



COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Pomona

Summer 2023

The Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 Collection
Civil Rights Pioneer Donates Her Archives to the College



Myrlie Evers-Williams '68, hands clasped, listens during the 90th birthday gala honoring her legacy in March in Bridges Auditorium.

TRIBUTE TO A CIVIL RIGHTS PIONEER

by G. Gabrielle Starr,
Pomona College President



Pomona College President G. Gabrielle Starr, at lectern, honors Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 during the March tribute in Bridges Auditorium.

Reflections on the fiery strength of Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 as the civil rights leader and widow of Medgar Evers donates her archival collection to the College.

Being around Myrlie Evers-Williams is nothing like being in a hurricane. Yet she can take a room by storm, and the strength of her will is easily on par with any force of nature. The problem with most of the metaphors we commonly use to describe people who have profoundly shaped the world around us is that they evoke the power of destruction. Moving mountains. Unleashing the power of a whirlwind. Standing in the eye of the storm. Fierce. Iron-willed. And indeed, when you see Evers-Williams in her full, proud, public persona, she is like fire: burning with a passion for life and justice that raises both fear and wonder.

Five years ago this spring, Professor Lorn Foster interviewed Evers-Williams side by side with the Rev. James Lawson. It was Lawson who tutored the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Mohandas Gandhi's principles of nonviolent resistance, helping to change our world for the better, forever. Forever is a word laden with hubris, but I, too, believe that the long arc of the universe bends toward justice, and the U.S. civil rights movement wove the warp and woof of destiny to bring us closer to justice for us all.

Watching Evers-Williams alongside Lawson was like watching fire and ice. Lawson spoke softly, invoking Gandhi, Jesus and Buddha as he explained why the road to justice and the road to peace unfolded side by side. Change, in his words, flowed as inexorably as a glacier, scouring the landscape clean and remaking the world in its path. In every word Evers-Williams spoke, however, I heard not the cool voice of peace, but the still-hot pain of murder, violence and injustice. I saw the aftermath of wounds to the soul. How could anyone have survived that pain with neither bowed head nor bruised conscience? How could she step forward with love, as she has done for more than half a century?

Myrlie Evers-Williams' story holds that secret, a secret of which Pomona College is part. She and I sat down one day soon after the College reopened after COVID—the warmth of her smile a balm to the soul. She had taken a walk about campus, pausing to sit with her son James, shaded by the trees of Stover Walk. Walking for her is not easy anymore. She shared with me the urgency she felt; she wanted to make sure that her archival legacy was secure at Pomona, and she was

starting to feel weary. "I'm tired, Gabi. I'm tired." She let me call her Mother Myrlie and said, "I came on this campus, and I knew. I sat today and I felt the strength of this ground well up in me, pouring up through my feet." Pomona, she told me, was the first place she felt safe after Medgar died.

What a privilege it is to hold in trust her riches—to steward them, to hold them safe for generations of humankind to come. By preserving her archive, with its reams of yellow foolscap written in her hand, moved by her intelligence, marked by her tears (and so much more), Pomona holds in trust great strength. For all those who step on this campus, I hope you too can feel strength swelling from this ground, and find your way forward in a world so much in need of the fires of love, the balm of peace and the guiding force of justice. I hope you too will move the great shuttle of the loom, crafting a world each of us mends a little more and a little more, weaving threads of strength, wisdom, hope and beauty, even when everything seems poised to unravel in our hands. Mother Myrlie is not a force of nature. She is human, strength and fragility side by side, and love, always, always love.

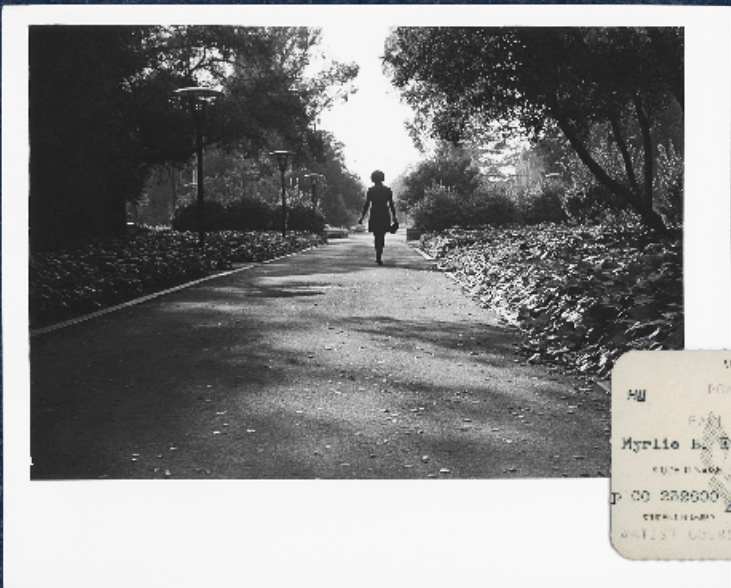
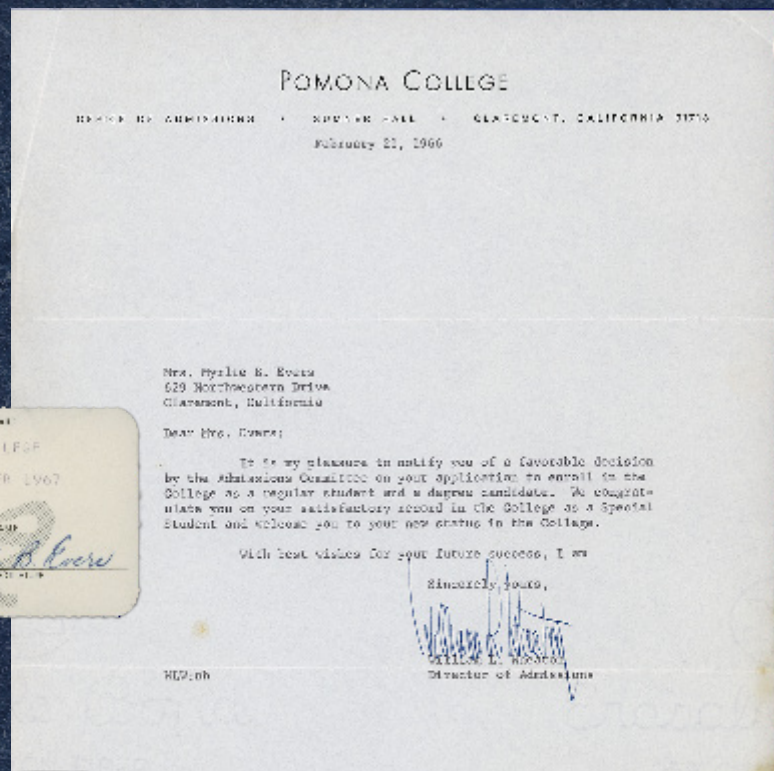
Earlier this year, Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 donated her archival collection of papers and other memorabilia to Pomona College, where she arrived to begin a new life as a student and young widow with three children a year after the 1963 assassination of her husband, civil rights leader Medgar Evers. She would go on to become chairwoman of the NAACP and to give the invocation at President Barack Obama's second inauguration, among other accomplishments. From hundreds of boxes containing materials of historical significance, archivist Lisa Crane of The Claremont Colleges Library Special Collections led the cataloging of the items that now form the Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 Collection at Pomona College, which in time will be made available to scholars and the public. Evers-Williams' donation and 90th birthday celebration drew coverage from media including the *CBS Evening News*, *USA Today* and the *Los Angeles Times*.



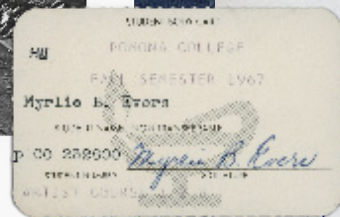
For more on her archives, visit pomona.edu/myrlie-evers-williams.

A Pomona College Student

Letter of change of status, Pomona College, 1966



Evers-Williams on the Pomona College campus, 1970



Evers-Williams' identification card, fall 1967



Pomona College yearbook, *The Metate*, 1968 with photo of Evers-Williams, top left corner.

A Wife and Mother



Left, Medgar and Myrlie Evers at their wedding reception, 1951. Right, Myrlie and Medgar Evers, early 1950s.

Evers-Williams with Walter Williams on their wedding day in 1976.



Evers-Williams with daughter Reena, crowned "Miss Black Pearl" at Citrus College, April 1972.



The Evers children: Reena, Darrell, James (also called Van), circa 1990s.

Crisis magazine, June/July 1988: Reena, Darrell, Evers-Williams and James on the 25th anniversary of Medgar Evers' death.



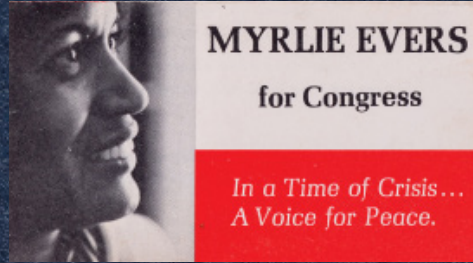
Ebony magazine, March 1965: Evers-Williams with daughter Reena, left, oldest son Darrell, right, and youngest son James, bottom.



"We heard Medgar drive into the driveway... Within the appropriate amount of time, we heard the blast of a gun."



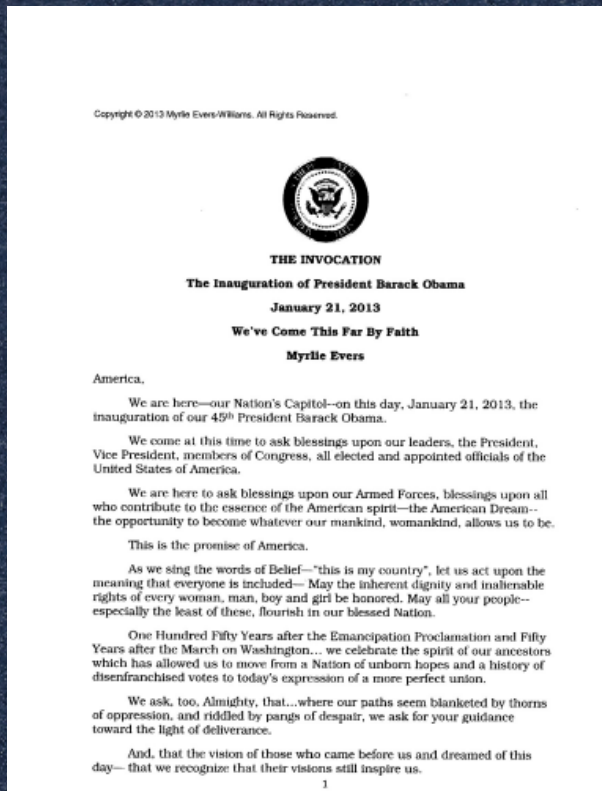
A Civic Leader



Mrs. Myrlie Evers, Educator, mother, community leader, author, she is the widow of the slain civil rights leader, Medgar Evers, of Jackson, Miss. She has lived with her three children, Darrel - 16, Rena - 15, and Van - 10, in Claremont since 1964. She is Assistant Director for Development at the Center for Educational Opportunity at Claremont Colleges. Attended Alcorn College in Mississippi and graduated from Pomona College. Author of "For Us, The Living." Contributing Editor, Ladies Home Journal. Trustee, Tougaloo College, Mississippi; Director, Southern California and Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ.



Cover of *Jet* magazine featuring Myrlie Evers from June 1970.



Text of the invocation Evers-Williams gave at the second inauguration of President Barack Obama on January 21, 2013, asking in part that "the vision of those who came before us and dreamed of this day—that we recognize that their visions still inspire us."



The dress Evers-Williams wore at Carnegie Hall in 2012 when she was invited to fulfill a lifelong dream by performing onstage there. Photo by Stefan Cohen

Campaign literature and button from the 1970 bid Myrlie Evers made to represent her California district in the U.S. House of Representatives. She was defeated by Republican John H. Roussetot.

Portraits of Betty Shabazz, Coretta Scott King and Myrlie Evers-Williams, at right, taken by her son, photographer James Van Evers. One accompanies an article in *Upscale* magazine (May 1997) about the widows of assassinated civil rights leaders Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and Medgar Evers.



A hardhat worn by Evers-Williams and a photo of her in her work as a commissioner of the Los Angeles Board of Public Works, the first Black woman to be appointed to the role.



President Barack Obama embraces Myrlie Evers-Williams during a visit in the Oval Office on June 4, 2013. The president met with the Evers family to commemorate the approaching 50th anniversary of Medgar Evers' death. Photograph by Pete Souza, White House Photographs.

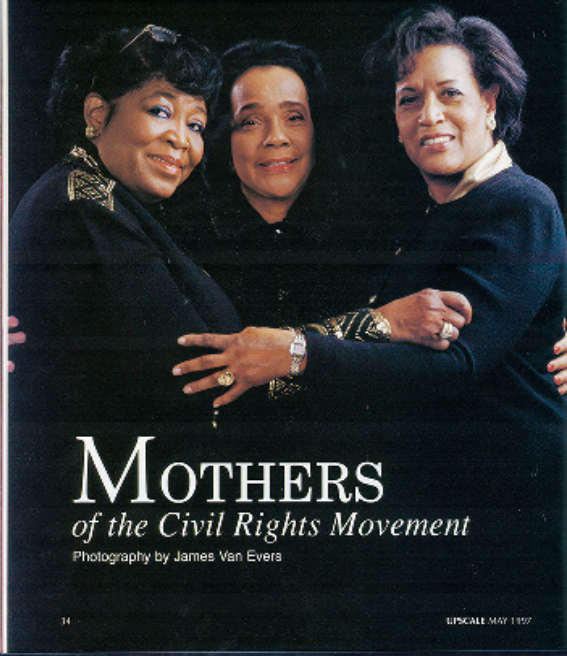
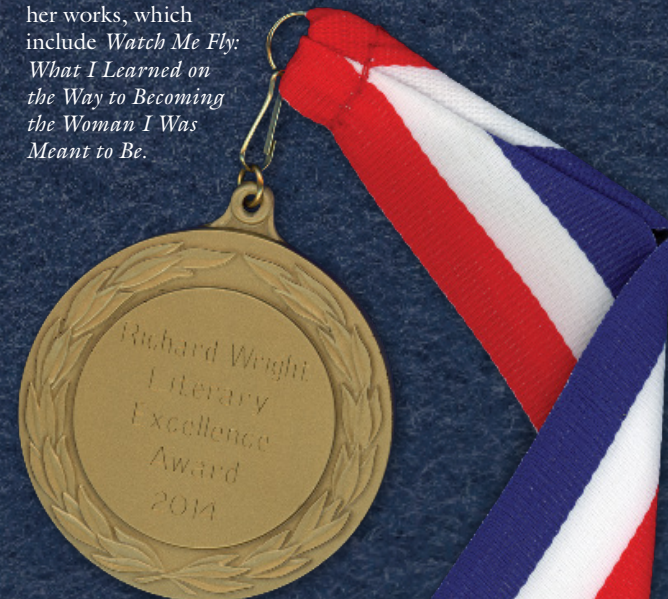


Above, the program from the second inauguration of President Obama in January 2013, at which Evers-Williams gave the invocation.

The U.S. Senate sent 90th birthday greetings and this certificate to Evers-Williams for a March 22, 2023, celebration on campus. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden also sent congratulations.



The medal presented to Evers-Williams in recognition of the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award for her works, which include *Watch Me Fly: What I Learned on the Way to Becoming the Woman I Was Meant to Be*.



Intimate Reflections
from the widows of
**Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr.
and Medgar Evers**

By Amy Leigh Robson

Imagine this: You're a happily married woman, raising several children with a remarkable man who was born to change the world. Suddenly, an assassin's bullet strikes that man down, leaving you to bring up your children — and carry on your husband's fight — alone.

Being a single mother in any day and age is not easy. Each new era brings on another set of challenges, another set of fears. But Coretta Scott King, Betty Shabazz and Myrlie Evers-Williams, the respective widows of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Medgar Evers, faced an array of uniquely daunting obstacles. When their husbands died in the fight for civil rights, these women stepped in and took up the reins of the movement, despite personal sacrifice and the threat of slanders. At the same time, they became, by necessity, their family's sole breadwinner in an age when most people still considered a woman's place to be home and hearth — not in the workplace.

Thirty years after their husbands' assassinations, these three extraordinary women take a moment to reflect upon their personal and professional accomplishments and the universal challenges faced by single mothers everywhere.

Listening to Other Viewpoints on Campus

It's become more difficult to talk to people we disagree with in recent years. It's been even harder to listen.

Looking through the memorabilia in the historic archives donated to Pomona College by Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 this year makes the dignity and discipline of the nonviolent principles of the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1960s all the more palpable. The irony, of course, is that the reaction to the call for change was often horrifically violent. Among the photos in Evers-Williams' belongings is one taken by her son, photographer James Van Evers, of three widows of the civil rights era: Betty Shabazz, Coretta Scott King and Evers-Williams. Both a defiant strength and resilience are visible in their faces and bearing. Shabazz and King even seem to smile slightly.

If they could do that, it seems we can at least talk to each other at Pomona about things like politics, faith, race and campus culture. To that end, a program on learning how to better connect has been offered at the College since 2021 through the model of the Sustained Dialogue Institute. Designed for small groups of students, faculty or staff that meet 90 minutes a week for 10 weeks, the sessions have included topics such as building a culture of inclusion, the Black experience at Pomona, queer culture and more. Theatre Professor Joyce Lu and Dean of Campus Life Josh Eisenberg also teamed to offer a class called Applied Theatre: Sustained Dialogue in Action.

"I know that it resonates," says the coordinator of the campus effort, Christina Ciambriello, chief of staff to College President G. Gabrielle Starr and secretary to the Board of Trustees.

The program grew out of a 2017-18 task force on public dialogue established by the Board of Trustees, a 2018 Gallup survey on speech and campus climate at the College and a Mellon Foundation presidential leadership grant awarded to Starr.

Jackson Lennon '24 has been a student leader of the effort, first taking part during the pandemic closure in a remote session about the climate around race, class and politics at Pomona that was the first dialogue group in the nation to include trustees.

"We talked a lot about the differences in culture that have evolved over time from the trustees' time and up to the incoming students, which included me," Lennon says.

Inspired by that, he became one of 35 to 40 people from Pomona now trained as moderators through the Sustained Dialogue Institute. But when Lennon and another student planned a series on "cancel culture" for spring 2021, they ran into the time crunch that seems to make it hardest for students to engage with the program.

"We really wanted to work that out," Lennon says. "Unfortunately, I think the timing was just not right because our sessions were late at night, a lot of students had homework and so they couldn't really commit." The session ended after a few weeks.

One of Lennon's goals is to ensure that people don't misunderstand a liberal arts college as an entirely *politically* liberal community, in part because, "I actually identify as a Republican," as he puts it. "For me, I have found it's been very effective to talk to people as a human being rather than becoming the stereotype that a lot of people think of as Republicans, and that's kind of helped me because later, further down the road, I've opened up a little bit to these people about my political views," he says.

Bridging differences takes time. The late Harold Saunders, founder of the Sustained Dialogue Institute, knew this: A U.S. diplomat, he was instrumental in Middle East peace negotiations, including the Camp David Accords of 1978. However, like Middle East peace, campus understanding can be temporary and ever shifting. It's still worth persisting.

"I really do believe it can work," Ciambriello says, noting that a benefit to students is that managing differences is a crucial career and life skill. "Even if it's just, honestly, that people who never thought they would talk to each other are talking to each other, if that's the takeaway, that's meaningful. Because then they can talk to other people, or say, 'Hey, here's a little skill I learned, to hold a beat and listen and hear someone out.' It's not for me to change your mind or for you to change my mind. That's really not the point at all."

—Robyn Norwood

Pomona

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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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Pomona College complies with all applicable state and federal civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in education and the workplace. This policy of non-discrimination covers admission, access and service in promotion, compensation, benefits and all other terms and conditions of employment at Pomona College.



Cover: Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 in the library as a Pomona College student in the 1960s. "That's where I began to grow again. To live again. Here on this campus," she says. Middle, with President Barack Obama in 2013. Right, speaking at Pomona College in 2018.

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Mufti Origins Revealed

After over 60 years of silence, we founding members of Mufti wish to offer a bit of Pomona history. Over the years we have been pleased to see occasional references to Mufti and are thrilled that once again, “Mufti is near.”

Mufti was started in 1958 by four women, all juniors, with strong senses of humor and mischief. We lived in Harwood Court, a women’s dorm complete with all-seeing head residents, 10 p.m. curfews and overnight locked doors. We admired the occasional strange events that occurred on campus, pulled off by unknown perpetrators: a letter on the College president’s stationery announcing amazing new rules for College behavior, the ringing of the bell in the Little Bridges bell tower during unusual hours of the day and night, and creative enhancements of the Orozco mural in Frary Dining Hall.

Who were the perpetrators and how did they do it? We knew a particular group of men was having all of the fun and we wanted to match them with a creative but subtle response! We started with orange footprints painted on the pathways of the quad. That approach became too time-consuming so we turned to simple messages plastered on mailboxes, lampposts and buildings, signed “Mufti.” We would sneak out of the dorm at 4 a.m., post our mysterious messages throughout the campus, go out to breakfast and return in time to attend our 8 a.m. classes.

Our senior year, we were “pillars of the community.” Our group included the president of the Associated Women Students, the chair of the AWS Judiciary and several members of the senior women’s May Court. Who would guess that we were Mufti?

By then living in Blaisdell, a senior-sophomore women’s dorm, we recruited four sophomores who committed to carrying on the Mufti legacy with whole-hearted devotion. And that they did! We have lost track of those who carried the torch, but we toast you all.

We had such fun breaking the dorm rules and making people pause to wonder who could be behind the messages. We have unearthed a few original Mufti messages. They are simpler than those shared in the Pomoniana piece (Winter 2023), but we are thrilled that Mufti has survived and evolved and we say, “All Hail.”

—Jean Wentworth Bush Guerin ’60
Alice Taylor Holmes ’60
Martha Tams Barthold ’60
Thomasine Wilson ’60 (RIP)



Early Mufti messages were simple yet cryptic. One citing “Vincent,” above, was a reference to History Professor Vincent Learnihan, who taught at Pomona from 1949-82.

Another Generation’s Protests

In 1980, students of The Claremont Colleges held the largest anti-Reagan protest in the country. It was so large and boisterous that a friend who had recently graduated from Pomona saw it on the evening news in Malaysia. We feared so many things should Ronald Reagan become president: nuclear escalation, further environmental degradation, the demise of the middle class—and the loss of women’s right to abortion, only recently won.

There is no satisfaction in being right. My sign read, “Motherhood is Optional”; a male friend’s said, “Women’s Rights Are Human Rights, Too.” On the verge of adulthood, it was inconceivable that neither would be true 40 years in the future—and much earlier for those without the advantages of place and privilege that we possessed.

So I was gratified to see the very thoughtful and informative article “The Choice I Make” by **Dr. Atsuko Koyama ’96** in the latest edition of *PCM*. Reading “While all of the air has been knocked out of me as I raise a young girl in a state where legislators and the courts have control over our bodies,” I struggled to breathe, too. Who are we if we don’t have control over our own bodies? Who are we if we are complacent

in California while girls and women in Arizona, Texas, Mississippi and too many more states suffer from the loss of their basic human rights? It took courage for Koyama to write this piece and for our alumni magazine to publish it. Thank you for making us proud.

—Sheri Cardo ’81
Petaluma, California

Remembering Irving Rosenthal ’52

I appreciated the fullness of the obituary for **Irving Rosenthal ’52** (Winter 2023). Although I graduated five years later in 1957 and would not have known him there, I became acquainted with Irving in the 1960s when I was a partner in Auerhahn Press, which published Beat Generation writers. One of our poets was John Wieners, much admired by Irving.

—Andrew Hoyem ’57
Honorary Doctor of Letters ’15
San Francisco

On Choice

I really appreciate the article “The Choice I Make” (Winter 2023). We need more people and physicians like **Atsuko Koyama ’96**. She is so right that choice is not only about abortion. It is about equal access to medical care for all, control over our own bodies. As she says, “Reproductive justice is the right to have children, to not have children, and to raise the children you have in safe, sustainable communities.”

—D.B. Zane ’85
Los Angeles

Editor’s note: Koyama credits the group Women of African Descent for Reproductive Justice with coining and defining the term reproductive justice in 1994.

Correction

Biographical information in the obituary for **Rex Hartley Rathbun ’52** in the Winter 2023 issue was incorrect. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, **Joanne Rathbun ’54**, and daughters Julie Wood and June Farries. *PCM* regrets the error.

Families of Children with Rare Diseases

Being the parent of a child with a devastating, ultra-rare disease can be incredibly lonely. It means a lifetime membership in a club you never want to see another family join. So it was with mixed feelings that I read “Moonshots for Unicorns” (Winter 2023) about **Zach Landman ’08** and the journey he and his family are going through with their daughter.

My wife and I are also both physicians. We met in medical school and did our residencies together at Georgetown. We delayed having children until we had the time and resources to care for them. Our third child, Andrew, was born when we were in our early 40s, a period with higher risks for both moms and babies.

Andrew’s first few months of life were like that of our first two children. Then, in a subtle flicker of his left foot, our lives changed forever. Over the course of a few weeks Andrew’s seizures became more dramatic. He went from a few a day to dozens. He spent over 100 days of his first year of life in hospitals across Southern California as we desperately raced to find a medication to make his seizures stop.

Andrew will be 6 years old in April. His seizures have slowed down, but his profound developmental stagnation persists. Andrew functions at the level of a 5-month-old. I have

never heard his voice. I have never seen him walk. Without a dedicated treatment we will be caring for an ever-growing infant for the rest of his life and ours.

Like Zach and his wife, we are not willing to accept Andrew’s fate. Our KCNT1 Epilepsy Foundation is collaborating with more than a dozen teams around the world looking into drug repurposing, new small molecules and gene therapies to save Andrew’s life.

Along the way we have been fortunate to have received advice and assistance from Pomona alumni including **Jeffrey Raskin ’03, M.D., Emil Kakkis ’82, M.D., Ph.D., and Jennifer Doudna ’85, Ph.D.** We are also working on building a multidisciplinary team of Pomona students to help with our foundation initiatives.

The rare-disease pathway is beyond challenging. I am forever grateful to Pomona for preparing me to take on seemingly insurmountable challenges and for giving me the chance to be part of a community that comes together to help people in need.

—Justin E. West ’96
Newport Beach, California
Kcnt1epilepsy.org

At left, **Justin West ’96** holds his son Andrew during one of Andrew’s many stays in the hospital as an infant. At right, West plays with Andrew, left, Colin and Carolyn in 2019. His children are now 6, 7 and 9.



Ducks on the Pond

Make that ducks in the bioswale—an unusual sight adjacent to Little Bridges after one of this year’s torrential rainstorms. The small,

landscaped basins on campus are designed to slow down rainwater and filter pollutants, but this one filled with enough water to attract a pair of courting mallards looking for a home. Alas, it was only temporary.

Photos by Jeff Hing



A Sustainable Garden Beside Marston Quad

Alongside the parade of young oaks planted beside Stover Walk to replace some of the trees lost in the 2022 windstorm, a new sustainable garden is taking root in the beds next to Marston Quad’s grassy expanse.

Once it is established in two to three years, the Marston Quad Sustainable Garden will require minimal to no irrigation. It includes plants such as California sagebrush¹, white sage² and chamise³ that have many uses among the Tongva people, the traditional caretakers of the land Pomona College now occupies. Other plantings with importance to Indigenous peoples include chaparral yucca⁴, mulefat⁵, toyon⁶, manzanita⁷ and single-leaf pinyon pines⁸.

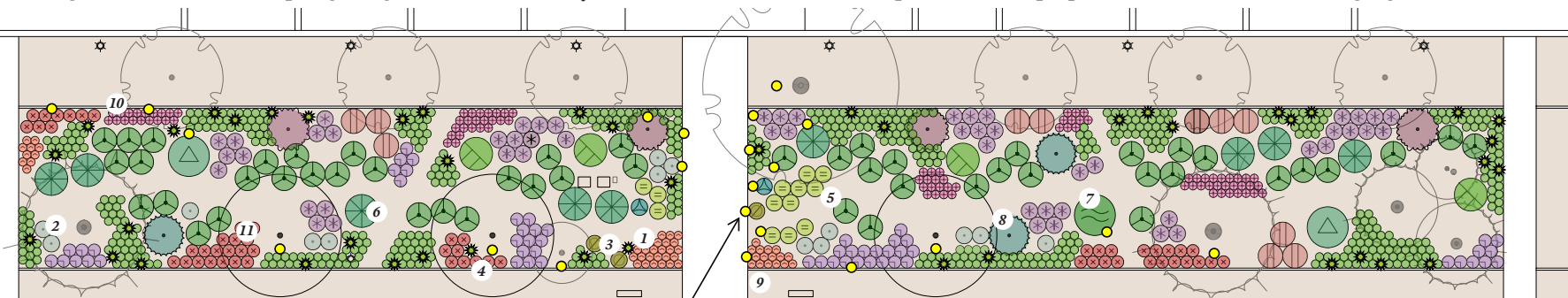
While many of the established plants such as camellias and azaleas whose blooms have signaled the arrival of spring for generations

remain, the new plantings include 30 species native to California, among them desert mallow⁹, hummingbird sage¹⁰ and California fuchsia¹¹. Designed by Claremont landscape architect **Ben McCoy**, the garden will have signs that identify the plant species in the Tongva language as well as by their English and Latin names, thanks to input from **Tina Calderon**, a culture bearer of Gabriellino Tongva, Chumash and Yoeme descent, and **Char Miller**, W.M. Keck Professor of Environmental Analysis and History.

The decision to create a more drought-tolerant landscape featuring native plants was guided in part by the research of environmental analysis students **Lucy Whitman Sandmeyer ’21**, **Madi Brothers ’22**, **Owen Hoffsten ’22** and **Maya Edstrom SC ’22**, who completed

their 2022 senior capstone project report, “Roots & Resilience: Reimagining Marston Quad after the Windstorm,” under the guidance of Professor **Guillermo Douglass-Jaimes**. The group surveyed alumni, students, staff and faculty, receiving the majority of input from alumni, with more than 300 responses. Alumni also had an opportunity to voice their opinions during the 2022 Alumni Weekend in one of two charrettes held by the student researchers.

The survey indicated that most of the Pomona community sees Marston Quad as the heart of campus, the students reported, and supports a landscape plan that “maintains the same open and green design as before the windstorm, features shade trees—especially native oaks—and [is] prepared to withstand the changing climate.”



PLANT ID SIGN

Graphic Credit: Ben McCoy/Department of Space



Award-Winning ‘TSL’

The oldest college newspaper in Southern California is still thriving—and still in print every Friday when class is in session.

The Student Life, founded in 1889, brought home 20 awards at the recent California College Media Association conference in San Francisco, including first-place awards for best newspaper, newspaper website, overall newspaper design, interactive graphic, editorial, social media reporting, feature story, news photograph, social justice coverage and news series in its category of publications on four-year campuses with 15,000 or fewer students.

TSL also claimed third nationally for newspaper and fourth nationally for website in its category in the Associated Collegiate Press awards. Recent editors-in-chief of *TSL*, the newspaper of The Claremont Colleges, include **Jasper Davidoff ’23** and **Jenna McMurtry ’24**. If you’d like to stay in touch with what’s happening on campus and the work of *TSL* journalists, visit tsl.news or subscribe to the weekly newsletter or print edition at tsl.news/subscribe/.

‘Coach Pop’ to Hall of Fame



There was little suspense over whether **Gregg Popovich** would be elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. After all, the San Antonio Spurs coach has won five NBA titles and more games than any coach in the history of the league. One bit of suspense remains, though: Will he mention his early coaching days at Pomona-Pitzer in his induction speech? Tune in to the August 12 ceremony in Springfield, Massachusetts, to see.

Out into the World

From such destinations as Copenhagen, Paris and Seoul in the fall to those and others including Amman, Jordan, and Yaoundé, Cameroon, in the spring, Pomona students dotted the globe as study abroad continued to rebound this academic year.

About 150 students studied in more than two dozen countries in what is now known as study away, which includes U.S. opportunities now managed by the Office of International and Domestic Programs. This spring also marked the relaunch of Pomona College’s international programs in Cambridge, England; Cape Town, South Africa; and the one led by Anthropology Professor **Arlen Chase** in Caracol, Belize.

One twist: A large number of seniors studied abroad after earlier plans were disrupted by the pandemic shutdown of programs in fall 2020 and spring 2021, followed by their gradual resumption.

“I know that in our fall 2022 class, I think around 35% of them were seniors and normally we would have maybe one senior,” says **Nicole Desjardins Gowdy**, senior director of international and domestic programs, noting some students also took gap semesters or years to preserve their chance to study internationally.

About half of Pomona students study abroad by the time they graduate, typically in their junior year. To ensure equal access, the College charges the same fees for a semester or year away as for studying on campus and extends financial aid allowances for that time.

International study also can offer expanded opportunities for academic achievement. **Kiya Henderson ’23** recently received the Forum on Education Abroad’s prestigious Award for Academic Achievement Abroad for her paper, “A Retrospective Analysis of Maternal Mortality in Kisumu, Kenya from March 2021 to March 2022,” based on research while studying in the School for International Training’s program in global health and human rights in Kenya. It was the second time in

three years that a Pomona student has won the honor from the international organization.

“One thing that can be surprising is how much you grow as a person in study away,” Gowdy says of international experiences. When students return, she says she sometimes notices a difference even in their physical appearance. “They’re carrying themselves in a new way. They’re more confident.

They’ve had experience navigating different environments and worldviews,” she says.

Pomona’s study abroad program is marking its 50th anniversary at the College, which established an office and named the first director of international programs in 1973.



'Easter Egg' Hunt

The season of searching for colored eggs is past, but **Brian Faber**, director of project management in the Office of Facilities and Campus Services, invites people to search for eight hidden examples of the number 47 on campus. Seven of them are identical, and two different types can be found at the new Center for Athletics, Recreation and Wellness. All of them can be seen from the exterior and are permanent, Faber says. Happy hunting. We haven't found any yet.



Coming to a Theatre Near You

Rose Portillo '75, a longtime theatre lecturer at Pomona, has been cast in the upcoming Disney+ film adaptation of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. The latest screen version of the popular children's book has a twist on the original: Alexander's last name is Garcia, and the film will star Eva Longoria and Jesse Garcia with 9-year-old Thom Nemer as Alexander. Portillo plays Alexander's grandmother, Lidia Garcia. In another recent Hollywood role, Portillo voiced the part of Señora Guzmán in *Encanto*, the 2022 Academy Award winner for best animated feature.



Urban Light, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Please Don't Kiss the Art

Urban Light, the very Instagrammable installation of 202 historic streetlamps created by the late artist **Chris Burden '69** at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gets a lot of love. Maybe a little too much love.

The 2008 sculpture needs a paint job and is one of 23 works selected by the Bank of America Art Conservation Project for grants "for the preservation and conservation of the world's cultural treasures" in 2023.

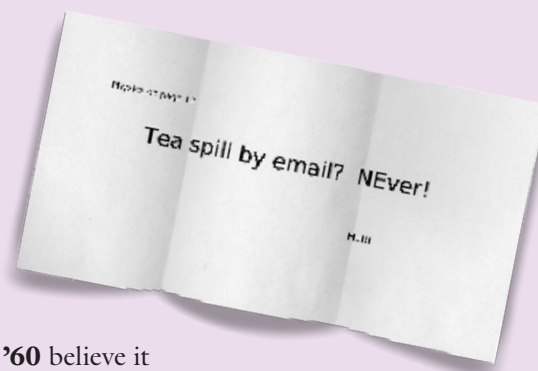
"Conservators will apply protective paint layers that have been extensively tested on all the streetlamps, ensuring that substances such as lipstick, permanent marker and dye can be easily cleaned from their surfaces," the bank announced. Other works selected for preservation grants included 15th-century Armenian manuscripts, Andy Warhol's *Oxidation* series and two paintings by Paul Cézanne.

More on Mufti

In the interest of Pomona history, a few women from the Class of 1960 have revealed the origins of Mufti, the secret society responsible for anonymous and often pun-filled campus postings over the years. (See "Letter Box," page 8.)

Exactly how it came to be known as Mufti may be lost to history, as **Alice Taylor Holmes '60** and **Jean Wentworth Bush Guerin '60** believe it might have been their late classmate **Thomasine Wilson '60**, known as a wordsmith, who named the group. Their best guess is it had to do with a secondary definition of the word that refers to civilian clothes or being out of uniform. (Anonymity was required as the women were not in compliance with residence hall rules of the era when they exited over the back wall at night.)

By the way, just because they've come clean doesn't mean they think others should. Secrecy "absolutely" remains an important aspect of Mufti, they agree. It seems from our mailbox that an anonymous former member agrees. (See above.)



Strom C. Thacker '88. Reprinted with permission of Pitzer College

New Pitzer President a Sagehen from the Start

The bonds of The Claremont Colleges will become a bit tighter this summer, when consortium alumni take over as presidents of two of the colleges.

Strom C. Thacker '88, who graduated from Pomona with a degree in international relations, cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, becomes president of Pitzer College on July 1. On the same day, **Harriet B. Nembhard CMC '90** becomes president of Harvey Mudd College.

Thanks to conveniently aligned athletic programs, neither one will have trouble knowing which side to sit on when Pomona-Pitzer plays Claremont-Mudd-Scripps in Sixth Street Rivalry games.

Thacker, who has been dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs at Union College in Schenectady, New York, grew up in Northern California and came to Pomona with the help of generous financial aid that included a federal Pell Grant. He went on to earn a Ph.D. in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and become an advocate for college equity, access and the value of a liberal arts education.

Among Thacker's duties at Union College, by the way: Managing a budget of approximately \$47 million. (Chirp.) Welcome home, President Thacker.

Civil Rights Press Photos at Benton Museum

Inspired by **Myrlie Evers-Williams '68** and the gift of her archives to the College, **Michael Mattis** and **Judy Hochberg** have donated their collection of more than 1,600 press photographs documenting the civil rights movement to the Benton Museum of Art in her honor. The Mattis-Hochberg photos include scenes of resistance, acts of civil disobedience and images of civil rights leaders including Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, James H. Meredith as well as photos of Evers-Williams.

2023 Wig Awards

Each year, juniors and seniors vote for the Wig Distinguished Professor Awards for excellence in teaching—the highest honor bestowed on Pomona faculty—in recognition of exceptional teaching, concern for students and service to the College and the community. This year, William A. Johnson Professor of Government and Professor of Politics **David Menefee-Libey** was honored for the seventh time, tying the late Emerita Professor of English **Martha Andresen Wilder** for the most recognitions since the establishment of the award in 1955.



2023 Wig Award recipients, from left: Fred Krinsky Professor of Jewish Studies and Professor of Religious Studies **Oona Eisenstadt**, Assistant Professor of Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies **Arely Zimmerman**, William A. Johnson Professor of Government and Professor of Politics **David Menefee-Libey**, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics **Jo Hardin '95**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Statistics **Konrad Aguilar**, Assistant Professor of Psychological Science **Sara Masland**. Not pictured: Henry G. Lee '37 Professor of English **Prageeta Sharma**.

A Path to U.S. Colleges for Refugee Students

Among Pomona's newly admitted students for 2023-24 are nine refugees with citizenships from Congo, Syria and Ukraine.

The admissions are a reflection of Pomona's commitment to the recently launched Global Student Haven Initiative, a program founded by eight colleges and universities in response to the war in Ukraine and the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

Along with Bowdoin, Caltech, Dartmouth, NYU, Smith, Trinity and Williams, Pomona is dedicated to providing a path for students affected by worldwide crises to apply to U.S.-based colleges and universities—and to receive scholarships and other support when they arrive. The initiative seeks to help

students continue their education and later to return to their home nations.

"This is about opening doors and helping people through them," says Pomona College President **G. Gabrielle Starr**. "The global disruptions of recent years have tested American higher education's long commitment to reaching out to the world. We seek to reaffirm our global ties, starting with the urgent needs of students facing the devastation of war."

Pomona's effort is supported by an earlier \$1.2 million gift from **Florence and Paul Eckstein '62** in honor of his immigrant parents, and a new \$1 million gift from the Fletcher Jones Foundation.

2023 Commencement Speakers

Pomona's 2023 Commencement speakers know about persistence, as do the new graduates they addressed in a May 14 ceremony.

Sherrilyn Ifill is a distinguished civil rights lawyer, voting rights advocate and scholar. A senior fellow at the Ford Foundation, she previously spent a decade as president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the nation's premier civil rights law organization. She was chosen one of *Time* magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2021.

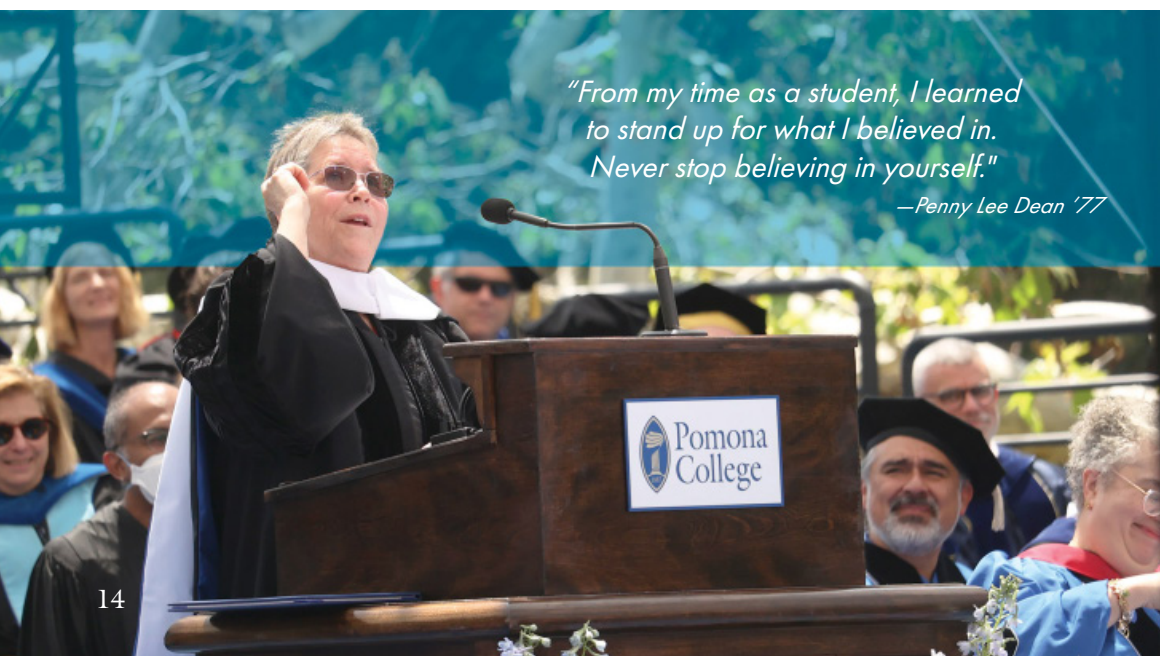
Penny Lee Dean '77 set 13 world records as a marathon swimmer, including a 1978 crossing of the English Channel that shattered the men's world record by more than an hour. She was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1996. A six-time All-American swimmer at Pomona, she returned to the College and coached and taught for 26 years, winning 17 SCIAA women's swimming titles and guiding the women's water polo team to a national championship in 1993.

In addition to conferring honorary degrees on Ifill and Dean, Pomona

posthumously honored Trustee Emeritus **George E. "Buddy" Moss '52** with the Trustees' Medal of Merit. A member of the Board of Trustees from 1995 to 2004, Moss made possible many programs for faculty and students. Among his many contributions, he made gifts to establish the George E. Moss Community Partnerships Fund, the George E. and Nancy O. Moss Professorship in Economics, the Henry G. Lee '37 Professorship in Poetry, the Peter W. Stanley Chair of Linguistics and Cognitive Science and the Roscoe Moss Professorship in Chemistry.



"We need you in this fight. You have to find time to do your part. While you do your part, hold onto your joy. Joy is part of resistance as well."
—Sherrilyn Ifill



"From my time as a student, I learned to stand up for what I believed in. Never stop believing in yourself."
—Penny Lee Dean '77

Long-Serving Faculty Members Retire

Professors **Margaret Waller** and **Zayn Kassam** have retired after decades of teaching and service to Pomona College.

Waller, the Dr. Mary Ann Vanderzyl Reynolds '56 Professor of Humanities and professor of Romance languages and literatures, had been a member of the faculty since 1986. A specialist in 19th-century French literature, she also is an expert on gender and power. Her 1993 book, *The Male Malady: Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel*, was one of the first to pioneer masculinity studies in the field of French literature. Waller, known as Peggy, was honored with the Wig Distinguished Professor Award for excellence in teaching in 1991 and 2000.

Kassam, the John Knox McLean Professor of Religious Studies, retired in December 2022 to become director of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. A professor at Pomona since 1995, her most recent leadership role was as associate dean of the College for diversity, equity and inclusion. Kassam was a three-time recipient of the Wig Award for excellence in teaching (1998, 2005, 2015) and in 2005 was honored with the American Academy of Religion's National Teacher of the Year Award.



The Places They Go

Speaking broadly, last year's Class of 2022 was similar to many other Pomona classes: About 71% secured jobs, internships or entered military service after graduation, and 21% were pursuing further education. Another 3% received fellowships, 2% began service opportunities and 3% had other plans.

The Class of 2022 First Destination Report features data gathered through surveys and data mining for the College's Career Development Office. Top industries included internet and software companies (14%), management consulting (11%), higher education (9%) and investment banking and management (9%).

For the real nitty-gritty about the specific jobs and graduate degrees Pomona's Class of 2022 headed for, check out the fascinating interactive dashboard at pomona.edu/outcomes-dashboard. Want to see how many went to work for Amazon and how many went to Accenture? It's all there, along with how many were destined for graduate school in Cambridge (Massachusetts or England) and elsewhere.

For an early look at destinations for some of the Class of 2023 graduates, see the inside back page of this issue.



Scholars and Fellows

This year's list of recipients of prestigious awards to study or conduct research at home or abroad includes two young women with striking achievements. **Vera Berger '23** was selected as both a Churchill Scholar and a National Science Foundation Fellow. She also was Pomona's student body president as a senior. **Alexandra Turvey '24** was selected as both a Beckman Scholar and Goldwater Scholar. In addition, she is a multiple-time All-American swimmer for Pomona-Pitzer and received the NCAA's Elite 90 Award from women's swimming. The Elite 90 is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade-point average participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's 90 championships.

Beckman Scholars

Santiago Serrano '25
Alexandra Turvey '24

Churchill Scholar

Vera Berger '23

Downing Scholars

Mohammed Ahmed '23
Rya Jetha '23

Fulbright Scholars

Visit Pomona.edu for updates.

Goldwater Scholars

Zoë Batterman '24
Alexandra Turvey '24

National Science Foundation Fellows

Vera Berger '23
Zoe Haggard '21
Joe Hesse-Withbroe '21
Kirby Lam '23
Rohan Lopez '23
Adele Myers '21
Gabrielle Ohlson '21
Cody Pham '21
Marie Tano '21
Gabe Udell '21
Clayton Ziemke '18

Schwarzman Scholars

Solomon Olshin '23
Qingjie "Bob" Zeng '18

Space for Sale

Ashlee Vance '00, author of the bestseller *Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future*, turns his attention to the business of space in his latest book, *When the Heavens Went on Sale: The Misfits and Geniuses Racing to Put Space Within Reach*. Vance follows four startup companies—Astra, Firefly, Planet Labs and Rocket Lab—as they race to launch rockets and satellites into orbit. *PCM's* Lorraine Wu Harry '97 spoke to Vance about the book, the corresponding HBO show he is producing and, of course, Elon Musk. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

PCM: What made you want to write this book?

Vance: I was not a space junkie (although I seem to be becoming one). Out of the Elon book, my favorite thing to report on was the early days of SpaceX. Those were some of the best stories and the most interesting characters. Right as I finished that book, I could see that there was this new world bubbling up around commercial space. And there were these entrepreneurs appearing all over the planet who were trying to make rockets and satellites. I could see that this was my chance to witness what may be like the early days of SpaceX firsthand. Then, as time went on, it became clear to me that there was this revolution taking place and that space was changing forever. And I had this unique “in” with all kinds of access that you don't normally get, and I just started chasing it.

PCM: What was it like for you to do research for this book?

Vance: Normally, almost all this stuff is usually top secret. It's almost impossible to get into, but because I had this track record, people were very willing to let me in, and then reporting it was just a proper adventure. I probably went to about 12 countries across four continents and followed this for five years. That's one of the things I love about the book: It is about rockets and space, but it's also this travelogue where you're going with me on this journey and meeting all these interesting characters. Some of them are in the U.S., but it's very much a global story and full of drama in all these places.

PCM: You say in the “Dear Reader” section, “I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed living it.” What did you enjoy about living it?

Vance: A lot of these launches take place

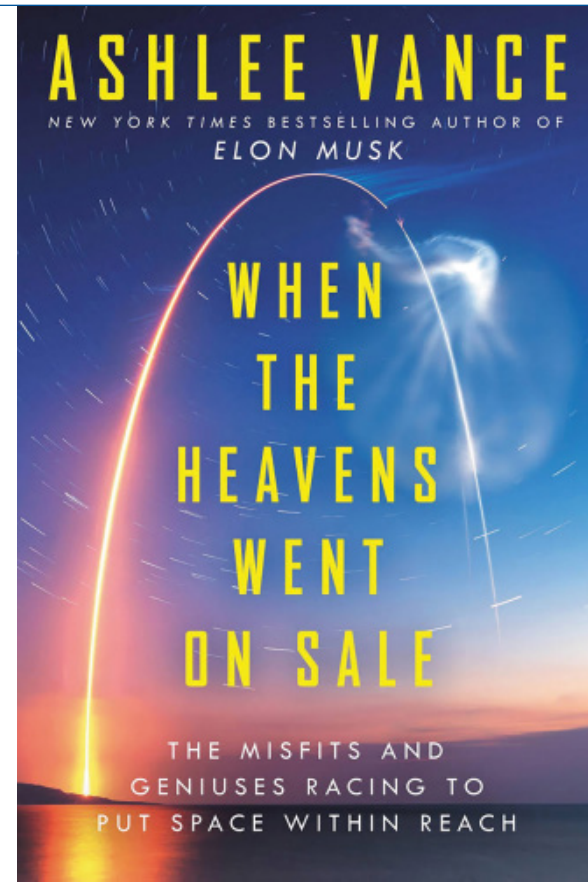
in pretty exotic locations, and they're both beautiful but also off the beaten path. The characters were very diverse in their personalities; there are a lot of different archetypes. You got to meet this quite eccentric group of people and spend a lot of time with them. It was this feeling of having a front-row seat to the birth of an industry and really getting to see how it operates. I do lots of very long magazine stories where you might interview dozens of people over a decent period of time. But this was the first time I felt like I was right there getting to witness everything firsthand, and you got a sense of the joy but also the difficulties and travails these people go through. It was the first time in my reporting where I really felt like I knew for sure what ground truth was, through my own eyes, as opposed to trying to stitch it together from other people's opinions after the fact. I was living it in real time.

PCM: So this was pretty different from all your previous work.

Vance: With Elon, there was a lot of historical stuff where you had to go back all the way to his childhood and recreate things, and the same with some of his earlier companies. But I spent literally thousands of hours with these subjects and so, in that sense, very different in terms of the depth of the reporting. I'd wanted to be a fly on the wall of a journey for a long time.

PCM: Tell me about the show you're producing and how it overlaps with the book.

Vance: I filmed with all the characters in my book for these five years and I've partnered with Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment and Adam McKay's Hyperobject Industries on this project. It's a



more concentrated version of the book that is going to focus on a couple of characters from the book and tell the story about the rise of commercial space. As long as the stars align, it will be on HBO next year.

PCM: Your book about Elon Musk came out eight years ago, and a lot has happened since then. What is your assessment of Musk's ownership of Twitter?

Vance: Since I've done the book, Elon's only gotten bigger, bolder and crazier over time. I'm still a huge fan of Tesla and SpaceX and find them fascinating. Twitter is not really my cup of tea, and I think it's a huge waste of time for Elon to be dealing with that. He's not doing probably the best job of taking it over so far. It's kind of sad, if I'm honest, because so much of my interest in him was this figure who was not doing consumer technology, was doing stuff that felt a bit more meaningful to me in the world of manufacturing and human ambition and climate change. Even though I use Twitter a lot, I find it to be sort of a large distraction and it falls more in the entertainment category to me. It's a little depressing that this guy who symbolizes so many other things is getting down in the muck.

PCM: How do you think the recent FTX bankruptcy and Twitter meltdown have changed the idea that tech entrepreneurs can supplant traditional government?

Vance: We're at a very interesting time where there's a handful of technology companies that have resources on par with governments and are taking on projects that governments traditionally would have done. If you look at Tesla's self-driving car network, if you look at all the rockets that I'm writing about, if you look at these giant computers fueling AI—outside of China, you don't really see countries tackling these issues; it's being driven by the companies. We're at this precarious position where I think a lot of the innovation and control has shifted so far from governments and academia toward companies. I'm not sure that most people fully realize the extent of this shift to where if you are a college like Pomona or a university like Stanford, and you want to do breakthrough research on the human brain or something like that, you probably do not have the requisite resources to do that yourself. You're knocking on the door of somebody like Google to borrow their computers. Overall, I'm not sure this is a good thing.

PCM: Why don't you think it's good?

Vance: There are pieces of this that are not good. There are pieces of this that are very liberating. I think it's bad that five countries controlled space for 60 years. I think it's a much more equitable future where almost any country that wants to be a spacefaring nation can be that. All the satellite imagery, all these pictures taken of Earth are not just in the hands of spy agencies and militaries. That the public can access all this stuff to see the sum total of human activity, what's happening with the environment, it's a much more open scenario with information. So I don't know. There are a lot of pros and cons.

PCM: Would you say the pros outweigh the cons of commercial space?

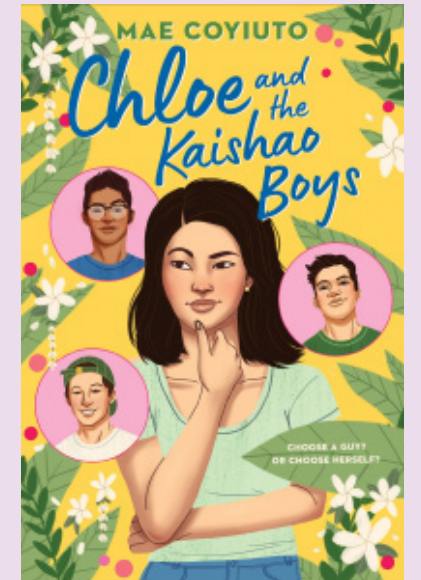
Vance: I think it's to be determined. I don't think the average person on the street realizes what's coming, which is that 100 percent, the capitalists have taken over space and the governments will very shortly be also-ran participants in this. People get fixated on space tourism or going to the moon, but in actual fact most of the money and action is taking place in low-Earth orbit where there's this giant economic expansion taking place. This is very much a capitalist exercise that, on the pro side, is going to bring high-speed internet connectivity to half the world's population so they can fully participate in the modern economy. We're going to have all this data that was unimaginable about the health of our planet, monitoring trees, methane. You will be able to calculate and tax every piece of this, but it is companies that are doing this. This is new territory that's being seized.

PCM: So, to be determined.

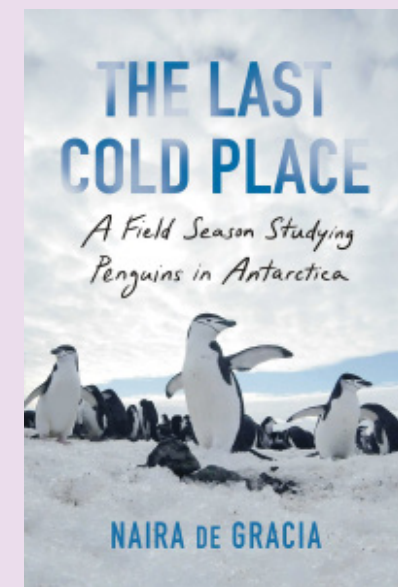
Vance: Hopefully, given that this is the last place we can expand, with a bit of luck we will be better stewards of it than we have been of the land and the oceans and the air. [PCM](#)



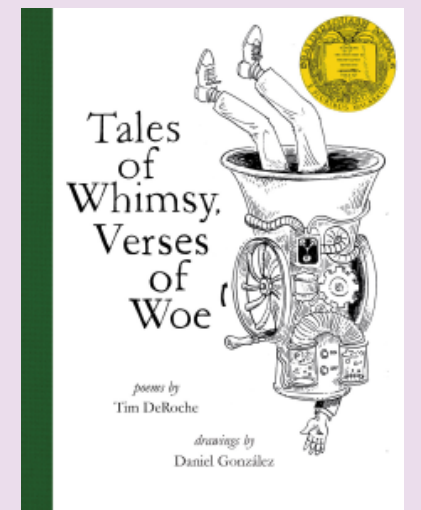
In *Asian American Histories of the United States*, **Catherine Ceniza Choy '91** presents 200 years of Asian migration, labor and community formation, all the while reckoning with the recent surge in anti-Asian hate and violence.



Chloe and the Kaishao Boys, a young adult rom-com by **Mae Coyoito '17**, follows a Chinese-Filipina girl in Manila as she gets off the waitlist for USC and decides if following her dreams is worth leaving everything behind.



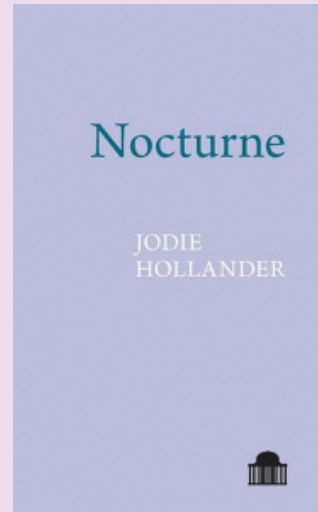
Naira de Gracia '14 writes a memoir about her experience studying penguins in Antarctica, weaving in the history of Antarctic exploration, climate science and personal reflection in *The Last Cold Place*.



Tales of Whimsy, Verses of Woe by **Tim DeRoche '92** is a collection of lighthearted poetry filled with wordplay reminiscent of Shel Silverstein and Dr. Seuss.



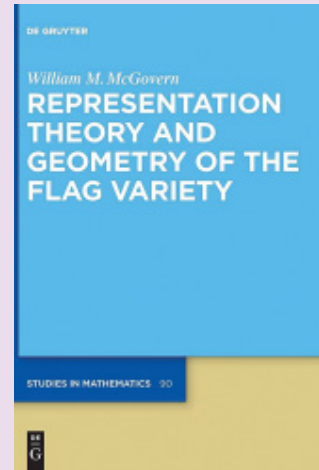
The short stories in *I Have Her Memories Now* by **Carrie Grinstead '06** touch on health, medicine and death and explore themes of vulnerability and fallibility.



The poetry of **Jodie Hollander '99** in *Nocturne* charts the emotional journey of the daughter of a professional classical pianist, exploring family dysfunction and musical obsession.



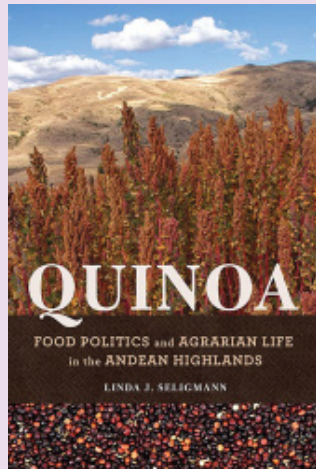
In *Tasting Coffee: An Inquiry into Objectivity*, **Kenneth Liberman '70** sheds light on the methods used to convert subjective experience into objective knowledge with coffee as its focal point.



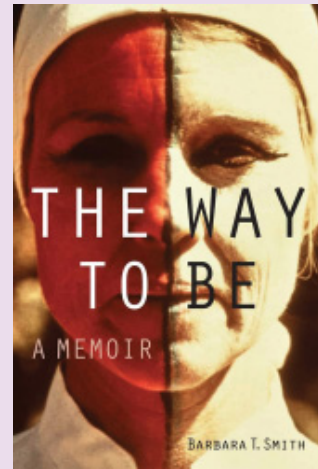
Representation Theory and Geometry of the Flag Variety by **William "Monty" McGovern '82** is a reference for researchers and graduate students in representation theory, combinatorics and algebraic geometry.



In *Blue Jeans*, **Carolyn Purnell '06** presents extensive research on the history of jeans as well as the global and economic forces that shape the industry. The book is part of a series called Object Lessons about "the hidden lives of ordinary things."



Linda Seligmann '75 tells the story of Indigenous farmers and the global demand for a superfood in *Quinoa: Food Politics and Agrarian Life in the Andean Highlands*.



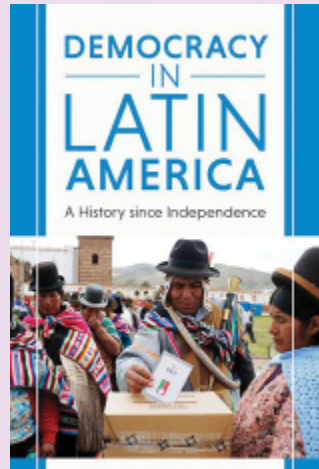
The Way to Be: A Memoir, a firsthand account of the life and work of artist **Barbara T. Smith '53**, accompanies an exhibition on view at the Getty Research Institute through July 16, 2023.



The novel *Beyond That, the Sea* by **Laura Spence-Ash '81** follows Beatrix, an 11-year-old British girl sent to live with a New England family during World War II, as she navigates two worlds.



After Anne: A Novel of Lucy Maud Montgomery's Life by **Logan Steiner '06** tells the story behind the story of the author of *Anne of Green Gables*, offering a nuanced portrayal of her life.



In *Democracy in Latin America: A History Since Independence*, **Thomas Wright '63** chronicles Latin America's struggle for democracy as well as the challenges that lie ahead.



Alex Zylstra '09 Plays Key Role in Nuclear Fusion Breakthrough

By Marilyn Thomsen

The shot that took just a few billionths of a second was 60 years in the making, and Alex Zylstra '09 played a key role in its success. Just after 1 a.m. on December 5, 2022, Zylstra and fellow scientists at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's National Ignition Facility (NIF) at last achieved fusion ignition. The energy produced by a controlled fusion reaction exceeded the amount required to fuel the process: 2.05 megajoules in, 3.15 megajoules out. For a tiny fraction of a second, they produced the brightest thing on Earth.

Fusion, as the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) describes it, occurs when "two light nuclei combine to form a single heavier nucleus, releasing a large amount of energy." The NIF scientists achieved a breakthrough that could someday lead to limitless clean energy to power the world, using the same reaction as the sun and stars.

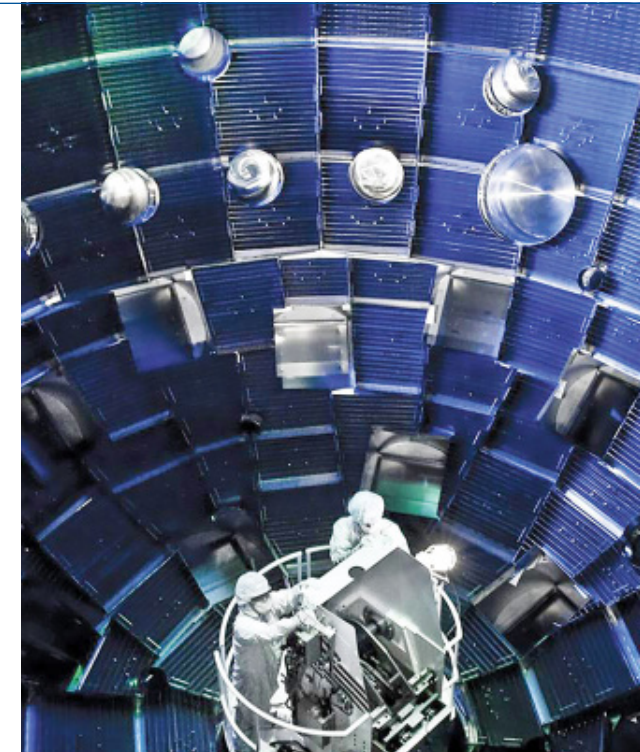
Zylstra was on the panel of experts at the DOE news conference in Washington to describe the successful experiment, which involved shooting 192 huge lasers at a target the size of a pea. The resulting temperature reached more than 100 million degrees. The pressure was more than double that at the center of the sun. The level of precision the experiment required was mind-boggling.

"We had a debate over a laser setting equivalent to five trillionths of a meter," Zylstra said at the news conference. "We had a discussion with the laser science team over timing discrepancies of 25 trillionths of a second."

In an email, Zylstra writes that he had been "eager to work on validating the results before we went public." Outside experts also provided peer review before the successful experiment was announced. Still, "When I saw the early data start coming in after 1 a.m. on December 5th, I was incredibly excited," he writes.

As principal experimentalist, Zylstra describes his role as twofold: "First, to be the primary scientist associated with executing a particular 'shot,' or experiment, and second, to guide a set of experiments to develop improvements or test hypotheses." He describes the NIF as "a highly interdisciplinary endeavor," and works closely with the other teams—computational, design, measurement, laser and target fabrication, and operations.

Dwight Whitaker, chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Pomona, was not surprised at Zylstra's role in the groundbreaking experiment. Zylstra was in his junior year when Whitaker joined the Pomona College faculty and



began setting up his lab. "I was trying to set up some difficult experiments and I was ecstatic when he joined the lab, because he was extraordinary," Whitaker recalls. "Alex and I worked a lot of hours together. I used to turn knobs with him in the lab, and now he's running one of the most complicated experiments ever created."

Zylstra has focused on fusion since starting a doctoral program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology the fall after graduating from Pomona. As an undergraduate, he'd had the opportunity to see the NIF center being built and says that "it felt like a chance to work on something straight out of science fiction."

Whitaker says fusion could "solve one of the biggest problems facing humanity right now—the climate crisis." But fusion research, like most other areas of science, is a long and arduous process. Whitaker says that "probably the personality trait you need to have as a physicist is the ability to grind through very unrewarding times, because experimental physics is usually a lesson in failure. Ninety percent of the things we do don't work," he says. "But each time you fail, you learn. I think that's what fusion has been—lots of incremental steps and failures." And then, success.



Another National Title for Women's Water Polo

The wire-to-wire No. 1 team in Division III women's water polo this season had to go the extra distance to bring home its second consecutive national championship.

Pomona-Pitzer flew two time zones to play in the four-team USA Water Polo Division III National Championship tournament in Rock Island, Illinois, only to meet Sixth Street rival Claremont-Mudd-Scripps (CMS) in the title game.

The Athenas pressed the Sagehens even further, taking them to overtime before Pomona-Pitzer won the championship, 14-13, after CMS just missed a shot in the final seconds of the second overtime period.

With that, the Sagehens defended the Division III title they won at home in Haldeman Pool last year. The NCAA holds only a single-division championship tournament dominated by Division I programs, but USA Water Polo sponsors a Division III title for men and women.

"I want to thank USA Water Polo for stepping up and organizing this tournament," Sagehens Coach Alex Rodriguez said. "They are providing

an experience for our student-athletes that was not available before."

CMS came from behind and forced overtime with four seconds left in regulation when Cooper McKenna '24 made good on a five-meter penalty shot to tie the score at 12-12.

"I think the world of the CMS coaching staff and they had their team prepared to fight," Rodriguez said.

The Sagehens netted the winning goal early in the second overtime period on a hard shot by Alexandra Szczerba '25. CMS couldn't break through against goalkeeper Zosia Amberger '25, hitting the crossbar in the final seconds before the Sagehens sealed it with a steal.

Abigail Wiesenthal '24, who scored six goals in the final game and four in the semifinal, earned most valuable player honors. She was joined on the eight-player all-tournament team by Szczerba and Namlhun Jachung PZ '24.

With the win, the Sagehens repeated their triple titles of a year ago, winning the SCIAC regular-season championship,

the SCIAC tournament championship and the USA Water Polo Division III title.

Still, Pomona-Pitzer's 26-10 record doesn't fully tell the tale. The Sagehens stood up to Division I teams all season, taking on a powerhouse schedule to prepare to defend their 2022 Division III title. As a result, they finished the season not only ranked No. 1 in D-III—they also ranked No. 22 in the all-division poll dominated by D-I teams.

They pulled their biggest upset in a game against then-No. 11 Indiana, claiming the best win in program history against a ranked opponent. They also defeated then-No. 22 Long Island University, a team that reached the NCAA tournament.

"When we play D-I teams, most of the time we're the David in the David-and-Goliath situation," said Madison Lewis '24, the Sagehens co-captain along with Wiesenthal. That's true, said Amberger, who as goalie has the task of facing likely future Olympians from teams like Stanford and USC.

"We obviously did win one, which was super amazing," Amberger said. [PCM](#)

SAGEHENS STILL IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Ryan Long '21 Strikes Out Mike Trout

The situation Ryan Long '21 found himself in on March 11 was almost unfathomable. The 6-foot-6 former Sagehens pitcher was on the mound for Great Britain against Team USA in the World Baseball Classic in Phoenix when Mike Trout came to the plate. Long, a minor leaguer who was drafted 497th overall by the Baltimore Orioles in 2021, was facing Trout, the three-time American League MVP and 10-time All-Star.

And down went Trout after Long struck him out with a 94-mph fastball.

"It was just a really surreal experience. Something that I'll definitely hold onto forever," Long says of playing in the World Baseball Classic.

Long realized he was eligible to play for Great Britain because his mother, Liz, was born in England. He asked Pomona-Pitzer Coach Frank Pericolosi if he had connections to the British Baseball Federation and Pericolosi put him in touch with alumni who did.

Months later, Long was pitching at Chase Field in Great Britain's opening game against Team USA.

"I think before this the biggest crowd I ever played in front of was about 7,000, maybe 8,000. This was 40,000," Long says.

His early nerves settled after he went on in relief in the fourth inning.

"Once I got out there and got on the mound, my heartbeat started to slow down a little bit, which was cool," Long says.

He gave up a home run, "one that I'm not too upset about because it's a major league All-Star," he says of the blast by Kyle Schwarber, who led the National League in homers last season.

The next inning, Trout came to the plate.

"First of all, he's obviously an amazing hitter but their whole lineup was filled with All-Stars and future Hall of Famers," says Long.

He got Trout to a 3-2 count and decided to stay with his best pitch, his fastball.

"He fouled the first two off," Long says. "He didn't seem like he was seeing it as well as he might normally be. I decided to throw it again and it got past him. That was a very, very exhilarating feeling—a lot to take in."

Long moved up to the Orioles' High-A team in Aberdeen, Maryland, this season and still has a goal of reaching the majors, but he won't forget playing for Great Britain.

"I think that will go down as one of the best, if not the best, experiences I'll ever have in this game." [PCM](#)



Melissa Barlow '87 Officiates NCAA Tournament Games

In a banner year for women's college basketball, Melissa Barlow '87 was in the middle of an NCAA tournament that garnered record ratings.

Decades after she played point guard on Pomona-Pitzer's standout teams of the 1980s, Barlow still runs the floor as a top NCAA Division I women's basketball official. She called three games during the 2023 tournament, including the Sweet 16 game in which Iowa star Caitlin Clark scored 31 points in a win over Colorado.

Barlow has officiated in 10 Final Fours and three NCAA championship games, assignments that are earned through round-by-round reviews by officiating supervisors. She also has been yelled at by some of the best in the business—the late Pat Summitt of Tennessee, Geno Auriemma of Connecticut, Kim Mulkey of Louisiana State—and can laugh it off later.

For years, officiating was a sidelight to a highly successful career in the pharmaceutical industry that enabled Barlow, a biology major at Pomona, to retire at 53 from her job as national sales director for the metabolic division of AbbVie.

She encourages other former women's players to get into officiating, too.

"I try to tell them: You get the best seat in the house, you get a workout and they pay you to watch these great games." [PCM](#)



Photo by Paul Stadart, British Baseball Federation/GB Baseball

All the Way to the Supreme Court



As a law student at UC Irvine, Viridiana Chabolla '13 became a plaintiff in the case that preserved DACA. Now she gives a voice to immigrants by advocating for others.

By Carla Maria Guerrero '06

There are not a lot of big wins for Viridiana Chabolla '13 in her line of work. It's not for a lack of trying, or a lack of sweat and tears. Her commitment has been tested over the years but she remains determined. Chabolla is an attorney working in immigration law. The landscape is grim, she says. It can be heartbreaking. Demoralizing. She's not just an attorney. She is an immigrant, too, and for most of her life she was undocumented.

In February, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote a story about one of her recent clients. Leonel Contreras, a U.S. Army veteran, was a legal permanent resident before being deported to Mexico after serving time for a nonviolent crime. Contreras had grown up in the U.S., but after his deportation he worked and lived in Tijuana for at least a decade before the Immigrant Defenders Law Center in Los Angeles took his case and Chabolla helped him return to his family members in California. He became a U.S. citizen earlier this year.

"It's really nice to wave an American flag at a naturalization ceremony," says Chabolla, who began working at the Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef) in October 2021. "Immigration law is so harsh and when it's not harsh, it's just not helpful. It's hard to have a win. When you have those moments, you have to grab on and make them last."



Chabolla was born in Guanajuato, Mexico. Her mother came to the U.S. to escape a bad relationship and start a new life. A 2-year-old Chabolla and the rest of her mother's family joined her soon after. Chabolla grew up with her grandparents, aunts and cousins all living close to each other in East Los Angeles. "I'd remember seeing my mom and aunts getting ready for work at ridiculous hours of the day," she says of the early-morning hubbub. "I remember always being surrounded by people and conversations. There were a lot of disagreements but a lot of love."

When she was 11, Chabolla met a group of lawyers who worked in East L.A. Although she didn't know what exactly they did, she recalls thinking that they seemed to hold a lot of power. They seemed to have some kind of authority to help her and others like her—people who were not born in the U.S.

It was during Chabolla's junior year at Pomona that the Obama administration established an immigration policy that changed her life. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) allowed certain immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and also become eligible for a work permit.

For the first time, Chabolla was able to have a job on campus. She saved her first pay stub. It wasn't much in terms of money, but it was significant for Chabolla.

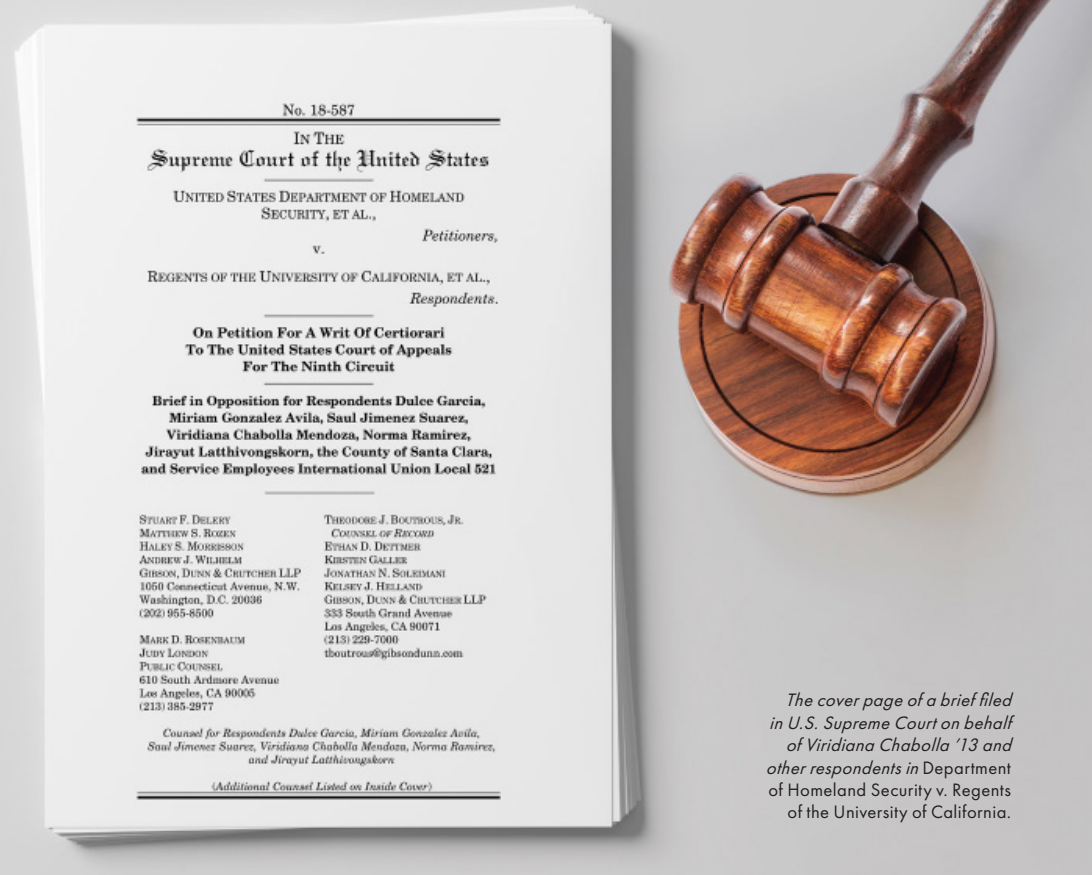
With DACA, Chabolla's future seemed a bit brighter. She could now apply for jobs after graduation. Her first work after Pomona was as an organizer with the pro bono legal services nonprofit Public Counsel, a choice that set her on a course for a win of historic proportions.

For four years, Chabolla took down the stories of plaintiffs for cases being handled by Public Counsel. As time passed, she began to feel more empowered to share her immigration status with her director, Mark Rosenbaum, even as the national political landscape was transitioning from an Obama presidency to a Trump one.

"When Trump was elected, I broke down," she says. She remembers Rosenbaum calling her to tell her she didn't have to go to work the next day: "Go be with your family, go through your emotions," he told her.

"We didn't know what Trump would do first. We just hit the ground running," says Chabolla, who worked on the defense case for Daniel Ramirez Medina, the first person to have his DACA permit taken away. "With everything going on, we focused

The Trump administration's 2017 decision to rescind DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) set off protests in multiple cities.



The cover page of a brief filed in U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Viridiana Chabolla '13 and other respondents in Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California.

on putting out fires. Trump wasn't taking out DACA in one go just yet. He was creating all of this panic everywhere first."

Her time at Public Counsel rekindled Chabolla's original interest in law.

"I kept thinking of the best way I could help others. I loved the idea of gaining new knowledge, and a degree in law would allow me to have a sense of power," she says. The attorneys at Public Counsel, like her boss Rosenbaum, not only practiced law and led big cases but they also wrote articles and taught university-level courses.

In September of 2017, the Trump administration announced it was officially rescinding DACA. Chabolla had just started at the UC Irvine School of Law. Her initial response was to focus on school and wait.

Then Chabolla got a call from Rosenbaum. "He called me to be a plaintiff in a case against the United States. I felt terrified."

Chabolla phoned her mother and her family. "If I shared my story, I would have to share their story," she says. She also was married by then and discussed the possible ramifications with her husband.

Her family was supportive. Chabolla felt compelled to help.

The Public Counsel lawsuit led by Rosenbaum was filed as *Garcia v. United States*. As it made its way through the higher courts, it was merged with four

other cases and ultimately became known as *Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California* by the time it reached the U.S. Supreme Court.

As a plaintiff in the case, Chabolla shared her story with a lawyer for a written declaration. While she never testified before any judges, she did have to share her

"He called me to be a plaintiff in a case against the United States. I felt terrified."

—Viridiana Chabolla '13

immigration story multiple times as the case garnered national media attention.

On June 18, 2020, the Supreme Court delivered its 5-4 decision blocking the Trump administration's elimination of DACA. Chabolla was in Washington for the hearing. "A few of us got to go inside," she recalls. "Some DACA students were there, too. And it was really powerful. These justices were hearing arguments on this huge case...but I know maybe for them all cases they hear are

huge. But we occupied half the room and that was really powerful and really unusual."

Chabolla took notes during the hearing. "I remember writing down something that Justice [Sonia] Sotomayor said: 'This is not about the law; this is about our choice to destroy lives.'

"So much of what Trump did was done without following administrative law," explains Chabolla about how they "won" this case. "Trump didn't follow procedure," she says. "If they had taken their time and done it right, it would have passed. But I remember taking the win."

Chabolla, who had just recently become a U.S. resident through marriage, remembers feeling relief for the DACA community.

"The DACA victory in the Supreme Court is a testament to the vision, commitment and tireless efforts of many, and Viri's name would surely be at the top of that list," says Rosenbaum. "I had the privilege of working with Viri at Public Counsel, first as an organizer...and then to come forward as a plaintiff in *Garcia* to inspire others to do the same and make the case that our nation needs DACA recipients to build a kinder and more inclusive community for all of us."



Upon returning home, Chabolla once again focused on school—it was her second-to-last semester at UC Irvine. She spent a year as a graduate legal assistant with the Office of the Attorney General for the California Department of Justice. It was a tough gig for a newly graduated lawyer. After one year, she left for her current job as a staff attorney at ImmDef, a legal services nonprofit with a post-conviction unit that drew her interest. "They take on clients who have criminal convictions like possession of marijuana from 40 years ago with deportation orders—deportation is not a fair punishment for everyone.

"Many of our clients have been living here as legal permanent residents for more than 20 years. Most find out they're getting deported just when they're going to be released," she says. "The statistics show that immigrants commit fewer crimes than the general population and our clients have already served their time—in jail, or prison, they've paid their dues and they've even paid their fines. Adding deportation is a way of saying 'I don't like that you're an immigrant.' It's extra punishment."



Viridiana Chabolla '13, who was brought to the U.S. from Mexico at 2 years old, on the day she became a U.S. citizen in 2021.

The work is tough. "My supervisor has shared that sometimes we have to redefine what a win is," says Chabolla. "It makes up partially for the times when we have a clinic and all these people show up thinking they can apply for residency when they actually can't."

She says that the immigrants she talks to are so full of hope. They believe that an attorney—like herself—can do it all. "Every situation is different. No lawyer has a miracle cure.

"It's heartbreaking to know how many people are becoming elders who don't have a nest egg, who paid taxes into the system but they can't access Social Security, can't access Medicare," Chabolla adds. "It's something I've been thinking a lot about

in the past two years: How can I help aside from placing my hopes in a Congress that is more concerned about building borders than dealing with these issues?"

In 2021, Chabolla became a U.S. citizen. The day was bittersweet and laden with guilt. "It was one of those moments where I felt I was further abandoning my undocumented community, but I know that's not true," she says. Although her mother recently became a U.S. resident, some of her family remains undocumented.

Chabolla says she's been able to find some balance as an ally who was once directly impacted by immigration policies. "I'm trying to find a place where I can remain hopeful in my job and be a zealous lawyer and advocate." **PCM**



BEYOND BRUCE'S BEACH

By Brenda Rees

As California weighs reparations for Black Americans, **Alison Rose Jefferson '80** works to reclaim the history that was erased.

Alison Rose Jefferson '80 stands in the permanent public art sculpture A Resurrection in Four Stanzas by artist April Banks in Historic Belmar Park in Santa Monica. Photo by Jeff Hing.

A grassy park known as Bruce’s Beach at the edge of the Pacific landed at the center of the national debate over reparations last year. Los Angeles County deeded the two oceanfront lots next to the park to descendants of Willa and Charles Bruce, the Black couple who lost their thriving resort there to a racist land grab a century ago.

To historian and author Alison Rose Jefferson ’80, who chronicled the history of Bruce’s Beach in her 2020 book, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era*, what happened in Manhattan Beach is a significant example of how the concept of reparations in America has evolved, and of the power of reclaiming stories. But it is only one story. Many more can be found along Southern California’s famous coast, and Jefferson has played a key role in uncovering them.

A little more than 10 miles north of Bruce’s Beach is what remains of the historic Belmar neighborhood in the Ocean Park area of South Santa Monica.

On a windy weekday, Jefferson walks the streets of present-day Ocean Park at Fourth and Pico, where a lively Black neighborhood stood from the early 1900s to the 1950s. The Belmar Triangle was one of three neighborhoods in South Santa Monica that made up this small community—only about 300 residents in 1920—but here Black families embraced the beach life, raised children, worked, danced, worshipped nearby and called the area theirs.

Today, nothing is left of the La Bonita Café and Apartments, the Dewdrop Inn and Café, the Arkansas Traveler Inn or Caldwell’s Dance Hall. In the 1950s, the city of Santa Monica wanted a new civic auditorium, courthouse and a 10 Freeway extension. Claiming eminent domain,



The two lots that formed the Bruce family’s oceanside resort—now the site of an L.A. County lifeguard facility—lie just west of the grassy park that was renamed Bruce’s Beach in 2007.

the city tore down Black and other marginalized communities’ businesses and cited residents’ houses as unsafe in order to burn them down. Most of the population dispersed, finding more welcoming neighborhoods in areas such as a Black Santa Monica enclave 20 blocks inland, the Venice area and South Los Angeles.

In her book and in the upcoming exhibit *Black California Dreamin’* at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles, Jefferson reveals the histories of Bruce’s Beach, South Santa Monica and other Black leisure communities in Southern California that have been erased. Lake Elsinore in Riverside County, a bucolic retreat from the city enjoyed by Black Angelenos, was described as the “best Negro vacation spot in the state” by *Ebony* magazine in 1948. The Parkridge Country Club in Corona was whites-only when it opened

in 1925. But its white owner soon ran into financial trouble and controversially sold to a syndicate of Black owners in 1927, after which Parkridge was called L.A.’s first and only Black country club. In the Santa Clarita Valley north of Los Angeles, a resort community developed in the 1920s named Eureka Villa, later called Val Verde, became known as the “Black Palm Springs.”

There is so much forgotten history that the first step of reparations, Jefferson contends, is learning the stories and accepting the past, no matter how difficult that is.

“[In order to] incorporate these stories into our collective thinking, our perception, you first have to be exposed to them,” she says.



Woman and small child at Bay Street Beach in 1931./L.A. Public Library

Summer 2023



A “shotgun-style” house on what was then Belmar Place in Santa Monica is burned in 1953 after being claimed by eminent domain. Photo by Clyde V. Fitzgerald/Santa Monica Public Library

Repairing Injustices

A disastrous first attempt at reparations by the U.S. government came in 1865 as the Civil War neared its end, when freed slaves were promised what became known as “40 acres and a mule.” The government eventually reneged on the program and Southern white landowners, not Black families, received much of that “promised land.”

For much of the last 70 years, Jefferson says, one focus of reparations was on educating Americans young and old about the wide-ranging stories of Black Americans, though even that has come under fire recently, particularly in Florida.

“African American historians and people who have been African American allies had been pushing for a much broader narrative to be presented to the public through American history classes in college, high school and grade school and through public venues like museums,” Jefferson says, noting that the 2016 opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., “helped make people much more aware of stories that they didn’t know about.”

Now there is a broader cry for reparations. Jefferson cites many factors: the 2020 social justice movement (driven by the murder of George Floyd, the killings in Ferguson, Missouri, and other racially

motivated incidents), a pandemic that presented people with time to research their own history, and young Black Americans sharing personal stories via social media. “Don’t forget that Barack Obama was elected president,” she adds.

Across the country, government leaders are beginning, once again, to more seriously grapple with how to address the generations of injustices experienced by Black Americans. Reparations are complex, can take many forms (see box at right) and may be politically volatile. There is no “one size fits all,” experts agree.

In 2020, California became the first state to create a reparations task force, and the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles soon followed by naming reparations advisory committees. Although California entered the Union as a free state in 1850, some people were brought to the state as slaves, and local and state governments continued to perpetuate systemic racism against Black Californians for generations through employment discrimination, displacement of communities and discriminatory educational funding, inhibiting their ability to develop wealth and social mobility.

Some economists initially estimated the potential cost to California for reparations at a staggering \$800 billion, and one proposal in San Francisco called for \$5 million payments to every eligible Black adult in the city. Ahead of a July 1 deadline to deliver

recommendations to the legislature, the state reparations task force instead proposed cash “down payments” of varying amounts to eligible Black residents, which would have to be approved by the legislature and signed by the governor. Elsewhere, the city of Palm Springs, facing a claim for \$2.3 billion in damages for the actions of city officials in the 1950s that uprooted Black and Latino families in an area known as Section 14, also is debating a reparations program.

Outside of California, other efforts to acknowledge the past and offer financial restitution are appearing. A program in Evanston, Illinois, is distributing payments to a number of Black residents who faced housing discrimination before 1969. In Asheville, North Carolina, where many Black people lost property during the urban renewal efforts of the mid-20th century, the city has designated more than \$2 million toward “community reparations,” such as programs to increase homeownership and business opportunities for Black residents.

These are a handful of examples, Jefferson says. “But it’s a start. We are closer to the possibility of national reparations than in any time in history.”

REPARATION TERMS

The big umbrella of reparations covers five main arrangements: compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.



Compensation is cash payments given to recipients, whereas **restitution** is reversing a historic wrong such as returning land or housing.



Rehabilitative reparations include covering costs for mental health, medical, legal or social services.



Satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition are about policy reform, such as removing legal slavery language from state constitutions, public apologies from officials, memorials and other public acknowledgments of specific historic wrongs.



Anthony Bruce holds up a certificate of the deed as the family property taken by eminent domain in the 1920s is returned to descendants in 2022.

Recovering History

In Southern California, the return of the deed to the two lots that had formed the Bruce's Beach resort to family descendants was a harbinger of other efforts, and it started with activists who heard the story and wanted justice for Willa and Charles Bruce. The Bruces migrated to Southern California from New Mexico in the early 20th century, and in 1912 Willa Bruce purchased the first of the family's two lots in Manhattan Beach. Over the years they created a seaside resort for Black Americans complete with a restaurant, bathhouse and space for dancing. But the city council, influenced by the Ku Klux Klan and racist white community members, condemned the Bruce property and that of other African American property owners in the small enclave that had grown up around their business, citing eminent domain to build a community park. The Bruces' and other Black property owners' buildings were destroyed in 1927 for a park that did not appear for decades, and owners were paid a fraction of what the beachside property was worth.

Still, less than a year after widespread coverage of the July 2022 ceremony marking the return of the deed to the Bruce descendants, the family sold the property back to L.A. County in January 2023 for \$20 million. The move was controversial, but the beachfront land—now used as a lifeguard training facility west of the grassy hill—is not zoned for private development and the descendants had been leasing it back to the county for \$413,000 a year. What the family will do with the money is unknown, but

Jefferson hopes some of that restitution will be used for community programs in Southern California to encourage young people to head to the beach and learn its history.

Today, the legacy of Bruce's Beach clings more tightly to its past. "We have to keep telling the story," Jefferson says. "This story is not over. There are still things we don't know [about] what happened in Manhattan Beach. There are 35,000 people who live in Manhattan Beach and less than half a percent are of African American descent. So that tells you a legacy. But we also had the legacy of these Black pioneers, the Bruces and the other property owners and the visitors who were going down there who were striking out to enjoy what California had to offer, and to potentially develop

their own dreams of property ownership or other things because they were inspired by going to this particular beach."

As she walks the breezy streets, Jefferson explains how the city of Santa Monica reached out to her in 2019 after the California Coastal Commission required an educational program to address the erased Black histories of South Santa Monica as a new park was being developed. She helped create interpretive signage there as part of what became the Belmar History + Art project in the new Historic Belmar Park, located where Black and other marginalized communities once resided. In 2020, the permanent outdoor exhibition was unveiled—colorful signs with historical narratives, along with a bright red sculpture in four pieces resembling the frame of a house. *A Resurrection in Four Stanzas* was created by Los Angeles artist April Banks, inspired by the people whose homes were destroyed due to urban redevelopment and by a photo of white city officials burning down a shotgun-style house in 1953.

Surrounding the new sports field, the walking path features 16 panels that tell the history of notable individuals—business leaders, doctors, pastors and other Black community members—accompanied by black-and-white photos. A map notes important nearby sites and buildings that still stand, such as the 1905 Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Murrell

Building, built by Santa Monica's first Black mail carrier and also, for a time, the office of the first Black doctors in the area.

Jefferson knows all their stories by heart, many of them told to her through firsthand reflections. From the beach, she stops and points east to the big hill on Bay Street. "Look up at the top," she instructs. Then she swings around for a straight view of the shimmering ocean before her. "Who could resist this?"

Walking down to the beachfront, Jefferson explains that the beach at the end of Bay Street—marked "COLORED USE" on one 1947 map of the era—was another hub for Black Angelenos in the early 20th century to enjoy the sun and sand. It was not without conflict. Casa del Mar, the nearby white-owned beach club, claimed only their members could use the beach in front of the club and built a fence in the sand.

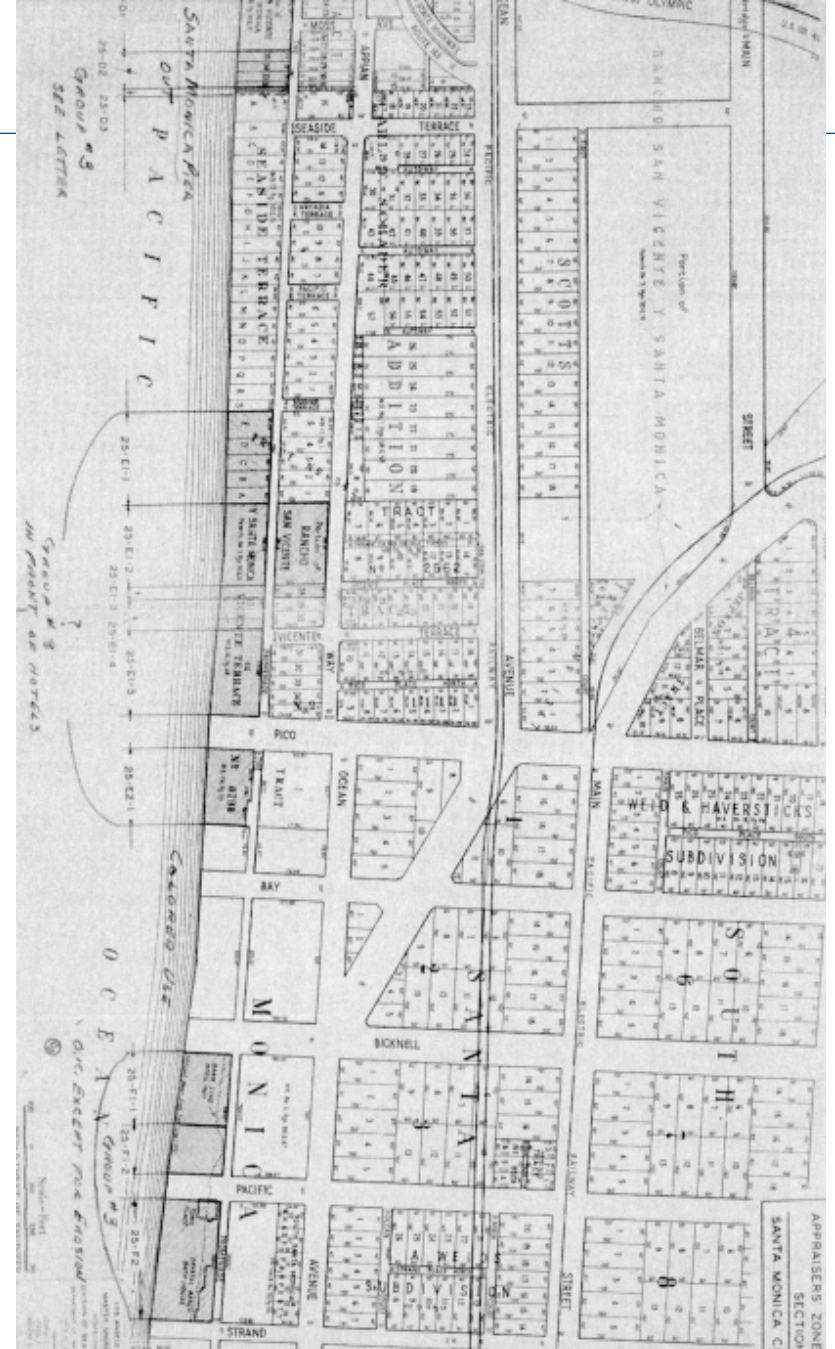
"So [Black beachgoers] found a place where they were less likely to be harassed," says Jefferson as she walks over to a bronze plaque that recognizes the beach in front of Crescent Bay Park as "The Inkwell," a controversial name given to it by whites. For years, this destination offered Black residents access to the joys of living in Southern California.

As she looks to the ocean, Jefferson considers her role, doing what she can to "push forward the storytelling." Among her many endeavors, she has been working with the Santa Monica Conservancy, Heal the Bay and other groups for the last 15 years, facilitating programs on the beach and introducing kids to the history of this area; sometimes they get a surfing lesson and learn about an early Black and Mexican American surfing legend named Nick Gabaldón.

"Education is so important," says Jefferson. "I want young people to know that they have the opportunity to tell the stories themselves as well. You first need to have that education to build your knowledge base."

Sometimes, that means heading down to the beach on a sunny Southern California day—Bruce's Beach in Manhattan Beach, Bay Street in Santa Monica and others—to learn what history has been washed away with the sand. **PCM**

City of Santa Monica, Los Angeles County Master Plan Map, 1947
Courtesy of USC Library Special Collections



Alison Rose Jefferson '80 points out local historic sites as shown on one of the panels she designed for the Belmar History + Art project.

Summer 2023



Jefferson at the historic marker for "The Inkwell" in Santa Monica, which calls it "a place of celebration and pain." Photo by Jeff Hing.

Pomona College Magazine

UPCOMING EXHIBITION *Black California Dreamin'*

Curated by Alison Rose Jefferson
California African American Museum, Los Angeles
August 5, 2023–March 31, 2024



ROOTS OF CHANGE

Continuing a long tradition of organizing among Pomona students and alumni, **Jacob Merkle '18** and **Niles Brooks '20** created Rhizome to equip the next generation of leaders.

By Lorraine Wu Harry '97

The yearning to build a better world may be innate, but the skills to become an effective organizer often need to be learned.

Jacob Merkle '18 believes in the potential of young people to create the world they want to live in: They just need structure, encouragement and clear paths to opportunity. To provide those things, he founded Rhizome, a grassroots nonprofit for emerging high school leaders to learn how to organize and create civic communities.

“So many young people, especially today, really genuinely want to take on high-impact work, want to make meaning with their time,” says Merkle.

An international relations and politics double major from Seattle, Merkle first became an organizer himself while at Pomona. He reveled in “the feeling when you’re shoulder to shoulder with folks that aren’t just talking about making the world a better place but are actually taking active steps toward making that happen.”

While Merkle says that the most meaningful parts of his time at Pomona were the conversations he had over meals at the dining hall, he also graduated with top accolades in both of his majors, winning the Fred Krinsky Prize in Comparative Politics and the John A. Vieg Prize in International Relations.

Professor of Politics Heather Williams says of Merkle, “He is one of those ‘immortals,’ or students whose presence, thought and writing rise above their peers. He’s one of the most likely politics alumni to become a major thought leader and public intellectual.”

After graduating, Merkle worked for Michelle Obama’s organization When We All Vote, where he helped register 38,000 students to vote. While doing that work, he realized the untapped potential of high school and college students. He enrolled at Cambridge University and earned a master’s degree in sociology, with his dissertation focused on the language used by history’s most persuasive nonviolent movements to motivate people into action.

“This research offered a personal, practical blueprint for how to organize sustainably over the course of my lifetime,” Merkle says.

Shortly after that, in 2021, he founded Rhizome (werhize.org). The impetus was “to be a part of building something that was authentically student-led, that was sustainable, that was collectively owned.”

He began calling people he had worked with in prior organizing efforts and eventually had 90 co-founders. These student organizers continue to vote to shape the goals, vision and work environment of Rhizome.

One of the people Merkle tapped was **Niles Brooks '20**. Brooks, an international relations major from Memphis, Tennessee, headed Building Leaders on Campus (BLOC) at Pomona as well as Young Men’s Circle, a community outreach program. The two knew each other through playing together on the Pomona-

Pitzer men’s soccer team. Merkle saw Brooks serving as a “spiritual center” for Rhizome, calling him “one of the most morally wonderful people” he has met.

Others at Pomona apparently agreed. Brooks won the Ted Gleason Award, given annually to the student who made a warm-hearted contribution to the community life of the College through traits such as sympathy, friendliness, good cheer, generosity and, particularly, perseverance and courage.

Brooks’ nonprofit work is partly inspired by his grandparents. “I learned from a young age what it meant to not have basic civil liberties in this country. My grandparents were folks who grew up in Jim Crow segregation,” he says. “Anytime I can leverage my experiences to help others, I will do that.”

Brooks believes in the work of Rhizome because “the younger we become civically engaged, the more likely we’ll treat civic engagement as a lifelong leadership activity.”

Through the support of Merkle, Brooks and other mentors, more than 600 students in organizing fellowships at 125 high schools have taken on campaigns such as advocating for safety policies in their cities, feminine hygiene products in their school bathrooms

or spreading information about democracy vouchers—a recently developed finance method that allows voters to select recipients of public funding for political campaigns. Additionally, fellows helped more than 7,000 peers register to vote last year, and Merkle

“So many young people, especially today, really genuinely want to take on high-impact work, want to make meaning with their time.”

—Jacob Merkle '18

hopes to build on that number this year.

“Whatever it is that fellows care most about, we want to provide support for them to take action around those ideas,” says Merkle.

Merkle repeatedly strikes a spiritual tone as he speaks about his work. He and Brooks trained with the James Lawson Institute, a program for organizing movements and nonviolent action. (The Rev. Lawson, a contemporary of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and a leading architect of the civil rights movement, spoke at Pomona along with Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 in the inaugural Payton Distinguished Lectureship in 2018.)

“I think organizing is at some level always an act of faith,” Merkle says. “A belief in things unseen.”

This faith could be applied to Merkle’s long-term vision for Rhizome as well. In it for the long haul, he says, he hopes to make local chapters of the organizing fellowship accessible to students in every community across the country someday.

“We are in the nascent stages of building something that we think is going to get really big and beautiful,” says Merkle. PCM

RHIZOME (rai•zowm)



“Rhizomes are root systems that grow horizontally in unpredictable directions without beginning or end. Rhizomes are always in-process, always growing, always adapting to form symbiotic relationships with existing forms of life. We are a self-organizing system; deeper than grassroots.”

WERHIZE.ORG PROJECTS

Sharing information about how to use democracy vouchers
SEATTLE, WA

Participating in a mental health forum with local city council
NEWARK, NJ

Joining James Lawson Institute for an intensive four-day training
NASHVILLE, TN

Meeting with the mayor on how to reduce peer-to-peer violence
NEWARK, NJ

Organizing for feminine hygiene products in bathrooms
CARY, NC

Running mutual aid campaigns to reduce youth food insecurity
RALEIGH, NC

Advocating for access to free public transportation systems
MIAMI, FL



Pomona College Alumni Award recipients, from left: **Ann Rose Davie '58, Peter Shelton '73, Linda Alvarado '73 and Michelle Williams Court '88.**

Congratulations to Our 2023 Alumni Award Winners

A committee of past presidents from the Pomona College Alumni Association Board has selected the 2023 alumni award recipients.

Three alumni received the Blaisdell Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of high achievement in their professions or community service: **Linda Alvarado '73, Michelle Williams Court '88 and Peter Shelton '73.** These alumni have carried the spirit of the College into the world and embodied the inscription on the College Gates: "They only are loyal to this college who departing bear their added riches in trust for mankind."

In addition, **Ann Rose Davie '58** was honored with the Alumni Distinguished Service Award in recognition of her selfless commitment and ongoing volunteer service to the College.

To learn more about this year's award recipients, visit pomona.edu/2023-alumni-awards.

A Refresh for Seaver House

Just in time for Alumni Weekend, Pomona's alumni house, Seaver House, reopened its doors with a warm welcome and a new look. Sagehens were invited to a special open house to meet with Alumni Board members and get a first peek at Seaver's new alumni photo galleries, items from the new **Myrlie Evers-Williams '68** archival collection and a short documentary on her life, as well as tour the house's beautifully updated interior. If you find yourself on campus, be sure to stop by for a visit and say hello to the Alumni and Family Engagement team.

Given to the College in 1979 by the Seaver family, Seaver House was built in 1900 and moved from its original location on East Holt Avenue in the nearby city of Pomona to its current site on the Pomona College campus in 1979, where it has since served as the home of the College's alumni. Read Seaver's exciting relocation story and see a photo of the move in action at pomona.edu/timeline/1970s/1979.

Learn more about the Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 Collection at Pomona College at pomona.edu/myrlie-evers-williams.

Alumni Association Board Chirps, Farewells and Welcomes

Cecil sends hearty chirps of gratitude to the Alumni Association Board and regional alumni chapter leaders who were out in full force throughout Alumni Weekend to assist and celebrate with visiting Sagehens! Board members helped with check-in, A Taste of Pomona and reunion class photos and dinners, among many other events throughout the weekend. They also presented the Class of 2023 graduates-to-be with their Commencement stoles on behalf of the Alumni Association and partnered with the Career Development Office at the CDO's Alumni Weekend Chirp and Chat mixer to talk careers, graduate school and Pomona memories with current students and alumni.

The Alumni Board also met as the weekend wrapped up to ratify new president-elect Andrea Venezia '91, who will take office for a two-year term beginning July 1, 2024, and to say an in-person thank you to members whose terms end this June 30:

**Paula Gonzalez '95
Megan Kaes Long '08
Vicki Paterno '75**

**Veronica Roman '95
Dominic Yoong '88**

The board also ratified new members whose three-year terms begin this July 1:

**Miguel Delgado '20
Stuart Friedel '08
Toran Langford '21**

**Te'auna Patterson '18
Tricia Sipowicz '85
Jim Sutton '84**

That's a Wrap: Alumni Weekend and Reunion Celebrations 2023

More than 1,300 Sagehens returned to Pomona April 27-30 to celebrate Alumni Weekend and Reunions on a fully decked-out Marston Quad and other iconic campus spaces. In addition to places across the U.S., alumni and guests traveled from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Canada and Mexico to reunite and reminisce with classmates, professors, staff members—and of course, Cecil! Class years ending in 3 or 8 celebrated milestone reunions ranging from the fifth through 70th this year as Pomona welcomed back eight decades of alumni, ages 23 to 93.

Alumni Weekend offered more than 160 programs and events, including signature events such as A Taste of Pomona Wine Tasting with alumni vintners, the Friday night All-Class Dinner on the Quad, Reunion Class Dinners across campus, the Party at the Wash and Class Parade through the Gates. Other programs included Blaisdell Alumni Award winners' talks at Ideas@Pomona and presentations from faculty and the dean of the College. For the first time, several events were also livestreamed this year.

Next year's Alumni Weekend and Reunion Celebrations will be April 25-28, 2024, and will celebrate reunions of class years ending in 4 or 9. Remember, all alumni are welcome to attend whether in a reunion year or not—so mark your calendars. Chirp!

For more Alumni Weekend photos and to watch the recorded livestreamed events, visit pomona.edu/alumni-weekend.

There's still time to make your reunion gift!



pomona.edu/reunion-givenow



Thank You, Nathan Dean '10

Forty-seven chirps to Nathan Dean '10, who closes out his term as our National Chair of Annual Giving on June 30. During his two years as chair, Dean worked closely with the College's Annual Giving team to support multiple fundraising campaigns and crowdfunding initiatives. Last year, he helped to raise \$5.3 million for the Pomona College Annual Fund, which supported student and faculty needs like financial aid, academic programs, research and internship opportunities and more. Huge thanks to Dean for his time and dedication in serving in this crucial volunteer role for Pomona!

Learn more about annual giving impact at pomona.edu/annual-giving-impact-report.



Reminder! Give by June 30 to make your Sagehen impact now.
pomona.edu/give



A Friendship That Bridged 50 Years

Helen Anderson '47, a lifelong advocate for others, guided Leena Ved '97 through early adulthood and into midlife. They were preparing this essay together when Anderson died at 97 on March 25, 2023.

By Leena J. Ved '97

The road to my friend Helen Heyden Anderson '47 was never long, and my heart always felt lighter crossing the Golden Gate Bridge. Her active senior community in Marin County reminded me of Blaisdell, where we lived 50 years apart.

Even at 97, Helen greeted me with bright eyes and a cheerful “Come in.” The scent of magnolia blossoms wafted through from the garden. “I was born in 1926. The flowers transport me to when I was 9, swinging from oak trees by the magnolias,” she said, remembering the San Fernando

Valley ranch where she grew up. Helen entered Pomona College during World War II and was affectionately nicknamed Kanga by her suitemates, after the A.A. Milne character. In later years, she became “Great Helen” to her grandchildren and friends.

I met Helen more than 30 years ago, when I was applying to Pomona. She was leading a program addressing childhood hunger, and my friends and I raised a few thousand dollars toward her efforts. I recall visiting her ranch-style home in Tustin where Helen, surrounded by her

watercolor canvases, talked about a service trip to Mexico with her husband Gordon. She was fascinated with the people she met, and I was taken with her life of service.

Her 10th decade of life found Helen leading a spirited social activist group called Seniors for Peace. With walkers and wheelchairs, Helen and some of her neighbors gathered to hold up poster board signs for various causes at a nearby intersection one afternoon a week. Her keen interest in restorative justice grew, and she worked with a group



Helen Anderson '47, left, with Leena Ved '97.



Anderson holding Ved's first baby, Serena.

Helen Anderson '47 took part in weekly demonstrations by seniors in Mill Valley, California, into her 90s, as seen here in 2018. Photo by Scott Strazzante / San Francisco Chronicle / Polaris



that successfully secured fair housing for low-income minorities in Marin.

During my turn as a student at Pomona, I wrote about Helen for Professor Jill Grigsby's class called the Life Course of Women. Helen encouraged my self-designed major in economic development. I visited schools for girls in South Asia with Professor Tahir Andrabi and, like Helen, I had my first career in K-12 education. Helen subtly counseled me on my life choices when I'd ask—career changes, having a second child and recently, on moving back to Tustin from the Bay Area with my little girls. We'll do that this summer, coming full circle. One of her greatest gifts was how she listened with gentle presence. With her advice, I'm currently managing social impact investments, including housing with dignity for lower-income Americans.

The geographies of our lives intertwined. We moved from Orange County to the Bay Area at the same time, and Helen and Gordon guided me through the wilderness of my 20s and 30s as I wrestled with life's big decisions. On Marston Quad during one of

our common reunion years, Gordon advised me, “Marry for chemistry,” he said. “And shared values,” Helen said before Gordon added, “I met Helen when she was a spry 68, and we've had fun since.” Helen lost Gordon to complications from COVID-19 in 2021.

Helen lived through two pandemics. When she was a senior at Pomona, she contracted polio at a friend's wedding. In her 70s, Helen experienced late effects of the disease, but continued moving forward with a leg brace, orthotics and undeterred optimism. She remembered the dramatic impact of Dr. Jonas Salk's polio vaccine in 1955 and found it strange that COVID-19 vaccines were politicized. (She approached people she disagreed with politically with curiosity, not judgment.)

Last year, I met with Helen as a respite to juggling my preschooler, pregnancy and increased professional responsibilities. I asked how she managed years ago as a young mother to simultaneously raise young children alone (when her first husband left), earn a master's degree and teach.

“We had four children,” she told me. “It was still the era where women could mostly become either a teacher or a nurse. So after Pomona I became a reading specialist. My mom watched the children, which kept me afloat. It made my family so much closer after that era when we were faced with sink or swim.”

That practical attitude pervaded all Helen did. When I asked how she kept up with the news, she grinned over her Jell-O. “I scan the biggest-sized headlines first. If I can take action on it, then I'll read more.”

Helen was remarkably resilient despite three heart blockages in her last six months. On our final visit, I asked her how she maintained her optimism. “From this age, I see the tough times,” she said. “For me, it was after Gordon was gone. It comes down to gratitude. I always wanted a spiritual tie, so I had a church community. That helped me, as well as gaining a worldview, interacting with young adults, and traveling and seeing the hardships people have. Others lifted me in my life, so I did the same.” [PCM](#)

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Solution to crossword puzzle on page 56

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Robert E. Tranquada '51

Public Health Advocate and Trustee
1930–2022

Bob Tranquada '51, former chair of the Pomona College Board of Trustees and former dean of the medical school at USC, died on December 4, 2022, in Pomona. He was 92.

A diabetes researcher turned public health advocate, Tranquada was instrumental in increasing access to health care for underserved communities across Los Angeles County. He was a founding board member and chair of L.A. Care, today the country's largest publicly operated health plan.

The son of two Pomona alumni and father and grandfather of others, Tranquada was a constant friend of the College. As a Commencement speaker and recipient of an honorary

doctorate in 2007, he said, "I have been couched in the arms of Pomona College for a long time. It would be impossible to return more than a fraction of that I have received." Awarded an Alumni Scholarship as a student, he returned much, both in service and financial support. The student health facility that serves The Claremont Colleges bears his name as the Robert E. Tranquada Student Services Center.

Tranquada's path to medicine began early. Hospitalized with a broken leg at age 5, he was so impressed with the doctors who treated him he decided to become a physician. After graduating from Pomona College, summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, he attended the Stanford University School of Medicine and joined the faculty of the USC medical school in 1959.

Tranquada's career took a dramatic turn in 1965, when the California Army National Guard medical battalion he commanded was activated during the Watts Uprising to treat casualties of the violent confrontations between L.A. police and residents. Afterward, he was asked by



then-USC Medical School Dean Roger Egeberg to head the new Department of Community and Preventative Medicine and to organize a public health clinic in Watts. Tranquada was one of the founders and the first director of the South Central Multipurpose Health Services Center in 1965 (now Watts Healthcare Corp.), one of the country's first community health centers.

His experience in working to launch the health clinic, which opened its doors in 1967, led to a 40-year career in public health. Two years later, as associate dean of the medical school, Tranquada was appointed medical director of Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. After five years as medical director, he became director of the Central Health Services Region of the L.A. County Department of Health Services.

Following other leadership positions, in 1986 Tranquada was recruited to become dean of what is now the Keck School of Medicine at USC with a mandate to develop a new private teaching hospital, today's Keck Hospital of USC. It was while serving as dean that he was appointed to the Independent Commission on the Los

Angeles Police Department, better known as the Christopher Commission, formed in the wake of the 1991 Rodney King beating. He also headed the Los Angeles County Task Force on Access to Health Care following the 1992 civil unrest, which led to the creation of Community Health Councils, a nonprofit that works to promote health and wellness in under-resourced communities.

After stepping down as USC medical school dean in 1991, Tranquada held an endowed chair in health policy before becoming professor emeritus upon his retirement in 1997. During his long and distinguished career, he was elected a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences

and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

In addition to his service on the Pomona College Board of Trustees beginning in 1969, Tranquada was chair of the Claremont University Consortium board from 2000 to 2006. He served on numerous boards and was a particularly effective advocate for increasing the number of women and people of color in medicine, serving as a longtime board member of New York-based National Medical Fellowships, a member of the founding board of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science and a board member of Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital.

Born in Los Angeles, Tranquada was the son of Ernest Tranquada '27 and Katharine Jacobus Tranquada '29. He married Janet Martin Tranquada '51 after meeting at Pomona. In addition to his wife of 71 years, he is survived by children John '77 (Lisa Sackett Tranquada '77), Jim (Kristin) and Kate Tranquada; grandchildren Matt '08, Jessica and Alex Tranquada; and his sister, Carolyn Prestwich '54.

Jerome J. Rinkus

Emeritus Professor of Russian
1938-2023

Emeritus Professor Jerry Rinkus, who taught Russian language and literature at Pomona for three decades, died on February 24, 2023. He was 84.

Rinkus arrived at Pomona in 1973 and remained at the College until his retirement in 2003, serving for a time as chair of the Department of German and Russian.

A specialist in 19th-century Russian literature—the era of Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Chekhov—Rinkus came of age during the Cold War, studying Russian at a time of critical interest to the U.S. government.

"In a sense, politics has influenced the overall pattern of my life," he told *Pomona College Magazine* in 2003. "But it is the love of literature that has kept me going."

Rinkus was an undergraduate at Middlebury College when the former Soviet Union launched *Sputnik*, Earth's first artificial satellite, igniting the space race between the U.S. and the USSR that led to the first moon landing in 1969.

After graduating cum laude from Middlebury in 1960, Rinkus was awarded a National Defense Education Fellowship to continue his study of Russian from 1960 to 1964, earning a master's degree in Slavic languages and literatures from Brown University in 1962. His doctoral studies at Brown were interrupted when he was drafted during the Vietnam War, serving from 1966 to 1968, after which he returned to Brown and earned his Ph.D. in 1971. He completed his doctoral dissertation on the work of Sergey Aksakov after writing his master's thesis on Maxim Gorky. Rinkus taught at Bucknell University from 1968 to 1973 before arriving at Pomona.



"If not for Jerry Rinkus, I would not have embarked on the career I've enjoyed for the past three decades," said former student Thomas P. Hodge '84, now a professor of Russian at Wellesley College. "He made a huge difference in my intellectual life and in the lives of the many other Russianists who passed through the department he lovingly nurtured at Pomona."

Hodge also noted that in the early 1980s, before word-processing software, it was also difficult to find Russian typewriters. "I vividly recall the way he painstakingly handwrote and glossed entire stories and long poems, then handed out the photocopies to us. He was indefatigable," Hodge said.

Rinkus also had a policy for students in his beginning Russian class who struggled to find the words in their limited vocabularies to accurately describe aspects of their personal lives in Russian.

"I don't care if you tell the truth, as long as it's grammatically correct," Rinkus told his students. "Every student in the room broke

out laughing," Hodge recalled. "I announce an identical policy for my own students every time I teach Elementary Russian."

During the early parts of his career, Rinkus told *Pomona College Magazine*, many of his students learned Russian in preparation for government jobs as translators, diplomats or to work for the CIA.

"If you studied Russian in the old days, you could either work for the government or teach," he said in 2003. "When the Soviet Union collapsed, interest in Russian dropped 40 to 50 percent. It was almost as if they were studying it to understand our enemy."

During his long career, Rinkus earned grants and fellowships from the National

Endowment for the Humanities and the Mellon Foundation, among other organizations. He traveled to the Soviet Union numerous times during the Cold War when it was uncommon for Americans to do so, participating in teaching exchanges, leading tours and conducting research.

He led a Pomona College alumni tour group to Russia, Siberia and Central Asia in 1978. In 1990, during the era of *glasnost* under the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Rinkus led a Pomona alumni tour group that visited Tallinn, Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Moscow and cruised the Volga River the year before the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union.

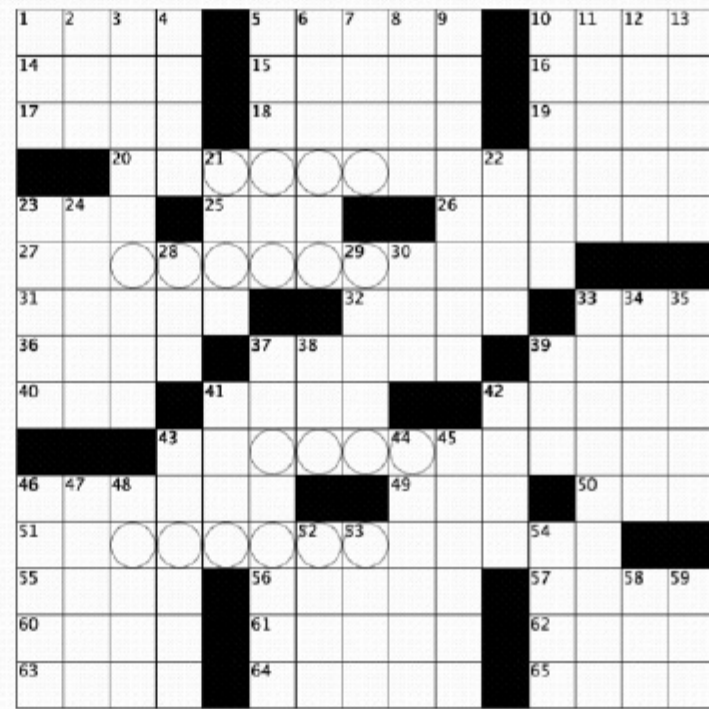
Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Rinkus was the grandson of emigrants from Vilnius, Lithuania. In addition to John Tarin, his partner of more than 40 years and husband since 2015, Rinkus is survived by a niece, nephew and cousin.

"The Heartland"

by Joel Fagliano '14

ACROSS

- 1. Feeling blue
- 5. "Ted ___" (hit Apple TV+ series)
- 10. Blue expanses
- 14. Opera solo
- 15. Online way to pay utilities
- 16. Zip, zero, nothin'
- 17. Team whose logo includes the New York City skyline
- 18. Score of four on a par three, e.g.
- 19. Standing above
- 20. Time-consuming wedding day activity
- 23. Bit of luggage
- 25. "___ qué?" ("Why?")
- 26. More than enough
- 27. Show of affection
- 31. Flat-topped hills of the Southwest
- 32. ___ Bell
- 33. Barbell abbr.
- 36. Only mammals that are capable of true flight
- 37. Sixteen pieces on a chessboard
- 39. It takes two
- 40. Wedding words
- 41. Long, quiet stretches
- 42. Like Santa, in disposition
- 43. Strange ... very strange
- 46. Headgear for the slopes
- 49. Prefix with binary
- 50. Corrosive cleaning material
- 51. Subject of this magazine
- 55. General vicinity
- 56. Actress Perez of "Do the Right Thing"
- 57. Foreboding symbol
- 60. Fray or Frank offering
- 61. Some events at Smith Campus Center
- 62. ___ coin (meme currency)
- 63. Without
- 64. Purple fruits used in gin-making
- 65. Chilly powder?



DOWN

- 1. Hydroelectric construction
- 2. Resource in the board game Catan
- 3. Enthusiastically
- 4. Operator of the James Webb Telescope
- 5. "King James" of the N.B.A.
- 6. On the train
- 7. Do Not Enter or Dead End
- 8. What Calvin and Hobbes ride in the final "Calvin and Hobbes" strip
- 9. 2024 event in Paris
- 10. Animals that smell with their tongues
- 11. Consumed
- 12. Tennis score after deuce, perhaps
- 13. Overly sentimental
- 21. Many craft brews
- 22. To boot
- 23. Classic Disney character
- 24. In the future
- 28. Expense for a car commuter
- 29. Doing battle
- 30. Nebraska neighbor: Abbr.
- 33. Big name in yoga pants
- 34. Hold a rock climber's rope
- 35. Panache
- 37. Kellogg's product with the slogan "Crazy good!"
- 38. What some movies don't do well
- 39. Uno y uno
- 41. Chinese currency
- 42. Pride Month
- 43. Schools of fish
- 44. Dissimilar to
- 45. Phrase of emphasis
- 46. Sends incessant messages
- 47. Peninsula divided at the 38th parallel
- 48. "That is to say ..."
- 52. Material for snowman eyes, traditionally
- 53. Capital of Norway
- 54. Jupiter, Pluto and Mercury
- 58. Sense of self-importance
- 59. Word in four state names



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 47.

As campus emptied after Commencement on May 14, new graduates from the Class of 2023 fanned out to jobs, graduate schools and other ventures across the U.S. and around the world. We asked some of them to share their plans and perhaps a thought about their time at Pomona.

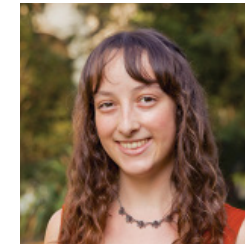


Maddie Asch

International Relations
Associate Consultant
The Bridgespan Group
Boston

"My time at Pomona taught me that I want to work in a field where I'm constantly

learning and can think critically about how to create positive social change. That's why I'm so excited to work for a nonprofit consulting company whose clients are exclusively nonprofits and philanthropists."



Vera Berger

Mathematics and Physics
Master's of Philosophy in
Scientific Computing
University of Cambridge
Cambridge, England

"The physics behind stellar flares is interesting and

somewhat mysterious. I'm hoping to focus my research at Cambridge on simulations of plasma or magnetic activity similar to what we might see in flaring stars."

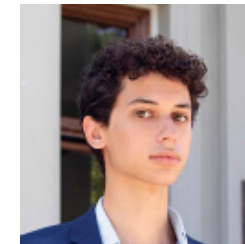


Isabel Fajardo

Psychological Science
Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies Minor
Teach for America
Washington, D.C.

"I think it's probably the most important job in the world to uplift

the most vulnerable, which are children."



Jordan Hoogsteden

Public Policy Analysis (Politics)
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

"The Pomona community's lively commitment

to social justice helped me realize that I wanted to pursue a career in public interest. I hope to use my law degree to become a public defender."

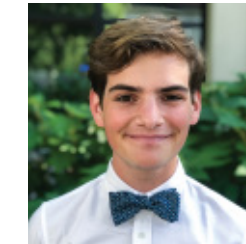


Alex Ker

Computer Science
Math and Philosophy Minors
Master's in Computer Science
Cornell Tech
New York

"Pomona's liberal arts environment helped refine

my interests and deepen my skills, from founding an organization like *P-ai.org* (artificial intelligence incubator for projects and ideas) to participating in the Randall Lewis Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship program at CMC and teaching writing to area youth once a week. I feel prepared for graduate school and to build a startup in the artificial intelligence/machine learning space."



Louie Kulber

Classics and Molecular Biology
M.D.-Ph.D.
Columbia University
New York

"The Pomona science classes do a particularly good job at cultivating

scientific inquiry and making you really curious. An M.D.-Ph.D. is all about being curious and creative and thinking about new ways to solve problems, and Pomona really sets you up to do that."



Sean Perez

Biology
Ph.D. in Genome Sciences
University of Washington
Seattle

"I will be attending graduate school in hope of earning my Ph.D. in genetics

and bioinformatics with the long-term goal of returning to Pomona as a professor."



Taylor Venenciano

Physics
Scientist
Areté Associates
Northridge, California

"The Physics/Astro Department at Pomona has helped

me to become passionate about and confident in trying to solve difficult problems. I'm hoping to continue to solve difficult problems at my first job and throughout my career."



John West Jr.

Africana Studies
Ph.D. in Criminology,
Law and Justice
University of Illinois Chicago
Chicago

"I chose UIC Criminology, Law and Justice so that I can

continue my work as an educator and activist within my home city, Chicago. Pomona allowed me to build relationships with educators like Professor J Finley interested in my personal and intellectual growth."



Sabrina Yu

Economics
Investment Banking Analyst
Jefferies Financial Group
New York

"I came to Pomona because I knew I loved learning but had no idea what I wanted

to study. Four years later, I'm heading into finance thanks to all the clubs I was given the opportunity to be part of that allowed me to hone in on my interests (through lots of trial and error!). I'm excited to start my career in a field that'll let me continue to explore my intellectual curiosity—a trait that has developed so much at Pomona."

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