook Colangelo, B.A. '00



About 70% of GW students receive aid thanks to philanthropy and institutional commitments.

INCREASING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Sustaining a Legacy of Success

Brook Colangelo, B.A. '00, is a leader in digital transformation. During the rise of the internet, he helped build the Democratic Party's technology, pioneered the first social media-driven national political convention and served as President Barack Obama's inaugural White House chief information officer.

Yet his journey from GW to the White House was nearly derailed.

After just one year at GW, Colangelo knew the university had opened new doors for his future. During his first year, while pursuing a degree in political communication, he served as vice president of Thurston Hall and worked as a university tour guide while interning for Rep. Nancy Pelosi.

But as he prepared for his second year at GW, Colangelo's financial aid package fell short, and he worried his GW journey might end. Good news came in the form of the Thaddeus A. and Mary Jean Lindner Scholarship. Established by former parent and GW Trustee Emeritus **Thaddeus A. Lindner, B.A. '51, HON '94, and his wife, Mary Jean Lindner**, the scholarship supported Colangelo for the next three years.

"The Lindners exemplify GW values," Colangelo said. "Their GW experience helped them succeed, and they used that success to help hundreds of students get a great GW education. It is humbling and inspiring to be a part of their story."

More than 200 GW students have received Lindner scholarships since 1992. Recipients have gone on to hold senior positions in the U.S. government, Fortune 500 companies, the entertainment and sports industries, and organizations impacting sustainability, public health and economic empowerment.

Colangelo's career has followed that successful trajectory. He has been named one of "Out Magazine's" 50 Most Powerful LGBT People, "Computerworld's" Top 100 IT Leaders, "Inspire's" Boston Global CIO of the Year and a "Boston Business Journal" LGBT Trailblazer.

"GW gave me my confidence and helped me transform into the person I am now. I'm really, really thankful for that opportunity and for the scholarship that made it possible."

Colangelo now serves as CIO of the Waters Corporation and sits on the board of directors for ISO New England and Somos, Inc.



Since 1953, more than 500 GW students have benefited from the **Wolcott Foundation Fellowship** program. Thanks to a \$4 million gift to GW's endowment from the **Wolcott Foundation** in 2023, more students can pursue careers in public service for generations to come.



1,182 GW students received funding from endowed scholarships in 2023-24.



In the past three years, **128 new scholarship endowments** were created, providing critical student support and helping open the doors to a GW education to talented young people in perpetuity.

WORLD-CLASS FACULTY

Protecting Ideas That Change The World

For more than 150 years, GW has been preparing lawyers to protect the rights of the world's most important creators and inventors. Our alumni have authored landmark patents for Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, the Wright Brothers' flying machine, Enrico Fermi's nuclear reactor and CRISPR gene-editing technology.

Today new technology is changing the face of intellectual property (IP) and patent law, increasing fears about privacy and blurring lines of ownership. Donor support of endowed professorships underpins GW Law's deep bench of experts helping to understand the complex legal questions that arise as technological capability and intellectual property concerns collide.

"We are consistently ranked as a top-five law school in intellectual property law. Now, we're expanding that expertise by incorporating exploration on the frontiers of privacy, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence law with a powerhouse faculty that is renowned

throughout the academy and industry," said GW Law Dean Dayna Bowen Matthew. "These globally recognized scholars undeniably enhance the educational experience of our students. No place in the country can rival our depth of expertise."

Investments in professorships drive GW's academic excellence today and ensure GW remains responsive to a dynamic and increasingly tech-driven world. Last year, four dozen GW Law students received their juris doctorates with a concentration in IP and technology law, and the school just launched a **Center for Law and Technology** that will place GW at the forefront of legal education in the rapidly evolving fields of privacy, cyber, AI and emerging technologies while continuing to expand its global leadership in IP law.



Michael Milken, HON '23, and Lori Milken created the **Lynn R. Goldman Professorship** and the **Michael and Lori Milken Professorship** with a \$6 million endowment. These professorships support two faculty positions at the Milken Institute School of Public Health, which just celebrated its 25th anniversary.



GW scholars published more than 4,100 journal articles, chapters and monographs in 2023, and faculty have, on average, published more than 120 books a year for the last decade.



Irwin and Joan Jacobs endowed two \$3 million professorships, the **Joan and Irwin Jacobs Professorship in Biomedical Engineering** and the **Joan and Irwin Jacobs Professorship in Electrical Engineering**, which will advance engineering at GW.



A generous gift from an alumnus and his spouse supports three endowed law professorships focused on intellectual property law, ensuring GW Law remains a leader in IP scholarship and teaching as technology drives the field to evolve.

MARY ANNE FRANKS

The Eugene L. and Barbara A. Bernard Professor in Intellectual Property, Technology and Civil Rights Law

Franks is an internationally recognized expert at the intersection of civil rights, free speech and technology and the president of the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to combating online abuse and discrimination.

F. SCOTT KIEFF

The Stevenson Bernard Professor of Law Faculty Director, Center for Law, Economics and Finance

A former commissioner on the U.S. International Trade Commission and an adviser to three U.S. presidential administrations, Kieff is a renowned expert in intellectual property law, antitrust law, economics and the politics of innovation.

DANIEL J. SOLOVE

The Eugene L. and Barbara A. Bernard Professor in Intellectual Property and Technology Law; Faculty Co-Director, GW Center for Law and Technology

Solove, recognized as the most cited legal scholar in the law and technology field, has authored five books on privacy and data security, testified before Congress and contributed to amicus briefs before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Growing Leaders, Transforming Education

School districts nationally face a shortage of talented principals, and the situation is compounded by the pressing need for administrators equipped to address inequities in our schools.

DC Public Schools (DCPS) and GW's Educational Leadership and Administration (ELA) program are partnering to build an equity-centered principal pipeline. With a five-year grant from **The Wallace Foundation**, the GW/DCPS collaboration began with two years of intensive program design to prepare ELA students to advance educational equity as future school leaders. Throughout the 18-month graduate program, participants apply research and theory to their practice as DCPS instructional staff and complete a summer internship in DCPS schools.

"Through this partnership, we are going beyond providing exceptional professional development opportunities—which supports our retention efforts," said DCPS Chancellor and GW alumnus **Lewis D. Ferebee, M.A. '00**. "The ELA program is helping us to cultivate a talent pool of equity-centered leaders from within our very educator workforce."

"Every assignment, every class, we are focusing on equity," said **Pernell Hicks, Ed.S. '25**, a DCPS assistant principal

and member of the inaugural cohort. "For so long, some students have been underserved. Being equity-focused leaders helps us make sure students have the resources to be successful in school."

"The strong partnership with DCPS and the support from The Wallace Foundation has tremendous impact, not just on the students but also on the communities they serve," said Leslie Trimmer, cohort adviser and ELA faculty member.

Cohort member **Rian Reed, Ed.S. '25**, agrees. "They set the tone to say this is community-oriented, this is about growth, this is about equity. We can all thrive together."

During her internship as a summer school principal, Reed and her leadership team collaborated with GW's Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service to design project-based learning experiences with local partners including the Washington Youth Garden, where students worked alongside master gardeners.

Reed saw the impact where it matters most: "At the end of the summer, one student said, 'I didn't think I was smart before. Now I know I am.'"



The **Milken Institute School of Public Health's** Health Policy and Management and online MPH programs are ranked in the top 10 nationally.



Associate Professor of Sports Management Lisa Delpy Neirotti led a group of 26 students to Paris for the **2024 Olympic Games**. GW has sent student delegations to nearly every winter and summer Olympics since 1992 to learn the ins and outs of marketing and operating this global mega-event.



Thanks to **David Gitter, M.A. '15**, an Elliott School of International Affairs graduate student will experience immersive Chinese-language instruction in China each year. The **David A. Gitter Endowment for Contemporary China Studies** also enables the school, celebrating its 125th year, to expand course offerings focused on contemporary China.



Rian Reed, Ed.S. '25, a member of the inaugural GW/DCPS equity-centered leadership cohort

Adopt-a-Doc recipient
Georgia Barbayannis



As the first medical school in the nation's capital and the 11th oldest in the country, **GW's School of Medicine and Health Sciences** has been at the forefront of medical education, training generations of compassionate health care professionals for 200 years.

HEALTH & MEDICINE

Adopt-A-Doc Program Builds Bridges Between Generations of Caregivers

Georgia Barbayannis, a second-year medical student, had dreams of being a doctor since she was a kid. But she knew a top-tier medical education would require years of study and years of tuition.

"I grew up in a working-class Greek immigrant household," Barbayannis said. "I was the first in my family to graduate from college, and I grew up helping my father in his decade-long battle with cardiovascular disease. So I know how challenging it can be to access both health care and higher education.

"The Adopt-a-Doc scholarship has enabled me to focus on my academics and extracurricular activities while worrying less about student debt," Barbayannis said.

The GW Adopt-a-Doc Scholarship program, established in 2010 with a gift from **Russell Libby, B.S. '74, M.D. '79**, provides critical financial support to medical students over the course of their GW medical education.

More than half of Adopt-a-Doc donors are GW alumni like Libby who want to offer a helping hand to the next generation of doctors.

Barbayannis considers her donor, **Keyur Shah, M.D. '04, and his wife, Natasha**, to be role models. "I hope to pay the Shahs' generosity forward by helping medical students from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve their dreams in the same way they have helped me."

Over the last 14 years, 80 Adopt-a-Doc scholars have received financial support and made meaningful connections with their donors.

And the future is healthy. Last year, dermatologist **Antonia Kofinas, B.A. '07, M.D. '11**, and fertility specialist **Jason Kofinas, B.A. '05, M.D. '09**, made the largest gift in the program's history, which will support up to five students throughout their GW medical education.



The **Helene Fuld Health Trust**, the nation's largest funder devoted exclusively to nursing students and nursing education, has supported more than 50 GW nursing students since 2021.



For the past three years, **Adam Friedman**, chair of the SMHS dermatology department, has directed a free teledermatology program that provides educational and medical support to underserved communities in Washington, D.C. The program is run in partnership with local and national patient organizations and has been made possible through grant support from **Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine** and **Eli Lilly**.



The **Milken Institute School of Public Health** is among the top 10 recipients of NIH funding in its category.

Building Tech We Can Trust

As artificial intelligence is increasingly integrated into our daily lives, we must find ways to design it in a way that builds trust. The **GW Trustworthy AI Initiative (TAI)** is a groundbreaking nerve center for research, education and collaboration to inform the creation and use of responsible technology.

Bridging the gap between scholarship and policy is one of GW's enduring strengths. At GW TAI, researchers across a range of disciplines are working with government, community and corporate partners to apply rigorous academic research to inform policy and solve real-world problems. **SAIC**, a Fortune 500 technology company, is the inaugural partner.

"Partnerships with leaders like SAIC facilitate two-way dissemination: We expect the industry's experience to inspire our research and our novel solutions to inform their practice," said Zoe Szajnfarder, GW TAI faculty director.

A wide range of federal investment enables GW TAI to convene multidisciplinary, multi-institutional teams to jumpstart innovation:

- **The Institute for Trustworthy AI in Law and Society (TRAILS)**, a GW co-led multi-institutional project, has received \$20 million from the **National Science Foundation (NSF)** and the **National Institute of Standards and Technology** to develop AI technologies that promote trust and mitigate risks while empowering and educating the public.
- A \$6 million award from **NASA** is supporting a GW-led team of researchers who are investigating how to protect autonomous flying aircraft from cyber attacks that could disrupt safe operations.
- GW's Ph.D. Fellowship in **Co-Design of Trustworthy AI** in Systems has received \$3 million from the NSF to prepare future researchers and policymakers to navigate the opportunities and risks of embedding AI in systems.
- With funding from the NSF, researchers in the **Behavioral Research Insights & DiGital Health Technology (BRIGHT) Institute** at the Milken Institute School of Public Health are developing an AI-powered smoking cessation tool using ChatGPT.



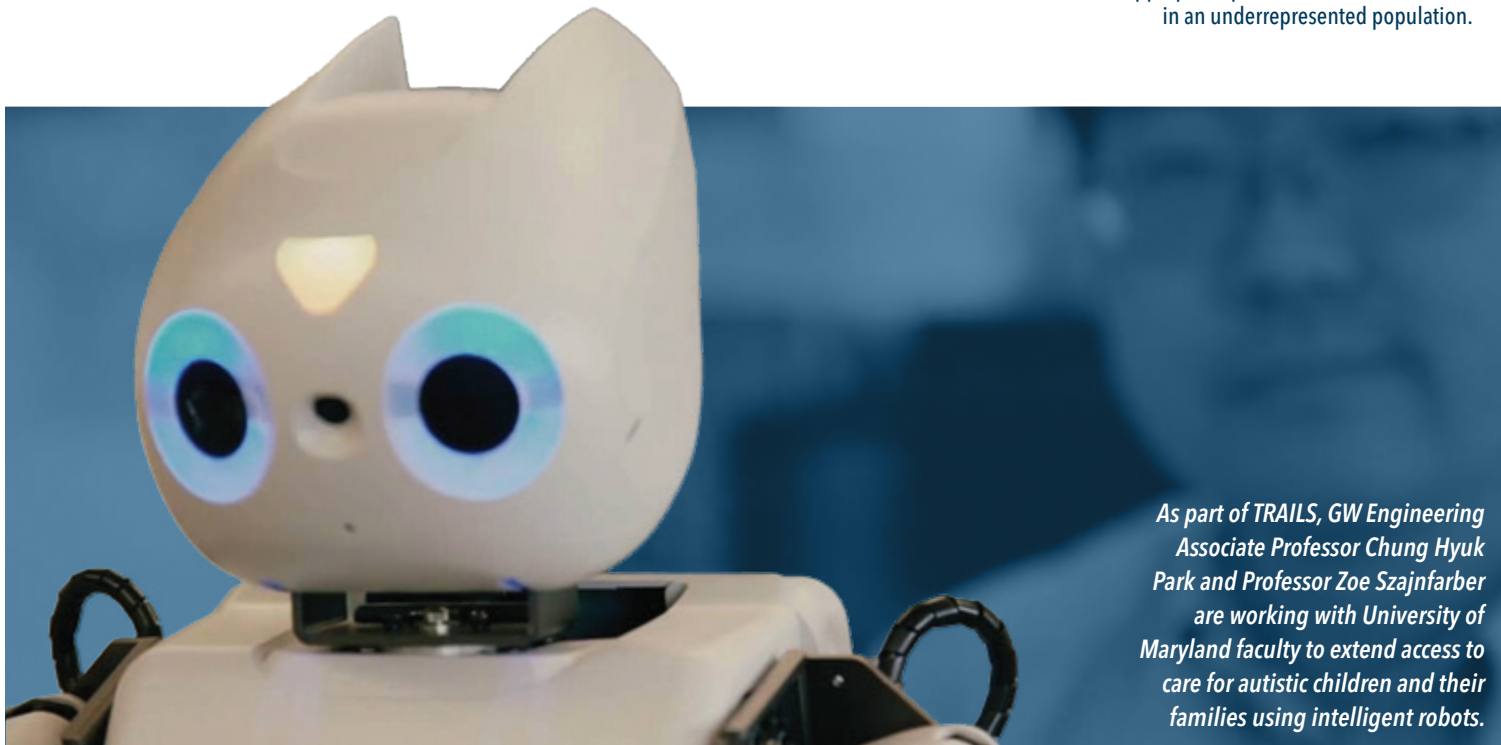
GW faculty and students have launched more than **350 new ventures** and raised **\$1.8 billion** in follow-on funding.



The **National Institutes of Health** awarded GW researchers \$6.4 million to study how the impact of repetitive head injuries from football and social determinants of health contributes to later-life cognitive function in adult Black male athletes.



Associate Professor Hee Jun Kim is the lead researcher on a grant from the **National Institute of Nursing Research** to study chronic pain in Asian Americans. The study will examine the efficacy of culturally appropriate pain education and intervention in an underrepresented population.



As part of TRAILS, GW Engineering Associate Professor Chung Hyuk Park and Professor Zoe Szajnfarder are working with University of Maryland faculty to extend access to care for autistic children and their families using intelligent robots.

Alexander Lucero, B.A. '24, and Associate Professor Samuel Goldman, executive director of the Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr. Institute for Religious Freedom and Democracy



BUILDING A GREATER WORLD

Loeb Institute Honors Our Namesake's Vision

Religious freedom for all faiths is a defining American ideal. First advocated by President George Washington in 1790, a national promise to ensure the safety of religious minorities and that, in Washington's words, "gives to bigotry no sanction," was remarkably innovative.

Today, as religious liberty dominates headlines across the globe, GW's **Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr. Institute for Religious Freedom and Democracy** is at the forefront of critical work to advance scholarship and ensure a new generation understands the centrality of these values to a healthy democracy.

Alexander Lucero, B.A. '24, came to GW from a diverse family—his father is a Filipino immigrant and a U.S. Navy veteran and his mother is a third-generation Jewish American. Like many GW students, Lucero built an education in and out of classrooms, mixing courses in law and trade with work at a law firm, a Hebrew school and the "Undergraduate Law Review."

A grant from the Loeb Institute and mentorship from its faculty helped Lucero synthesize his understanding of constitutional law and policy in a research project.

"It was my time at the Loeb Institute that really helped me to take what I learned in

the classroom about religious liberty and politics and produce original research on the intersection between those topics," Lucero said. He also received a Sigelman Undergraduate Research Enhancement Award created by GW professors Carol and Lee Sigelman.

In addition to grants to undergraduate and graduate students, the Loeb Institute supports the research of noted scholars from a range of disciplines, sponsors lectures and events, partners with international organizations to advance collaborative data and holds workshops for high school teachers.

Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr., an accomplished businessman, public servant and philanthropist, provided the founding gift for the institute in 2016, and his continued investment will exceed \$20 million. A former U.S. ambassador to Denmark, Loeb's experience with anti-Semitism during World War II sparked a lifelong passion for promoting religious freedom.



The **GW Center for Excellence in Public Leadership** and the **Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation** awarded the 21st annual Calvin Cafritz Awards. The awards have recognized more than 120 D.C. government employees for their dedication and service.



The **Planet Forward Frontline Climate Fellowship**, supported by a grant from the **Helen Gurley Brown Foundation**, engages students who report environmental stories from, by and about underserved communities on the front lines of climate change and environmental inequity.



In the 2023-24 academic year, nearly 3,000 members of the GW community recorded 640,669 service hours through the **Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service**.

"In a democratic society, persons of all faiths are equal in the eyes of their government."

— Ambassador John L. Loeb Jr.



COMING TO CAMPUS

Past Meets Present at GW's Annual Alumni and Families Weekend

FROM HEARTY REUNIONS TO LAUGHTER WITH TREVOR NOAH, THE ANNUAL WEEKEND SHOWCASED THE SPIRIT AND STRENGTH OF THE GW COMMUNITY.

It was a grand celebration calling all Revolutionaries as the George Washington University commemorated its past and present during the annual Alumni and Families Weekend, held Oct. 18-20 with events at both the Foggy Bottom and Mount Vernon campuses. The gathering of alumni, families and friends served as a reminder of the enduring strength of the GW community.

On Friday night, students of the past who left GW with a degree and great deal of school spirit gathered, caught up and danced away at the All-Alumni Party as the Grand Ballroom in the University Student Center transformed into a beachy paradise. Many of those same alumni also had an

opportunity to reconnect at reunions for the undergraduate classes of 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 held throughout the weekend.

Mother Nature basked Washington, D.C., in glorious sunshine on a picturesque fall weekend. That made the changing colors stand out even more, especially at events such as the Vern Harvest, where community members could celebrate fall with pumpkins, apple cider, doughnuts, games and more.

Saturday, Oct. 19, offered a diverse lineup of open houses with GW Athletics and deans from various schools, including the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Professional Studies, the Elliott School of International Affairs, GW

Business, GW Engineering, GW Law and the Milken Institute School of Public Health.

Later that afternoon, President Ellen M. Granberg outlined the formal development of the university's strategic framework to the GW community. Speaking to a near-capacity crowd at Betts Theatre in the University Student Center, Granberg said during her first year she was consistently impressed by the GW community's passion for not only changing the world but also building an institution that provides a strong platform for making that change possible.

It didn't take long for Granberg and her wife, Sonya Rankin, to realize what a remarkable place GW is in a special city like D.C., and during engagements she frequently heard desires to better leverage its strengths in education and research to foster a more adaptable and resilient community of global leaders prepared to tackle the world's biggest challenges. The strategic framework, she said, is a tool for reaching those goals.

"We must build a foundation for the next level of excellence," Granberg said. She laid out the framework's four guiding themes: advancing impactful knowledge production through interdisciplinary excellence, reimagining skill development for the future, redefining authentic leadership for modern challenges and turning ideas into action by being a global convener. Granberg noted how some of the groundwork has already been laid with significant investments in student life, enhanced career support and resources for faculty research.

She shared that a committee of faculty and staff is working to flesh out these ideas and that a steering committee will take its feedback and develop a complete strategic framework, including timelines and budgets. The goal is to present a plan to the Board of Trustees next May, and she is excited to engage with the larger GW community to inform that plan.

The strategic framework is key among Granberg's initiatives as the university continues to embark on its third century of operation. Asked by an audience member what she's most excited about in terms of future projects that promote the university's goals, Granberg said she sees an amazing opportunity for GW to integrate its historical strengths in politics, policy, law and international relations with medicine, science, technology and AI.

"This combination positions us to address complex issues like climate change, food supply and the health of democracy," Granberg said. "I believe this is our unique opportunity moving forward, and

it excites me the most." The launch of the Global Food Institute, founded jointly by world-renowned chef and humanitarian José Andrés and GW, is one such example.

Granberg noted that the three things she finds especially special about GW are its proximity, outstanding people and relentless pursuit of impact through research and education. These all add up to GW community members being deeply engaged and passionate about the world around them, she said.

With current global conflicts eliciting strong passion among community members, Granberg pointed to new spaces and resources on campus that help the community engage meaningfully with one another and these topics, including the Center for Interfaith and Spiritual Life and the Division for Student Affairs, which is bringing in experts to train student leaders and staff on techniques that help bridge challenging dialogue across differences.

"Today we are also focused on developing global leaders who will face increasingly complex and existential challenges," Granberg said. "It is our duty to equip our students with the skills and courage needed to engage with these difficult issues."

Some of those students may even join the long list of GW alumni and community members in the halls of government. Frequently cited as one of the most politically active campuses, GW has educated more than 120 members of Congress, 79 ambassadors, two U.S. secretaries of state and two U.S. attorneys general. Granberg said that there is no better place to learn, debate or engage with the democratic process.

"At GW, we do

LEFT Members of the GW community gather for Alumni and Families Weekend on the Foggy Bottom and Mount Vernon campuses in Washington, D.C., Oct. 18-20. The annual celebration brought together alumni, families and friends to honor the university's legacy and community spirit.

"It is our duty to equip our students with the skills and courage needed to engage with these difficult issues."

Ellen M. Granberg
President, George Washington University



not just study democracy; we live it," she said.

Also on Oct. 19, one of the world's most recognizable comedians, Trevor Noah, brought the house down at the Charles E. Smith Center. The event, called "A Night with Trevor Noah" and put on by the GW Program Board, gave GW students, families and alumni a night they'll never forget as they listened to the former host of the Emmy Award-winning "The Daily Show" use his trademark smart satire in a two-hour laugh-a-thon.

As the weekend drew to a close, one final event emphasized the university's connection to the democratic process. The latest entry in GW's series of "Democracy Dialogues" focusing on the presidential election was a conversation between historian Jon Meacham and NBC political analyst Charles "Chuck" Todd, ATT '90-'94, Hon. '22.

In a friendly back-and-forth on Oct. 20, the two speakers outlined possible results of either a Trump or Harris victory at the polls.

After brief welcoming remarks to a full audience in Jack Morton Auditorium, Traci Scott, M.A. '96, introduced Granberg, who described the present moment as a pivotal time for American democracy and linked the event to GW history.

"In 1821," Granberg said, "GW was founded with a clear purpose to educate citizens of a young republic at the seat of their nation's government, ensuring that the ideals and practices foundational to the

American experiment and democracy would persevere for generations.

Today that founding vision still animates our university." ☐

HONORING ALUMNI

Spirit of GW Awards Recognize Alumni and University Supporters

THE AWARDS HONORED THE INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY AND THEIR DEDICATION TO GW. // By

Brook Endale

The Spirit of GW Awards ceremony, an annual tradition at GW that recognizes notable individuals for their contributions to society and for raising the standard of excellence within the university community, was held Oct. 19 as part of Alumni and Families Weekend.

GW President Ellen M. Granberg opened the ceremony, highlighting the evening as a celebration of the enduring power and spirit of GW's alumni and the vast talent across the university.

"Your achievements, your commitment and your generosity embody the spirit of GW and exemplify the mission of this institution," Granberg said. "We are so very proud to call you alumni and to honor and celebrate you this evening."

Here are the 2024 awardees:

Recent Alumni Achievement Award

Zinhle Essamuah, B.A. '15, CERT '16, M.A. '17, is an Emmy-nominated journalist and filmmaker, co-anchor of NBC News Daily and a correspondent for NBC News, reporting across NBC News NOW, MSNBC, Nightly News and TODAY. Known for her eclectic storytelling, Essamuah engages diverse audiences through broadcast, documentary and digital media.

Patricia Carocci, associate vice president of alumni relations and annual giving, presented Essamuah with the award, which recognizes graduates of the past 10 years

who have attained notable achievements.

"Zinhle's impactful journalism has set new standards for excellence, focusing on culture, poverty, justice and health care disparities, and addressing these critical issues with depth and clarity," Carocci said.

Alumni Outstanding Service Award

Dale Carlson-Bebout, M.B.A. '90, has had a distinguished career, including serving as a senior executive at Hewlett Packard, where she led North America's customer relationships and was recognized as an HP Top Tier Leader. Carlson-Bebout has also headed nonprofit organizations focused on poverty reduction, health equity, cancer research and workforce development.

Carlson-Bebout is a member of the GW Board of Advisors for the dean of the Business School. She has actively supported the GW Women in Business Undergraduate Student Organization as an adviser, mentor and advocate.

Maley Hunt, B.A. '13, M.H.A. '16, an executive committee member of the GW Alumni Association, presented Carlson-Bebout with the award.

"Dale Carlson-Bebout exemplifies the spirit of giving back and fosters a sense of community and pride among our alumni and current students," Hunt said. "She supports GW women in business, empowering many aspiring leaders and providing them with invaluable guidance and inspiration."

GW Philanthropy Award

GW Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations Donna Arbide presented the GW Philanthropy Award to the **family of the late Albert H. Small and Shirley Small: James Small, B.A. '84, Albert "Sonny" Small Jr. and Susan Small Savitsky.**

Albert H. Small was a third-generation Washingtonian, successful real estate developer, philanthropist and a Monumental Alumnus of GW. He dedicated decades to collecting rare books and manuscripts, inspired by his service in the Navy in World War II.

In 2011, the Albert H. Small Collection was donated to GW. It became the foundation of the Albert H. Small Center for National Capital Area Studies at the GW Museum and The Textile Museum. Small was granted the GW President's Medal in 2011 and an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree in 2016.


The couple's children have maintained a shared ethos of generosity through the Albert & Shirley Small Family Foundation and numerous other charitable ventures. The Small siblings have taken up their father's mantle and extended his legacy through enthusiastic support of ongoing activities at the museum and GW's Albert H. Small Normandy Institute.

Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award

Kevin Brown, M.S. '94, is the executive vice president and chief supply chain officer at Dell Technologies. In that role, he oversees a global supply chain spanning 180 countries and 25 manufacturing sites. Under his leadership, Dell has been recognized by top research and advisory firms as having one of the most efficient, sustainable and innovative supply chains worldwide.

Brown is also actively engaged in thought leadership and policy, serving on the National Committee of the Council on Foreign Relations. He also contributes to the National Advisory Council for the GW School of Engineering.

Granberg presented Brown with the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award, which recognizes alumni who have achieved a high level of success and distinguished accomplishments in their professional lives.

"Recipients have brought honor to GW through achievements that reflect the highest standards of quality, excellence and innovation," Granberg said. "This year, we honor Kevin Brown, a leader whose three-decade career personifies excellence and innovation." 



Essamuah

Carlson-Bebout

Brown

Small

CLASS NOTES

// '50s

James Rudin, B.A. '55, co-authored "Why (Not) Me: Searching For God When We Suffer" (ipub Connections, 2023), the story of his friend's battle with hairy cell leukemia.

// '70s

Bruno I. Aploks, B.S. '77, M.D. '83, recently retired from Slocum-Dickson Medical Group, where he practiced as an otolaryngologist and a head and neck surgery specialist.

Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak, M.F.A. '77, received a 2022-23 Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award for a project in Ukraine (reassigned to Poland, due to the war). In 2024, her artwork was showcased at Texas A&M. Hooks-Epstein Gallery will feature her solo show in Houston next year.

Louella Bryant, B.A. '71, Ed.D. '20, published "While in Darkness There Is Light: Idealism and Tragedy on an Australian Commune" (Black Lawrence Press, 2008), which is now available from Audible Publishing Services in hardcover, paperback, ebook and audio book.

Bob Frishman, B.A. '73, published "Edward Duffield: Philadelphia Clockmaker, Citizen, Gentleman, 1730-1803" (The American Philosophical Society Press, 2024).

Neil Harpe, M.A. '76, published "Pictured in Time: An Artist's Journey Around the Chesapeake" (Fox Road Productions, 2024), which showcases more than 125 previously unpublished photographs of the Chesapeake Bay from the 1980s and '90s, along with the artwork inspired by these iconic images.



Crystal (Blankenship) Kinzel, B.B.A. '78, was re-elected clerk of court and comptroller for Collier County, Florida.

Javier A. Lopez, J.D. '76, joined Vedder Price as a shareholder in the Miami office.

Andy Shapiro, B.A. '75, M.U.R.P. '85, has retired after nearly 35 years as a management consultant in corporate site selection and relocation, most recently serving as principal at Biggins Lacy Shapiro & Company, LLC.

William R. Simpson, M.S.A. '75, published "Morty Martin and Dancing Francis" (Newman Springs Publishing, 2024) under the pen name Nathan Pflieger. The book tells the story of a scientist and his unusual pet.

Steve Vender, B.A. '73, published "Private Instigator: A Journey Through the Underworld of Disorganized Crime" (fmsbw, 2024), in which he recounts stories from his time as a private investigator.

// '80s

Laurie Fenton Ambrose, B.A. '87, co-founder, president and CEO of GO2 for Lung Cancer, recently presented actor Tony Goldwyn ("Oppenheimer," "Law & Order") with her organization's most distinguished award, the Rays of Hope Award, for his work starring in national public service announcements on the dangers of lung cancer.

David Araujo, M.D. '84, was selected to serve on the 2024 ACGME Family Medicine Residency Review Committee.

Joseph Babits, B.A. '85, M.B.A. '88, was recently selected as Top Lawyer of the Year by the

International Association of Top Professionals for his outstanding leadership, dedication and commitment to the industry.

David A. Cohen, J.D. '88, recently joined Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck's executive committee.

Ken Gause, M.A. '87, joined the Institute for Defense Analyses as a researcher in IDA's Global Dynamics and Intelligence Division.

Michael F. Heim, J.D. '87, has earned selection in the 2024 IAM Patent 1000 guide as one of the country's top intellectual property attorneys.

S. Craig Holden, J.D. '80, was selected as an American Health Law Association fellow. AHLA is the nation's largest nonpartisan educational organization devoted to legal issues in the health care field.

Daniel Moses Laby, M.D. '87, RESD '89, director of SportsVisionNYC and a sports vision consultant with Major League Baseball's Pittsburgh Pirates and the Korean Baseball Organization's Lotte Giants, recently published his second book, "Eye of the Champion: Unlocking the Power of Sports Vision for Peak Performance."

Andrew J. Paul, J.D. '85, retired from his position as vice president of labor relations for Metro-North Railroad in New York City. He is opening a labor arbitration practice in Westchester County.

Sarah Schneiderman, B.F.A. '80, has had her work, "Deqa Dhalac — First African-Born Woman Mayor In the United States," selected for inclusion in Compass Gallery's first National Juried Exhibition, focused on the theme "Transformation and Change." Schneiderman's portrait, created from non-recyclable trash and repurposed objects, reflects the resilience of Somali Americans and highlights the responsibility of government officials to address waste.

Victor Vallo Jr., M.M. '81, retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, is an adjunct professor of music at both Le Moyne College and the American College of Music. He is also the music director and conductor of the Syracuse Chamber Orchestra, Auburn

Chamber Orchestra and the Oasis Chamber Orchestra.

// '90s

Robert Brown, B.S. '97, was appointed president of J2 Engineers, Inc. dba J2.

Edgar D. Bueno, J.D. '97, joined Hunter Maclean as a partner in the firm's health care and litigation group.

Jason Drenning, B.S. '97, M.S. '00, was promoted to president and CEO of STATinMED, a health care consulting organization focused on real-world evidence and health economics/outcomes research.

Dianne Duva, B.A. '97, a founding partner of the wealth management firm Arlington Financial Advisors in Santa Barbara, California, has been named the company's new managing partner.

Alan M. Freeman, J.D. '96, joined the senior leadership team at Uncommon Cures.

Ali Gharavi, M.D. '90, was recently named chair of medicine at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and physician-in-chief at New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

Michele Zamarra Givens, M.B.A. '92, completed her service in the British monarchy from 2020 to 2024. She served Queen Elizabeth, Prince Andrew and King Charles III during this time. She held the title of Princess Michele, duchess of York, and princess consort, while residing in Virginia.



Marjorie J. Just, J.D. '94, recently became a shareholder of Offit Kurman, P.A.

Lori S. Kovak, J.D. '97, has been named to the "Daily Journal"'s 2024 list of Top Intellectual Property Lawyers in California. The annual list highlights the "top performing intellectual property attorneys" who work in patent litigation, trademark and copyright.

David Leibowitz, B.B.A. '92, recently started a new role as vice president of finance and CFO for the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority.

Terence Nicholson, B.A. '91, has had his work, "Safety Jacket: A Mourning in Chinatown," selected for inclusion in the Smithsonian American Art Museum's "Sightlines: Chinatown and Beyond" exhibition, which celebrates the impact of Asian Americans in Washington, D.C.

Deirdre O'Leary, B.A. '91, recently celebrated 20 years of employment with Leidos. She serves as a consultant assigned to special projects.

Ethan R. O'Shea, J.D. '93, has been named to the 2024 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers list in the areas of employment and labor, and employment litigation. Each year, the research team at Super Lawyers selects no more than 5 percent of the lawyers in the state to receive this honor.

Tony Palermo, B.A. '91, M.P.A. '93, was elected vice president of membership and outreach services for the American Planning Association Florida Chapter.

Stefanie Reeves, B.A. '95, is the deputy chief of public policy and engagement for the American Psychological Association. She recently received its 2024 Professional Performance Award.

Holly Rymon, B.A. '90, has spent the past 30 years working in film and television. She is currently a producer on the HBO series "The Gilded Age," which has been nominated for multiple Emmy Awards, including "Outstanding Drama Series."

Kara Sidener, B.A. '95, is now teaching AP psychology and criminal justice to high school students in Prince William County Schools after a 25-year career as a special agent with the FBI.

Dana Lynn Thomas, M.D./M.P.H. '98, chief medical officer and assistant commandant for health, safety and work-life for the U.S. Coast Guard, retired this year after 30 years of uniformed service.

Jon Tuteur, B.B.A. '99, published his first book, "Seizing Today: Discovering Purpose and Authenticity Amidst Life's Extraordinary Challenges" (Manuscripts LLC, 2024), a memoir about living with epilepsy, which affects one in 26 Americans.

Stacey Young, M.B.A. '97, M.S. '00, successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, "Student Engagement's Impact on Academic Performance for Nontraditional Students in a Community College Environment," at Marymount University.

// '00s

Michael Y. Bennett, B.A. '02, published "Between the Lines: A Philosophy of Theatre" (Oxford University Press, 2024) and "The Routledge Companion to Absurdist Literature" (Routledge, 2024).

Jason B. Blank, B.A. '02, was sworn in as the 37th president of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Lesley Bryant, B.A. '03, is the owner of D.C.'s Lady Clipper Barber Shop, which is staffed exclusively by women of color.

Bridget Cooper, Ed.D. '05, a former GW employee in student affairs and visiting professor in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, published her seventh book, "Unflappable: How Smart People Quit Overthinking, Ditch the Drama, and Thrive at Work" (Summit Press Publishers, 2023).

Dana Cooper, B.A. '06, is the general counsel for GreenVest, LLC, a small environmental developer specializing in stream and wetland restorations and nature-based climate resiliency solutions.

Shannon Dalton, M.B.A. '06, has acquired Quinn Fiduciary Services, a fiduciary firm based in Santa Barbara, California, following her licensure as a professional fiduciary in 2020 and a successful career running her own insurance company and working with Aflac.

Hitesh Dev, M.S. '02, is the COO and co-founder of Devout Corporation, the leading health care technology company supporting the U.S. Department of Defense, Veteran Affairs and the U.S. Department of Commerce with electronic health records implementation and analytics.

Teresa Diaz, M.A. '00, opened Red Dot Art Gallery in Oaxaca, Mexico. The gallery specializes

in contemporary art by Oaxaca artists and multidisciplinary events like artist talks, art tours, hands-on workshops and performances.

Chris Dougherty, B.A. '06, and **Kristen Tully, B.A. '08**,

married on April 6.

The wedding was attended by about 26 GW friends and fraternity brothers.



Julie Gordon, B.A. '04, was named editorial director of "New Jersey Bride" magazine in addition to her role as editor of "New Jersey Monthly."

Ariel Handelman, B.A. '03, is the new director of strategic communications, brand and marketing at the Children's Museum of Manhattan.

Kate Hash, B.A. '06, signed a two-book deal with Dutton, an imprint of Penguin Random House. Her debut novel, "Gracie Harris Is Under Construction," is tentatively scheduled for release in summer 2025.

Erin E. Hertzog, J.D. '09, joined Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP as a partner in the firm's health care and life sciences industry practice.

Laura Vartain Horn, J.D. '08, joined Kirkland & Ellis as a partner in its intellectual property practice group.

Jeanelle Johnson, B.B.A. '01, was named managing partner of PwC's Washington, D.C., metro office.

Dan LeClair, B.A. '05, now serves as executive director of alumni and donor relations with the University of Vermont Foundation, where he works closely with the Larner College of Medicine.

Luis E. Lorenzana, J.D. '06, has been named office managing shareholder of Littler's San Diego office.

Andrew MacWilliams, B.A. '04, was promoted to chief innovation officer at Precision Talent Solutions.

Nathan S. Mammen, J.D. '04, joined Snell & Wilmer's Washington, D.C., office as

a partner in the intellectual property group.

Lori Metcalf, M.P.P. '05, Ph.D. '12, is a senior analyst with the Office of the D.C. Auditor, where she conducts performance audits to assess the effectiveness and equity of District government programs.

Michael Nemerof, B.A. '08, is an attorney at Property Litigation Group, PLLC, in South Florida, specializing in representing homeowners against their insurance company for property damage claims.

Ricardo J. Pineres, J.D. '09, has been appointed chief risk officer at the United States Senate Federal Credit Union.

James Platte, M.S. '05, joined the Institute for Defense Analyses as a research staff member in the Strategy, Forces and Resources Division of IDA's Systems and Analyses Center.

Patti Kelly Ralabate, Ed.D. '08, published her fourth book, "True Inclusion with UDL: Designing to the Edges to Reach Every Learner" (Brookes Publishing, 2024).

Rudy Rodas, B.B.A. '08, was recently appointed to serve as state director for interim U.S. Sen. George Helmy (D-N.J.).

Katie Rodriguez, M.B.A. '05, was promoted to executive vice president of capital markets at Housing Partnership Network.

Christine P. Dela Rosa, B.B.A. '06, published "Between Two Poles" (Legacy Book Press LLC, 2024), a memoir focusing on a relationship that starts and grows at GW.

Will Sparks, Ph.D. '02, has published "Actualized Teamwork: Unlocking the Culture Code for Optimal Performance" (SHRM Books, 2024), which debuted as an Amazon No. 1 Best Seller.

Tim Tobin, Ed.D. '02, published "The Clarity Advantage: Overcome Ten Communication Pitfalls and Boost Your Influence" (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2024), which shows how clear communication leads to credibility and influence.

// '10s

Tracy Badua, J.D. '10, co-authored "The Cookie Crumbles" (HarperCollins, 2024), a middle-grade novel following two best friends who must solve the mystery behind a baking competition gone awry.

Jennifer Bates, M.A. '14, was commissioned as a provisional deacon in the North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in June. Bates graduated from Brite Divinity School in May with a Master of Arts in theology in ministry.

Elizabeth Berry, B.A. '12, received the "Phoenix Business Journal"'s "40 Under 40" award recognizing the area's enterprising young executives making an impact in their fields.

Katelyn B. Cramp, J.D. '19, joined Fox Rothschild in Denver, Colorado, as an associate in the litigation department.

Nichol Gabor, M.A. '19, is the Nathalie L. Klaus curator of costume and textiles at the Valentine museum in Richmond, Virginia.

Christopher P. Healey, J.D. '11, joined Davis Polk as a partner in the investment management practice in Washington, D.C.

Jacqui Heinrich, B.A. '11, was promoted to senior White House correspondent at FOX News Media.

Bryan Hilley, M.A. '15, is the associate registrar at Duke University's Nasher Museum of Art.

Garrett Jackson, M.P.P. '13, currently serves as director of philanthropy and communications at an award-winning affordable housing developer in the D.C. region.

Molly Kunselman, M.A. '13, launched MKD Interiors, a full-service studio offering interior design, decoration and coaching.

Kacy Lawrence, M.P.P. '10, received her Ph.D. in educational research and evaluation from Virginia Tech in May.

Jose Rey Antonio Lesaca, B.A. '15, currently serves as associate chief counsel at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and was recently recognized with an Outstanding Service Award for

his efforts in advising the FDA on a number of novel and complex legal issues.

Chris R. Marando, J.D. '10, joined Perkins Coie's intellectual property and patent litigation practices as a partner in the Washington, D.C., office.

Aaron R. Modiano, J.D. '10, joined Lewis, Longman & Walker, P.A., one of Florida's largest environmental law firms, as a senior attorney at the firm's West Palm Beach office.

Matthew R. Mollozzi, J.D. '13, M.B.A. '13, has been named to the 2024 Lawdragon "500 X – The Next Generation" list. The list recognizes future leaders in law and those who "have eyes turned toward the future and an undiminished belief in the opportunity to make an impact."

Steven Mumford, M.P.P. '18, was promoted to associate professor of political science with tenure and MPA program director at the University of New Orleans. He recently co-edited the "Research Handbook on Program Evaluation."

Jane Pierce, M.A. '13, is a project manager in the modern and contemporary art department at the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. She and her husband welcomed their first baby, Vivian, in July.

Martina Polasek, L.L.M. '12, has begun her term as the secretary-general of the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes following her election in April.

Saurabh Prabhakar, J.D. '14, has been named counsel at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP in the San Francisco office.

Trevor R. Salter, J.D. '10, joined Troutman Pepper's Washington, D.C., office as a partner in corporate practice.

Cathy Felmele Shanholtz, O.T.D. '16, joined McDaniel College as the inaugural program director of the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. The program is expected to launch in summer 2026, pending approval by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education.

Mourad M. Shehebar, M.D. '11, was promoted to program director for the Pain Medicine Fellowship

at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York.

Simoon Shiferaw, M.B.A. '10, has published a meditative adult coloring book to promote mindfulness and well-being.

Mohammad M. Shouman, J.D. '14, has joined the U.S. Coast Guard as a United States officer and judge advocate general. This marks his first station as a direct commission lawyer, where he holds the rank of LTJG. Shouman was also recently named to the Arab American Foundation's 40 Under 40 list, which recognizes young Arab Americans across various fields.

Adriano Lima e Silva, M.S.A. '19, has been hired as assistant professor of accounting at McDaniel College.

Sadie Thimsen, M.P.A. '13, currently serves as a general services officer at the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador.

Yuta Watanabe, B.A. '18, left the NBA to play in his native Japan.



// '20s

John B. Allen, J.D. '21, joined Spencer Fane's litigation and dispute resolution practice group as an associate in the firm's Salt Lake City office.

Libby Barnard, M.F.A. '20, recently performed in the world-premiere play "The Bed Trick," at Seattle Shakespeare Company.

Julia B. Heasley, J.D. '22, joined Fox Rothschild in Princeton, New Jersey, as an associate in the family law department.

Donavan Hoffman, B.A. '24, is pursuing a doctoral degree in clinical psychology at Northern Illinois University.

Eric Lee, M.A. '20, joined "The New York Times" in June as a photo fellow and covers Capitol Hill and the White House.

Theresa Menders, M.P.H. '20, co-founded "The Power of Faces: Looking at the Global Refugee Crisis," a global refugee portrait project that aims to humanize the women, men and children seeking safety from conflict and persecution.

John Perrino, M.P.A. '20, joined the Internet Society as a senior

policy and advocacy expert. He leads U.S. policy and works with partners and policymakers around the globe to advocate for an open, secure and trustworthy internet for everyone.

Georgia Turpin, B.A. '23, recently moved to Aviano Air Base, Italy, to serve as an Air Force intelligence officer at the 31st Fighter Wing. In addition to serving her country, she is pursuing her master's degree in public policy at Northwestern University.

Laura Wilson, M.A. '24, is the new collections specialist at the National Building Museum. She is currently cataloging the permanent photography collections and collaborating with the team on an upcoming visible storage exhibition.

Regina Wright, M.P.P. '20, was recently elected as the first woman president of the Ohio State Council of Machinists, the political arm of the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers in Ohio.



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IN MEMORIAM

Paul Chernoff, J.D. '67*(July 15, 2024, 85)*

earned a mechanical engineering degree from Tufts University before serving in the Coast and Geodetic Survey. After graduating from GW Law with honors, he had a distinguished judicial career spanning nearly four decades, serving on the Newton District Court and the Massachusetts Superior Court. An educator, he also taught trial practice at Boston College Law School. He is survived by his wife, Lynn; two sons; and three grandchildren.

Joel P. Dictrow, J.D. '69*(July 6, 2024, 79)*

began his career in the CBS Tax Department before working as a tax attorney at Citigroup for 25 years. A passionate collector of contemporary art, he traveled with his wife, Zoë, to international art fairs and remote locations, including Antarctica and Pantanal, Brazil. He is survived by his wife; stepson David Walker and his family; brother Robert Dictrow; and nieces Jill Asars and Lori Fisher, along with their children.

Theodore J. DiLorenzo, LL.B. '52*(July 2, 2024, 99)*

served in the U.S. Army during World War II before earning his law degree from GW. He practiced law in Hartford, Connecticut, for 50 years and was active in local politics, serving on the Hartford City Council and as a Republican candidate for mayor. He was dedicated to education and improving opportunities for the children of Hartford. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Lorraine (Calano) DiLorenzo, three children, four grandchildren and his brother, sister, nieces and nephews.

Claire Duggan, J.D. '13*(July 10, 2024, 48)*

was a talented photographer, loving mother and accomplished lawyer. Known for her sharp mind, spirited debates and big heart, Duggan was deeply involved in her community, including supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. She also served as

GW's first official photographer, capturing the university's history. She is survived by her partner, Dewayne, and three children.

Brian Herrman, B.B.A. '77*(June 9, 2024, 69)*

was a successful CFO who devoted his life to Jesus, his friends and his family, especially his beloved wife of 48 years, Cherylee. He was a dedicated supporter of GW, serving on the Business School's advisory board and receiving the Alumni Outstanding Service Award in 2013. Throughout his life, Herrman cherished family time, coaching his sons' soccer teams and actively participating in church as an elder and teacher at Valley Community Baptist Church. Herrman is survived by his wife; sons Andrew, Timothy and Benjamin; two granddaughters; and his brothers and sister.

Saundra Lynn Hutchison, B.F.A. '85*(Aug. 6, 2024, 62)*

was a passionate artist and storyteller who earned her arts degree from the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design. Her interests included art, movie production and writing novels and short stories. Hutchison also harbored a love for fashion and design. She is survived by her mother, Patricia Schrader, and brother, Mark Hutchison.

Mary M. Levy, J.D. '76*(July 31, 2024, 82)*

was a longtime D.C. resident and advocate for public schools. She earned a B.A. in linguistics from the University of Wisconsin, a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and a J.D. from George Washington University. As director of the Public Education Reform Project from 1990 to 2009, she was instrumental in D.C.'s public school funding reforms. She is survived by her husband of 57 years, Edward P. Levy; siblings Roger, Laura and Paul Mansnerus; daughters Dina and Rachel Levy; son-in-law Cedar Reilly Riener; and five grandchildren.

Alan S. Loesberg, LL.B. '56*(June 15, 2024, 98)*

was a World War II veteran and graduate of the

Merchant Marine Academy. After earning a law degree from GW, he enjoyed a successful career in maritime law. He was passionate about reading, sharing stories of his adventures and never missing a Washington Commanders game. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn Pearl Loesberg; three children, Matthew, Fred and Susan; two stepsons, Barry and Stefan Platnick; and eight grandchildren.


Edwin J. Monsma, J.D. '56*(July 15, 2024, 93)*

excelled in academics and athletics at Calvin College before attending GW Law. He had a distinguished legal career, serving as assistant general counsel at the General Accounting Office and providing legal review during the transition of power from Richard Nixon to Gerald Ford. He is survived by his daughter, Liz; son Ian; grandsons Trey and Christopher; great-grandchildren; brothers Jim and Chuck; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Matthew Regan Osborne, B.A. '99*(Aug. 13, 2024, 47)*

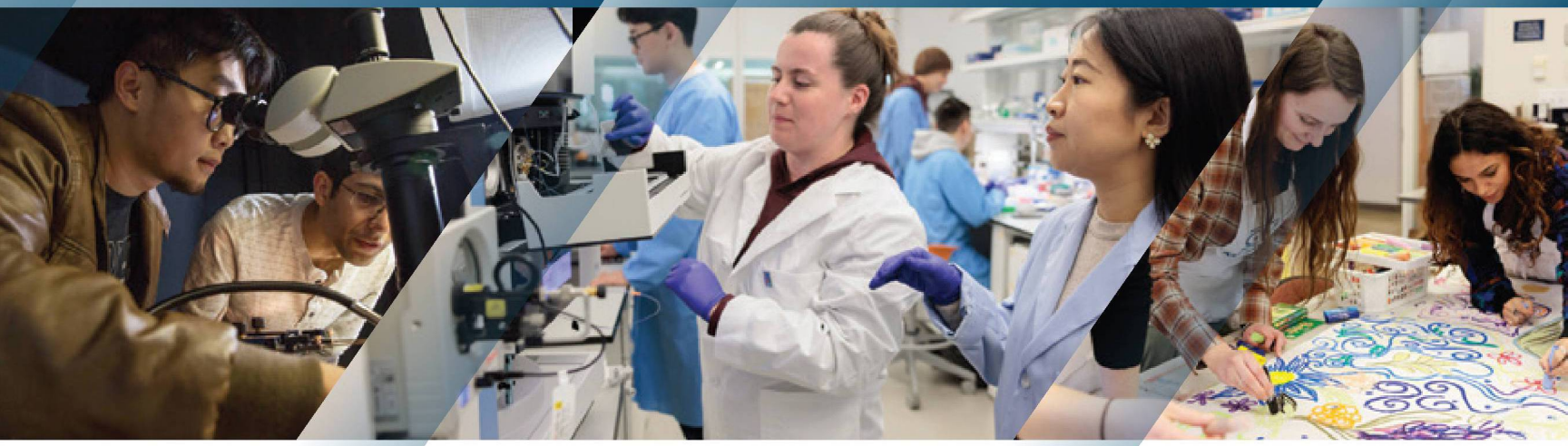
had a 25-year career in journalism. He worked as a sportswriter, editor and publisher at various publications, including "The Graham Star," "The Trentonian" and "The Northeast Georgian." He is survived by his wife, Samantha Sinclair; sons Hunter, Callum and Oliver; his mother, Sue Osborne; and his sister, Mackenzie Osborne.

William E. Watson, J.D. '61*(June 23, 2024, 87)*

had a successful legal career spanning over 60 years, serving clients throughout West Virginia and remaining active in his community even after retirement. An advocate for the Democratic Party, he held significant positions, including state chairman of the West Virginia Democratic Party and chancellor of the West Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Mara Linaberger Watson; two children, Lynn Ellen Watson Neumann and Edward Allen Watson; and a granddaughter, Audrey Ellen Neumann. 

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