

COLLEGE MAGAZINE

# Pomona

Fall 2023

## HARVEST

The Modern Spice Trader [26](#) | Fine Vines [32](#) | The Ocean's Bounty [38](#) | The Cultural Roots of Boba [44](#)



The Claremont Colleges Library Special Collections' citrus industry archives include the Oglesby Citrus Label Collection donated by the late Emeritus Professor of Biology Larry C. Oglesby and his wife, Alice. Special Collections also houses the David Boulé California Orange Collection, the Matt Garcia Papers on citrus and farm laborers, and the California Citrus Industry Collection, collected and gifted by Claremont Heritage.

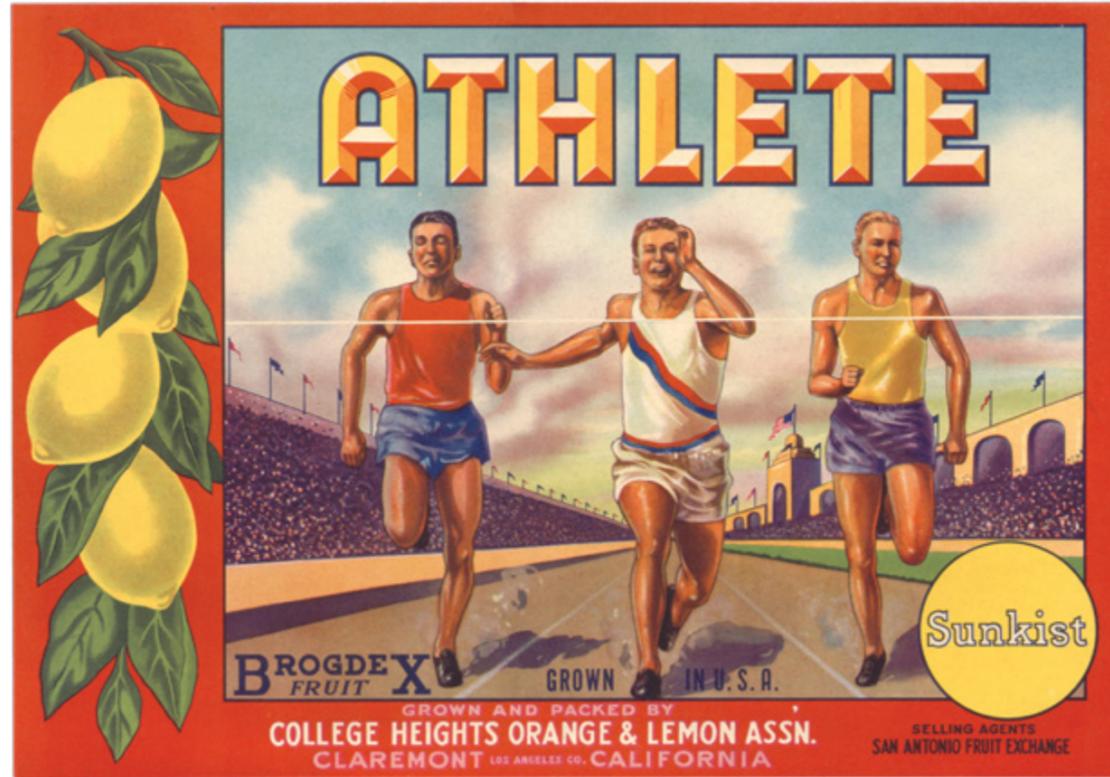


The heyday of Claremont's citrus industry in the first half of the 20th century is long past, but vibrant examples of crate labels featuring local scenes endure. The 1908 Carnegie Building, depicted here, served as the library of both Pomona College and the city of Claremont until 1914. Today, it houses classrooms and offices for politics, international relations, public policy analysis and economics.

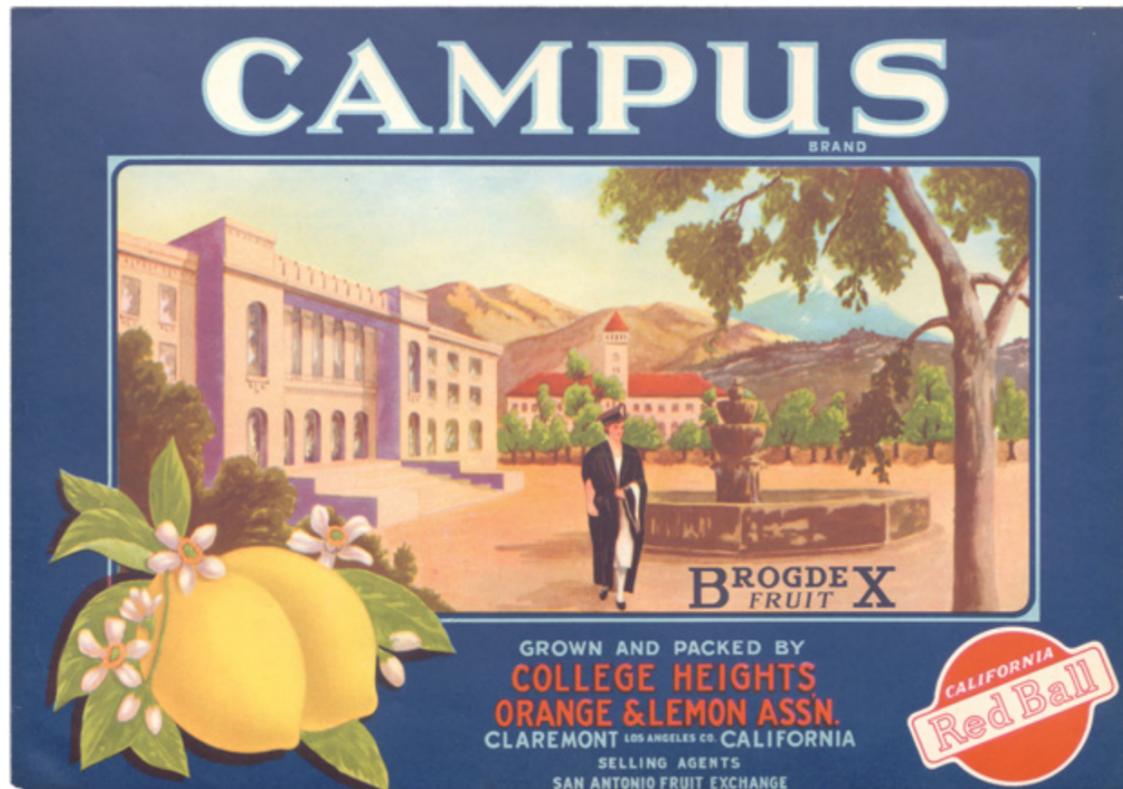


Mason Hall, completed in 1923 as a state-of-the-art chemistry facility, is 100 years old this year, as is Crookshank Hall, originally a zoology building. Today, Mason is home to classrooms and offices for history and languages, and Crookshank houses the English Department and media studies. In this view from what is now Stanley Academic Quad, Mason is at center and the building at left is Harwood Hall for Botany, built in 1915 and demolished in 1968. The labels reprinted in this issue are from the Oglesby Citrus Label Collection. The late Professor of Biology Larry C. Oglesby, also known as "Doc O" to some, taught at Pomona for 30 years and was a mentor to several of the alumni featured in this issue, including Doug Bush '94, Cathy Corison '75 and Kim Selkoe '97.

The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, celebrating its centennial this year, hosted its first varsity college football game on October 6, 1923, with the USC Trojans playing none other than the Sagehens of Pomona College. (See story, page 21.) The citrus label commemorates the 1932 Olympic Games, with the Coliseum's famous peristyle incorporated at right.



As commercial art, labels weren't signed by the artists and lacked descriptions, though some might not have represented actual scenes. This image at first suggests Bridges Auditorium, built in 1931, but Bridges has five double-height arches on each side, among other differences.



The idealized vision of the citrus industry and life in a college town depicted on crate labels was not the experience of everyone in Claremont and surrounding areas. The Matt Garcia Papers in The Claremont Colleges Library Special Collections include research materials such as photos, oral histories and newspaper clippings related to Garcia's book *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970*. This image of citrus pickers in San Dimas around 1930 from the Pomona Public Library collection is included in Garcia's book and used as its cover image.

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**POMONA COLLEGE**

is an independent liberal arts college located in Claremont, California. Established in 1887, it is the founding member of The Claremont Colleges.

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## Doing By Learning

I'm not much for college slogans that aren't old and in Latin, but there's one that stands out to me: Learn by Doing.

While California's polytechnic universities have taken up that mantra, many Pomona College alumni, it seems to me, take the opposite approach: They do by learning.

Again and again, I encounter people who have taken an intense academic interest and turned it into a related but less-than-obvious entrepreneurial path. In this issue, we explore a few of those in the realms of food and drink.

Consider Kim Selkoe '97, who has a Ph.D. in marine ecology, and Doug Bush '94, who earned a master's degree in animal science. They each sell seafood for a living, applying their knowledge to expand the sustainable seafood industry along the coast of Southern California.

Like Selkoe and Bush, Cathy Corison '75 was a biology major at Pomona. After an extracurricular wine-tasting class, she headed to UC Davis and earned a master's degree in viticulture and enology. She has been a lauded Napa Valley winemaker for decades, but Corison still can be found out among her vines, pruning by hand and nurturing the grapes that produce the noted cabernet sauvignons of Corison Winery.

Sana Javeri Kadri '16 made an even greater entrepreneurial leap. An art major at Pomona, she landed on a Forbes 30 Under 30 list five years after graduating as the founder and CEO of Diaspora Co., a spice importer. With a focus on reinventing the ancient spice trade, providing fair prices for farmers—and an absolutely stunning Instagram—Javeri Kadri has melded several of the academic interests she pursued during her days on campus.

There is no business major at Pomona, of course. But the training in critical thinking, research, organizational skills and a certain get-right-to-it quality often lay the groundwork for starting a business—which after all is a fundamentally creative endeavor.

Many other Pomona alumni work in the world of food, including some focused on providing for more basic needs than the rather epicurean businesses we feature in this issue. One who leaps to mind is Yi Li '16, a former McKinsey & Co. engagement manager who is co-founder and CEO of FarmWorks Agriculture in Kenya. FarmWorks is a startup that aims to address food security and climate change in Sub-Saharan Africa. It provides training in regenerative agriculture, technology and market access to more than 5,000 small-scale Kenyan farmers. FarmWorks' ambitions, however, are not small. The company recently raised more than \$4 million in impact and venture capital to strengthen its data analytics capabilities and to learn to use AI to enhance production and influence planting and lending decisions.

Back to this issue, though. It's meant to be on the lighter side, and we hope it will leave you ready to raise a glass and enjoy a good meal.

—Robyn Norwood



Cover: Anamalai Cacao pods at Anamalai Estate in Tamil Nadu, India. Photo by Sana Javeri Kadri '16, founder and CEO of Diaspora Co., which sources its cacao, mace and nutmeg from the estate farm.

## Features

**The Modern Spice Trader 26**  
With an artist's flair and a commitment to equitable trade, Sana Javeri Kadri '16 and her Diaspora Co. are shaking up the spice industry.

**Fine Vines 32**  
Cathy Corison '75 is a lauded Napa Valley winemaker—and it all started with a noncredit wine-tasting class while she was at Pomona.

**The Ocean's Bounty 38**  
Along the California coast, biologists Kim Selkoe '97 and Doug Bush '94 have put their graduate degrees to work in the sustainable seafood industry.

**The Cultural Roots of Boba 44**  
Pomona College Professor Kyla Wazana Tompkins received a 2023 James Beard Media Award for her essay "On Boba," published by the *Los Angeles Review of Books' LARB Quarterly*.

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## The Women Behind Mufti

Thank you to the four women who shed their anonymity to reveal the secret of Mufti’s founding. I grew up in Claremont, surrounded by the traditions and lore of the campuses, including a healthy respect for Mufti—possibly instilled in me by a relative who may have been a member at some point along the way (though since they’ve yet to admit membership, I’ll continue to shield their identity). As a student in the early ’80s, I appreciated the wit, targeted wisdom and biting commentary Mufti provided us in an era marked by so many cultural and political transitions. And with all of that, what a delightful revelation to discover it was women of South Campus in the late 1950s who challenged cultural norms and rigidity in an effort to seek parity with their male North Campus counterparts. While I consider myself a feminist and an academically trained historian of women and gender studies, it never once occurred to me that Mufti could have been founded by women—shame on me, and 47 chirps to them! Of course this begs the question: “In what other ways have the voices and actions of women on the Pomona campus been silenced or lost over time?” Perhaps a rising senior history and/or gender studies major could take this on as their thesis for next year?

—Julie Siebel ’84  
Balboa Island, California

## Hey Ref! We’ve Come a Long Way

What a great joy for me to read of Melissa Barlow ’87 officiating women’s NCAA tournament games!

She brings back 1958 memories of entering Pomona as an avid basketball player, only to find women’s basketball a missing sport on campus. Having gone to an all-girls high school where basketball was *the* sport sans males to steal the athletic limelight, I was greatly disappointed with this omission, to say the least.

Once settled into my freshman year, this sport continued to haunt me and finally stirred within the motivation to try to muster up a team. I began by spotting women of above-average height and inviting them to play. A sufficient number of women were eager to do so, with some never having played the sport before. We began with rag-a-tag demonstration games in Renwick Gym, charging the guys an entry fee for the “special” privilege of watching. Gradually, other colleges were engaged in unofficial and unrecorded contests but the seed was thereby sown nonetheless. One cannot help but be grateful for those who then carried the banner in one fashion or another to eventually make this an official women’s sport on campus.

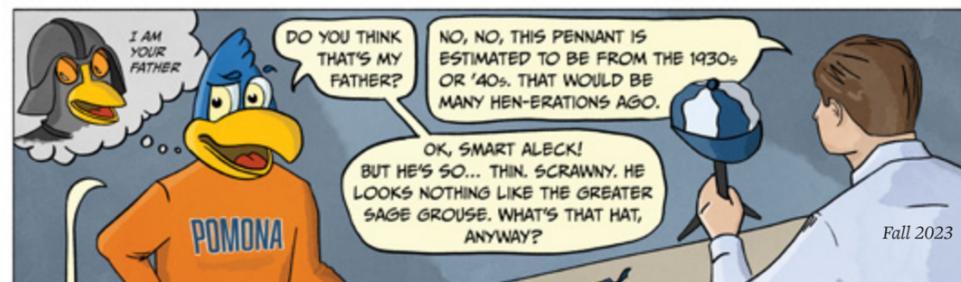
—Susan Tippett Bruch ’62  
Santa Barbara, California



*P.S. As a 5-foot-11 guard, I never had to learn how to make a basket because in those days, both guards and forwards were forbidden from crossing the center line! Furthermore, once I retrieved a rebound, I was only allowed three dribbles to get it to a forward teammate on the other side lest one might incur a foul. Obviously it was thought that this sport, played as men did, was too taxing for us ladies. ... Heaven forbid! Yes, we as women in the world of sports have truly come a long, long way. Thank you, Melissa, for your current Pomona claim to fame in the world of basketball.*

## ‘PCM’ Honored

Pomona College Magazine received a 2023 Circle of Excellence Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) for “Our Bird’s Beginnings,” a graphic story about the origins of Cecil Sagehen that appeared in PCM’s Spring 2022 issue. Judges praised the comic, illustrated by Eric Melgosa and written by Robyn Norwood and collaborators in the Office of Communications, for creativity, ingenuity and clever wordplay, selecting the story for a gold award in the category of writing/profile (less than 1,000 words). The judges also applauded the comic for “highlighting the unsung heroes on college campuses.” You can read the full comic at [magazine.pomona.edu/our-birds-beginnings](http://magazine.pomona.edu/our-birds-beginnings).



## Q&A: Adam Sapp, Assistant Vice President & Director of Admissions The New Admissions Landscape

In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in June that ended race-conscious college admissions, *Pomona College Magazine* asked Adam Sapp, assistant vice president and director of admissions, what it means for Pomona—and for all students applying to college. The interview has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

**Q: In her message after the ruling that effectively struck down affirmative action in admissions, Pomona College President G. Gabrielle Starr said Pomona remains committed to striving for a diverse student body and providing access to talented students from all backgrounds. How will that work?**

We have a history of recruiting broadly across California, the U.S. and the world, and that will not change. It’s also true that Pomona sits in one of the most diverse parts of the country. As a national, global liberal arts college, we will continue to recruit broadly, but can we do more outreach in our own backyard? I think the answer is yes. In addition to our usual school visits in the region, this year we are planning to support more visits to campus for under-resourced and first-generation students, host more events for local high school guidance counselors to join us on campus, and continue to grow our presence at area community colleges. As our alumni know well, their continued support of the College’s efforts to raise funds in support of financial aid, global engagement and student support initiatives is critical to maintaining our national leadership position on diversity.

**Q: The opinion by Chief Justice John Roberts seemed to leave an opening with the application essay, allowing colleges to consider “an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise.” Where does that leave admissions readers and, for that matter, the students writing application essays?**

Some obvious changes will be made. For example, admissions readers will not have access to applicants’ self-reported race answers. Our application partners like the Common Application, the Coalition and QuestBridge have all made allowances for that change. I anticipate Pomona will not be alone in firewalling this information in the review and selection process.

Where does this leave students? Tell us your individual story. Every student has a unique ability to contribute to the Pomona community and our essay questions were devised with that idea in mind. Our individual and holistic process means we consider many factors for each candidate and responses to essay questions are one of those factors. We are public on our website about what qualities we value, and our essay questions are designed to help students not only think critically about issues important to Pomona, but also to understand Pomona better and reflect on whether we are a community where they see themselves fitting in. College admissions is a two-way process. It’s as important for our office to tell students who we are as it is for students to reflect on the kind of college experience they seek. We believe our essay questions serve both those goals well.

**Q: The group of students offered admission to the Class of 2027 was the most diverse in Pomona’s history, with 62.5% domestic students of color. What does that reflect, and do you expect the percentage to be lower next year?**

It’s certainly true that in the last decade Pomona’s applicant pool has become more racially and ethnically diverse. It’s also become much more global. As with any shift like this, the reason why is complicated. Yes, the Office of Admissions has been strategic in our outreach to ensure the pool is full of academically talented candidates from all backgrounds, but at the same time there are real demographic shifts taking place in American high schools that suggest the future student population will be even more diverse than the present. It is also true that the COVID-19 pandemic created more outreach opportunities for online engagement, and that the College’s financial aid program, which has always been amongst the best in the country, continues to be a clear motivating factor for applicants. I would also argue that the College’s work to increase programming and support for students to ensure they have excellent

experiences, and the success of our alumni, ever more diverse, cannot be overstated as a factor in influencing future applicants to see Pomona as a place where they can flourish. Will we see declines in enrollments from students from diverse populations? In the short term the answer is probably yes. But are less diverse classes something we believe is a new status quo? Definitely not. That’s the work of our office going forward: to work within the limits of the law to ensure we make good on the values of diversity, values that were critical to the College’s founding and remain central to our mission today.

**Q: Many alumni are parents of students applying to colleges, both to Pomona and elsewhere. What recommendations do you have for their students’ approach to admissions in the new era?**

I think it’s key to understand that in the next few years we may continue to see shifts and changes. We haven’t even touched on the national conversations about the test-optional movement or legacy admissions policies (remember: Pomona does not consider legacy status in the admissions process), or the continued public dialogue criticizing the value of a liberal arts education. These issues and more will continue to loom on the minds of students as they make decisions about their future.

For parents reading this, I would say two things. First, do your very best to have a good attitude for your student about change. Help them see the opportunities in this moment and resist defaulting to the language that change is inherently negative. When parents stress, it gives students permission to stress too, and that just isn’t helpful in the long run. Second, talk to your student about who they are becoming as a human, not what they want to major in, or what kind of profession they seek. Students who know who they are, know what they value, have reflected on what they care about in the world and who have engaged in activities that they feel help them grow as a person are going to be much stronger college applicants. Just as we evaluate students holistically, encourage the young people under your roof to develop themselves holistically. Your children are incredibly talented and their worth in the world can be measured in so many ways. Helping them see that fact as early as possible will have benefits way beyond college admissions.

## New Members of the Board of Trustees

Six new members and one ex officio member have joined the Pomona College Board of Trustees. They began their terms in July, with the exception of Erika H. James '91, who will begin her service on July 1, 2024.



### Betsy Atwater '79

Atwater has engaged in nonprofit board work for a variety of institutions, including the Guthrie Theater, Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, Breakthrough Collaborative and Public Radio International, and has served as board chair of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and Graywolf Press. Her work has focused on governance, development and strategic support for the nonprofits' missions and executive directors. A history major at Pomona, she earned a J.D. degree at the NYU School of Law before moving to Minneapolis and now lives in Santa Barbara, California. Her mother, uncle and two grandparents attended Pomona.

### Nathan Dean '10

A forensic accountant in FTI Consulting's Los Angeles office, Dean focuses on understanding companies and their internal and external records, including financial and non-financial records. He advises outside counsel on damages and accounting issues in commercial litigations and advises entities on their environmental, social and corporate governance reporting. For the last three years, Dean served as the national chair of annual giving at Pomona. A biology major, he earned a master's degree in accounting from the University of Southern California and is a certified public accountant.



### Johny Ek Aban '19

An investment associate at Architect Capital in San Francisco, Ek Aban works with startups across the world and particularly in Latin America to provide debt funding at early stages of a company's life. He enjoys working with entrepreneurs and startup hubs that reach beyond Silicon Valley. Ek Aban also serves on the Young Leaders Board for Next Generation Scholars, a nonprofit college access program in Marin County that coached him on his journey to be the first in his family to graduate from college and enter the corporate workforce. An economics major, Ek Aban was very active during his time at Pomona, serving on the President's Advisory Committee on Diversity and as a leader and advocate for first-generation, low-income students at Pomona.



### Carlos Garcia '73

Garcia has had a long career in marketing research with a focus on the Latino sector. He currently serves as the CEO of Garcia Research, a 90-employee firm based in Palm Desert, California. A foreign languages major at Pomona, Garcia appeared in some of Professor Leonard Pronko's Kabuki productions. His senior year production was one of 10 shows featured by the American College Theater Festival at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He later earned a master's degree from UC Berkeley in comparative literature, an MBA from National University in San Diego and studied medieval theater and French literature at the Sorbonne III. While at Berkeley, he earned a Ford Foundation Fellowship for Mexican Americans.



### Erika H. James '91

James became dean of The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in 2020. Trained as an organizational psychologist, she is a leading expert on crisis leadership, workplace diversity and management strategy. Before her appointment at Wharton, she was the John H. Harland Dean at Emory University's Goizueta Business School. An award-winning educator, accomplished consultant and innovative researcher, James has paved the way for women in leadership both in education and corporate America. She serves on the boards of Morgan Stanley and the Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center. She is a sought-after thought leader whose expertise has been quoted by *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, MSNBC and Bloomberg, among others.

### Steve Olson P'23 P'26

Olson is a partner in the Los Angeles office of O'Melveny & Myers and co-chair of the firm's white-collar defense and corporate investigations practice. He also advises non-U.S. headquartered companies on investing and operating in the U.S. and on navigating the regulatory and political environment. In 2021, he served as interim general counsel and chief legal officer for Hyundai and Genesis Motor America. Olson is chair of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. and the World Trade Center Los Angeles. He also serves on the boards of the Public Policy Institute of California and the Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation. He and his wife, Liz Olson P'23 P'26, chair Pomona College's Family Leadership Council.



### Christina Tong '17 (ex officio)

Tong joins the group as Pomona's national chair for annual giving, an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees. A senior product manager at Google Maps, Tong leads a team responsible for the user experience and growth of products including Immersive View, Street View, Live View and the look and feel of the Google Maps mobile apps. Her work has been featured in leading tech publications such as *The Verge*, TechCrunch, Engadget and VentureBeat, and she has Augmented Reality research patents. Tong also lends her leadership to LGBTQ+ nonprofits. She is board chair at InReach, the world's first tech platform connecting LGBTQ+ people in need with verified, safe resources such as therapists and lawyers. [PCM](#)



The Glee Club at Durham Cathedral in England, conducted by Donna M. Di Grazia, David J. Baldwin Professor of Music. Photo by John Attle

## At Last, the Glee Club Goes Abroad Again

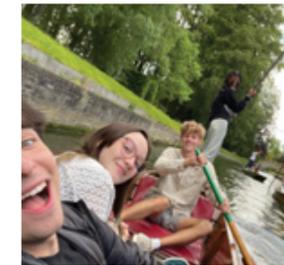
Going on tour has long been one of the high notes for the Glee Club. But the Gleeps, as they like to call themselves—think Glee People—had been grounded since 2020 before a giddy two-week tour to England and Scotland in May.

A planned trip to Europe in 2020 was canceled by the COVID-19 shutdown, and the next two years were limited to small outdoor performances in Claremont and a Southern California tour. When the Glee Club took flight again in May, even some alumni from the past few years joined in after missing their chance.

“For those of us in the Class of 2020, a trip to Spain was supposed to be the perfect ending to our already incredible experience in the ensemble,” says **Matthew Cook '20**, a former Glee Club co-president and a second-generation Gleep: His mother, **Melissa Cook '90**, also sang in the ensemble. “We didn't even get the chance to sing a full concert in our last semester, let alone go on tour,” says Cook, who earned a master's



Photos via Instagram @gleeclub4747



in vocal arts from USC in May. “To be able to sing with the 2023 Glee Club and go on an international tour that I lost out on as a student, I feel like I got some closure in that part of my life that was disrupted by the pandemic.”

After arriving in London, the Glee Club opened with a concert in St. James's Church, Piccadilly, one of four benefit concerts for local charities. The choir also sang for a Eucharist service in Cambridge's Trinity College Chapel, traveled to York for a concert in St. Michael le Belfrey and held another in Durham Cathedral (in Durham, of course). In Scotland, they performed in St. Andrews in a joint concert with the St. Andrews University Madrigal Group and closed their tour in Edinburgh with a concert at St. Giles' Cathedral.

In more normal times, the Glee Club travels each year, with about one international trip for every three domestic tours to give each class an opportunity to go overseas. Other trips abroad have included Italy (2016), Poland (2012) and Germany (2006).

Besides alumni performers, there was an extra alumni assist on this one: **Catherine John '05**, a violinist who works as a concert tour manager, helped plan the trip with **Donna M. Di Grazia**, the David J. Baldwin Professor of Music and conductor of the Glee Club and College Choir, and **Elizabeth Champion**, the Music Department's concert production manager and tour manager. “The Glee Club sent me a very kind thank-you note, which I will cherish always,” John says.

# Scholars for Good



**Elisa Velasco '23**, a 2023

Napier Award for Creative Leadership recipient as well as a Projects for Peace awardee, designed and implemented a nine-week program called Sin Límites (Without Limits) last summer for 21 Latina/o high school students in her hometown of Norman, Oklahoma. The program emphasized community engagement, Latina/o history and college access, and provided transportation and meals. Nine students earned small college scholarships through the program.

The Napier Award provides \$20,000 to carry out a social change project, while Projects for Peace grants \$10,000 to “pursue innovative, community-centered and scalable responses to the world’s most pressing issues.”

The Napier Initiative is a partnership between the Pilgrim Place community in Claremont and the five undergraduate Claremont Colleges to encourage leadership for social change. Members of the Napier Initiative council with ties to Pomona include **Paula Martin Hui '67 P'01 P'07**, **Richard “Dick” Johnson '66 P'96**, Emerita Professor of Sociology **Jill Grigsby**, Draper Center Assistant Director **Rita Shaw** and honorary member **David Menefee-Libey**, the William A. Johnson Professor of Government and professor of politics.

**Amanda Eric '25** has been awarded the 2023 Obama-Chesky Scholarship for Public Service, which provides students with up to \$50,000 in financial aid, travel experiences and a network of mentors and leaders to support them.

A cognitive science major from Delaware, Eric plans to focus on helping to transform front-line communities facing challenges from global climate change. “I aim to utilize cognitive justice to advance climate resiliency in communities with limited resources, capacity, safety nets and bureaucratic power,” she says.



Photos by @stephmontelongostudios



In addition to creative activities, students in the Oklahoma program created by Elisa Velasco '23 went on field trips, connected with community organizations and met Ellen Ochoa, the first Latina astronaut to travel to space.

Velasco, at middle front in black top, designed and led a nine-week program for 21 teenagers in her hometown of Norman, Oklahoma. She is pictured here with students and other young assistants.

## 2023 Payton Lecturer: Anita Hill

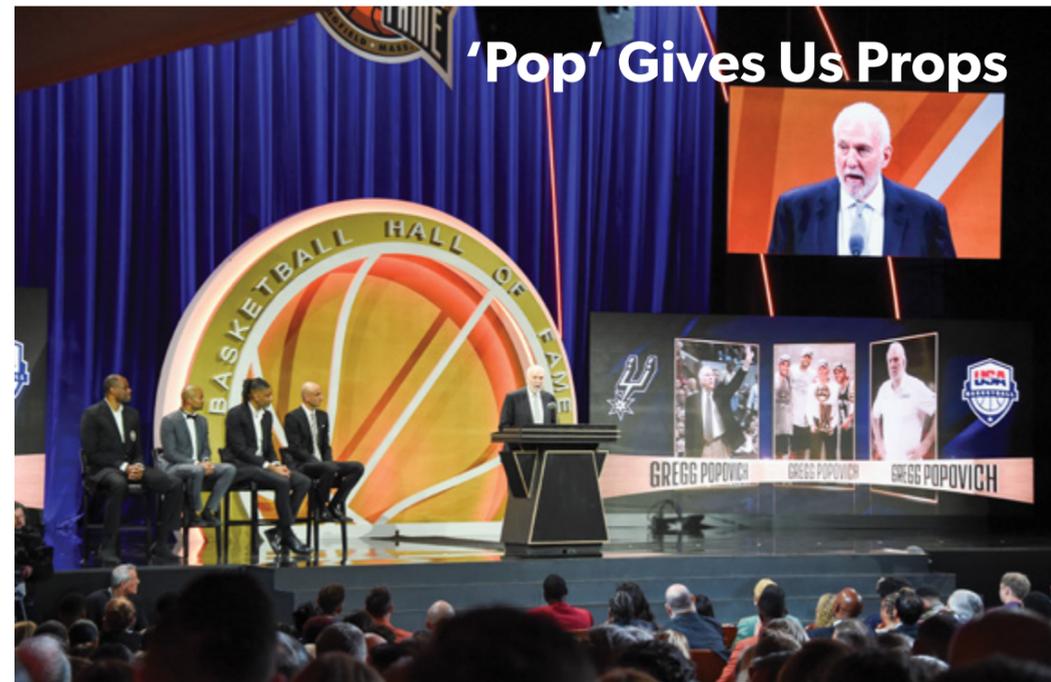


The annual John A. Payton '73 Distinguished Lectureship has moved to the fall, where each year’s Family Weekend visitors will be able to join the campus community and the public for a talk by a distinguished speaker in honor of Payton, the late civil rights attorney and member of Pomona College Board of Trustees.

The 2023 lecture on October 28 in Bridges Auditorium by Anita Hill, the noted professor, lawyer and advocate for equality and civil rights, is being livestreamed on YouTube and later available online.

[pomona.edu/payton-lectureship](http://pomona.edu/payton-lectureship)

# ‘Pop’ Gives Us Props



We knew he would. In his induction speech at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in August, San Antonio Spurs Coach **Gregg Popovich** gave the Sagehens some priceless air time.

“How could this happen? It’s hard to describe. Because I’m a Division III guy,” Popovich said in his speech. “I was gonna wear my Pomona-Pitzer shirt ... .”

Popovich invited Pomona-Pitzer Coach **Charles Katsiaticas**—one of his assistants during his eight seasons as coach of the Sagehens—to join him for the induction ceremony in Springfield, Massachusetts, where the game was invented.

“I feel so lucky to have him as a mentor through the years, and to have been with him since the early days during his first head coaching job,” Katsiaticas says. “He is one of the most driven, motivated and innovative people I have ever known. And he never has forgotten his time here. He continues to be a great ambassador for Pomona-Pitzer basketball and a great mentor and friend.”

# Hey Batter, Batter ...

Where do the paths of the campus nurse, the chair of the Politics Department and an assistant vice president cross? This past summer, it was on the softball field as faculty and staff participated in the Pomona College Summer Softball League.

**Bob Robinson**, assistant vice president of facilities, started the league in 2022, with the goal of building community. He wanted to get “faculty and staff interacting in a very different way than they’re used to,” he says.

Meeting new people was what motivated **Amanda Hollis-Brusky**, professor and chair of politics, to join the league the last two summers. This past summer, her team consisted of members of the Office of Facilities, Asian Studies Program, Finance Office and various other offices across campus. “These are people I never would have met or gotten to know very well had they not been on my team,” Hollis-Brusky says.



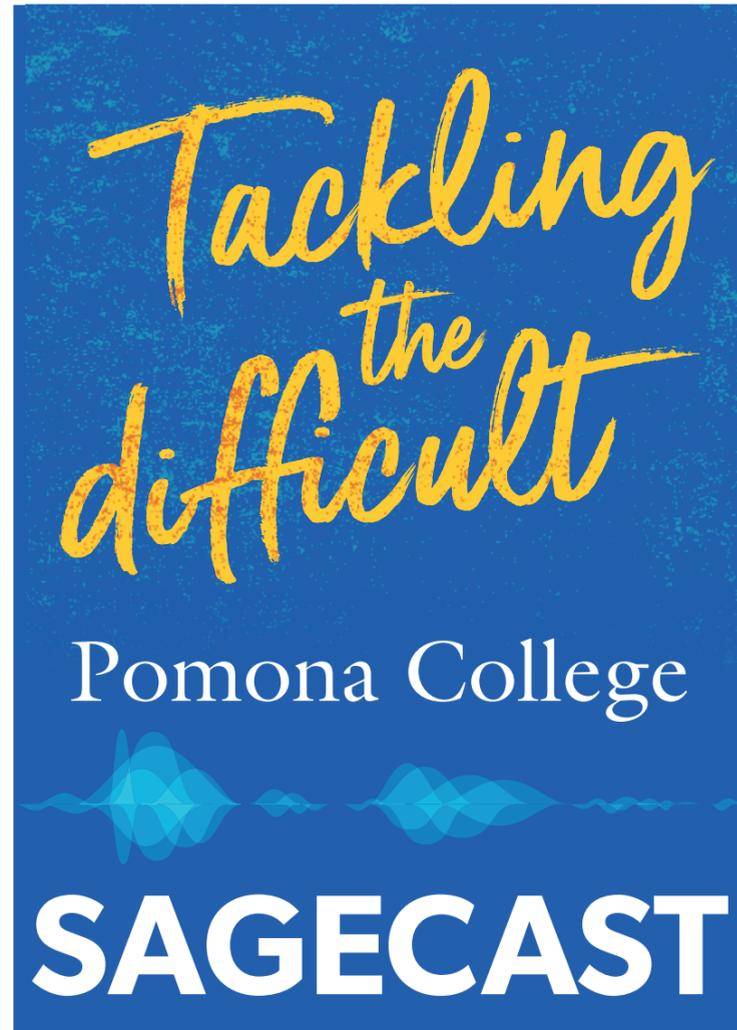
Professor Amanda Hollis-Brusky at bat. Above, Assistant Vice President of Facilities Bob Robinson and Hollis-Brusky, who also chairs the Politics Department.

# The Full Stack: 2003-2023

With the 20th anniversary of Pomona College’s annual orientation book in the rearview mirror, the full list makes for quite a stack.

Each year since 2003, entering students have read a book—or books—together. One thing has changed: Instead of receiving the book in the mail, most students now opt for electronic access.

How many have you read? Have a pick for the entering Class of 2028 next year? Books of poetry, short stories, essays or a volume that pairs well with a work of art such as a painting or film are being considered. Send your ideas to [pcm@pomona.edu](mailto:pcm@pomona.edu).



Fentanyl. Ukraine. Race. The sixth season of Sagecast, the Pomona College podcast, launched in October. Hosted by **Marilyn Thomsen** and **Travis Khachatoorian**, this season features interviews with faculty and alumni who tackle difficult problems. Among this season’s guests:

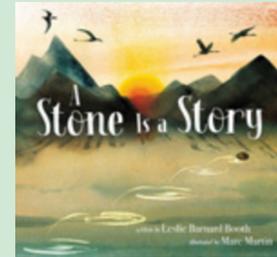
- **Dr. Michael Sequeira '73**, who became the public health officer for California’s vast San Bernardino County in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic raged, and continues to battle the deadly fentanyl crisis there.
- **Mietek Boduszyński**, a politics professor at Pomona and former U.S. diplomat who spent the 2022-23 academic year working at the U.S. Department of Defense on atrocity prevention and Ukraine, among other issues.
- **Leah Donnell '13**, an editor for NPR’s popular Code Switch podcast, blog and newsletter, which take on what NPR calls “fearless conversations about race.”

Listen at [pomona.edu/sagecast](http://pomona.edu/sagecast) or look us up on the podcast sites of Apple, Google or Spotify. [PCM](https://www.pcm.com)

## Bookmarks



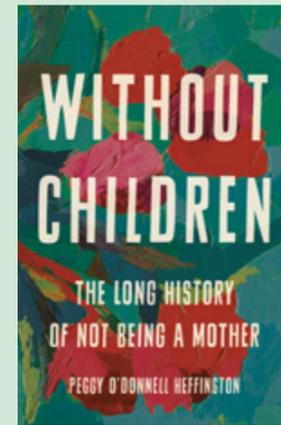
Set in rural Cuba, *Arletis, Abuelo, and the Message in a Bottle* by **Lea Aschkenas '95** tells the story of a little girl and an old man who forge a lasting friendship that expands both their worlds.



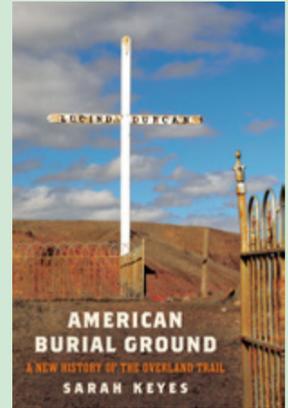
*Stone Is a Story* by **Leslie Barnard Booth '04** follows a stone’s journey through time as it forms and transforms, providing a window into Earth’s past along the way.



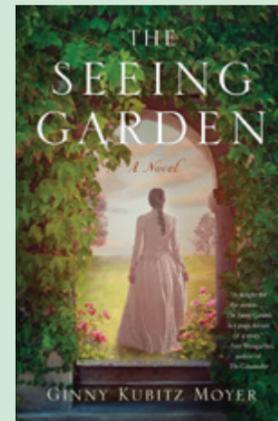
In *Don't Look Away: Art, Nonviolence, and Preventive Publics in Contemporary Europe*, **Brianne Cohen '04** advocates for the role of art to foster a public commitment to end structural violence in Europe.



In *Without Children: The Long History of Not Being a Mother*, **Peggy O'Donnell Heffington '09** draws on diligent research to show that history is full of women without children.



**Sarah Keyes '04** offers a reinterpretation of the Overland Trail in *American Burial Ground: A New History of the Overland Trail*, focusing on how the graves of migrants who died along the way were leveraged to claim the land of Indigenous peoples.



Set in 1910 on an estate in Northern California, *The Seeing Garden* by **Ginny Kubitz Moyer '95** is a coming-of-age story inspired in part by the great San Francisco Peninsula estates of the past.



**Susan L. Ostermann '02** demonstrates how coercively weak states can increase compliance by behaving pragmatically in *Capacity beyond Coercion: Regulatory Pragmatism and Compliance along the India-Nepal Border*.



*Becoming a Social Science Researcher: Quest and Context* by **Bruce Parrott '66** aims to help aspiring social scientists understand the research process, focusing on the philosophical, sociological and psychological dimensions.



*Warnings: The Holocaust, Ukraine, and Endangered American Democracy* features exchanges between professors **John K. Roth '62** and Leonard Grob that underscore the most urgent threats to democracy in the U.S. and suggest how to resist them.



In *Just in Time: Temporality, Aesthetic Experience, and Cognitive Neuroscience*, Pomona College President **G. Gabrielle Starr**, also a professor of English and neuroscience, explores how beauty exists in time, integrating neuroscientific findings with humanistic interpretation.

# A Lens on Tangled Times

In his latest book, Stephen Marc Smith '76—a street photographer and digital montage artist who works under the name Stephen Marc—documents our complicated era in American history.

Story by Paola Boivin  
Photography by Stephen Marc Smith '76

Of all the images Stephen Marc Smith '76 creates, it is the ones of the people he has least in common with that may define him best.

A photographer, digital montage artist and Arizona State University art professor who adopted the name Stephen Marc professionally in 1979 after two other Stephen Smiths were accepted to the same exhibition, Marc recently published his fifth book, *Street Cat Tales and Tangled Times: An American Journey Continues*.

A photographic travelogue of more than 200 photos and digital montages, *Street Cat Tales* records the outpouring in our streets during a time of pandemic, racial and political division, gun violence and more. It is a follow-up to his award-winning *American/True Colors*, which recorded 12 years of life in the U.S. at some of its more fragile moments.

Whether he is photographing vibrant street scenes, a “Stop the Steal” rally or an

immigration stare down, the way Marc gets the shot is part of the story. He is a Black man with a camera who has talked his way into white supremacist rallies, social justice protests and the hearts of Chicago gang members with his disarming approachability. His deft banter and innate friendliness have allowed him to capture a lifetime of photos that transport the viewer into the midst of volatile and sometimes disturbing situations.

“If I go and I photograph an event like this and then I simply leave with the photographs, I’m going to be illustrating a preconceived idea. I’m making some assumptions about what’s there,” Marc says. “If I interact, then I’m learning a little bit more about what’s really going on. I feel very fortunate when they share things with me.”

It is those unlikely connections that bewilder many people, including his wife, Ani Tung, who watched Jacob Chansley—the QAnon Shaman and January 6 rioter whose horned fur hat made him one of the most recognizable participants in the assault on the U.S. Capitol—bear hug her husband at a Trump rally in Phoenix.

“So you know him, too,” she said of Chansley, who since has served time in federal prison for obstruction of an official proceeding. Marc told his wife he had a civil discussion about cultural appropriation at another protest with Chansley, who couldn’t understand why the Native American community was upset with him even though his attire had its roots in their culture.

This 2022 montage depicts a stare down at the 2018 Families Belong Together rally at the Arizona State Capitol in Phoenix.



Above, a montage of protesters at a “Stop the Steal” rally supporting President Donald J. Trump in Phoenix on November 14, 2020, a week after his re-election bid was called in favor of Joe Biden by major news organizations.



For his previous book, *American/True Colors*, Marc traversed the country in an old car, landing at gatherings and protests of all sorts. Some of the most powerful photographs came from a 2015 Ku Klux Klan rally at the South Carolina State House a week after the Confederate battle flag was permanently removed from the capitol grounds following the massacre of nine Black churchgoers in Charleston by a white supremacist. Yet because Marc engaged with both protesters and law enforcement before the rally, Klan supporters did nothing to impede him, a Black photographer who was a mere sucker punch away.

The most striking shot may be the one he took from behind the shoulders of a powerfully built state trooper—a Black officer assigned to keep peace among the factions. More than a dozen waving Confederate flags define the background. To the side is a banner featuring hooded Klansmen and a jarring phrase: “The Original Boys N the Hood.” The photo is soul-rattling because it is from the perspective of a Black law enforcement official. Once again, Marc’s fearlessness allows us to become voyeurs, at a safe distance.

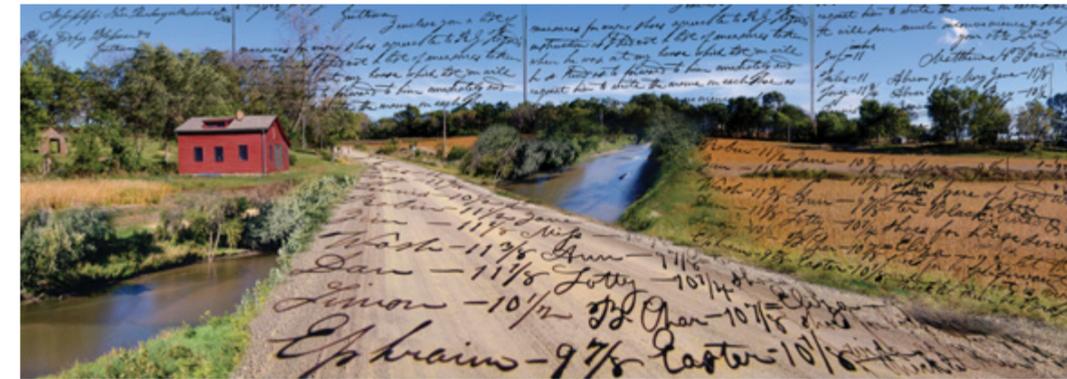
His other books have examined different aspects of the American experience and Black lives. In particular, *Passage on the Underground Railroad* tells the story of attempts to aid escaped and enslaved people from the South before the end of the Civil War. Marc gained unprecedented access to some sites, among them the birthplace of abolitionist Harriet Tubman, and created digital collages by melding 21st-century photos with historical documents.

One location had particularly deep meaning for him: The town of Canton, Mississippi, is in the area where he is told his great-great-grandmother was enslaved. Marc’s great-grandmother also lived there, and his grandmother was born there. Standing on the grounds of the local courthouse—a place in many towns where slaves were sold—Marc photographed it as it is today. Later, he digitally superimposed the shirtless torso of a Black man on top of a tree stump. “Any kind of raised area—whether it was steps or a stump or a pedestal—people were auctioned off of, so people could see them,” Marc says. On the man’s chest, he added lettering from an 1846 token, as if the man had been branded. “The token is from Charleston, South Carolina, an auction house that sold slaves,” he says.

Marc’s path has been anything but predictable. One of his earliest inspirations came when he was 11 years old and living in Chicago.



In this montage from *Passage on the Underground Railroad*, a torso seems to grow from a stump on the courthouse grounds in Canton, Mississippi. Superimposed on the chest is an 1846 auctioneer’s token from Charleston, South Carolina. Also included are texts from 1865.



A photograph of the Nishnabotna Ferry House in Iowa is overlaid with an 1838 letter (courtesy of John L. Ford) from a Mississippi slave owner ordering shoes for his slaves. Their names and shoe sizes cover the roadway (*Passage on the Underground Railroad*).



A Black state trooper stands guard at the South Carolina State House during a Ku Klux Klan rally the week after the Confederate battle flag was removed from the capitol grounds in July 2015 (*American/True Colors*).



A woman at the 2023 Iran and Ukraine Against Tyranny rally in Scottsdale, Arizona, wears the Ukrainian flag with signatures identified as those of Ukrainian soldiers.



In an image from *American/True Colors*, a woman bangs an instrument during a RISE Against Climate Capitalism rally hosted by an Indigenous group before the 2018 Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco.



Rev. William J. Barber II, in red stole, is greeted by the Rev. Jesse Jackson in a montage of images from a Moral Monday rally in Phoenix in July 2021.

He befriended Ira Harmon, a neighborhood boy who already was a skilled cartoonist. Marc was blown away by his friend's focus, drive and utter desire to research everything that he drew.

"I remember the first time I went to his house, his mother said, 'I'm sorry, he can't come out.' So I said, 'What's going on?' She goes, 'What's today, Monday? He'll be out on Thursday.'" When he asked what his friend had done wrong, "She said he told her to leave him alone for four days. He's drawing. They even had to negotiate family meals. Later on, I could meet with him for like 15 minutes at the front door."

The moment left an impression about curiosity and work ethic, and to this day the men remain close friends.

Marc's interest in capturing images developed after he took a photography class in high school, at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. He soon thought of that as a career pursuit, but when he went to Pomona College, his parents strongly suggested another path. Psychology became his new direction.

Though the desire to take pictures never left him, Marc didn't take a photography class until his junior year. It was taught by Leland Rice, a highly regarded photographer and curator who inspired him and remains a friend and mentor. Suddenly, Marc found himself trying to pursue three different passions: photography, psychology and sports.

Competing on Pomona-Pitzer's track team as Stephen Smith, he was an NAIA All-American and five-time NCAA Division III All-American who still holds program records in the 200 meters (21.32 seconds) and 110-meter hurdles (14.19). A two-time team MVP, he later was inducted into the Pomona-Pitzer Athletics Hall of Fame. He loved track. But he found something he loved even more.

"I mean, I was cutting track practice in the afternoon to go photograph because of the lighting," Marc says. "You know, my friends were asking me where I was. I was missing meals. I fell behind in a couple of my classes. And that was not like me. So I sat down and tried to figure out what was really going on."

Of all his loves, he realized that photography had the strongest pull.

Marc eventually received a master's in fine arts from the Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University in Philadelphia. He taught at Columbia College Chicago for 20 years and has been on the faculty at ASU since 1998.

In 2021, Marc was named a Guggenheim Fellow in photography by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. He has won numerous awards, among them the 2021 gold medal for best photography book from the Independent Publishers Book Awards for *American/True Colors*. His work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Phoenix Art Museum, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati and the Chicago Cultural Center. He also has completed residencies at the Center for Photography at Woodstock and at the CEPA Gallery, both in New York state.

Marc says he captures such powerful photos not only by researching his subjects but also by preparing for what he might encounter.

"One thing I tell my students is that when you go out and photograph, I don't care what you're photographing, just take a moment and look in the mirror," he says. "Think about how somebody like you dresses and the kind of equipment that you're carrying. ... The photographer is always the bad guy. We're always doing something we're not supposed to be. And so you need to get ahead of that so that you are prepared for the questions and the challenges that you're going to get." [PCM](#)



Children are among the friends and family gathered at a street shrine for 22-year-old gunshot victim Rakim J. Vineyard in 2014 in Champaign, Illinois. (*American/True Colors*)



On the way to a 2022 anti-vaccine mandate rally at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., a man lends a hand to a woman costumed as the Statue of Liberty.



Stephen Marc Smith '76, left, was an All-American in track for Pomona-Pitzer. Two of his program records still stand.



Firefighters taking part in a 2022 anti-vaccine mandate rally in Washington carry the U.S. flag from the Washington Monument toward the Lincoln Memorial in this digital montage.

# Angie Zhou '25 Claims National Singles Tennis Title



A year after reaching the title match as a first-year player, Pomona-Pitzer's Angie Zhou '25 claimed the 2023 NCAA Division III singles championship in women's tennis with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Olivia Soffer of Babson College on May 22 at the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Florida.

Zhou became the fourth Sagehen to be crowned singles champion since the NCAA began holding a women's competition in 1982, joining Shelley Keeler '92 (1992), Claire Turchi '97 (1994) and Siobhan Finicane '10 (2008).

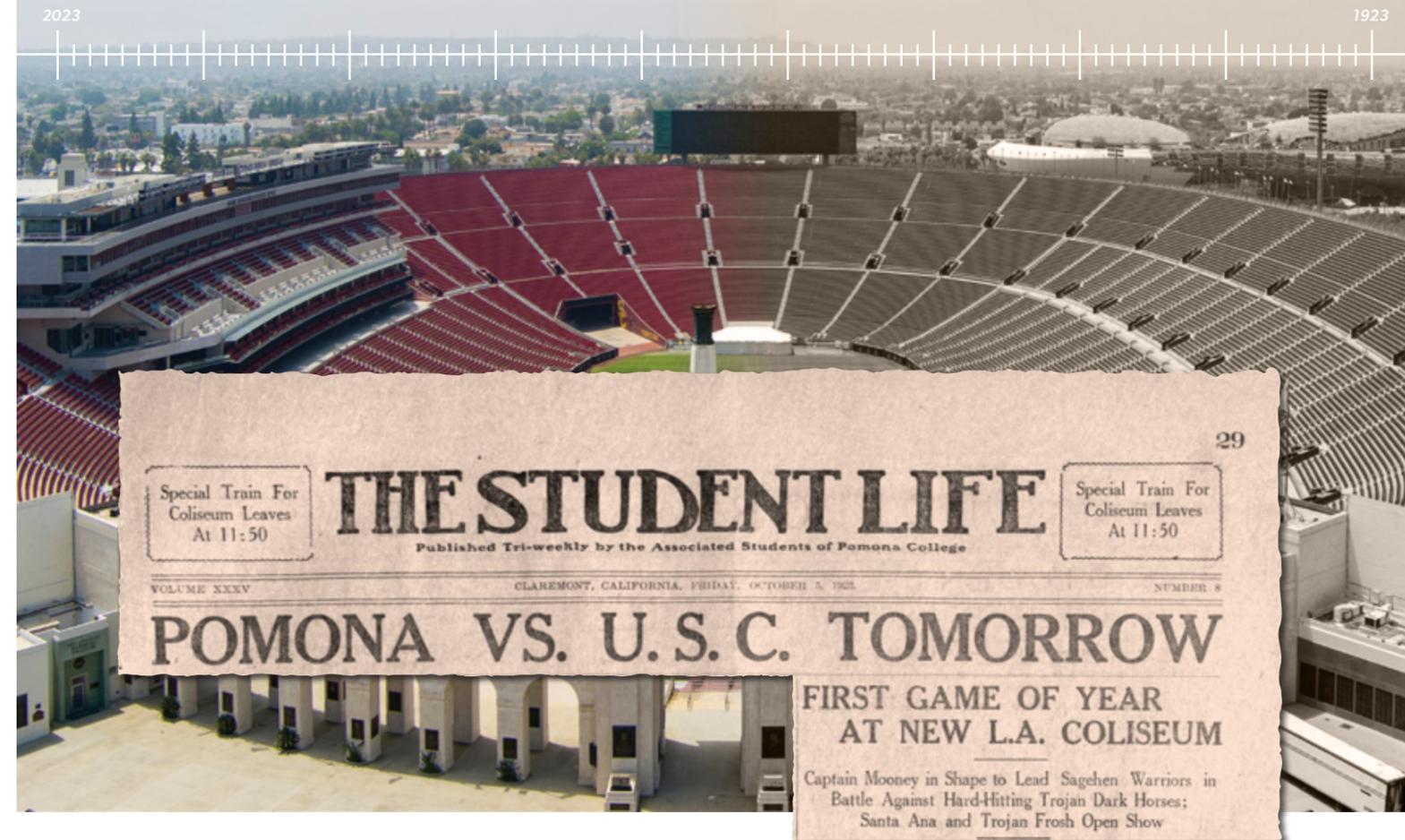
Zhou, a two-time Intercollegiate Tennis Association first-team All-American and the 2023 SCIAC Athlete of the Year in women's tennis, also was selected the 2023 D-III Honda Athlete of the Year for Tennis, one of 11 finalists for Honda's D-III Athlete of the Year.

A computer science major from Ann Arbor, Michigan, Zhou arrived at Pomona as a National Merit Scholarship recipient and National AP Scholar. [PCM](#)



# 100 YEARS AGO

## The Sagehens vs. the Trojans in the L.A. Coliseum



The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum is marking its centennial, celebrating the storied history of a stadium that will host an unprecedented third Summer Olympics in 2028. Famous for the graceful peristyle end that echoes the arches of the Colosseum in Rome, the vast stadium

also has hosted two Super Bowls and a World Series, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and Pope John Paul II, the Rolling Stones and Bruce Springsteen, and all of USC football's eight Heisman Trophy winners.

Pomona College has a small part in all that history, but a notable one: On October 6, 1923, Pomona played USC in the first varsity college football game ever played on the Coliseum field.

# SPORT NEWS

The **LOS ANGELES Times**

SATURDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 6, 1923.

## LEONARD FIGHTS AT TIJUANA DEC. 24

### TROJANS AND SAGEHENS DEDICATE COLISEUM TODAY



The New Coliseum and Chief Newman of U.S.C.

### POMONA FACES U.S.C. ELEVEN

Initial Test of Conference Champions Should Prove Real Test of Trojan Ability: Football, Tackle, Safety, Line

Although the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum opened for other events earlier in 1923, the first varsity college football game in the stadium was between USC and Pomona on October 6, 1923, as reported by the Los Angeles Times.

Ranney E. Draper '60 has memorabilia from his father, Ranney C. Draper 1925 P'60, that includes the official program published by USC. "Pretty amazing that 'Fuzz' was my coach during my 1957 and '58 seasons," writes Draper, referring to his father's teammate Earl Merritt.

"Trojans and Sagehens Dedicate Coliseum Today," read the *Los Angeles Times* headline that Saturday. Bleacher seats were \$1, Los Angeles fans were instructed to take streetcar lines to the game, and a special train car traveled from Claremont to the Coliseum. *The Student Life* gave driving instructions that did not include the then-unimaginable 10 Freeway: "Go to Pomona, thence to Los Angeles over Valley boulevard. Proceed to Figueroa and then south to Exposition Park. Stadium is on west side of grounds."

Pomona's student body president, Ranney C. Draper 1925 P'60—the father of Pomona College Trustee Emeritus Ranney E. Draper '60—not only played in the game, but "introduced a new wrinkle yesterday when he appeared at the University of Southern California during chapel period and expressed the belief that, while the Trojans have a fair sort of football team, Pomona will clean them today," according to an unidentified newspaper clipping that spelled his first name as Rammey.

The Pomona quarterback was Earl J. Merritt 1925 P'39, already known as 'Fuzz' or variations thereof, who would go on to coach the Sagehens from 1935 to 1958 and for whom Pomona-Pitzer's stadium, Merritt Field, is named. The *Times* called him "a quarterback who looked like the best signal-yelper in Southern California last year on the Freshman squad."

A *TSL* preview of the game written by George W. Savage 1925 displayed the colorful style of the sportswriters of the era: "Led by Captain 'Herb' Mooney, ten fighting-mad Sagehens, who have eaten horseradish for the last month in order to 'horse' the Trojans, will trot onto the fresh green turf of the nation's

largest stadium, prepared to meet all the wiles [Trojan Coach Gus] Henderson and his men have concocted, all the power and weight U.S.C. possesses, and ready to do their stuff as one of the two picked teams chosen to combat in dedication of the newest temple to the great American collegiate game."

Mooney, the aforementioned team captain, would go on to become a doctor and round out his own personal Sagehen 11. His alumni record reads: Mooney Sr., Herbert 1924 P'55 P'57 P'59 P'65 P'77 GP'82 GP'86 GP'04 GP'07 GP'13.

The game itself was a disappointment for the Sagehens.

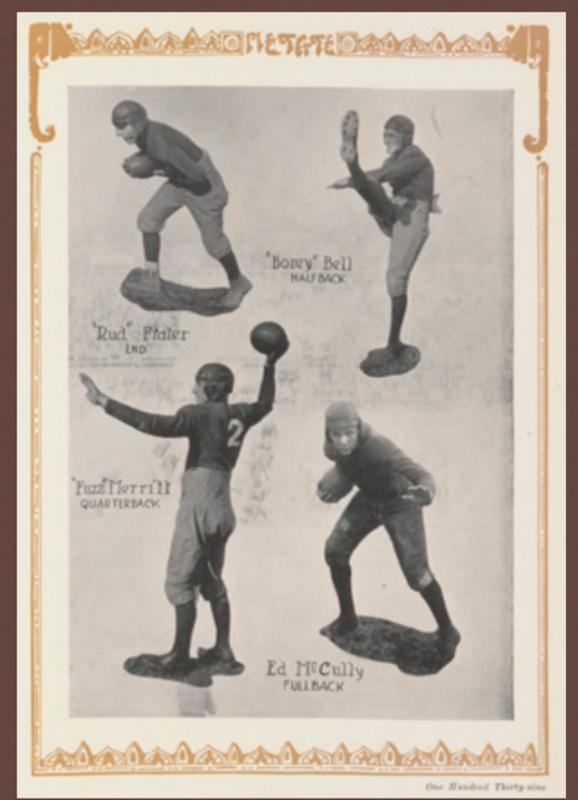
"Trojans Trim Pomona, 23 to 7, Before 25,000 Fans at the Coliseum," the *Times* headline read. "The U.S.C. Trojan swallowed the Pomona Sagehen, 23 to 7, yesterday but found the gravel-fed bird from Claremont entirely too tough for easy digestion."

USC, of course, would go on to become a football powerhouse, claiming 11 national championships, and Pomona would settle comfortably into NCAA Division III. All told, Pomona and USC met 21 times on the gridiron. The Sagehens won four games—in 1899, 1900, 1901 and 1914—tied four others and lost 13. The last meeting was in 1925, two years after the teams' Coliseum debut, when an 80-0 Pomona loss relegated the series to history. [PCM](#)

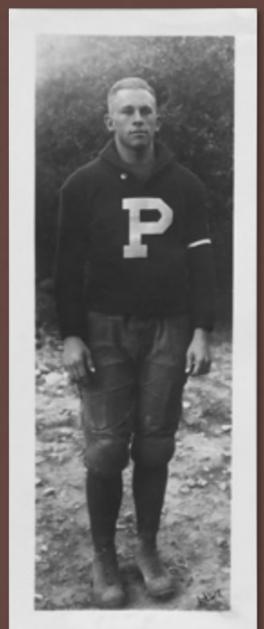
Quarterback Earl "Fuzz" Merritt 1925 P'39, the second player from left in the top row of this photo of the 1923 starters from the Metate yearbook, went on to coach Pomona's football team from 1935 to 1958. Pomona-Pitzer's Merritt Field was named in his honor in 1991.



Photographed wearing the leather helmets of the era for a page in the Metate are end Rutherford "Rud" Frater 1924 and halfback Allison "Borey" Bell 1925, top. At bottom, quarterback Earl "Fuzz" Merritt 1925 P'39 and fullback Ed [McCulley] 1926 GP'09, whose father was English Professor Bruce McCulley.



The captain of the 1923 Sagehen team was Herbert "Herb" Mooney 1924. Five of his children and five of his grandchildren would attend Pomona.



Ranney C. Draper 1925 P'60, left, the father of Trustee Emeritus Ranney E. Draper '60, spoke at USC as Pomona's student body president before playing in the game. Clipping courtesy of Ranney E. Draper.



## Pomona College Academy for Youth Success

Once-Skeptical Student, Now Pursuing a Ph.D. in Math, Returns to Teach in Pomona’s College Access Program

By Marilyn Thomsen

As a freshman at Fontana High School, Cesar Meza '16 was suspicious of the offer to join the Pomona College Academy for Youth Success (PAYS), a college access program that aims to increase the pool of area students prepared to enter highly selective colleges and universities.

Go to a town called “Claremont”—an unfamiliar place even though it was less than 20 miles from home—move into a Pomona College residence hall for four weeks every summer, take rigorous classes to become more competitive for college, eat in the dining hall every day—and not pay a dime? “Too good to be true,” thought Meza, who planned to bolt the first time he was asked for money.

Three years later—not having paid a single penny for his three summers in the PAYS program—Meza moved into a college dorm again. This time it was as an enrolled first-year student at Pomona.

This past summer, Meza—now a doctoral student in mathematics at Washington University in St. Louis—returned to Pomona to again teach math in the PAYS program during its 21st summer. Aiming for a career as a professor, Meza says his goal is to make math come alive in the classroom, just as PAYS professors did for him a decade ago.

“Some students start out saying, ‘I’m not a math person,’” he says. “Or they say, ‘I didn’t think I’d be able to do these types of problems when the course started but by the end, I feel comfortable enough to try harder things next time.’ That’s one of the things that brings me joy.

“I have an opportunity to teach at PAYS and to give back to the program and help other students realize what an opportunity it is,” Meza says. And he knows from personal experience: “This is a life-changing thing.”

The PAYS program, founded in 2003, is highly selective. This year, there were 214 applicants for 30 available spots in the incoming cohort. Participants come from low-income or underrepresented groups in a five-county area of Southern California. The goal is to help them prepare for enrollment and



Cesar Meza '16 is completing doctoral studies in mathematics at Washington University in St. Louis.

success in college. Selected students commit to a three-year program that begins after their first year in high school and includes an annual four-week residential summer program, plus connections with Pomona College faculty and staff during each school year.

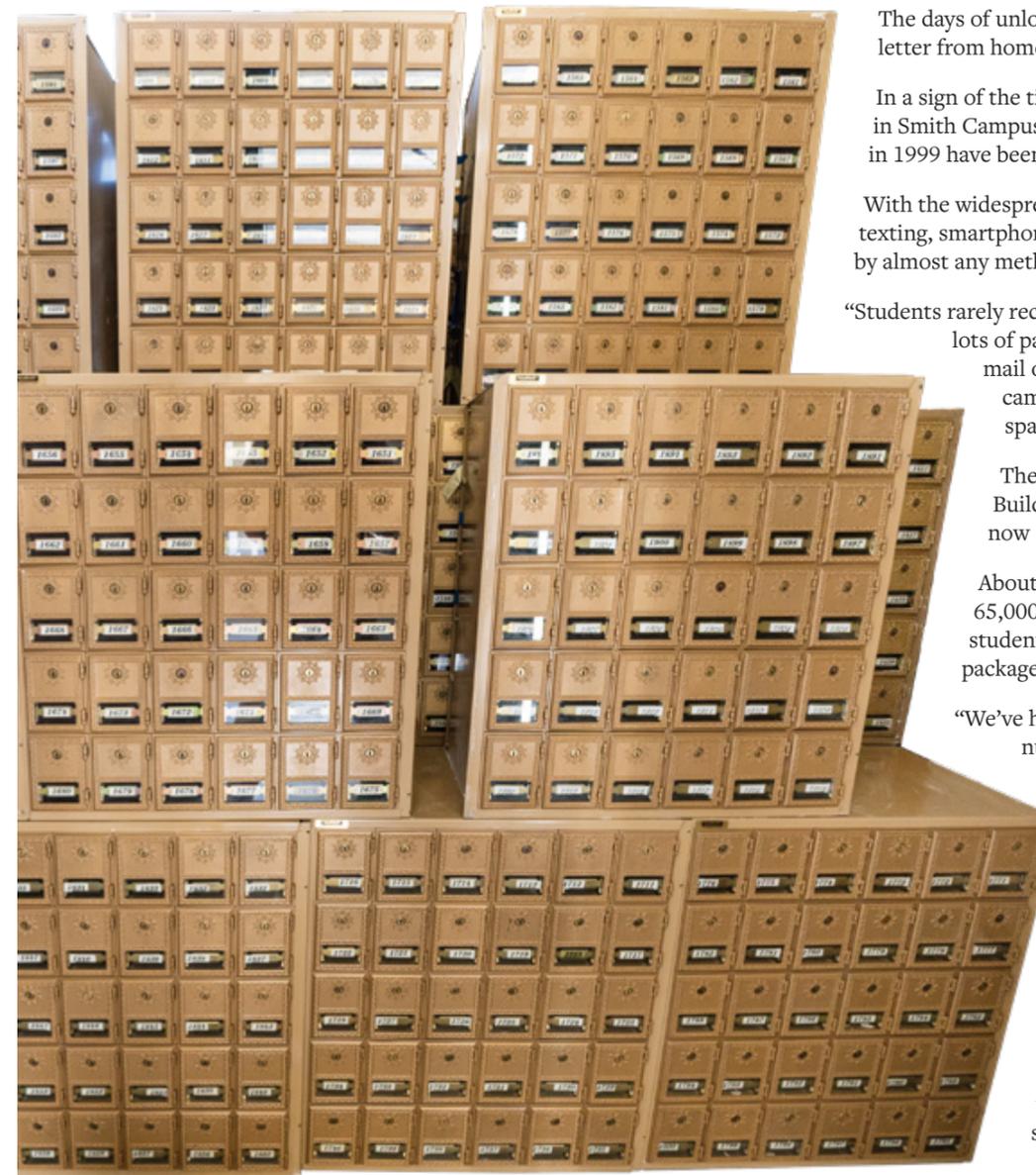
The summer program is challenging—nearly three hours of intensive math or critical inquiry reading in the morning, with elective classes and study sessions in the afternoon. Rising seniors conduct hands-on research with faculty—a group of 2022 PAYS students undertook a project using the revolutionary CRISPR gene-editing technology, a method co-discovered by 2020 Nobel Prize laureate Jennifer Doudna '85.

At the annual closing ceremony on the Pomona campus, PAYS alumni who have just graduated from high school return to announce where they will be attending college. Six hundred students have completed the program since its inception, and every one of them has been accepted to a four-year college or university. Some have chosen Pomona or other members of The Claremont Colleges, while others selected UCs, CSUs or Stanford. Others have gone to Brown, Columbia, Dartmouth, Harvard, MIT, Princeton or Yale.

Being part of a cohort for three years helps the students form a sense of community. As one PAYS scholar says, there is “academic rigor, but we are together.” [PCM](#)

## You’ve Got Mail

With the flow of letters down to a trickle, students now receive an email when they have a letter to pick up. The mailboxes below were removed last summer.



The days of unlocking your mailbox in anticipation of a letter from home or a high school crush are over.

In a sign of the times, the traditional mailboxes installed in Smith Campus Center when the building opened in 1999 have been removed due to lack of use.

With the widespread adoption of email in the 1990s followed by texting, smartphones and video calls, students now communicate by almost any method except the U.S. Postal Service.

“Students rarely receive letters anymore, but they receive lots and lots of packages,” says Glenn Gillespie, who leads the mail operation as assistant director of facilities and campus services. “This move is about giving us more space for the packages. That’s our business now.”

The new, larger mailroom is in the Pendleton Building, with the mailing address for students now 150 E. 8th St., Claremont, CA 91711.

About those packages: Pomona receives about 65,000 packages annually, or several dozen per student per year. Email notifications go out when a package arrives. Now, the same applies for letters.

“We’ve had a good 300 to 400 percent increase in the number of packages” over the last 20 years or so, Gillespie says. “In the meantime, the mail has decreased about 75 percent. What we’re trying to do is embrace that it’s a new age.”

As for the lovely old mailboxes, there’s an effort to preserve and repurpose some of them.

“So much nostalgia surrounds the mailboxes,” says Anne Stewart, associate director of advancement communications and events, who claimed about 200 of the 1,920 boxes. “I wanted to be sure we secured some for future use. For now, we will box them up and keep them safe until an opportunity presents itself.” [PCM](#)

# The Modern Spice Trader

With an artist's flair and a dedication to fairness for South Asian farmers, Sana Javeri Kadri '16 and her Diaspora Co. are shaking up the spice industry.

By Sneha Abraham Villalva

Photo by Gentl and Hyers  
Additional photography courtesy of Diaspora Co.



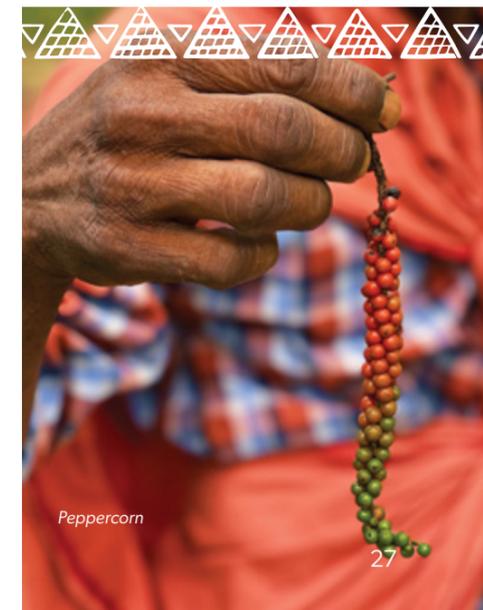
**B**lack pepper, with its biting heat and piney taste, comes to many of us in the West in grocery store grinders and is used in cuisines throughout the world. Chocolate, with flavor profiles ranging from milky or bittersweet to notes of berries, often is associated with places like Belgium and Switzerland.

But CEO and spice merchant Sana Javeri Kadri '16 and her business Diaspora Co. are here to remind us that the bulk of our spices aren't native to Europe or America—and their true flavors and colors aren't what we're buying in conventional markets. Black pepper, for instance, hails from the steamy shade of the southernmost and very tropical state of Kerala, in India, and can have a more complex, fruit-forward taste, even coming in shades of purple.

Javeri Kadri is here for more than a lesson, however. She is set on surprising palates with the taste of fresh top-shelf spices, and she's determined to disrupt the spice industry by paying a living wage to Indian and Sri Lankan farmers.



Cacao

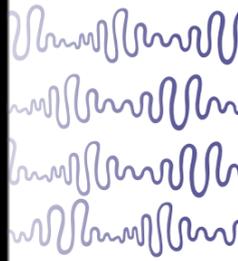


Peppercorn

Diaspora Co., established by Javeri Kadri in 2017 when she was 23 years old, has made a culinary splash in the industry, the media and home kitchens. In short order, Javeri Kadri was named to the 2021 Forbes 30 Under 30 list for the food and drink industry for her successful entrepreneurship. She and her company have been featured everywhere from *CBS Mornings* to *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Bon Appétit*, *Food & Wine* magazines and many more outlets. Whole Foods Market recently selected Diaspora Co. to be among 10 startup participants in the Local and Emerging Accelerator Program (LEAP), an initiative that launched last year offering mentorship, education and potential financial support to up-and-coming food and beverage brands. Over the years, *Allure* and *The Cut* have even detailed Javeri Kadri's skincare and haircare routines—further proof of her celebrity spice trader status.

Long before she was a rising star in the spice business, Javeri Kadri was a kid foodie. In nursery school she would go to the kitchen and eat all her classmates' snacks—apparently without remorse. The running joke in her household was that if 3-year-old Javeri Kadri were kidnapped, she would be promptly returned home due to her insatiable appetite.

Her passion for food, which started as a toddler in Mumbai, inspired Javeri Kadri to study the slow food movement at an international high school in Italy. Then she arrived in Claremont. An art major, Javeri Kadri was profoundly influenced by Pomona College Art Professor Lisa Anne Auerbach and Art History Professor Phyllis Jackson, and eventually creatively combined her interests in photography and food justice.



Diaspora Co. founder Sana Javeri Kadri '16 was featured on CBS Mornings in June.

But on Day One at Pomona, Javeri Kadri fell head over heels in love with the Organic Farm and agriculture. She spent virtually every day there, as a farmworker for the first two years and then teaching farming and cooking.

During her sophomore year, Javeri Kadri took a semester off to study regenerative agriculture and sustainable food systems. This wasn't just a matter of interest; it was a matter of making a return on her parents' investment in her.

"There was this feeling for me that being at an American liberal arts college was the greatest privilege of my life and the greatest expense my parents would ever incur," she says.

Javeri Kadri knew she had to make good on her parents' sacrifice. So while they never pressured her to pursue a particular major or vocation, they did impress upon her that it was critical she graduate with a clear plan. So during her semester leave she got a job at an urban farm, another job at a bakery, worked at a restaurant and found every single mentor she possibly could in New York. She says she returned to campus with all the tools she needed to start her long-term career journey, which she ultimately describes as telling stories around agriculture and food systems.

As a Pomona junior, she started the Claremont Food Justice Summit, which later turned into Food Week and brought in speakers from all over the country. This was certainly

educational for The Claremont Colleges community, but it also was aspirational individually. Javeri Kadri says she networked relentlessly.

In the midst of the self-described hustling, Javeri Kadri also was working on her senior art thesis, which was about the effects of colonialism on food, specifically British colonialism on Indian cuisine. Javeri Kadri's point of inquiry was chai. Through her thesis, she learned that spices on grocery store shelves are very old and very stale and that the industry doesn't prioritize freshness or quality, she says. She also learned that spice farmers make almost no money. For at least four centuries, she says, the industry has been built to profit middlemen, not the farmers.

But economics wasn't the only aspect that disturbed Javeri Kadri. Cultural whitewashing did as well. Situating spices in their indigenous contexts was critical for her.

"If a spice is coming from the hills of northern Kerala, people should know what northern Kerala pepper recipes are and how amazing they are," she says. "It is partially about right or wrong, but it's also delicious."

"Right," "wrong" and "delicious" may be shorthand for Javeri Kadri's philosophy of business for Diaspora Co., which promises that its farmers get a fair living wage and aims to disrupt the industry's unsustainable farming practices and discrediting of culture, while also supplying fresh, delectable spices.

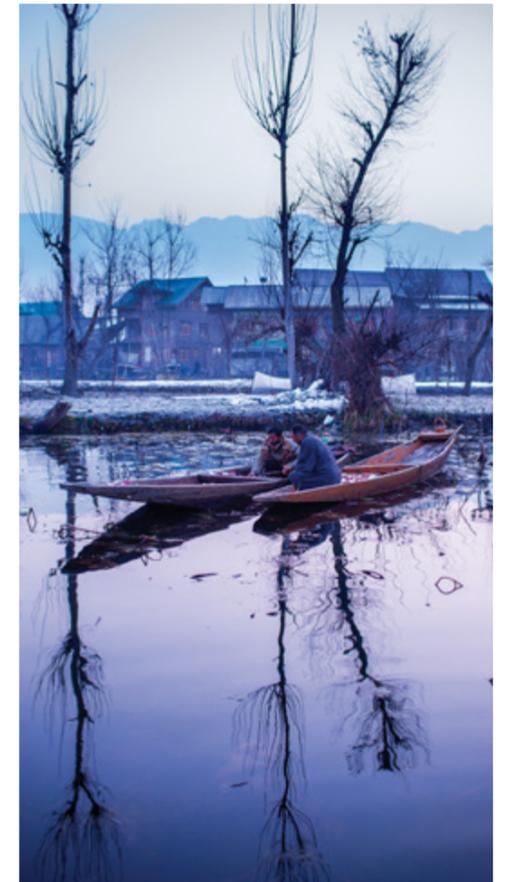
Throughout her time on campus, Javeri Kadri was heavily involved in the Pomona College Organic Farm.



Sana Javeri Kadri '16, an art major at Pomona, keeps her camera close at hand in her travels. She is photographed here standing in a field on a Kashmiri saffron farm.



Local farmers at a floating vegetable market on Dal Lake in Srinagar, Kashmir, India. Photography by Sana Javeri Kadri '16 on a sourcing trip to visit saffron and Kashmiri chilli farm partners.



Origin, equity and—unsurprisingly for an art major—even beauty are paramount principles for Javeri Kadri’s business. Diaspora Co.’s Instagram profile (@diasporaco) and website ([diasporaco.com](http://diasporaco.com)) reveal stunning photography, much of it by Javeri Kadri, and thoughtful narratives.

There are photos of the intricate designs on Diaspora Co.’s vibrant marigold and raspberry-colored tins; a shot of Pahadi pink garlic, with its cream-edged petals, cradled in the hands of a farmer at the harvest in the lush mountains of Uttarakhand in northern India. There are videos to stimulate salivary glands, like a recipe for corn ribs with smoky chili-saffron butter and a chai masala cocktail, which is a combination of Diaspora Co.’s house chai masala, jaggery syrup and a black-tea infused bourbon. Another video traces the production of cinnamon, from tree bark to quill, in Kandy, Sri Lanka. A slideshow depicts a pile of sand’s transformation into a gleaming bronze mortar and pestle. Javeri Kadri, of course, is an installation artist by training, and she jokes this venture started off as one big art project.

“I’m not going to get into business unless I can build it the most beautifully and idealistically as I can. ... Is it possible to build the most equitable form of the spice trade and make it beautiful?”

Evidently, the answer is yes. The art project evolved into a company that works with 140 farmers and pays an average of three to even 10 times over the going commodity price. Javeri Kadri acknowledges that Diaspora Co. spices fall on the luxury end of the spectrum, price-wise. According to a *Los Angeles Times* writer’s description, the taste also is premium—Diaspora’s Aranya pepper is not just peppery, “but also extra-ripe-strawberry fruity, and with some actual heat on the tongue.”

Javeri Kadri is quick to acknowledge that Diaspora Co. is not perfect, but what she appreciates most is her team and how they keep one another honest, accountable and forever on a growing edge. Her hope for her business is that what is now a luxury for a few will become the standard for the industry at large: better sourcing, better salaries, better spices.

Sourcing is among the most critical ingredients and challenges for their business. Pragati turmeric from Vijayawada in the state of Andhra Pradesh, in southeast India, was the first spice that Javeri Kadri sourced. Diaspora Co., which now sells 30 spices, only launches a spice after rigorous testing and tasting on two

continents and once they believe it’s the best of its kind on the market. It took four years to find fennel that met its criteria. The quest for the finest dried mango powder is ongoing.

The transformational effect of Diaspora Co. on its farming partners is astounding, Javeri Kadri says. As the farmers’ wages increase, naturally their

  
*“Is it possible to build the most equitable form of the spice trade and make it beautiful?”*



lifestyle does as well and there are tangible and significant markers even in the span of six years. After Year One, the farmers may buy a smartphone. After another year, they send their children to a better school. One more, and they are willing to talk about paying their workers more. After the fourth year, they start to think about how they can get similar returns on their other spice crops, since most are growing multiple varieties. Diaspora also has a farmworker fund divided amongst their three oldest farm partners (turmeric, pepper and cardamom farmers) and each farmer receives \$7,000. These funds go toward building women’s toilets, establishing medical camps, setting aside land for a kitchen garden for the farmworkers, and other projects.

Diaspora Co. is a small company but for the farmers, it is a mighty one. Since 2019, Diaspora has paid out \$2.1 million to 140 regenerative farms. In 2022, the company purchased 16 metric tons of spices. Diaspora started with a modest investment of \$8,000 from Javeri Kadri’s parents and the entirety of her tax refund of \$3,000. Over the years, it has been supported in part by family, friends and operator angels—angel investors who also are food industry mentors, including chefs and CEOs.

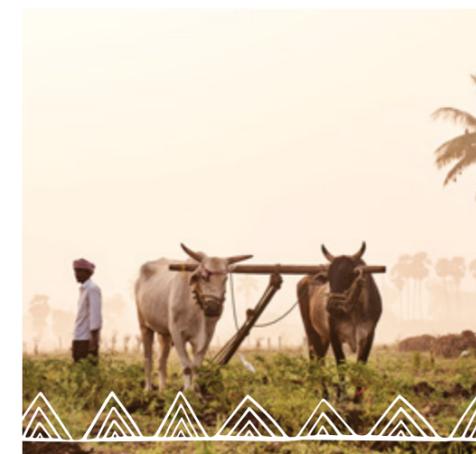
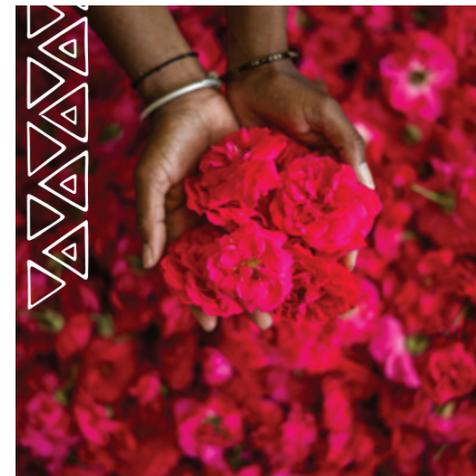
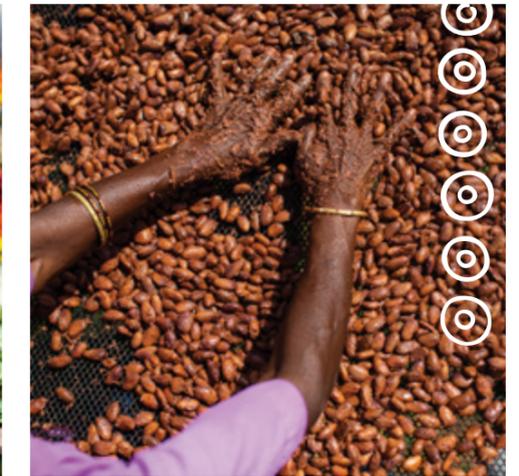
Even deeper than Javeri Kadri’s love for spices is her passion for social justice. It is arguably coded in her DNA. Her paternal grandmother started a nonprofit in the 1980s called Save the Children India (no relation to Save the Children USA), which became a large organization focused on serving underprivileged children and children with disabilities. Javeri Kadri grew up visiting the rural hospital her grandmother built.

“The family business is architecture, but it was also service,” Javeri Kadri says. Her father’s ongoing reminder was that they had great privilege, so much was required of them.

“I grew up upper class in Mumbai. It’s a lot. And then was able to go to the world’s best schools on three continents,” she says. “So how am I going to use that and how am I going to pay that forward?”

By dealing spices—with equity, beauty and, of course, taste. [PCM](#)

*A professional food and culture photographer earlier in her career, Javeri Kadri is the artist behind many of the photos on Diaspora Co.’s distinctive Instagram, @diasporaco. Other contributors include Melati Citrawireja, Hashim Badani and Asha Loupy.*





# Fine Vines

*A long and fruitful career as a lauded Napa Valley winemaker began with a noncredit wine appreciation class Cathy Corison '75 took at Pomona.*

*By Adam Rogers '92*

*Photography by  
Robert Durell*

*Cathy Corison '75, standing in her vineyard along Napa Valley's St. Helena Highway, started making cabernet sauvignon before she had a vineyard or a winery of her own.*



The vines in one of the Corison Winery vineyards are five decades old. "I so value these gnarly old ladies," says Cathy Corison '75. "It's like a sculpture garden."



In a vineyard in full green flourish under a bright blue sky, Cathy Corison '75 is caressing a cluster of grapes.

She's showing off a little. Corison's small winery and vineyard are tucked in among much bigger names along St. Helena Highway, the tree-lined central axis around which Northern California vino revolves. But these little green grapes, a few weeks away from ripening and harvest beginning in mid-September, are hers. They're the beating heart of Corison's if-you-know-you-know cult-fave cabernet sauvignon. And she takes *very* good care of them.

The grape clusters hang from thick, twisted trunks, gray as driftwood, that seem to reach toward each other all along their martial ranks. The vines are five decades old, ancient by Napa standards. "I so value these gnarly old ladies," Corison says, pushing a leaf aside. "It's like a sculpture garden."

Except it's all alive, of course. A stalwart Napa winemaker, Corison is well known for spending a lot of time out among her vines. She works with simple parameters—loamy soil that holds the rain, so Corison barely needs to irrigate, and the Napa Valley climate, which

is optimum for growing world-class cabernet sauvignon: hot days, cold nights. "We work hard to get the right amount of air and light in to the fruit for color and flavor development," she says.

Corison makes artful, classic Napa cabs—lower in alcohol with brighter flavors and what the language of connoisseurship calls "structure," an elegant and well-defined progression of aromas and flavors. But there is fashion in winemaking like anything else, and those kinds of wines went out of style in the

late 1980s. The last few years at Corison Winery have been better, the awards and accolades (and sales) a vindication for her approach. But that was never a sure thing. Corison has always been an outlier.

"When I started this project, this wine was fully formed in my head. Power and elegance. Cabernet is always powerful, but is far more interesting to me at the intersection of elegance," she says. "Good wine can be made by a committee. Great wine cannot. It reflects the hand of the maker."



Winemakers use the term *veraison*, from the French, to describe the point in the ripening process when grapes begin to change from green to red, blue, purple or almost black. The grapes increase in sugar concentration as they ripen further.



At Pomona, Corison was a competitive springboard diver. The school didn't have a women's team, so she joined the men's team—lettered in the sport, even. Part of her training was tumbling on a trampoline, so when the opportunity came up for people in the campus community to teach short noncredit classes, she volunteered to instruct other Sagehens on how to take those big, bouncing leaps.

At the sign-up fair, at the table adjacent to Corison's, a young professor was offering a wine appreciation class. This was John Haeger, an expert in the Sung Dynasty with a serious wine collecting hobby. (Today Haeger is a big-deal writer on the subject.) Corison was just 19, but beer and wine flowed more freely on campus back then. On a whim, she signed up.

The tastings were on Sundays at Haeger's house. All the wines were French and delicious, and the classes were fun. For Corison, though, they were more than that. The agronomy of grapevines, sugar transformed by yeast into alcohol, the chemistry of wine production, the flavor of wood from barrels...she was hooked. "What really grabbed me is that wine is a collaboration among a whole series of living systems; the result is the alchemy that is wine," Corison says.

She graduated with a biology degree, and two days after graduation, she went to Napa. This was almost 50 years ago; there were just 30 wineries in Napa then, but some of them were starting to make genuinely great wine—from now-iconic vintners like Robert Mondavi and Donn Chappellet '54, himself a Pomona grad.

Then, a year after Corison showed up in Napa, Napa showed up in France. At a now-famous tasting at Le Grand Hôtel in Paris (today it's the InterContinental Paris le Grand), nine big-shot sommeliers and restaurateurs judged—blind, meaning no one knew which glass held which wine—Napa chardonnays versus French white Burgundies, and Napa cabernet sauvignons versus cab-dominated red blends from Bordeaux. The results were all over the map, statistically and literally, but the boozy score at the end of the night was as undeniable as a hangover: The Californians—*sacrée merde!*—won. And a reporter from *Time* magazine was there to

file the news. What came to be known as the Judgment of Paris made Napa into a world-class wine producer, and Corison was in the thick of it. "It was blind luck, but it catapulted the Napa Valley onto the world stage," she says.

Corison started a master's program at UC Davis, taking classes in both winemaking and the care of grapevines—enology and viticulture—still considered somewhat separate realms even today. And she started working at wineries, even though women were scarce in winemaking back then. She ended up heading the winery for Chappellet Vineyard. "She had both academic knowledge and also knowledge from working at Freemark Abbey and Yverdon, a lot of real-world experience," says Phillip Corallo-Titus, one of Corison's assistants at Chappellet's winery and, today, the head winemaker there. "She just knew a lot about winemaking that I didn't know, and she hadn't been in the industry that much longer."

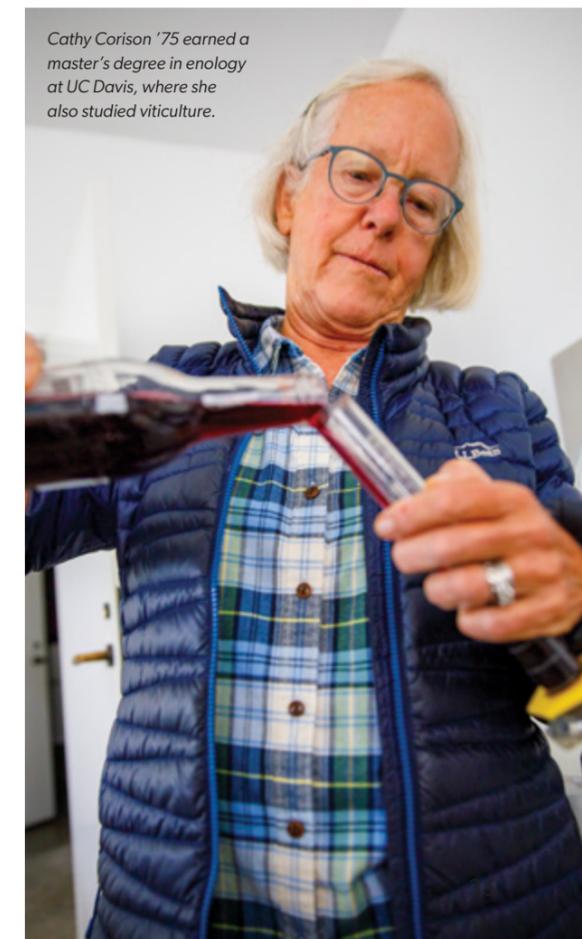
She knew enough, in fact, to start making her own wine. In 1987, toward the end of her tenure at Chappellet, she began to buy grapes and barrels and make her own cabernet sauvignon as a custom client in other people's wineries. Her brand was launched.



Cathy Corison '75 earned a master's degree in enology at UC Davis, where she also studied viticulture.



Winemakers make use of scientific analysis, sending samples to labs to test for qualities such as total acidity, pH, alcohol and sugar levels and to check for microbiological stability once in barrels.





Cathy Corison '75 and her husband built a new barn in 1999 to serve as the winery, which includes the large stainless steel tanks where fermentation occurs.



The thing about pendulums is that they swing back. “I’m hearing a lot of winemakers talk about acid and freshness and using less oak,” Lander says. “Cathy’s been doing that all along, and people are starting to realize that’s what they want to drink.”

What happened? Well, the sugar bombs of the 2000s aged poorly, Lander says. And wine criticism welcomed lots of new voices, especially on social media. Young, hip sommeliers started evangelizing Corison’s wine, too.

Corison herself isn’t sure what flipped the switch, but she definitely noticed. *The New York Times* started touting her in the 2010s. *The Chronicle* named her winemaker of the year in 2011. She got a couple of prestigious James Beard Award nominations. “That took 35 years,” Corison says. “It took 25 years for the business to be a going concern. It’s only been in the last 10 or 12 years we’ve been comfortable enough not to be terrified all the time.”

Napa might have changed again, but her wine hasn’t. The best answer to the question of how Corison turned things around comes while

*“Good wine can be made by committee. Great wine cannot. It reflects the hand of the maker.”*

I sit across from her amid stacks of empty barrels, an array of quarter-full wine glasses on the table between us. Getting to taste wine with a winemaker is like visiting with an artist in their studio. She’s talking me through vintages from the 2010s forward, including a sip of the as-yet-unreleased 2020. That was a difficult year for Napa, when climate change-

powered wildfires meant lots of vineyards’ grapes were tainted by smoke. Not Corison’s: Her earlier harvest meant she’d already brought in her grapes.

I also get a bit of her cabernet sauvignon from 1999, when the winery we’re sitting in was new. It’s extraordinary—the older wine is inky, with the same tart red-fruit-eau-de-vie lattice as the more recent bottles, but with an umami taste. And the ’20 has it too. It’s like time travel. What must have seemed like stubbornness tastes like continuity today. Corison’s wine is a big deal for the simple reason that it’s good.

It also, not incidentally, takes me back to the Napa reds my dad drank when I was a kid. I tell Corison this, and she smiles. That’s all she wants from her wine. “I want it to grace the table,” she says. “I want it to have a long and interesting life.” Take care of the grapes, and eventually they’ll take care of you. [PCM](#)



On the last day of 1995, Corison and her husband William Martin closed a deal on a broken-down Victorian house and an old vineyard that had been on the market for eight years. Both were fixer-uppers. The Victorian needed a new foundation, new wiring, new plumbing and a coat of paint. And the vineyard needed a lot of TLC. This is where they built a barn in 1999 to serve as the winery.

Corison had been told the old rootstock was a variety susceptible to phylloxera, the vine-killing bug that nearly crushed Napa in the 1980s. But it turned out to be the phylloxera-resistant strain St. George. “We had bought this for bare-land prices,” she says. “It was a miracle.”

With those old, badass vines, Corison had a vineyard of her own at last. After more than a decade of making wines under her label with other people’s grapes in other people’s wineries, she could keep making the classic Napa cab she’d learned to make in the 1970s—lean, balanced and complex—with the fruit of her own Kronos Vineyard. In 2015, she and

Martin added the nearby Sunbasket Vineyard to their estate.

From the start, Corison harvested grapes weeks before many other winemakers. “These early grapes’ lower sugar levels result in wines of lower alcohol, because the yeast converts the sugar to alcohol. “The grapes come into the winery with complex flavors, tannins that feel like velvet, and snappy acidity,” she says. “In a good year, farmed right, I can have all the flavors good cabernet produces, from cherries to plum to cassis to blackberry. By picking early, I preserve that bright red and blue end of the flavor spectrum. With time in the bottle, this turns into the floral perfume I so value.”

But that wasn’t what Napa was making by then. The moneymakers were sweet, juicy sugar bombs with 15% alcohol or more. Some people like those—no judgment. Well, OK, a little judgment. More seriously, that style might have been popular not for its own qualities, but because of the idiosyncratic recommendations of influential wine writers like Robert Parker. “In the ’90s, the Robert Parker era, Napa maybe took it too far,” says Jess Lander, wine reporter at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. “Big,

concentrated fruit bombs, lots of oak, lots of structure and tannin. That’s what made Napa famous, I would say.”

So by the early 2000s, things were tight for Corison Winery. Corison’s neighbors were building multimillion-dollar visitor centers and tasting rooms, hosting tour groups, selling swag. Napa was changing; Corison wasn’t. She thought she might have to sell.

“I’ve never met anybody so unwavering on their ideas,” Corallo-Titus says. “She stuck to a philosophy when maybe, at times, during the ’90s and 2000s, the industry was going in another direction.”

Maybe there’s a hint of critique in all the compliments about Corison’s unwavering faith. Either she’s as indomitable as her tough old vines or just too stubborn to survive in the modern Napa. She could have made wine that tasted like anything she wanted. Why not just make something people wanted to drink?

“All we have to sell is our integrity,” she says. “I just couldn’t make a wine I didn’t believe in.”



After starting her career at a time when women winemakers were still rare in Napa Valley, Cathy Corison '75 was the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s winemaker of the year in 2011.



# THE OCEAN'S BOUNTY

*With a Ph.D. and a master's degree between them, biologists Kim Selkoe '97 and Doug Bush '94 harvest sustainable seafood along the Santa Barbara coastline.*

*Story by Andrea Weir  
Photography by Jeff Hing*

*Kim Selkoe '97, left, loads halibut purchased directly from a fisherman. At right, Doug Bush '94 holds red seaweed grown to feed abalone farmed in onshore tanks.*

On a warm afternoon, Kim Selkoe '97 stands on a dock at the Santa Barbara harbor waiting for a local fisherman. Dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, she has a baseball cap pulled low across her forehead to shield her face from the sun.

Selkoe is there to buy fresh halibut for the 350 or so customers in Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties who have signed up for Get Hooked, her local-catch-of-the-day seafood delivery subscription service. Morgan Castagnola, a fourth-generation fisherman,

ambles up the dock and steps onto his boat. He and Selkoe exchange friendly banter as he tosses whole fish from the large receptacle on deck to a smaller tub nearby. He wheels the tub to the upper pier, where Selkoe's pickup truck is parked. She hops onto the truck bed and transfers the halibut—50 pounds worth—to her cooler. She packs it all in ice, tamps down the lid and then completes the paperwork.

Thirty or so miles up the coast, Doug Bush '94 moves easily among the rows and

rows of fiberglass tanks that are the heart of his onshore shellfish farm. A thin layer of fog hangs over the canyon, and the damp dirt and gravel crunch beneath the weight of his heavy hiking boots. A partner in The Cultured Abalone Farm, Bush is raising the native *Haliotis rufescens*. Shaded from the elements and continuously refreshed with cool, clean saltwater from the Santa Barbara Channel, the tanks—400 in all—emulate the rock substrate of the abalone's natural environment.

Bush and his team cultivate the mollusks—long prized as culinary delicacies—through their entire life cycle, harvesting live, market-size seafood, which the farm sells directly to restaurants or to home chefs and other abalone lovers via the farm's online store. Selling upward of 35 tons of seafood per year, the abalone farm—one of only three in California—has tapped into an enthusiastic market. Upscale restaurants in Northern California such as Atelier Crenn, The French Laundry and

SingleThread have featured the farm's abalone on their menus, as do a few closer to home, including the famed San Ysidro Ranch, Lucky's and Mattei's Tavern. Occasionally, the delicacy is available to Selkoe's Get Hooked customers.

Selkoe and Bush are making a splash in the sustainable fishery and seafood industries in Santa Barbara, but they have more in common than a shared passion for marine life. Both headed west for college—she from Massachusetts, he from Missouri—and

both graduated from Pomona College with bachelor's degrees in biology.

A native of Boston, Selkoe found her calling as a marine ecologist in California. "For as long as I can remember I've been fascinated by sea creatures and the diversity of the oceans," she says. A family vacation on the West Coast included a road trip from San Francisco to Los Angeles, and she fell in love with the Golden State. "I knew I wanted to be a marine biologist and live in California,"



Kim Selkoe '97 displays some of the day's catch, such as halibut, above, and rock crab, below. The seafood usually reaches her customers within two days of being caught.

she recalls, "and I became fixated on going to college there."

Pomona College, with its strong biology program—and, by the way, springboard diving team—dominated Selkoe's list of possibilities. The swimming pool, with its grand view of the mountains, was a major selling point. "It was really stunning for me, coming from Boston," she recalls. "I thrived at Pomona, being able to pursue my passions of marine biology and springboard diving."

One faculty member in particular, the late biologist Larry C. Oglesby, stands out to Selkoe for the impact he had on her as a student, as a researcher and, ultimately, as the leader of two large, complex organizations—Get Hooked and the nonprofit Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara, where Selkoe serves as executive director. "I developed a strong relationship with Professor Oglesby, and he really guided me," she says. "In his classes, for example, he focused on synthesizing research—you have to choose five research papers on a topic and then write one paper that brings all of them together. And that's exactly the kind of work I did in grad school and the work I do now."

So, with a strong foundation in marine biology, Selkoe "hit the ground running" when she commenced her graduate studies at UC Santa Barbara (she completed her Ph.D. in marine ecology in 2007). "I really understood how science papers are written," she says, "and how research gets distilled down into a paper and how that fuels the next generation of questions in science and pulls the field in

different directions. And I learned that in my science classes at Pomona."

Those skills became central to work Selkoe did as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and as an independent researcher at UC Santa Barbara's Marine Science Institute, where she continued her studies on the population genetics of kelp forest species. "We wanted to understand how much connectivity (immigration and emigration) there is between the different habitat areas—in this case, the kelp forests of Southern California and Baja Mexico," she explains. "The question we were asking was, can you manage California and Mexico fisheries separately, or do you have to consider them as completely integrated and interdependent?"

The short answer: They are quite interconnected. "There is a little bit of a bias toward Southern California as a repository of fish from Mexico, so our fisheries here are much more impacted by what they do in Mexico than fisheries down there are impacted by what we do here," Selkoe notes.

In reality, she adds, the globalized seafood industry makes everything interconnected.

At the same time, Selkoe began a side project, the Santa Barbara Sustainable Seafood Restaurant Program, which sought to put sustainable seafood on the menus at local restaurants. "I ran the program for six or seven years, and I learned a lot," she says.

When she crossed paths with Stephanie Mutz, a local sea urchin diver and then-president of the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara, they put their heads together

and began to look at how they could promote local seafood. They were familiar with the community-supported agriculture movement and how farms and even some fisheries were creating subscription programs. "So, we created a community-supported fishery program and called it Community Seafood. It was a great success."

Meanwhile, Selkoe's association with Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara continued. Mutz eventually moved on, a new president was named, and Selkoe became the organization's executive director. Incorporated in 1971, Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara has a threefold mission: to provide healthy, high-quality seafood to local and global markets, to ensure the economic and biological sustainability of fisheries, and to maintain California's fishing heritage. "As much as I love research, academic research paper writing was less interesting to me, and I wanted to get more involved full time in the fishing community," Selkoe says.

Fast forward, and Community Seafood has been replaced with the more robust seafood subscription service Get Hooked, which Selkoe co-founded with Victoria Voss, a Santa Barbara native who also has strong ties to local fisheries. "We focus on buying direct from our fishermen and we focus on diversity, which allows people to taste all the different seafood available here," she explains. "In a given year, we'll have 40 different species of California-caught seafood."

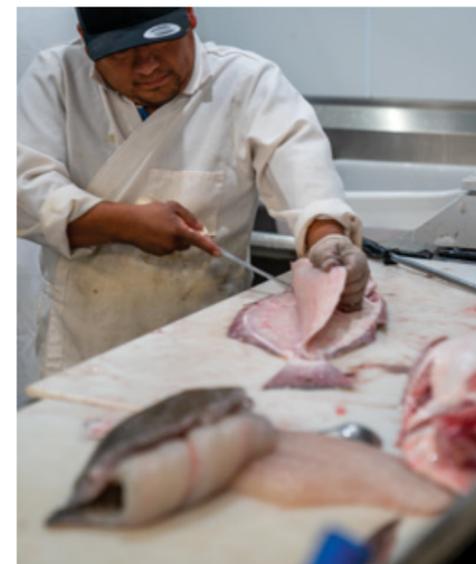
But Get Hooked does more than deliver fresh seafood to its subscription customers. With Selkoe at the helm, Get Hooked is growing and expanding its reach. "We started renting out our commercial kitchen to other fishermen. We started a wholesale program. We're developing meal kits," she says. "Our fish, with our Get Hooked label, is in grocery stores in the Bay Area."

In addition, Selkoe and her team have partnered with local farms and garden centers to turn their fish scraps into soil amendment, and they are spearheading a pilot project—courtesy of a generous Farm to School grant—to develop kid-friendly fish burgers and fish sticks that they'll bring to selected school districts in Ventura County.

"What I love is that the ecosystem is raising our food for us without the fossil fuel and land conversions you get with land meat and even vegetables," Selkoe says. "There can be some habitat impacts when we fish, but they aren't wholesale habitat destruction."



A Farm to School grant will help Selkoe and her team provide salmon patties like these to selected area schools.



A worker fillets halibut that will be distributed to customers via Get Hooked's local seafood subscription service.



White sea bass, below, is one of the staples of the summer catch off the coast of Southern California.



Rock crabs, above and left, are caught year-round. (The Dungeness crab season usually opens in late fall.)

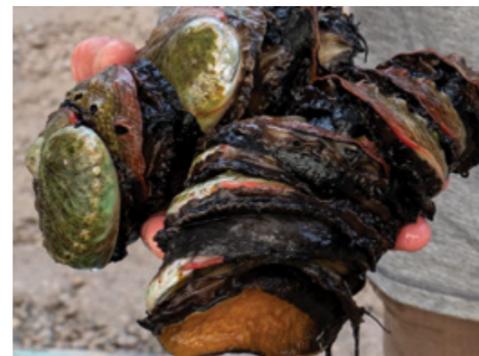


Doug Bush '94 is a partner and general manager of The Cultured Abalone Farm, one of only three abalone farms in California.

“The things we’re harvesting from the ocean are packed with nutrients in a way we can’t get on land,” she continues. “It’s a beautiful thing that we can have this wild harvest. And our planet is 70% ocean—it’s big enough to support us if we manage it properly. If we fish sustainably and harvest sustainably, we can meet the protein needs of large numbers of people on the planet. With Get Hooked, we’re giving people an option they can feel good about.”

That’s a philosophy Doug Bush can get behind, and a philosophy he brings to his abalone aquaculture.

“Nothing is zero impact,” he says. “It’s a matter of choosing what’s best, and that’s enormously complicated. But we can affect only what we do, and we do a really good job growing native California red abalone.”



A biologist with an interest in history and anthropology, Bush has a deep, personal connection not only to Dos Pueblos Canyon, the land along the Gaviota coast that is home to The Cultured Abalone Farm, but also to the way his work is intertwined with place and history. “Abalone is an iconic California seafood, but it goes way back,” he says. “It’s well known that the Chumash occupied this area but, in fact, there have been humans living not just in California but on the dirt where we’re standing for, according to some estimates, 14,000 years.”

Under Bush’s guidance, The Cultured Abalone Farm is committed to creating a sustainable regional food system. “Seaweed is a tremendous, underdeveloped resource for nutrient capture, carbon sequestration, unique nutritional compounds for both humans and

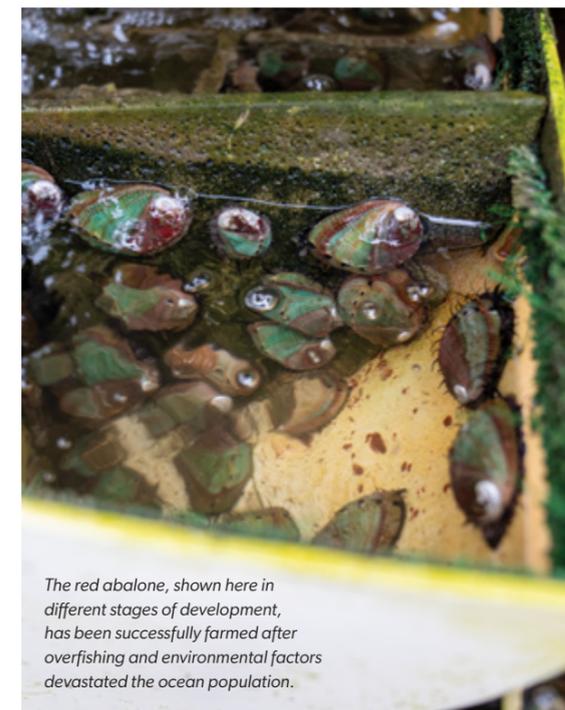
animals, and forage for vegetarian marine invertebrates like abalone,” he explains.

The unique microbial community of the abalone digestive process converts seaweed into one of the most nutritionally complete sources of protein that can be found anywhere, Bush says. “This process is a natural subsidy, and our job at the farm is simply to try and harness it and manage it to create a food source in a repeatable way,” he continues.

The farm has a standing inventory of roughly 1 million abalone, ranging in size from 10 millimeters to market size, which, according to Bush, is “about the size of your palm.”

The abalone are raised in a land-based seawater tank system designed to accommodate them through each stage of development. In addition, Bush cultivates on-site the two types of red seaweed that comprise the abalone’s diet. “We also harvest giant kelp from the nearshore,” he says. “Kelp harvesting is among the most sustainable of all marine harvests. We harvest only 15 inches below the surface from the perennial kelp plant, which remains intact and continuously grows new fronds.”

While Bush, who has a master’s degree in animal science from UC Davis, grows red abalone exclusively for commercial production, he also is part of a group led by the UC Davis



The red abalone, shown here in different stages of development, has been successfully farmed after overfishing and environmental factors devastated the ocean population.



The Cultured Abalone Farm also grows purple sea urchins, producing the delicacy known as uni to sushi lovers.

Bodega Marine Laboratory that seeks to restore the critically endangered white abalone.

“We collaborate in the technical husbandry aspects of maturation and spawning of a small number of captive adult white abalone,” he says, “and then also participate in the group effort to successfully raise the larvae of a successful white abalone spawn into small, competent individuals that can be planted in offshore locations.” This is all in the hope of re-establishing a self-sustaining population of white abalone in the wild.

But how does a guy from the Midwest end up in California raising abalone? Quite simply, Bush says, it was the “enduring appeal of the Golden West.” Like Selkoe, when he began researching colleges and universities in California, he hit upon Pomona College. It was the right place.

“I loved my time at Pomona College,” he says. “I learned how to be a student, how to teach myself to learn. I’m not sure I would have done as well at that in a different environment. And I never felt like I was forced into some artificial exclusivity—like being on a biology track meant I wasn’t welcome to take art classes or history classes or literature classes. I was given the opportunity to be a whole human intellectually.”



Selkoe and Bush didn’t know each other at Pomona but met at the Saturday Fishermen’s Market in Santa Barbara.

Relationships with faculty members, including Oglesby and Bush’s freshman advisor, botanist Sherwin Carlquist, who died in 2021, inspired and motivated him. “Both were fundamental to my enjoyment of biology, and both encouraged me to apply that enjoyment in a way that was personally meaningful,” Bush says. “They taught me a lot about trusting myself, but also being accountable for my assumptions. For both, there was a certain joy in the subject matter of the natural world that really affected me.”

After graduating, Bush joined the Peace Corps and taught biology to high school students in the East African nation of Malawi. “Near the school where I taught was a little agricultural development project site,” he says. “It was a fish farm with a couple of ponds, and I used to take my students over there to learn about nutrient cycling and food webs. The fish would get dried on tiny racks, and you’d see them in the local trading center market. And I remember being struck at the time that this is a local market-driven ability to provide a protein source in a community that is protein insecure.”

Returning from Malawi, Bush sought ways to pursue his new interest in aquaculture. A fellow Pomona College alumnus got him started. “I happened upon an article about

David Leighton [’54], who had been raising abalone in a small lab in Carlsbad,” Bush says of the San Diego County biologist, who died in 2017. “I called him out of the blue and he invited me to come help out around the farm, which he shared with a small mussel-growing business and another few incubating farming ideas.” Bush jumped in, doing all manner of dirty, cold, wet work. He spent his days cleaning out filters; swimming rafts of bay shellfish between their lines; and building prototype cages, bags and specialty containment systems.

“I maintained a close relationship with David throughout my professional development,” Bush continues, “and he was a good friend to The Cultured Abalone Farm and a great resource once I landed here in Santa Barbara.”

And that’s a boon for Selkoe, whose post-college association with Bush began at the Saturday Fishermen’s Market at the Santa Barbara Harbor. One thing led to another, and they discovered their shared connection to Pomona College. Now they are also colleagues, and both together and separately are helping build out the future of sustainable fisheries and of a seafood industry that can feed the world as it supports the planet. [PCM](#)



Professor Kyla Wazana Tompkins,  
a 2023 James Beard Media  
Award winner, holding a  
Strawberry Fluffy Matcha at Tea  
Maru in Arcadia, California.  
Photo by Jeff Hing

# The Cultural Roots of Boba

Kyla Wazana Tompkins, Pomona College professor of English and gender and women's studies, won a coveted James Beard Media Award this year for "On Boba," her essay for the *LARB Quarterly* of the *Los Angeles Review of Books* about those smooth pearls of tapioca and sugar at the bottom of concoctions of tea, milk or juice. Made of starch from the root of the cassava plant native to South America, boba originated in Taiwan and spread via the Asian diaspora, finding an early foothold in the San Gabriel Valley of Southern California. These "chewy spheres" mean much more than meets the eye, Tompkins writes.

## On Boba Gelatinousness in the Bones

by Kyla Wazana Tompkins

Originally published by the *Los Angeles Review of Books* in the April 2022 issue of *LARB Quarterly* and reproduced below with permission.

My first encounter with boba was not my first encounter with the gelatinous food objects that have come to occupy my imagination for so many years since. But because it took place my very first week in the United States in 1998, boba drinks, which are actually Taiwanese, have come to be associated for me almost entirely with California.

Gelatinousness was in my bones long before I moved from Toronto to California, a state in which crispness is a sanctified culinary value. By contrast, I grew up with collagen-rich food that often included ingredients like cow feet and tongue and other usually discarded bones and body parts. I met boba that first week in the U.S.—still reeling from the shock of moving from East Coast to West Coast; of encountering a culture so car-centered you couldn't even walk across a road to get groceries; of suddenly walking through the TV screen called the 49th parallel and finding myself in a *Truman Show*-esque landscape of U.S. flags on every corner—when my assigned grad housing roommate, a fellow international student from Taiwan named Wen-pei ("call me Wendy"), got a friend of hers to drive us to a local boba shop so that I could try something she associated with home.

I remember the drive to get there through the suburban eternal of small-town California; I remember the white and blue and pink of the store; I remember feeling relief at finding myself in a store full of not-white people. I distinctly recall the tannic pucker of black tea syrup on the tongue, how concentrated black tea makes your taste buds feel concave and how the sweetness and milk bring them back. And I remember the chewy spheres and how I took to them immediately.

I guess there are people who don't like boba or tapioca or any food that resists the tooth. I guess there are people who don't want to eat cow's foot. I am not one of those people. Boba for me, then and now, tastes like a kind welcome from a new friend to a strange country, even when that new friend is a stranger, too.

If I were to name my country now, almost a quarter-century of emigration later, it would still not be the United States; but it

would definitely be Los Angeles. I have come to love L.A. with the fullest of hearts. My Los Angeles is, like everyone else's, severely circumscribed by My Commute, the topic of constant conversation here. This is another way of saying that my L.A. is circumscribed by how the limits of time have shaped how far I can drive on a given day and still attend to the basics of getting things done: working; being with my son; writing; domestic labor. And thus, my L.A. is not the cinematic L.A. of the West Side and Beverly Hills. It is not even the consciously unglamorous new money of Downtown L.A. with its lofts and weekend scene, nor is it the studiously louche energy of the Silver Lake creative class with their elaborate artisanal take on everything that should only cost \$3.

Largely, my L.A. is everything to the north and south of the 210 artery that runs between the Inland Empire, where I work, and Altadena, where I live. All along my commute, lying to the south of me in the huge space of land between the east-west rush of the unlovely 10 freeway and the brown and frowning imposition of the San Gabriel Mountains that lie on the north side of the 210, is the great gift that is the multiethnic and transnational checkerboard of neighborhoods called the San Gabriel Valley. Much has been spoken and written by people who think about eating a lot, including David Chang and the late Jonathan Gold, both of whom recognized the SGV ("the Ess-Gee-Vee") as the center of the widest range of and the very best multiethnic Asian restaurants in the United States. Part of what defines the SGV is that you take freeways to get there but the freeways don't really take you there; instead, you take an off-ramp and then drive actual streets to get to actually anywhere, a long romp through a lot of space to get to a singular place. This, I think, keeps the SGV less shiny than other parts of L.A. but more human and more complex: You have to either work to get there or you have to be from there to enjoy finding yourself there.

Another way to say this is that the best parts of L.A. are those areas where other immigrants do their living: the arid and dried-out streets with not enough trees on them; the parched stucco of the ordinary bungalow;

nearly identical strip malls that seem to repeat themselves block after block after block until you've lived here for at least half a decade and your vision sharpens to the differences between them. Also the not-choice real estate that you find along highway frontage lanes in which the greatest enemy of your sleep isn't the aquatic swoosh of freeway sounds but the hideous roar of police helicopters chasing down cars for reasons you never can find out.

Boba drinks were born in Taipei, either at the Chun Shui Tang Teahouse in Taichung or at the Hanlin Tea Room, both of them in Taiwan. Since the 1990s, boba, a tiny bubble of refined and boiled cassava paste that sits at the bottom of a sweet and fairly complex drink, has become one of the most globally recognized food and drink commodities of Asian origin. Its stores are gathering places for youth of all demographics, but particularly, the studies tell us, of Asian teens from multiple transnational diasporas.

Cassava has a long and interesting history as a global commodity that, like most modern commodities, found its first foothold in the circulations of modern capital that emerged out of the Western colonial project. Cassava, food historians tell us, is indigenous to Brazil but was exported around the world, first to feed enslaved Africans as they were transported to the ships that stole their lives to the Americas.

Food anthropologist Kaori O'Connor tells us that what we know as tapioca (originally a Tupi food), boba, or cassava was originally known as *manioc*. Poisonous in its root form, in order to be eaten manioc requires days of soaking and fermentation to extract the possibly lethal amounts of hydrocyanic acid from its fibers. After a long soak, manioc is then vigorously pounded or grated to produce the meal and then flour now known in Portuguese as *farinha*. In precolonial times, what the West would now recognize as tapioca was then made from the liquid left behind when *farinha* was extracted. Between the cultivation and consumption of manioc, including drinking fermented tapioca drinks and hunting animals, the preinvasion Tupi diet

was well organized to supply enough carbohydrates and meat for survival.

Deracinated from Tupi culture and exported abroad as the European invasion and markets expanded, cassava became a central provision provided by enslavers to enslaved peoples: Though labor intensive to produce, it also provided carbohydrate calories to fuel cruel amounts of labor and energy extraction and was flavorless enough to adapt to multiple cuisines and locations. Cassava was transported to inland Africa to feed enslaved peoples as they were stolen and put on forced march to the vessels that would sever them from their worlds. It was taken to the sugar colonies to provide plantation and plot provisions. Cassava was, in other words, one of the most important sources of caloric fuel for the colonial world.

Processed cassava is smooth, chewy and soothing. Its neutral flavor allows it to live peacefully alongside almost any flavor continuum from spicy to herbaceous; its gelatinous quality makes it a splendid preservative. Mixed with milk, it was used to create English puddings that kept dairy from spoiling; in Jamaica enslaved people reappropriated cassava to invent the divine and irreproachable coconut-milk-soaked fry-bread called bammie.

Cassava finally arrived in Taipei directly from Brazil in the hands of the Portuguese, either in the 17th or 18th centuries, but it wasn't until the 1990s that boba left Taiwan to become a global drink phenomenon. But is boba necessarily a drink? If you read boba cookbooks or watch videos about how to make boba, you come to understand that it is really just another kind of noodle, albeit one with a particularly resistant visco-elastic bounce in the mouth.

Much has been written about “Q,” the elusive mouthfeel so favored in Taiwanese cuisine, and a lot of that writing circles in wonderment around the idea that a particular mouthfeel could belong to a particular place. We are used to thinking about flavor profiles geographically: It is taken for granted for instance that butter, white wine and lemon are French, that turmeric, cumin and curry leaf might signify a cuisine touched by the Indian Ocean; that ginger, garlic, scallion and soy generally accompany a number of East Asian cuisines across borders.

But those are flavors: Mouthfeel is something else altogether. How does a desire for a particular experience along and against and between the roof of your mouth and the length of your tongue emerge as a cultural phenomenon? I once spent a year in Boston and came away with the sense that, except for steamers and lobster and the impeccable genius that is chowder, basically everything I was eating was unnecessarily fried or topped with mayonnaise; two different kinds of too oily. Growing up Moroccan, I came to believe that we, as a culture, like our food wet and even sticky. Someone who had only eaten couscous in a restaurant wouldn't know that at home, couscous comes with a small pitcher or bowl of broth to keep it from getting dry. Even our salads are cooked.

What is taste? Over 25 years ago, I attended a food history conference in Fez where I heard the chef, restaurant owner and food scholar Fatéma Hal talk about how Moroccans in general do not eat chocolate, and that it simply isn't a commodity with a great deal of pull in the country. That insight stunned me: It had never occurred to me that one might belong to a food desire, as one belongs to a nationality.

There is such a thing, then, of a geography of the palate, if we define a palate as a set of flavors, aromas, textures, sounds and memories agreed to be desirable or disgusting. A shared palate develops out of necessity, by force, because of ecologies, as a result of invasion and theft or because communities have been colonized or invaded. It's not always a bucolic or pretty history, and a short trip through the muck and mess of the past delivers you directly away from your wishes for anything like an “authentic experience.” But palates are always *particular*. And they feel particular: They feel like they belong to the us-ness of us, the me-ness of me, the here-ness of wherever you came from.

Palates live in the mouth, but they can also travel. Palates change.

If cassava is a global commodity that illuminates Asian and hemispheric American commodity chains and leisure cultures in the form of the boba tea joint, linking dispersed colonial history and late-modern national projects to each other, so too do the coffee, tea and sugar ingredients that make up the drinks. These energy sources shape the sensory everyday into which our bodies are plugged and fuel the jagged experience of working under capital.

Boba drinks, especially when made with tea or coffee, feed the body's particular caffeine/sugar/carbohydrate addictions that plug us into work and study schedules, but its pleasures are leisurely, too. Boba can roll out in phases, and in the more artisanal of boba drinks there is no mouthful that has not been designed with mouthfeel in mind, every layer an event: the chewiness of the balls at the bottom of the drink; the crystalline coolness of an ube slush, the meringue density of cream cheese topping. Are there any boba drinkers that mix the layers together? I've never seen that and it seems almost taboo: Boba drinks seem to assume a palate that wants to be entertained, every layer a different texture game. Boba, in short, is fun: a ball pit at the bottom of a cup that is eminently photographable, improved by any Instagram filter, an invitation to restage childhood games in your mouth.

The resistant gelatinousness of boba, the elusive “Q” texture, has variously been described as “springy and chewy” or, as one writer translated from the words *tan ya*—“rebound teeth.” Gelatins are solid liquids, substances that are able to bind water, thickening and holding their shape, and, interestingly, often suspending aroma and taste for a slow release such that the experience of flavor unrolls slowly in the mouth and nose. The best gelatins—which is to say the smoothest and the clearest gels—promise an

evanescent physics of recoil and release: scientific food at its best, where it meets the quotidian productions of street and small shop food production, transcribed into a multisensory event.

If I could write this essay as a letter to other lovers of the gelatinous, I would extol the pleasures of these drinks as they happen in slow motion time. Some boba drinks contain multiple jellies: boba followed by basil seeds followed by lychee or grass jelly, followed by a fruit drink or a tea. Some bobas at the slushy end of the drink menu are layered with flavors like ube and coconut milk. Driving around the SGV with my son during the pandemic, trying to get away from the hygienic pandemic containment field defined by masks and car windows and windows and doors and fences, we drove to Rosemead to Neighbors Tea House to try the smashed avocado and durian drinks as well as the mung bean drinks, none of which we had with boba but which seemed boba-aligned in their indifference to any cultural line between drink and food.

We tried The Alley's Snow Strawberry Lulu and Brown Sugar Deerioca as well as the exquisite snow velvet muscat black tea, each of them a meditation on the kind of symphonic experience that sweetness can make musical. At the Boba Guys, we tried the perfect candy drink banana milk, the smoky black sugar hojicha, and their highly photogenic strawberry matcha latte and strawberry rice milk drinks. We tried the peach tea and the strawberry fruit teas at Dragon Boba in La Cañada, and ogled but did not try the boba doughnuts. By far some of the best boba we had was the housemade boba at Tea Maru in Arcadia, where we tried the Strawberry Fluffy Matcha, layered atop a berry jam bottom, and the brilliant Okinawa Slush that flips the whole paradigm and puts their homemade brown sugar boba on the top of the drink.

Boba's pleasing categorical and sensory promiscuity is summed up in the boba shop's ubiquitous wide straw, so completely opposite to the anemic straws of Western fast food. The former are made to not just let a liquid through but actually to let in food-like drink. This confusion of eating categories is perhaps what some people can't take about boba drink culture: If Claude Lévi-Strauss long ago proposed a culinary triangle that elevated the West from the Rest via a differentiation between the primitive Raw and the cultured Cooked, Western food cultures tend to assume the difference between food and beverages, with the exception of the historically virtuous smoothie. Boba drinks are food and drink, or along another line, drinks that are more complex than a quick sip that slides down the throat. Boba tea from a really quality boba shop insists on a complex and interesting sensory experience that is visual as well as flavorful, that choreographs layers of texture that are as casually beautiful as they are sensually complex.

How does one find a resting place in a culture that is not one's own? Is there a way to approach a world of

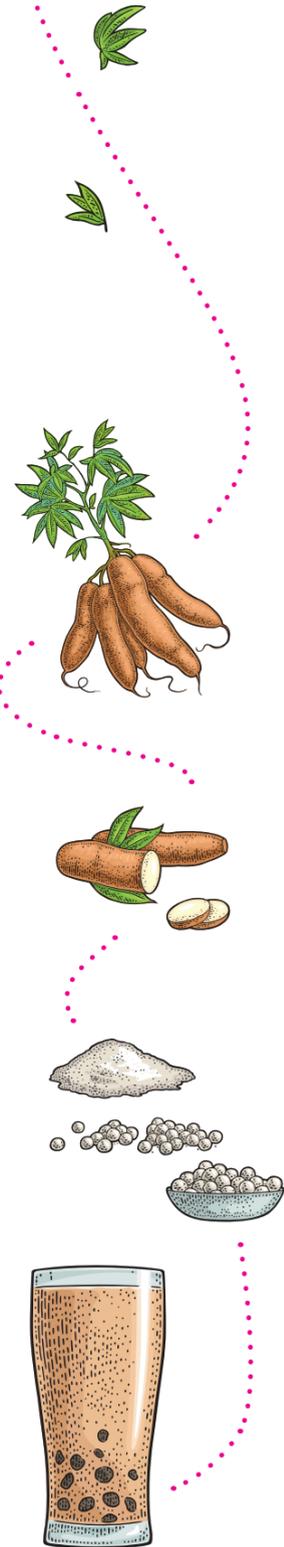


difference without stealing from it? There are many bad racial subjects in food culture, just as there are in the world: the appropriators, the people who lift ingredients and transport them to other foods without understanding or appreciation for local food technologies; the cosmopolitans, so eager to recite facts and knowledge about food cultures not their own; the thieves who take recipes from their original knowledge holders and reproduce them deracinated and unrecognizable. And in turn there are the “good” racial subjects, who write only about their own lineages and cultures. The immigrants nostalgic for a taste and feel of home, banking on recreating their memories as closely as they can approximate.

One shorthand way to talk about the politics of difference in food has been through bell hooks's cannily marketable phrase “Eating the Other,” in which usually white consumers devour exotic difference metaphorically and figuratively, while not paying attention to the people whose lives and complexity they commodify. These are the slings and arrows thrown so easily around social media debates on race and difference and eating, and some of them land where they should, and it is all so very tiring. We are in a tiring time.

A more generous and gentle take might be that there are places and histories where people and their desires cross each other—where touch happens, where the sensory congruences that shape each of our innermost senses of having private desires and tastes in fact overlaps and resonates, as history or as a shared present. It is harder work to get there: History is dense and chewy that way. [PCM](#)

*Boba drinks, sometimes called bubble teas, are creative concoctions that might include tea, milk, fruit juice, sugar and other flavors—and of course, the smooth pearls of tapioca known as boba.*



### Greetings from the President of the Alumni Association Board

Hello Sagehens!

I hope the fall is off to a good start for you. The 2023-24 Alumni Association Board kicked things off with our first online meeting in August to welcome new members, establish this year's board committees and discuss key initiatives. Our first in-person meeting during the PCAAB Retreat Weekend on campus in October offered a meaningful opportunity to work together closely, gather with the Class of 2024 for a panel presentation and mixer, and connect with members of the Board of Trustees, who also met that weekend.

This year, the board is excited to work to expand our regional chapters, find opportunities to engage with alumni near and far, help plan and support Alumni Weekend 2024, build our online Sagehen Connect community and, of course, connect with students to learn how we can be helpful to them.

There will be many opportunities for us to meet up this year through regional chapter and on-campus events. Stay up to date with information and announcements through the Alumni Chirps newsletter and event invitation emails. If you're in the Claremont area on Saturday, October 28, I'm hoping I'll see you at Pomona's 2023 Payton Distinguished Lecture with Anita Hill, the noted lawyer, educator and advocate for equality and civil rights. I'll keep an eye out for you.

Until next time ... Chirp!

**Alfredo Romero '91**  
Alumni Association Board President

See the current Alumni Association Board roster and learn more about serving on the board at [pomona.edu/alumni-board](http://pomona.edu/alumni-board).



### Update Contact Info

Moved or changed your email recently? Stay connected with Pomona by updating your contact information at [pomona.edu/update-your-info](http://pomona.edu/update-your-info).



### Pomona College Welcomes Sagehen Families at Family Weekend

Pomona welcomes hundreds of Sagehen families for Family Weekend each October. With a variety of special programs curated just for the weekend and plenty of time to spend with their students, families can enjoy visiting, learning and exploring. Planned highlights for October 27-29, 2023, include tours of our beautiful new Center for Athletics, Recreation and Wellness (CARW), a special welcome event with President Starr, a food truck dinner on Friday evening, exhibits at the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College and much more. Members of the Family Leadership Council are always on hand to assist with the weekend and answer questions.

Family Weekend information and schedule available on our website at [pomona.edu/family-weekend](http://pomona.edu/family-weekend).



### Call for Distinguished Alumni Award Nominations

For over 30 years, the Pomona College Alumni Association has paid tribute to alumni who represent the values, spirit and excellence that are at the core of Pomona College by presenting Distinguished Alumni Awards. Nominations are now being accepted for:

- Blaisdell Distinguished Alumni Award
- Alumni Distinguished Service Award
- Inspirational Young Alumni Award

Honorees are selected by a panel of past presidents and/or current members of the Alumni Association Board, and awards will be presented during Alumni Weekend in April 2024. The deadline to submit nominations is November 30, 2023.

Submit your nomination and learn more about past recipients at [pomona.edu/alumni-awards](http://pomona.edu/alumni-awards).



### Save the Date

Mark your calendars to save the date for **Alumni Weekend and Reunion Celebrations next spring, April 25-28, 2024.**

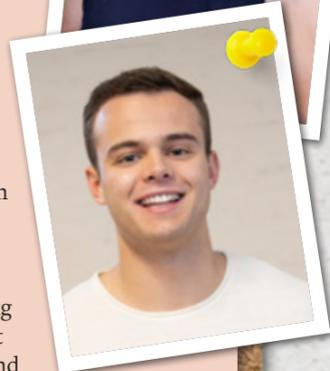
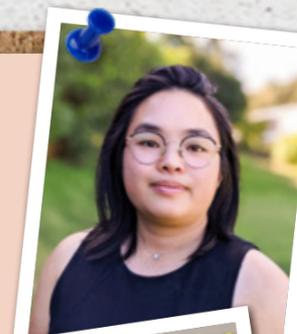
All classes are invited back to campus to enjoy a festive weekend of reconnection, curated programs and events—plus hugs from Cecil. Classes ending in 4 or 9 will celebrate milestone reunions with class gatherings and Reunion Class Dinners on campus. Registration opens in early February, and now is a great time to take advantage of special room rates at local hotels for Alumni Weekend.

Visit [pomona.edu/plan-your-trip](http://pomona.edu/plan-your-trip) for more information on making your reservations.

### Welcome Chirps to Christina Tong '17 and Jack Storrs '19, National Chair and Chair-Elect of Annual Giving

A big warm welcome to Pomona's National Chair of Annual Giving Christina Tong '17, who began her 2023-24 term this past July. Tong is excited to serve in this vital philanthropic role to connect with the alumni community and partner in creating support for current students and faculty. Hitting the ground running, she began collaborating with the Office of Annual Giving last summer on several initiatives for this year and to establish a student philanthropy program with the aim of increasing students' understanding of donor impact, the Pomona College endowment and the importance of alumni paying it forward and giving back. National Chair-Elect Jack Storrs '19 will work alongside Tong to help support giving campaigns and other philanthropic endeavors to prepare for his transition to the lead role next year.

Pass the Torch to current and future Sagehens at [pomona.edu/give](http://pomona.edu/give).



### Get Involved With Regional Chapters!

Reach out to your local Pomona College Regional Alumni Chapter to help plan or attend events, casual gatherings and share all things Sagehen. Current chapters:

- Bay Area
- Chicago
- Los Angeles
- New York City
- Orange County, CA
- Puget Sound, WA
- Washington, DC

Get in touch and learn more about starting a regional chapter at [pomona.edu/alumni-chapters](http://pomona.edu/alumni-chapters).

### Join the Sagehen Connect Online Alumni Community

- Create Sagehen affinity groups
- Access the official Pomona College Alumni Directory
- Read Pomona College Magazine Class Notes
- Provide student and alumni mentorship as a Sage Coach
- Share announcements, photos and videos
- Find and message classmates
- Plus more!

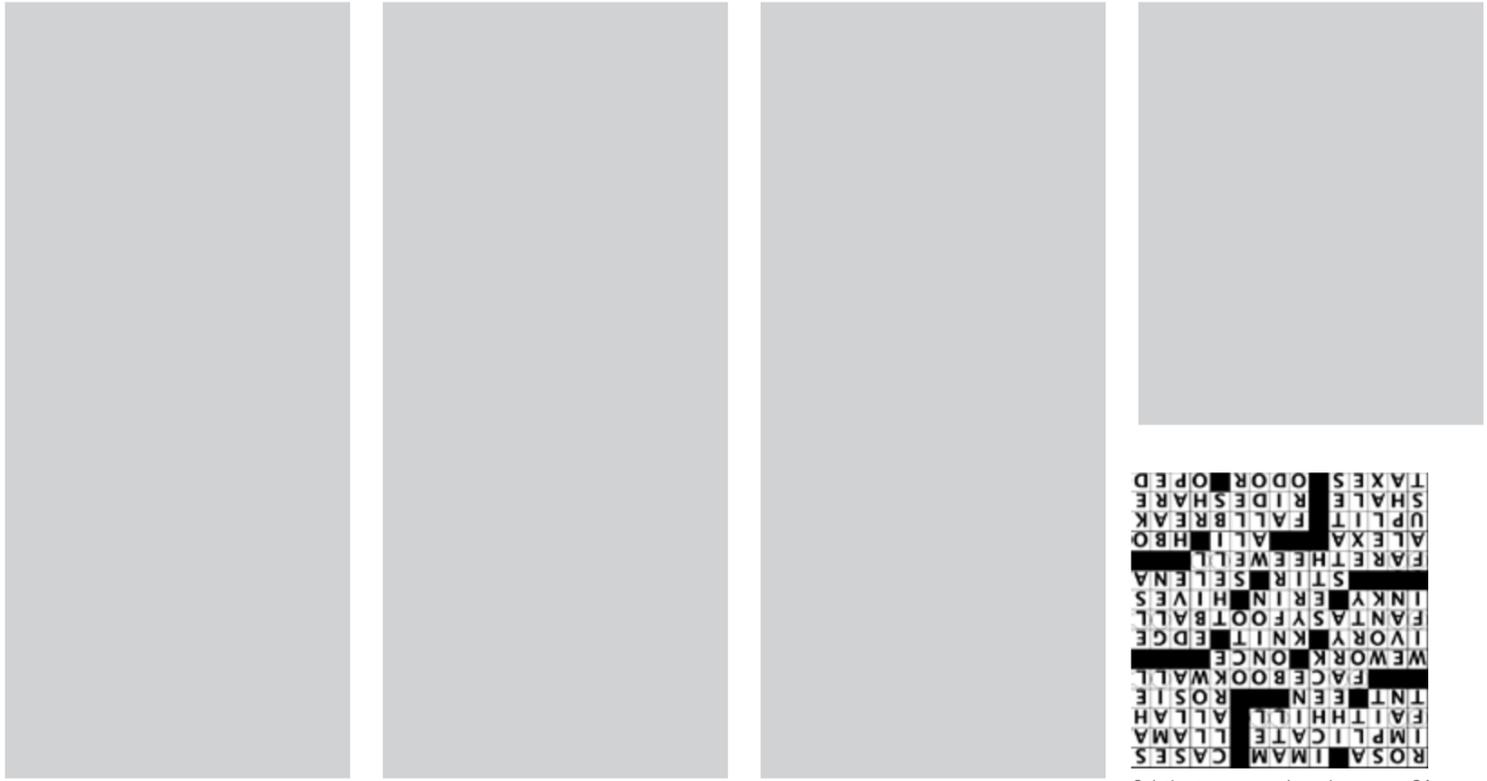
To learn more and register, visit [pomona.edu/sagehen-connect](http://pomona.edu/sagehen-connect).

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Solution to crossword puzzle on page 64



"I firmly believe in Pomona College's transformational power—but that power depends on you."

— Professor Ken Wolf



PASS THE  
**TORCH**  
 OF OPPORTUNITY TO  
 A NEW GENERATION

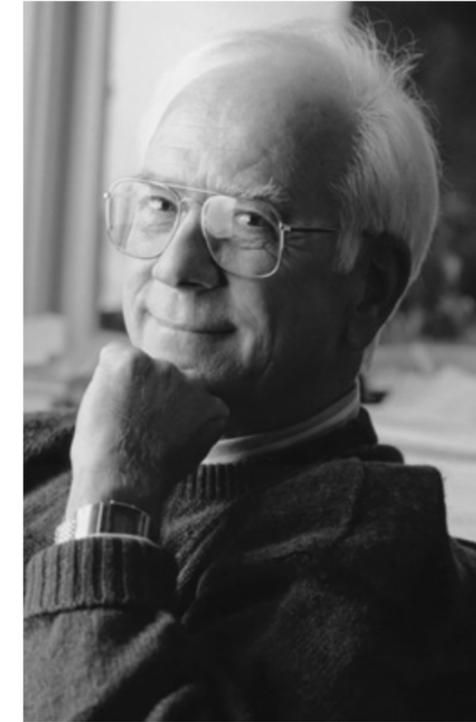
Give to Pomona's Annual Fund at  
[pomona.edu/give-today](https://pomona.edu/give-today)



To view notes online, visit  
[sagehenconnect.pomona.edu](https://sagehenconnect.pomona.edu)

## Hans C. Palmer

Emeritus Professor of Economics  
 1933-2023



Emeritus Professor of Economics Hans C. Palmer, a former dean of the College and a professor of economics at Pomona for 46 years, died on May 26, 2023. He was 89.

Palmer devoted his entire professional career to students at Pomona College. He was a member of Pomona's faculty during five different decades—including three years as vice president and dean of the College—and became, for many on this campus, the quintessential Pomona professor: erudite, witty, supportive and demanding. Palmer also was a longtime promoter of international initiatives at the College, and was a leader of the Pacific Basin Institute after its move to Pomona College in the late 1990s.

A four-time winner of the Wig Distinguished Professor Award, Palmer is remembered by students for always pushing and prodding them to give their very best. "He wasn't letting me off the hook," Emeritus Chair of the Pomona College Board of Trustees Stewart R. Smith '68 once said. "A B-plus wasn't good enough if I could do better—and that was one of the best things that could have happened to me."

In anonymous nominations for the Wig Award, one student praised Palmer's exacting standards for writing. "It was painful at the time, but receiving paper after paper marked up beyond recognition did quite a bit towards pushing me to a clearer and more concise writing style," the student wrote. Another commented, "Professor Palmer simply knows everything ... but that's not why the students love him. Professor Palmer really draws the best out of his students, always asking that third or fourth question that takes discussion to a whole new level."

A native of New York City, Palmer came west for college, earning his B.A. and M.A. from UC Berkeley. After two years of service as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army, he returned to Berkeley to earn his Ph.D. He joined the Pomona faculty in 1962, rising to full professor of economics—with the endowed titles of Stedman-Sumner Professor of Economics and W.M. Keck Distinguished Service Professor—as well as chair of the Economics Department.

Taking on the role of dean of the College in 1998, Palmer led the academic program through the creation of a new Linguistics and

Cognitive Science Department and a number of major academic construction projects, including the new Andrew Science Building and renovations of Bridges Hall of Music and Seaver Laboratory for Chemistry, now known as Seaver North. After completing his tenure as dean in 2001, Palmer returned to his first love, teaching economics, before retiring from Pomona in 2008.

Palmer's research focused mainly on the economics of health care issues and the economies of Eastern European nations. Among the honors he received for his work were a John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation Fellowship and a National Science Foundation Faculty Fellowship. He was a member of the American Economic Association, Association for Health Services Research, Economic History Association, Economic History Society of the United Kingdom, History of Economics Society and Association for Comparative Economic Studies.

Both his philosophy of life and his philosophy of teaching are perhaps best encapsulated in a quotation from the Convocation speech he gave upon assuming the mantle of dean: "Above all, keep our sense of humor and lighten up. Learning and teaching can be hard work, but they also should be sources of joy in the best sense. If they are not, we have missed something very precious, and all our attainments may be meaningless."

Palmer is survived by his wife Beverly, daughter Margaret Woodruff and son David, as well as five grandchildren. He was preceded in death by an infant daughter, Jane, in 1967.

# School's Out

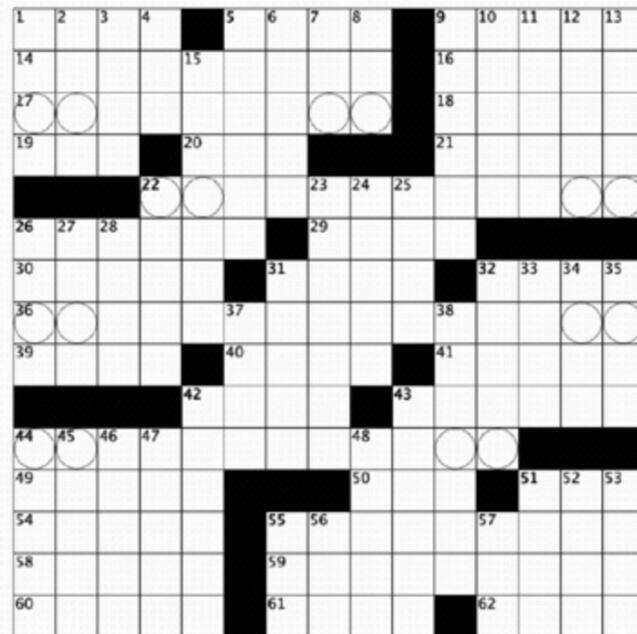
by Joel Fagliano '14

**ACROSS**

- 1. Civil rights icon Parks
- 5. Mosque leader
- 9. iPhone protectors
- 14. Connect to a crime
- 16. Camel relative
- 17. Country music star married to Tim McGraw
- 18. God, in Arabic
- 19. Explosive material
- 20. Twilight, to a poet
- 21. \_\_\_ the Riveter (iconic poster subject)
- 22. Social media feed of the early 2000s
- 26. Real estate start-up whose implosion spawned the book "Billion Dollar Loser"
- 29. Fairy tale's first word
- 30. \_\_\_ Coast, neighbor of Ghana
- 31. Use needles and wool
- 32. Perimeter
- 36. In which you roster a QB, two RBs, two WRs and a TE
- 39. Jet black
- 40. Pam's replacement as secretary on "The Office"
- 41. Itchy skin condition
- 42. Keep the sauce moving
- 43. Pop star Gomez
- 44. Old-timey parting words
- 49. First name that declined sharply in popularity as a result of Amazon
- 50. "Prince \_\_\_" ("Aladdin" song)
- 51. "Succession" ainer
- 54. Like the Statue of Liberty at night
- 55. Time off in first semester ... or a hint to 17-, 22-, 36- and 44-Across?
- 58. Rock layer targeted in fracking
- 59. Use Uber or Lyft
- 60. One of life's certainties, per Benjamin Franklin
- 61. Stinky smell
- 62. Column with a viewpoint

**DOWN**

- 1. Serious divide in a friendship



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- 2. Neighbor of Yemen
- 3. Rain slightly
- 4. \_\_\_-rock
- 5. Non-betting words in poker
- 6. Senator Susan Collins represents it
- 7. City where trap music was popularized: Abbr.
- 8. Director Brooks
- 9. Emilia who starred as Daenerys Targaryen on "Game of Thrones"
- 10. Permit
- 11. Dip for tortilla chips
- 12. What a pointless meeting really should have been
- 13. Region of Africa stretching from Senegal to Chad
- 15. "Roger that"
- 22. Number of squares on a Monopoly board
- 23. Culminating event at Burning Man
- 24. Guacamole ingredient
- 25. Eight: Prefix
- 26. You might give its password to a house guest
- 27. "Dear \_\_\_ Hansen" (musical)
- 28. Policy nerd
- 31. N.B.A. star Irving
- 32. Paperless way of paying utilities
- 33. Author Eggers
- 34. Secluded valley
- 35. Snow queen in "Frozen"
- 37. Late night host Meyers
- 38. Whom right-wing trolls try to own, informally
- 42. MA and PA
- 43. One side of an eBay transaction
- 44. He sold his soul to the devil
- 45. Dominant personality
- 46. "Chill!"
- 47. Banish from a country
- 48. Halloween costume with a striped red shirt and glasses
- 51. Messy pile
- 52. Naked
- 53. Gave the thumbs-up
- 55. To and \_\_\_
- 56. Word after first or Rite
- 57. Greek letter after pi



## Crossword Challenge

This crossword puzzle was designed by Joel Fagliano '14, a senior puzzles editor at *The New York Times*. The solution is available on page 54.

**Gabi Stawski '27**

*This is me and my younger sister Julia, 13, and younger brother Noah, 11. That moment was right as the social was ending and the students were being told to gather and say their last goodbyes to walk through the Gates. It was an emotional moment for all of us. I didn't expect so many tears. I've spent practically my whole life with them; there has never been a time where they were farther than a bedroom door down from me. I had been mentally preparing for the change but I think this was the moment that it all became a reality. I love and miss them very much, but I know they're doing great (we've FaceTimed often).*  
Photo by Jeff Hing





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