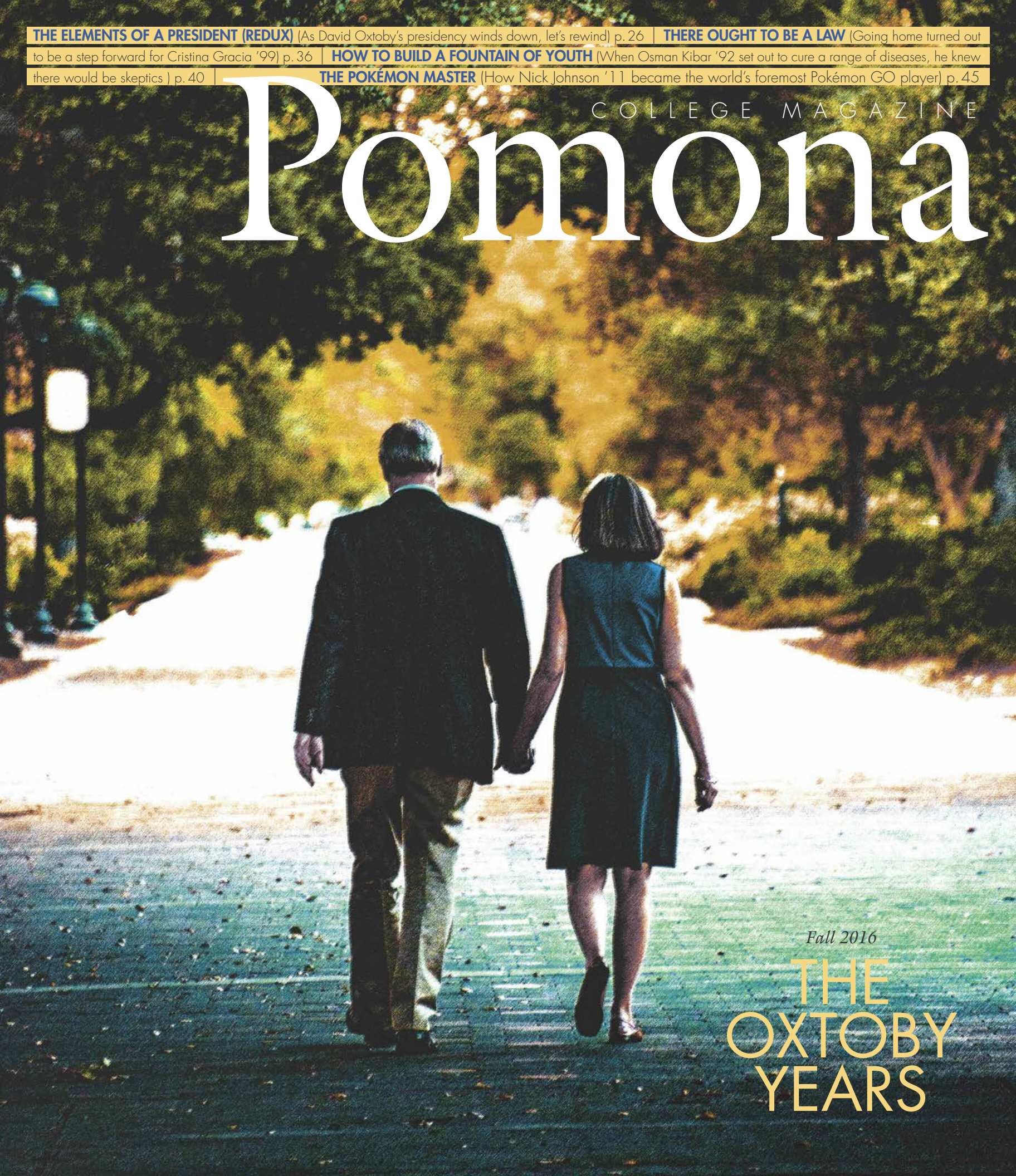


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COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Pomona



Fall 2016

THE
OXTOBY
YEARS

36 HOURS

IN THE LIFE OF A PRESIDENT

PHOTOS BY JOHN LUCAS

As David Oxtoby enters his final months before stepping down as president of Pomona College on June 30, 2017, he agreed to allow photographer John Lucas to follow him around over a period of two days in early October to give us a visual record of what the life of a college president is like today. Of course, missing from this 36-hour span, save for a brief roadtrip to Pasadena, is his frequent travel schedule, since we couldn't very well ask our photographer to take a red-eye to Washington or New York, as Oxtoby has done on so many occasions over the past 13 years. But other than that, Oct. 4 and 5, a Tuesday and a Wednesday, were fairly ordinary days in the life of Pomona's ninth president.



Day One

10:34 a.m.

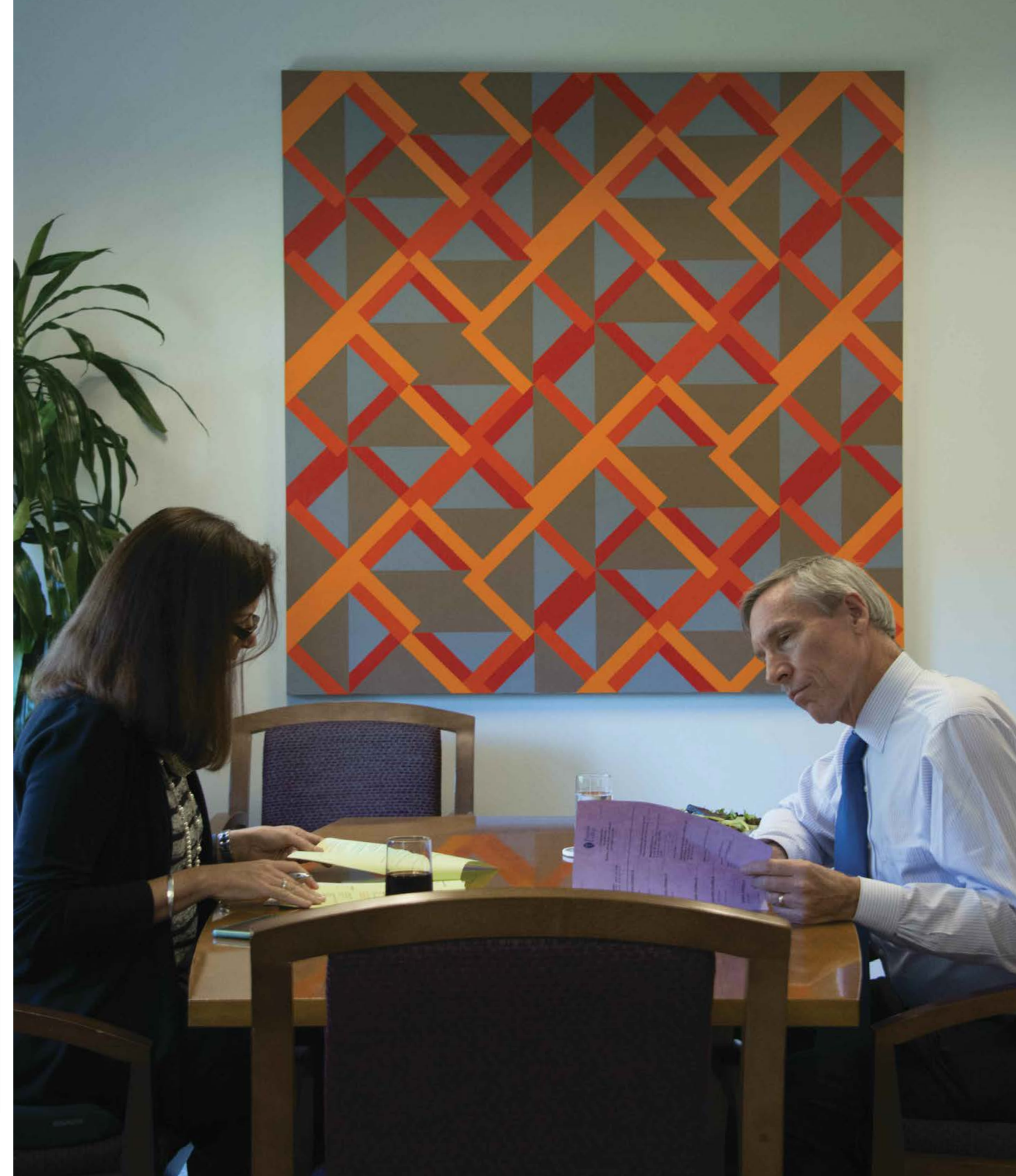
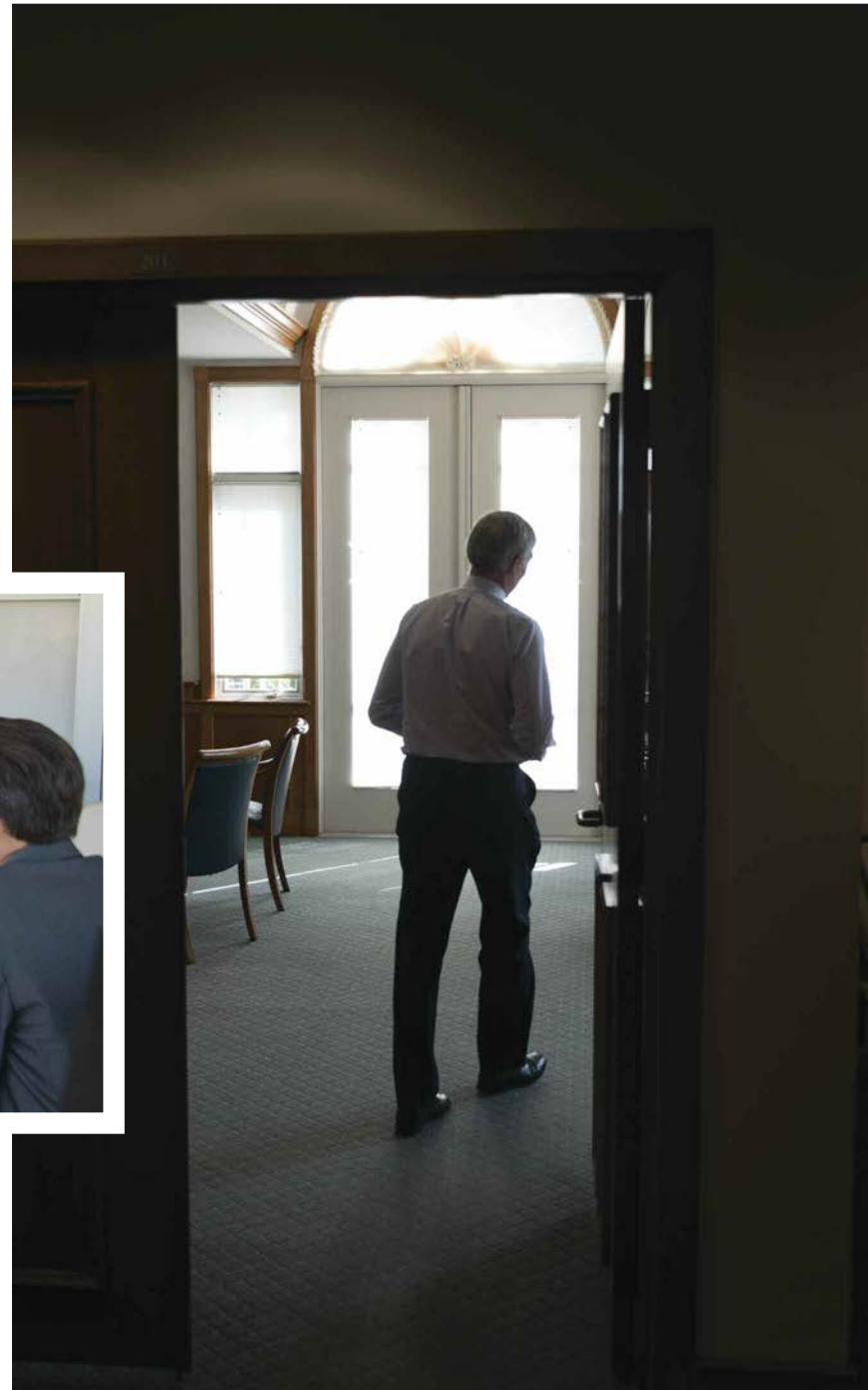
Oxtoby begins his day at a meeting of the Council of Presidents of The Claremont Colleges (above) on the campus of Claremont McKenna College. With plenty of issues that cross the seven campuses to discuss, the group convenes at 8 a.m. and meets throughout the morning.

12:17 p.m.

During a working lunch, Oxtoby meets with Vice President for Advancement Pamela Besnard (right) to discuss the itinerary for an upcoming trip to South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong.

2:26 p.m.

After another meeting, this time with Vice President and Treasurer Karen Sisson, Oxtoby returns to his office to prepare for the next (below).



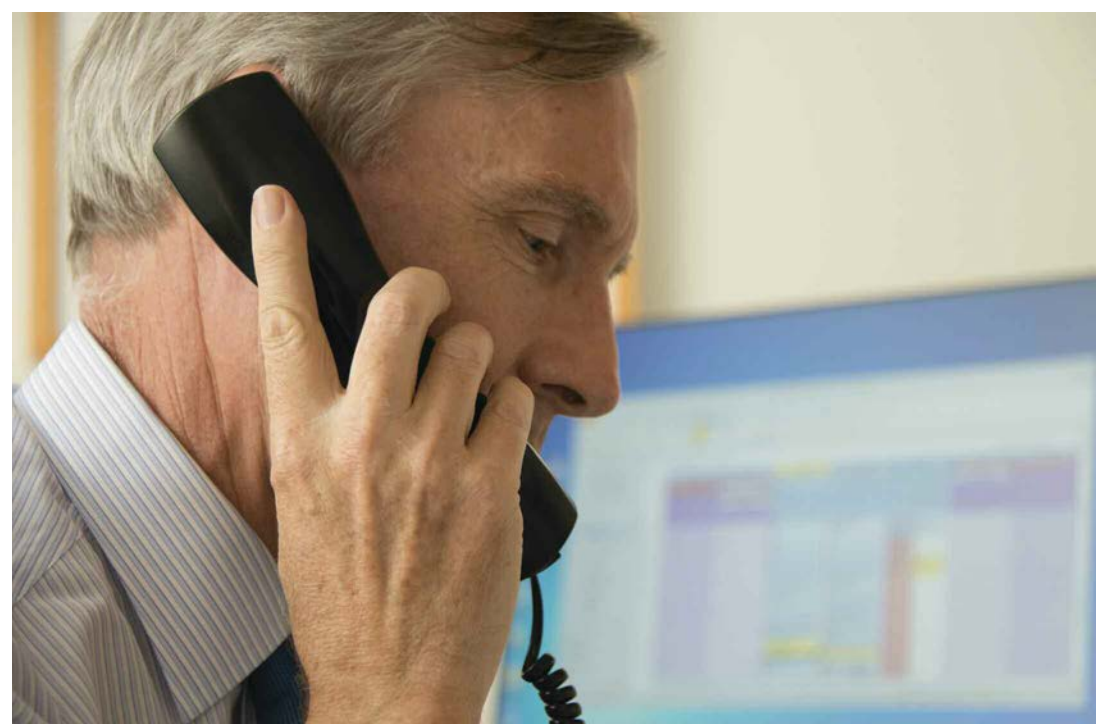


2:43 p.m.

Having already taken part in more than five hours of meetings, Oxtoby takes a short break (above) to join his wife, Claire (background, far left), at Bridges Auditorium and to speak with a group of students as they examine a display about the College's history of activism, part of the celebration of Founders Day 2016.

3:01 p.m.

Back at his inner office (right), Oxtoby makes a scheduled phone call to Chair of the Board of Trustees Sam Glick '04 to discuss details of the upcoming board meeting.



4:23 p.m.

Oxtoby returns to Alexander Hall for the next thing on his schedule, a two-hour meeting of the Faculty Personnel Committee (bottom center).

5:21 p.m.

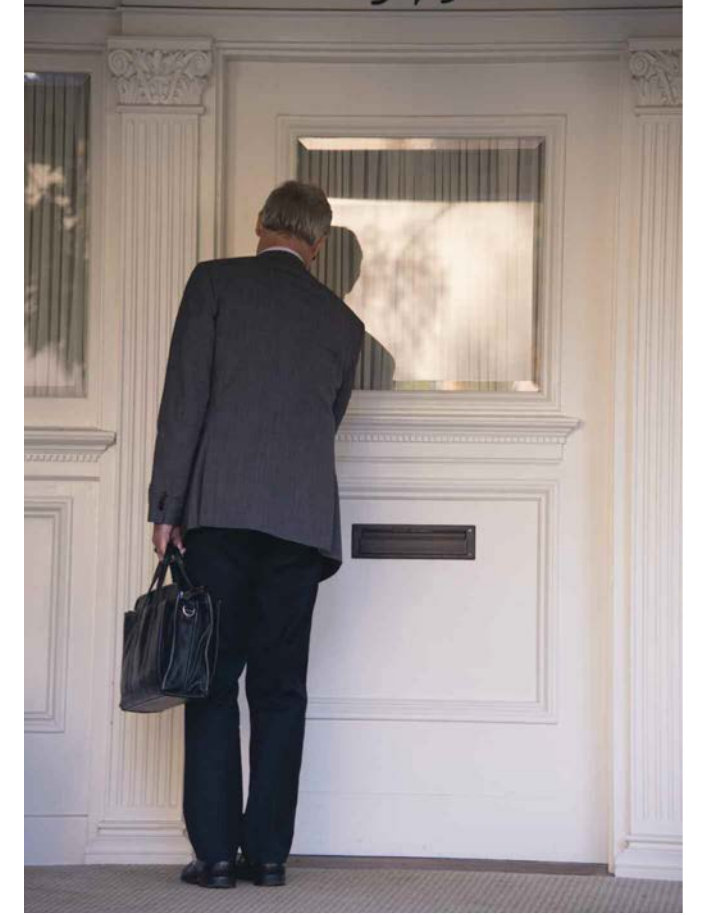
His day over, he packs his briefcase and walks two blocks down Indian Hill Boulevard to number 345, otherwise known as the President's House (right).

5:32 p.m.

After exchanging suit and tie for plaid shirt and jeans, Oxtoby checks out the *New York Times* and discusses the day with his wife, Claire (center right).

5:45 p.m.

A baseball buff, he turns on the TV to catch part of a playoff game before he and Claire leave to attend a play (bottom right).





7:44 p.m.

Claire and David Oxtoby watch a dress rehearsal of a student production of Anton Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard" at Seaver Theatre (top and above).

Day Two
7:24 a.m.

The Oxtobys have breakfast together at the President's House (right).



8:08 a.m.

Oxtoby starts his work day at his computer (above).

9:23 a.m.

He engages with his vice presidents in key policy discussions at a meeting of Executive Staff (bottom center).

12:06 p.m.

Oxtoby convenes a monthly meeting of the faculty (left) and shares his goals for the academic year.



2:12 p.m.

Oxtoby discusses future plans for the 7-college library (top left) with Vice President and Dean of the Faculty Audrey Bilger and Kevin Mulroy, dean of The Claremont Colleges Library.

3:10 p.m.

Kathleen Howe, director of the Pomona College Museum of Art, gives the Oxtobys a tour of the museum's exhibit by Native American artist Rose B. Simpson, titled "Ground."



4:14 p.m.

During his regular student office hours, arguably one of his favorite parts of the job, Oxtoby speaks with Maggie Lemons '17 (left).

5:22 p.m.

Claire Oxtoby joins her husband to attend a women's soccer game against the University of La Verne which ends in a 3-0 victory for the Sagehens (above).

6:21 p.m.

Evening finds the Oxtobys on Highway 210 to Pasadena (bottom left).

7:07 p.m.

In Pasadena, they join trustee Louise Bryson for dinner (below).



[THE OXTOBY YEARS]

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The End of an Era

Nearly 14 years ago I wrote a column about the imminent departure of Pomona's eighth president. It began with these words: "A college president is remembered for a word, a deed, a gesture—something personal to each one of us. A presidency, however, is remembered for more enduring things."

Forgive me for falling back on old words, but I can't think of better ones as we now prepare to say goodbye to Pomona's ninth president.

Personally, I'm sure the first thing I will remember about David Oxtoby is his phenomenal energy—the kind of energy required to take a red-eye to the East Coast, rush from meeting to meeting at a breakneck pace till long after dark, then fly home just in time to hurl himself into another trying 12-hour day—and do it day after day, month after month. Of course, I'll also remember a particularly humanizing moment when that brutal schedule finally caught up with him, causing his eyelids to droop during a long, boring meeting.

And there are other indelible memories—like the carefully articulated Spanish in which he always addressed the gathering at the annual holiday luncheon for college staff in order to ensure that everyone was included in his message. Or the refreshing honesty and quiet civility with which he faced the inevitable storms that struck his presidency.

But that's just my list. Others will have lists of their own—good memories and bad, but rarely indifferent. That's a fact of life for college presidents—especially those who remain on the job for a decade or more. They tend to arouse strong feelings, one way or the other.

Which brings us to the question of how history will remember the Oxtoby presidency—and the corollary question of how much of the credit should go to the person at the top.

David Oxtoby would be the first to point out that college presidents accomplish very little by themselves. In looking back at these 13-plus years, he prefers to talk about the College family as a whole and what we have accomplished together. However, the truth is that institutional progress is a messy business, full of fits and starts that can easily devolve into a morass of conflict and well-intentioned ineffectiveness. It takes a rare combination of temperament and skills in order to manage it successfully.

Indeed, very little of consequence happens at a place like Pomona without bearing the president's fingerprints in some way or other—through an overall vision, a specific goal, a set of priorities, a mediation between warring parties, or simply a well-timed word of encouragement. In this particular case, I think some of the biggest accomplishments of the Oxtoby years—like the dramatic upturn in the diversity of the student body or the highly successful Daring Minds Campaign—have his fingerprints all over them.

There are still eight busy months to go in the Oxtoby era, but even as the work goes on, the institution is beginning to look forward—with sadness, nostalgia, excitement and trepidation—to the dawn of a new era. But before we turn that page, we invite you to join us for a look back at the Oxtoby years, with a focus on both a transformational presidency and the remarkable person behind it.

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Pomona College
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Nondiscrimination Policy
Pomona College complies with all applicable state and federal civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in education and the workplace. This policy of nondiscrimination covers admission, access and service in Pomona College programs and activities, as well as hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits and all other terms and conditions of employment at Pomona College.



Focus on Faith

Thank you for the faith focus of your summer 2016 issue. It is good to know that, just as in my day, people of faith are being helped by their Pomona education to deepen and integrate their received religious heritages into modern worldviews that will enable them to live creative and fruitful lives.

I do wish, however that the fine interview of Judge Halim Dhanidina had touched upon how his faith as an Ismaili Muslim has served him as a foundation for his commitment to providing equitable justice in these United States.

—The Rev. John-Otto Liljenstolpe '62
Seattle, Wash.

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the summer issue. I was a religious studies major at Pomona (featured once myself when I brought a group of Tibetan monks to campus to create a sand mandala), and it was so much fun to read about students and their personal, spiritual and academic journeys. I particularly enjoyed reading about the young man in "The Calling"; he was very inspiring. Now I'm a practicing ob/gyn in a low-resource setting, and the "No Más" article also hit close to home. Well done; I really enjoyed it.

—Kristl Tomlin '05
Phoenix, Ariz.

It is such an honor to have TWO letters from the Class of 1962 in the newest *Pomona College Magazine's* "Letter Box" pages. You've made my classmates and me very happy.

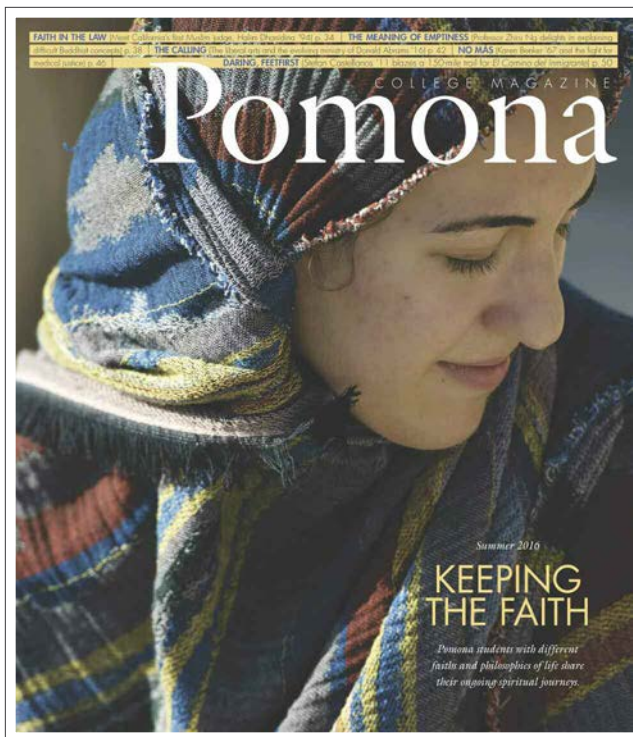
However, there must have been some sort of glitch in the printing of the magazines sent to the 95120 zip code in San Jose, California. Pages 25 through 40 were missing from the center of the magazine. My San Jose friend from the Class of 1966 showed me her magazine, and it has the very same problems.

On the Class of 1962 listserv I asked my classmates if anyone else was missing magazine pages. Those who replied said that their magazines were fine. One of them, who had finished reading the magazine, mailed it to me, and I will share it with my San Jose friend. It has all of the correct pages and no duplicates.

I was glad to have the complete magazine. Look at what I would have missed:

- The gorgeous two-page photo of the Pomona Glee Club singing at St. Peter's in Rome—It bowled me over.

- The photo of that "youngster," Deborah Bial, founder of the Posse Foundation—I looked her up. Since 1989 she has identified promising students from urban backgrounds using alternative standards for predicting their success in college. The students are provided with extra support, and the program has an excellent graduation rate. In 2007 she won the MacArthur "genius" grant. In 2010 Barack Obama gave his Nobel Prize money to 10 charities, and the Posse Foundation was one of the 10.



- The interview with Ashlee Vance, author of a book on Elon Musk—I found the book on Amazon and read several pages. Mr. Vance is a somewhat casual writer, but his stories held my interest. Elon Musk's Tesla factory is just up the road from my San Jose house. Ordinarily, only customers who have purchased a Tesla can tour the factory, but a friend was able to get our group in. (I'm a Prius owner.) The tour was fascinating.

- "Fireproof Ants"—What's not to like about a title like that?

- "Molecular Origami"—I didn't realize that protein molecules folded and unfolded, and if they don't fold properly, they make us sick.

- Halim Dhanidina, Class of 1994, a judge in Long Beach, CA.—If I had to be in court, I'd want him for my judge.

- "The Meaning of Emptiness"—Added to my continuing education about Buddhism.

Once again you have given us a splendid magazine. I'm thinking that most college magazines haven't featured students wrestling with the

religious practices with which they had grown up, trying to see if they fit with their college experience. So you're breaking some new ground there. The photos accompanying those interviews are beautiful.

On page 19, I glanced casually at the photo of Bryan Stevenson and then suddenly realized that I was in the middle of reading his book, *Just Mercy*, as an assignment for my church women's class. If the magazine had arrived a month earlier, I wouldn't have known who he was. What a heart and a mission that man has.

At my 50th reunion we toured the two new dorms and I was charmed by the roof garden on one of them. The magazine shows the garden as a place for meditation (page 12) and as an opportunity to mentor local high school students (page 20).

So, congratulations on another "work of art" in magazine publishing. But let me know if you find out what went wrong with my missing and duplicate pages.

—Bonnie Home '62
San Jose, Calif.

I always look forward to reading each issue of *PCM*. This last issue—summer 2016, "Keeping the Faith"—holds meaning for me. I thought it especially wonderful to see the Islamic student (Pomona '16) on the cover as well as to read what she has to say in the pages inside. I have always felt that all true religions are God-bearing in the light of human hearts. There is something else which spoke to me in particular—namely, her connection to nature. She writes of going up on top of Pomona Hall among birds and clouds. Much of my work as a poet (an Angelean lyric poet) is inseparable from nature-phenomena. So I am especially filled with gratitude for this issue.

—Alan Lindgren '86
Culver City, Calif.

Correction

There was an error in my birth announcement in the most recent issue. My name is Daniel Jones, not David Jones. There was also a punctuation typo—an extraneous period between "and" and "Graeme."

—Daniel Jones '04
Newton, Mass.

Alumni, parents and friends are invited to email letters to pcm@pomona.edu or "snail-mail" them to *Pomona College Magazine*, 550 North College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711. Letters may be edited for length, style and clarity.

PORTRAIT of the President as a Young Boy

This is not how most of us think of Pomona's third and perhaps best known president, James A. Blaisdell, but like the rest of us, he was once a child, and unlike most of us, he had his likeness recorded at the age of about six in the form of a plaster bust.

Blaisdell would grow up to become a minister, theologian and president of Pomona College from 1910 to 1927. Today he is perhaps best remembered as the principal founder of The Claremont Colleges consortium and the author of the quotes on Pomona's gates.

The bust, done in the classical style that was popular at the time (including clothing the boy as a child would have been clothed in Greek or Roman times), may have been intended to be cast in bronze, but no one knows whether this was ever done. Dating from around 1873, Blaisdell's childhood likeness remained in the Blaisdell family until it was donated to the College this year by his great-granddaughter Susan Blaisdell Cornett.



ITEM: Sculpture

DATE: Early 1870s

DESCRIPTION: Plaster bust, 18" x 10.5" x 8"

ORIGIN: Gift from Susan Blaisdell Cornett

If you have an item from Pomona's history that you would like to see preserved in the Pomona College Archives, please call 909-621-8138.

[POMONIANA]

Flightless to the Bone



PHOTO BY MARK WOOD

Jeffrey Allen '17 (center), a teaching assistant in Professor of Biology Nina Karnovsky's Avian Ecology class, joins Ellie Harris '18 (left) and Vanessa Machuca '18, students in the class, to examine the skeleton of an ostrich, part of the vertebrate specimens collection housed in the Biology Department. "From one look at the breastbone you can tell that this bird can't fly," Karnovsky notes. "There is no keel for flight muscles—it is totally smooth—plus the wings are tiny. It dramatically shows adaptations for running—lots of area for attaching leg muscles. I use this in my Vertebrate Biology class as well. I have no idea where it came from or how long we have had it. I just love it."

By the Numbers: Trees

According to the tree database kept by Pomona's Office of Facilities and Campus Services, the most common trees on campus, in order of frequency, are:

- 1 **Coast live oak**
(*Quercus agrifolia*)* 
- 2 **California sycamore**
(*Platanus racemosa*)* 
- 3 **Crape myrtle**
(*Lagerstroemia indica*) 
- 4 **Coast redwood**
(*Sequoia sempervirens*)* 
- 5 **California redbud**
(*Cercis occidentalis*)* 
- 6 **Mesa oak**
(*Quercus engelmannii*)* 
- 7 **Camphor tree**
(*Cinnamomum camphora*) 
- 8 **Canary Island palm**
(*Phoenix canariensis*) 
- 9 **Red ironbark**
(*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) 
- 10 **Sweetshade**
(*Hymenosporum flavum*) 

*California native




PHOTO BY JEFF HING

In late August, the Class of 2020 continued the Pomona tradition of "chirping through the gates" to begin their first semester at the College.

Critical Inquiries

You can always find some of Pomona's most distinctive courses among the array of Critical Inquiry (ID1) classes offered each year to introduce first-year students to both the rigors and the pleasures of academic life at Pomona. An intellectual rite of passage, ID1 classes require new students to think, talk and write about some interesting, often cross-disciplinary topic. They also give Pomona faculty members an opportunity to create something new based on their own interests and passions. Here are a few of this year's new offerings.

 <p>ECOTOPIAS (Professor Los Huertos)</p>	 <p>COLD PLACES (Professor Chu)</p>	 <p>LIVING WITH PETS AND WILDLIFE (Professor Grigsby)</p>	 <p>CRIME FICTION OF LOS ANGELES AND NEW YORK (Professor Raff)</p>	 <p>CHINA FROM THE INSIDE AND OUT (Professor Barr)</p>
 <p>OUR TROUBLED WORLD IMAGINED: THEATRE & THE ENVIRONMENT (Professor Taylor)</p>	 <p>LANGUAGE & GENDER (Professor Divita)</p>	 <p>MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.: FROM MONTGOMERY TO MEMPHIS (Professor Foster)</p>	 <p>ARABESQUE: THE ARTS AND AESTHETICS OF THE ISLAMIC MIDDLE EAST (Professor Shay)</p>	 <p>PHILOSOPHY THROUGH SCIENCE FICTION (Professor Kung)</p>
 <p>THE ECONOMICS AND POLITICS OF FOOD (Professor Navarro)</p>				

Reaping What She Sews

Suzanne Schultz Reed's classroom is not your typical seminar room. Upon entering, visitors are immediately greeted by a costume rack boasting dozens of hangers and garments in various states of completion. Long project tables dominate the open space, ringed by smaller workstations furnished with bright white sewing machines and strips of fabric. The walls are covered in color sketches of period dresses and men's breeches; visible in the supply cabinets are buckets of buttons and thread and pincushions. Today is Wednesday and the room is uncharacteristically quiet, humming only with the sound of sewing machines and soft conversation between Schultz Reed and her student worker, Amy Griffin (Scripps '18). "On Fridays, I have six students working in the shop," Schultz Reed explains. "It's very social. Everybody's chatting, everybody's doing something, music is on. And—" here she grins wickedly—"I bring brownies on Fridays."

Schultz Reed has been the Pomona Theatre Department's costume shop manager for nearly 25 years, producing the costumes for every production the department puts on and teaching sewing to her nine to 16 student workers in the process. She has been sewing for over half a century, since learning from her mother, a sewing teacher, at the age of six. Schultz Reed came to Pomona from a freelance stint at South Coast Repertory, a Costa Mesa-based theatre company, after an accomplished career as a freelancer, a costume shop manager at Mount Holyoke College and a costume shop assistant manager for the Atlanta Ballet.

Although she possesses her own extraordinary design skills and has designed one show for Pomona in the past, Schultz Reed prefers working with her hands to making conceptual decisions about how the costumes should look. "When I went to grad school [at UNC Chapel Hill], I discovered that designing wasn't what I really liked. What I really liked," she confesses, "was making the stuff. I liked taking somebody else's vision and turning it into reality."

Now Schultz Reed takes the renderings of the department's guest costume designer, Kimberly Aldinger '11, and finds ways to bring her ideas to life on the stage. This can mean borrowing from other theatres, renting from costume shops or theatre companies, pulling from the department's stockroom, or building new costumes from scratch. Gesturing to the sketches that decorate the walls, Schultz Reed explains: "Her renderings are my blueprints."

Those blueprints reflect the fact that the needs of each production are very different. If a production calls for a cos-

tume that looks uncommon or serves a scene-specific purpose, it will most likely need to be handmade. "That dress, the pink one," Schultz Reed says, gesturing to one of the renderings on the wall, "has three tiers of petals that have to come off during the show. There's no way we're going to find that, and no way we're going to borrow it. So we're going to have to build it."

The biggest challenge of Schultz Reed's job is making sure all the building and borrowing gets done in time. "You have to get it done by opening night," she stresses. "There's just no way you can fudge that. Tickets are sold; people are coming." The dress rehearsals are crucial to this process. Often Schultz Reed will come away from the first dress rehearsal with pages of notes and 24 hours to address as many of them as she can before the next dress rehearsal. "In last year's production of *Urinetown*, Amy had a fabulous quick change," she remembers, smiling at her student. "She had to go from a dress and a wig and heels to a full-body black costume with a mask. In 30 seconds! We had to practice that." Schultz Reed also worked on redesigning elements of the costumes to make the transition easier, such as replacing a real belt buckle with a magnetic replica. Those kinds of adjustments, from hemming dresses to swapping out collars to the rare overhaul and redesign of entire costumes, ensure that the actors aren't inhibited from giving a great performance.

And while the actors are working hard onstage, Schultz Reed keeps her students working hard offstage. "I teach the basics to those who come in with nothing, and I try to expand the knowledge of those who come in with a lot of sewing experience," she says. "You can really see their progress, and it's a life skill that everybody should have—knowing how to sew. And being creative in here works a different part of your brain than traditional studying does."

Here Amy chimes in, speaking up from behind her sewing machine: "One of the advantages afforded to you in the costume shop is that you get to produce something that isn't attached to grades. You're productive, but you're not productive in a way that's stressful. It's about creating."

Schultz Reed nods emphatically—to her, this job is about her students as much as it is about her own creativity—and adds: "One of my older students was talking to a newcomer and said, 'Oh, you'll love it here! It's like having a sewing class, but you get paid to do it.'" She laughs. "That's how I feel. You get paid to sew, to learn and to have fun."

—Feather Rose Flores '17

**"YOU HAVE TO
GET IT DONE BY
OPENING NIGHT.
THERE'S JUST
NO WAY YOU
CAN FUDGE THAT.
TICKETS ARE
SOLD; PEOPLE
ARE COMING."**

Path to the Paralympics

When Amy Watt '20 got the call that she would be traveling to Rio de Janeiro in early September, her joy in making the U.S. Paralympic track and field team was tempered by worry about missing the first two weeks or so of her first semester at Pomona. She remembers calling Pomona-Pitzer Women's Cross-Country and Track & Field Coach Kirk Reynolds with trepidation.

"I didn't know who I should contact or what to do about missing some school," recalls Watt. "He just asked when I'd be gone, information about the events, and the dates for everything. He talked to several people and the dean; he took care of a lot of it for me and made it easier for me."

Born without part of her left arm, Watt has been an athlete since discovering soccer in kindergarten. She continued playing the sport until she fell in love with track and field in junior high school. "I was encouraged by my mom and friends," says Watt. "It was also a fun activity to do."

Her path from there to the Paralympics involved a couple of chance encounters and an aha moment concerning the rules.

One day during track practice at Gunn High School in Palo Alto, when Watt was in the 10th grade, a Gunn alumnus who is an amputee recommended that she check out the 2014 U.S. Paralympics Track and Field National Championships, being held in nearby San Mateo.

There she happened onto an amputee friend who was competing in a 4x100-meter relay. By chance, the group needed one more person. Watt agreed to fill in and was immediately hooked.

"Never thought I could do Paralympic track and field until I saw some other arm amputees and realized I could also do it," says Watt, who had always assumed that those competitions were meant for leg amputees. What she discovered was that the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has a classification system that determines athletes' eligibility and divides them into sport classes with athletes with similar impairments. The category in which she was eligible was one that seems perfect for a Pomona-bound athlete—IBC classification T47.

Soon she was competing at the international level, traveling to the Netherlands for the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation World Junior Games and then to Toronto for the Parapan

American Games, where she took fourth place in the 100- and 200-meter events. Last year, as a high school senior, Watt traveled to Doha, Qatar, where she participated in the IPC World Championships and came in fifth in the 400-meter dash and seventh in the long jump.

Between homework and world competitions, Watt had a tough decision to think about: college. Having decided she wanted to attend a Division III school, she got in touch with track and field coaches from her top choices.

When she visited Pomona, she was struck by the people she met and the tight community. "I liked that family feel before you get to campus. I liked having small classes; that's something I really wanted in any school. I liked the general feeling on campus and could envision myself here being really happy. I met a lot of intelligent but humble people here."

In Rio, Watt competed in three events—the long jump, in which she finished sixth; the 100 meters, in which she made it to the semifinals; and the 400 meters, in which she also finished sixth.

"Even though I didn't perform as well as I had hoped in my events, the overall experience I had was incredible," she says. "Now that I'm back, I'm catching up on a few assignments and other classwork that I missed, and all my professors have been understanding and supportive. I was touched

that many of my classmates have congratulated me on my performance and watched some of my races."

Although she's not sure what she plans to major in, she is sure she's going to continue track and field at Pomona.

"She is a remarkable jumper and sprinter who has had a successful high school career, and I know she can continue to improve her performance in all her events," says Reynolds.

And though the next Paralympics won't happen until her senior year is over, she can't help thinking about it sometimes.

"Sometimes I still have a hard time grasping that I went and competed in the Paralympics," she says. "It was such an unforgettable experience to be running with the best athletes in the world. I would love to go to Tokyo in 2020, but I'll need to keep working hard to get better and perform well at trials."



Migrants in the Crossfire of Love and Law

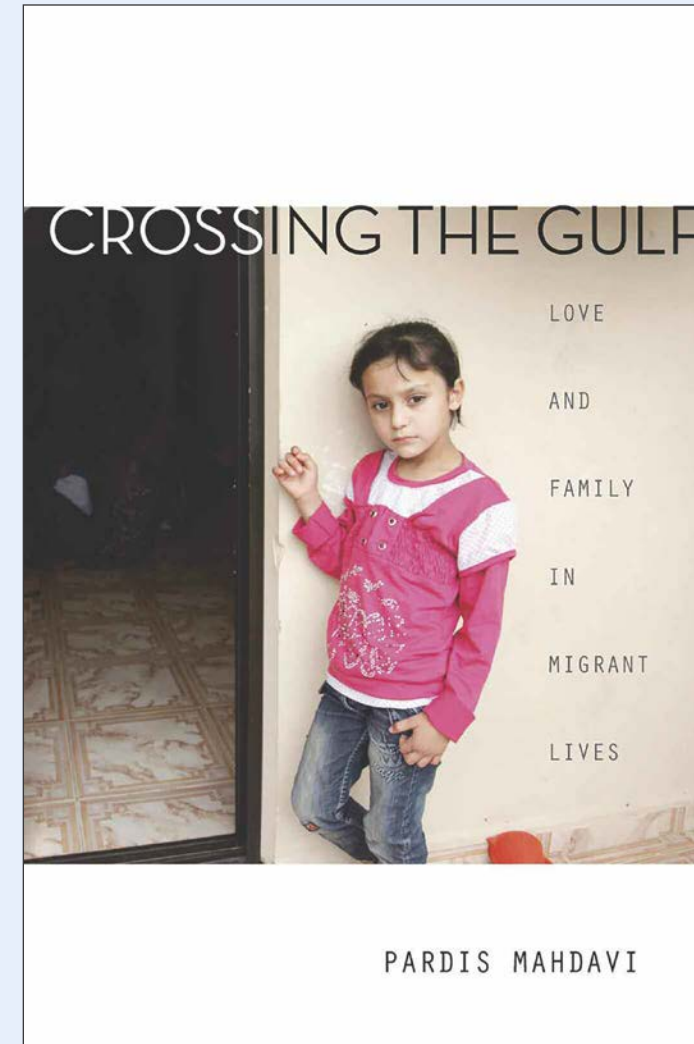
In her new book,

Crossing the Gulf: Love and Family in Migrant Lives, Associate Professor of Anthropology Pardis Mahdavi tells heartbreaking stories about migrants and trafficked mothers and their children in the Persian Gulf and talks to state officials, looking at how bonds of love get entangled with the law. Mahdavi talked to PCM's Sneha Abraham about her book and the questions it poses about migration and families. This interview has been edited and condensed.

PCM: Talk about the relationship between family and migration.

MAHDAVI: Our concept of family has been reconceptualized and reconfigured in and through migration. People are separated from their blood-based kin; they're forming new kinds of fictive kinship in the labor camps or abroad. Some people migrate out of a sense of familial duty, to honor their families. Sometimes they get stuck in situations which they feel they can't get out of because of their family and familial obligations. Other people migrate to get away from their families, to get away from the watchful eyes of their families and communities. Families are not able to necessarily migrate together, and children are not able to migrate with their parents; they're in a more tenuous relationship now than we would recognize when we look at migrants really just as laborers.

Laws complicate those relationships. Laws on migration, citizenship and human trafficking create a category



Crossing the Gulf Love and Family in Migrant Lives

BY PARDIS MAHDAVI
STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016
216 PAGES | \$24.95

of people caught in the crossfire of policies—and those people are often women and their children, and often they are trapped in situations of illegality.

PCM: Would you tease out the question of migration versus trafficking? That is something you're exploring in your book.

MAHDAVI: I think it's a real tension that needs to be teased out in the larger discourse. That's the central question. What constitutes migration? What constitutes trafficking? It's very difficult and that space is much more gray than we think. We've tended to assume that women in industries like the sex industry are all trafficked. We assume if there's a woman involved, it's the sex industry; if it's a minor, it is trafficking; if it's a male, if they're in construction work, that's migration. But that's just not true. Trafficking really boils down to forced fraud or coercion within migration. It's kind of a gray area, a much larger area than we think. The utility of the word "trafficking" really is questioned in the book. How useful is that word? The very definitions of migration and human trafficking are extremely politicized and depend on who you ask and when. Some people might strategically leverage the term, whereas other people strategically dodge it.

Some interpretations have positively elevated the importance of issues that migrants face; other people might say that the framework is used to demonize migrants or further restrict their movement. ▷

PCM: What's an example of a policy that affects these issues of migration and trafficking?

MAHDAVI: The United States *Trafficking in Persons Report* (TIP) is one policy, kind of a large one, to the extent that the report ranks all the countries into tiers and then makes recommendations based on their rankings. And sometimes the recommendations that the TIP report makes actually exacerbate the situation instead of making it better.

For instance, the United Arab Emirates is frequently ranked Tier 2, or Tier 2 Watchlist [countries that do not comply with minimum standards for protecting victims of trafficking but are making efforts], and the recommendation is that there should be more prosecutions and there should be more police. Now, the police in the U.A.E. are imported oftentimes, and from my interviews with migrant workers, it's often the police who are raping sex workers and domestic workers. So you double up your cops, you double up your perpetrators of rape. So that is a policy that's not helping anyone.

Other policies are more tethered to citizenship. They don't have soil-based or birthright citizenship in the Gulf. Citizenship passes through the father in the U.A.E. and Kuwait. Citizenship also passes through the father in some of the sending countries, for instance, up until recently Nepal and India. So that means a domestic worker from India or Nepal, five years ago, who goes to the U.A.E., perhaps is raped by her employer or has a boyfriend and gets pregnant and has a baby, that woman is first incarcerated and then deported because as a guest worker she is contractually sterilized, and that baby is stateless because of citizenship laws that are incongruent.

There is a whole generation of people that have been born into this really problematic situation.

PCM: You write about "children of the Emir." Who are they?

MAHDAVI: So, "children of the Emir" is kind of the colloquial nomenclature given to a lot of the stateless children. They could be children of migrant workers, children who oftentimes were born in jail; maybe they were left in the Gulf when their mothers were deported. They may have been left there intentionally. It's not clear, but they're stateless children who were born in the Gulf. And some of them are growing up in orphanages; others are growing up in the palaces. There was a lot of tacit knowledge about these children and rumors that the Emir or members of the royal family are raising them. But nobody could find the kids. Nobody knew where they were or if it was actually true that they were being raised in the palaces or not. That was rumor until I conducted my research and I was able to confirm that by interviewing these children. And it is true that some are raised in various palaces, given a lot of opportunities, and treated very well.

So now many of them are adults, living and working in the Gulf but still stateless. Recently there's been a slew of articles that have indicated that some of the Gulf countries, the U.A.E. and Kuwait included, are engaging in deals with the Comoros Islands where, in exchange for money to build roads and bridges, they are getting passports from the Comoros Islands. Initially it was thought that they would just get passports to give to these stateless individuals, but the individuals had to remain in the Gulf. However, a closer look at some of the contracts indicates that some of these stateless individuals who are being given Comoros citizenship actually will have to go to the Comoros Islands, which is a very disconcerting prospect for many stateless individuals in the Gulf. And for people who are from the Comoros Islands, they are now thinking, "Oh, our citizenship is for sale," to stateless individuals who are suddenly told that they are citizens of a country they've never even heard of.

"LAWS ON MIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING CREATE A CATEGORY OF PEOPLE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE OF POLICIES—AND THOSE PEOPLE ARE OFTEN WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN, AND OFTEN THEY ARE TRAPPED IN SITUATIONS OF ILLEGALITY."

PCM: You write about something you call "intimate mobility." What is that?

MAHDAVI: Intimate mobility is kind of a trope that I'm putting forward in the book. Basically, it's the idea that people do migrate in search of economic mobility and social mobility—which is obvious to a lot of people—but people also migrate in search of intimate mobility, or a way to mobilize their intimate selves. For example, they migrate to get away from their families in search of a way or space to explore their sexualities. Some form new intimate ties through migration. For others, their intimate subjectivities are challenged when one or more members of the family leave. My book is asking us to

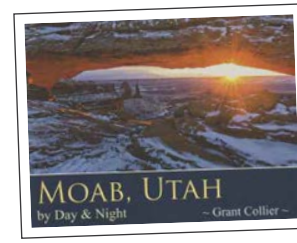
think about how intimacy can be both activated and challenged in migration.

PCM: What does it mean to mobilize one's intimate self?

MAHDAVI: There was a young woman who migrated, who left India because her parents wanted her to get married in an arranged marriage. But she left because she saw herself as somebody who would not want to marry a man. She identifies as a lesbian, and so she migrated to Dubai so that she could explore that sexual side of herself. So that's some of the intimate mobility I'm talking about.

On the flip side, I talk about intimate immobility and I talk about how people's intimate lives, as in their intimate connections with their children back home or their partners back home, become immobilized when they are in the host country. Their intimate selves are immobilized because they can't fully express their love for their children or for their partners. And also women who are guest workers or low-skilled workers legally cannot engage in sexual relations so they can't as easily engage in a relationship.

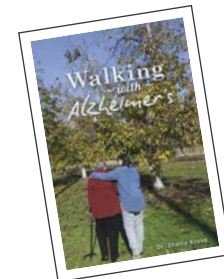
Pardis Mahdavi is associate professor of anthropology, chair of the Pomona College Anthropology Department and director of the Pacific Basin Institute. *Crossing the Gulf* is her fourth book.



Moab, Utah by Day & Night

In his new book of landscape photography, Grant Collier '96 shares the eerie beauty of earth and sky in the canyon country of eastern Utah.

EXCERPT: "In my dreams, I occasionally find myself standing atop impossibly large arches or bizarre, almost whimsical pillars of stone. I will wander far too close to the edge, but I have little fear, as I am rapt in awe by the splendor of the scene. Only in the landscape around Moab do these dreams ever meld with reality. The scenery here is so otherworldly that it seems precariously balanced on the cusp of fantasy."



Walking with Alzheimer's: A Thirty Year Journey

This book by physician Shelly Kruse '76 is both a personal memoir of her mother's progressing illness and a guidebook for families and caregivers. **EXCERPT:** "My mother drove everyone crazy. Her favorite activity was calling out, 'Help me, help me, help me.' She sounded sincere and in trouble and would continue however long it took for someone to arrive. After the nurse or myself came running to ask, 'What's wrong, Jo?' she would smile sweetly and reply, 'Nothing.' Then a few minutes later, she would do the same thing again."



The Fog Seller

This Sausalito-based, literary mystery from Don Daglow '74, the creator of the Emmy Award-winning *Neverwinter Nights*, has won a number of awards. **EXCERPT:** "Liam the Fog Seller stands atop the round concrete bench in the Powell St. BART station, 50 feet below the streets of San Francisco. He wears a black satin top hat, a tuxedo with tails, baggy black pants, neon yellow T-shirt and a diaphanous pale blue scarf. "Ladies and Gentlemen!" he proclaims, drawing a glare from an old Chinese woman sitting nearby. "The trains that roll through this station will take you away from this place and time!"



Rosa's Very Big Job

With illustrations by Sarah Vonthron-Laver, this children's book by Ellen Mayer '74, about a spunky preschooler named Rosa who enlists her imaginative grandfather to lend a helping hand to her busy mom, is part of Mayer's new series of "Small Talk Books," which are designed to demonstrate practical techniques parents can use to facilitate language development in their children. Other titles in the series include *Cake Day*, with illustrations by Estelle Corke, and a pair of board-books titled *Red Socks* and *A Fish to Feed*, both illustrated by Ying-Hwa Hu.



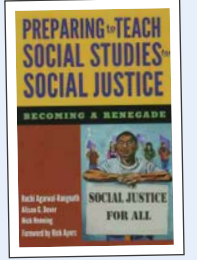
The Legacy of the Moral Tale: Children's Literature and the English Novel, 1744–1859

Patrick Fleming '05 traces the rise of the moral tale in children's literature and its impact upon such authors as Charles Dickens and Maria Edgeworth. **EXCERPT:** "By the time he wrote *Great Expectations*, Dickens had changed his didactic narrative style. Unlike his earlier novels, *Great Expectations* does not take the form of an example illustrating a moral precept, rewarding the virtuous characters and punishing the villains. If *Great Expectations* is to succeed in its didactic goals, the experience of reading the novel must accomplish this task."



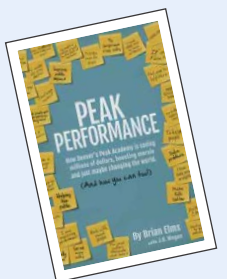
Alphabet Fun: Playing 'Eye'

In her new children's book, based on a game she plays with her grandchildren, Alice Ronald '63 teaches imaginative observation using photographs of found alphabet letters in everyday objects. "When I was little," she explains, "my father played a game with my brother and me. It was called *Playing Eye*. We looked for animal shapes in the clouds or slightly different colors and shapes in trees or flowers or rocks. *Playing Eye* trains young minds to observe and to use the artistic parts of their brains. I am continuing the *Playing Eye* game with my grandchildren."



Preparing to Teach Social Studies for Social Justice: Becoming a Renegade

Nick Henning '95 and co-authors Ruchi Agarwal-Rangnath and Alison Dover offer a guide to teaching justice-oriented social studies classes within the Common Core State Standards. **EXCERPT:** "Before the beginning of each school year, every teacher is faced with the important content-focused curricular question, "What will I teach?" Embedded within this question are the corollary questions, "What do I want to teach?" and "What am I supposed to teach?" For most justice-oriented teachers in accountability driven classrooms, the answers to these two questions often do not match..."



Peak Performance: How Denver's Peak Academy Is Saving Millions of Dollars, Boosting Morale and Just Maybe Changing the World. (And How You Can Too!)

J.B. Wogan '06 joins co-author Brian Elms, a founding member of Denver's Peak Academy, to offer a guide to improving organizational performance. **EXCERPT:** "It's the small innovations that can transform a process—and the small questions that can cause you to reexamine the way something's always been done. When you're looking for an opportunity to innovate, think small, and ask yourself this question: Is there anything you do just because it's always been done that way?"

[HOW TO]

HOW TO BECOME THE CREATIVITY GURU OF THE 5Cs

Fred Leichter likes to tell the story of the 2000 election ballot from Palm Beach County, Florida. “It was so poorly designed,” he says, “that an inordinate number of votes that were meant for Gore went to a third-party candidate instead. And that swung the whole election and the presidency to Bush.”

For years, he kept a copy of that ballot on his wall with a note saying “Design matters.”

Today, as the founding director of the Rick and Susan Sontag Center for Collaborative Creativity, Leichter is bringing that message to the students of The Claremont Colleges.

Known as “the Hive,” the center was conceived as a place where students could form creative teams, be intellectually daring and work collaboratively to address complex challenges.

Bringing dynamic experience in fields ranging from higher education to technology, Leichter built his career as a design innovator and executive for Fidelity Investments. As senior vice president for design thinking and innovation at the Boston-based firm, he led teams focusing on user needs and experimenting with ways to speed up innovation.

Along with his Fidelity role, Leichter has served as a lecturer at Stanford University’s Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (commonly known as the d.school), teaching such classes as Designing with Data, Visual Thinking Strategies and Project Joy: Designing Delight into the Workplace. His founding director role at the Hive also includes a faculty appointment as clinical professor of engineering at Harvey Mudd College.

President David Oxtoby said Leichter was chosen for his leadership skills, team-building experience and track record of design innovation. “We are looking to Fred to help spark an environment where students push into new areas, look at problems in fresh ways and seek out surprising solutions.”

The following is a how-to manual in seven parts, tracing Leichter’s path from childhood to the Hive.

1 Grow up a faculty brat at Columbia University. Go to a Waldorf school that emphasizes creativity. Attend Swarthmore, spending a “study abroad” semester at Pomona College.

Wish there were such a thing as a computer science major, but since there isn’t, major in math.

2 After graduating, receive two job offers—teaching high school math or becoming a programmer on Wall Street. Choose Wall Street because it cuts “against the grain” of your previous life. Take graduate courses in computer science and spend lots of nights debugging COBOL programs.

3 Meet your future wife, Jennifer, a financial analyst, and when she takes a new job in Boston, abandon Wall Street to join her. Work at a software company until it goes bankrupt, and take away an important lesson: Failure isn’t permanent, and you can learn from it.

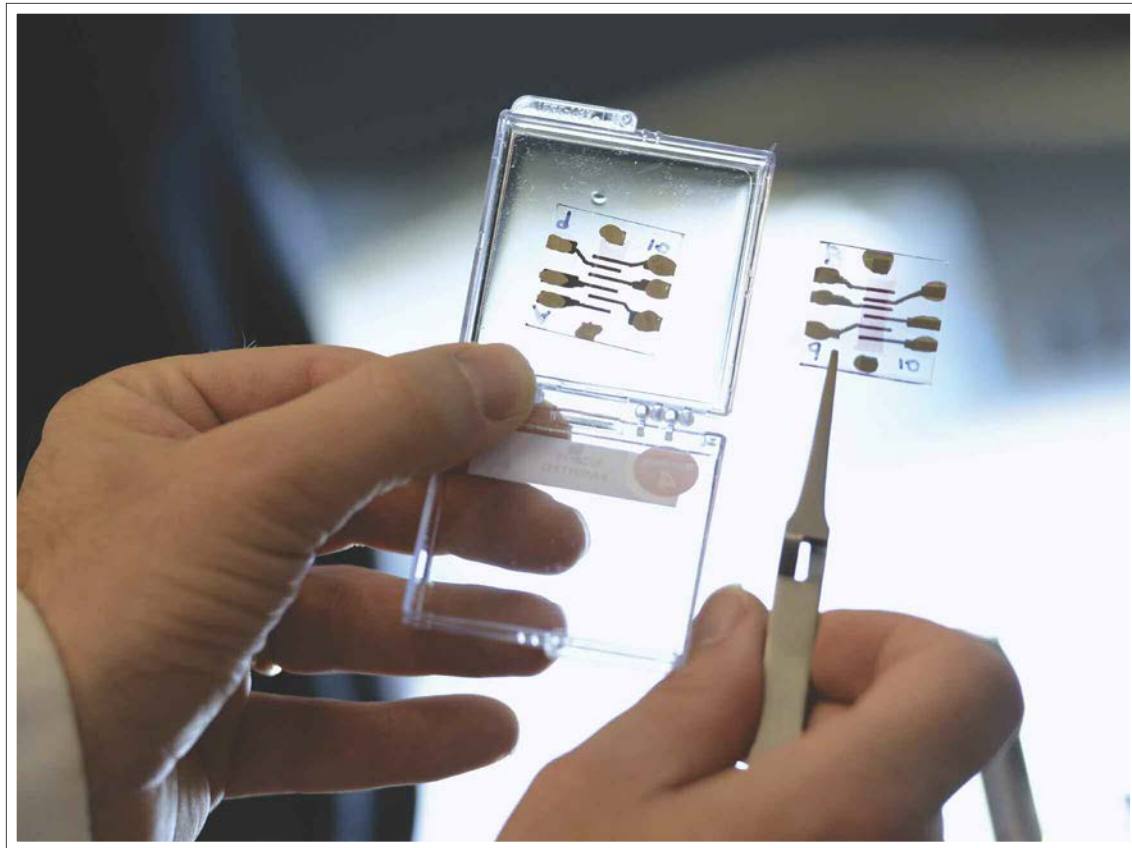
4 Get a job at Fidelity Investments and design their first website, with a user interface that is largely unchanged decades later. Learn about human-centered design and begin to think of yourself as a designer at a time when most people think designers are people who sketch clothes.

5 Meet George Kembel and David Kelley, who are launching the d.school at Stanford. When Fidelity sponsors a class at the school, spend time there and bring new ideas back to your firm. Build a state-of-the-art design-thinking lab at Fidelity to focus on innovation from the perspective of unmet human need.

6 Return to the d.school for a full year as a fellow, taking and teaching classes and working on projects for Fidelity. Tell your wife your new dream is to build a creativity program at a small liberal arts college like the one you attended, though the chances of that seem slim.

7 Two years later, learn about the director’s position at the Hive. Though you still love your job at Fidelity, decide that this is the perfect place to pursue your dream. Consult your kids and family and negotiate with the colleges over a great space for the Hive, but ultimately say yes.

—Mark Wood



PHYSICS: Professor of Physics David Tanenbaum

Organic Solar

What was once a rare sight is now becoming more common: solar panels on the roofs of homes across the country. While solar technology has improved and is seeing exponential growth as an industry, Pomona College Professor of Physics David Tanenbaum notes that there are still a few factors limiting production at a mass scale globally. Tanenbaum and his student researchers are working to improve this by focusing on one important factor: the cost of the materials used in producing solar cell panels.

Tanenbaum explains that today's solar panels, like microchips, are made with silicon, which requires a fairly expensive production process because of factors such as the need for high-temperature processing of high-purity materials. In building solar panels, he says, the difference in cost between silicon and less expensive organic materials is like the cost difference between manufacturing a flat-screen TV and printing ink on paper. Imagine, he says, trying to cover the globe with expensive flat-screen televisions; that's where solar cell technology is today. Now imagine covering the globe with printed paper and how much cheaper and easier that would be. That's where he wants to see solar technology go.

To this end, Tanenbaum and his students are making organic solar cells using chemicals like poly(3-hexylthiophene), P3HT for short, or [6,6]-phenyl-C61-butyric acid methyl ester, known as PCBM. They are experimenting with differing materials and processing techniques to make the cells.

"The main thing we want to get out of solar technology is a way to produce electricity. Everyone would benefit from electricity that is carbon neutral, and solar cells require no fuel stock: no gasoline, diesel or nuclear pellets. The sun is out there whether we take advantage of it or not," he says.

When it comes to solar cell technology, there are three main attributes: efficiency (how good the device is at converting sunlight into energy), production cost (how much it costs to produce cells and panels), and lifetime (how long the device will last).

Current solar technology has good efficiency and a long lifetime, but the challenge still lies in the cost, he says.

"The idea is to bring the cost way down, even if it means the efficiency and lifetime is not so good," he says. "The efficiency of the solar cell is maybe not perfect, but the reality is there's not a lot of waste. When you burn diesel fuel or natural gas to make electricity, you produce a lot of waste heat. You're not wasting anything from the sun, just using a little bit for your advantage. The

low cost allows us to displace natural gas, coal, all those things that have issues.

"In the grand scheme of things, we'd like to produce electricity at a low cost and put electricity in isolated places relatively easily. In the U.S. everyone is connected to the electricity grid, but not everyone in the world is. You can't build a nuclear power plant for a small amount of people, but solar energy can grow with the population."

Tanenbaum has been working on this particular type of solar cell technology research for about eight years and has had students in the laboratory helping since the beginning.

Sabrina Li '17, a physics major, and Meily Wu Fung '18, an environmental analysis major, were summer lab researchers through the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP).

Li has been working with Tanenbaum since her first year at Pomona and is planning a senior project that encapsulates what she's learned in the lab thus far. "I'm looking at organic solar cells. They're organic instead of silicon, and I'm looking at trying to optimize efficiency and lifetime." Li experiments with different materials and processing techniques to make the cells.

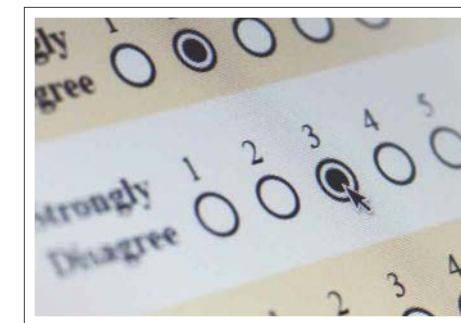
This was Wu Fung's first summer doing research at Pomona. She's working on testing the aging of cells over time, using cells created over the past three years in the lab that are still working today. "At the end of the day, when we're done making the cells, it's really gratifying to measure them and see what's come of it."

Tanenbaum is on sabbatical for the 2016–17 academic year, continuing his research on solar cell technology at the Catalan Institute of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

PSYCHOLOGY: Assistant Professor of Psychology Adam Pearson

Not Your Average Online Quiz

It's not your typical online poll—the type you find on BuzzFeed to determine which Hogwarts house you'd be sorted into, or what your *Game of Thrones* name would be. Assistant Professor of Psychology Adam Pearson, along with Princeton social psychologist Sander van der Linden, have developed a series of online surveys for *Time* magazine to see what Americans think about issues like climate change, gun safety and genetically modified food and how in touch they are with others' beliefs on these issues.



The first survey was on how different groups feel about gun ownership. It was to be followed by surveys on issues like climate change, evolution, GMO food consumption, vaccination and gun safety.

At the end of each survey, the reader has a

chance to see if he or she has accurately assessed how other people feel about the same subjects. The results, says Pearson, can be very surprising.

"Many seemingly intractable social problems come down to a deceptively simple, but quite powerful truth: Social perceptions matter. As adults, we may like to think that peer pressure is something that only kids are susceptible to—that we come to hold the views that we do through logic and reason—but decades of research in social psychology suggest otherwise," he says.

"We thought this would be a terrific opportunity to test and expand on a well-known set of social psychological effects with a large and diverse sample of Americans," says Pearson of the partnership with *Time*. "We know that one of the best predictors of how you'll feel about an issue is what you think others think about the issue," he says. For example, people are more inclined to believe in human-caused climate change when they perceive that there is scientific consensus on the subject, regardless of which political party they align with.

"These meta-perceptions or meta-beliefs—what we think others think—matter," he adds.

One way this shows itself is what is known as the false consensus effect. "We tend to (and often falsely) assume others hold the same beliefs that we do," says Pearson. "Another effect is called pluralistic ignorance—a tendency to perceive that my private beliefs don't align with those around me. Both types of perceptions can influence how we behave. If we want to build consensus on issues that are important to us, we first need to accurately understand others' views. This is especially true for building consensus on contentious and politicized issues, from gun safety to the foods we consume."

The findings will be used by *Time* and shared widely after the surveys are concluded. Pearson and van der Linden also plan to use their findings in their research to broaden our understanding of factors that shape public opinion on these issues.

—Carla Guerrero '06



New Pomona Faculty

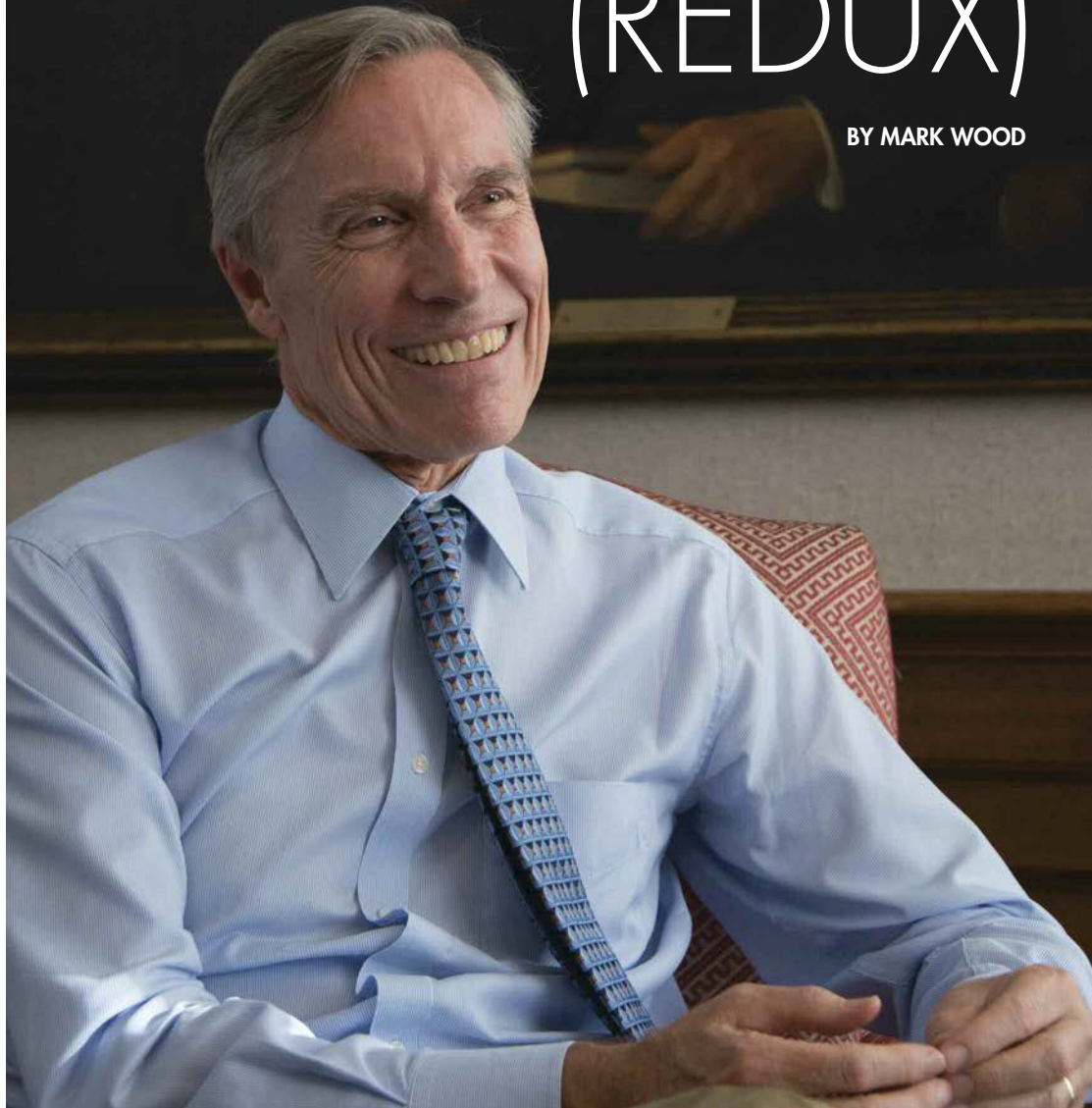
Every fall, Pomona College welcomes a special group of people to campus: new professors, visiting professors, lecturers and fellows. This year the College has a group of 36, including, from left to right: **Back row:** O. Maduka Ogba, Robbins post-doctoral fellow in chemistry; Mark Caspary, post-M.F.A. fellow in theatre and dance; Scott Medling, visiting assistant professor of physics and astronomy; Vivek Swaroop Sharma, visiting assistant professor of politics; Peter Andrew Mawhorter, visiting instructor in computer science; **second row from back:** Robin Melnick, instructor in linguistics and cognitive science; Kimberly Ayers, visiting assistant professor of mathematics; Jill Pace, assistant professor of physical education and women's basketball coach; Tyler LaPlante, visiting assistant professor of economics; **third row from back:** Kara Wittman, director of college writing and assistant professor of English; Patricia Blessing, visiting assistant professor of art history; Guadalupe Bacio, assistant professor of psychology and Chicana/o-Latina/o studies; Lei Shao, visiting assistant professor of economics; **fourth row from back:** Nicole Holliday, Mellon Chau postdoctoral fellow in linguistics and cognitive science; Joanne Nucho, Mellon Chau postdoctoral fellow in anthropology; Carolyn Ratteray, assistant professor of theatre and dance (now tenure-track); Giovanni Ortega, assistant professor of theatre and dance (now tenure-track); and **front:** Katya Mkrtychyan, visiting instructor in computer science. **Not pictured:** Nani Agbeli, lecturer in music and director of the West African Drumming Ensemble; Richard Asante, visiting African scholar in international relations; Martha Bárcenas-Mooradian, lecturer in Romance languages and literatures; Zaylin Cano, lecturer in dance; Brett Hershey, lecturer in theatre and design; Rushaan Kumar, visiting assistant professor of gender and women's studies; Whitney Mannies, lecturer in politics; Audrey Mayer '94, lecturer in environmental analysis; Sam Miner '06, lecturer in mathematics; Claire Nettleton, lecturer in Romance languages and literatures; Alexandria Pivovarov, lecturer in environmental analysis; Elm Pizarro, lecturer in dance; Meagan Prael, lecturer in theatre and dance; Andrew Sappay, visiting assistant professor of chemistry; Meghan Sisson, visiting assistant professor of physical education and men's and women's swim coach; Corey Sorenson, visiting assistant professor of theatre and dance; Ousmane Traoré, assistant professor of history and Africana studies; and Samira Yamin, lecturer in art.

The Class of 2020
gathers on the steps of
Carnegie Hall.
—PHOTO BY JEFF HING



THE ELEMENTS OF A PRESIDENT (REDUX)

BY MARK WOOD



AS DAVID OXTOBY NEARS THE END OF HIS 14-YEAR TENURE AS POMONA'S NINTH PRESIDENT, LET US PAUSE TO REWIND...

Very early in David's tenure, we were at a meeting, and David had to leave the meeting early, so he got up and proceeded to walk into a closet. Everyone in the room fell silent, and a few moments later, David emerged from the closet and said, "There are so many doors around here. I love it." At which point he plunged at a dead run, which is the way he always moves, through the correct door and off into the rest of the College. And I remember everybody chuckled, but I was just sort of beaming ear to ear for having been involved in hiring him, because it kind of framed exactly why we hired him. That is, his amazing intellectual curiosity and energy. **In my mind, he was a guy who thrived on opening new doors, and who didn't shy away from difficult situations.** And I think we've seen a great deal of that in such issues as sustainability and the art museum and diversity and creating an inviting and comfortable environment for everybody, his athletic leadership, summer internships, building the College beyond Claremont. Here's somebody who's always looking for new doors to open.

—Stewart Smith '68
Former Chair of the Board of Trustees

My second meeting with David was an argument, but a good argument. This was during the strategic planning process. I had been leading the task force about interdisciplinary studies, and we were meeting to discuss our report. First he wanted to take me to lunch, but I was suspicious because people take you to lunch to try to disarm you before they pounce. So I said, 'No, no, no, no, let's just have a meeting in your office.' And sure enough, David opened by saying he had read the report, that it was well documented and well written, but that he strongly disagreed. And we had a wonderful kind of back and forth, because he had clearly read and thought about everything we had said. I think we continued to disagree, but I was impressed because it was clear he was engaging seriously with what we were saying on an intellectual level.

—Cecilia Conrad
Former Dean of the Faculty

I was on the tennis team, and President Oxtoby would often come to weekend matches to cheer us on in his full Spandex bike gear. As I student, I appreciated the fact that he was out doing his weekend routine of getting some exercise, **but he took some time out to come to the tennis courts and watch our match.**

—Elsbeth Hilton Kim '08

Thirteen years ago, as David Oxtoby was preparing to become the ninth president of Pomona College, this magazine introduced him to the College family with an article titled "The Elements of a President." The title arose from a reference to one of his favorite books, *The Periodic Table*.

In this autobiographical work, Italian chemist and Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi famously titled each chapter with an element that he had worked with as a chemist or that was related in some symbolic way to his life. Asked which elements he would choose to describe his own life, Oxtoby—as a fellow chemist with a similarly figurative turn of mind—played along. He started with hydrogen, the first and simplest element, symbolizing his formative years. Next came gallium, an element with some odd properties that interested him in his research on nucleation, as well as being named in honor of France, the country where he met his wife, Claire. Chlorine, bromine and iodine, all part of the halogen family, represented his three children. All, he said, were part of a single family and yet each was utterly distinctive in character. To symbolize his years of teaching and research in atmospheric chemistry, he chose carbon, the key element for life. Finally, for his arrival at Pomona, he selected element number 47 on the periodic table, silver. So naturally, as Oxtoby's tenure as Pomona president entered its final months, we went back to him to ask how he would revise or add to that list today to characterize his presidency. Once again, he played along, and the result is a metaphorical reflection on some of the key themes of his transformative tenure at Pomona. ▷

David has had to deal with a lot of hard, hard issues. **The issues change, but they don't seem to get any easier.** During the presidential search, someone asked me, 'What are you looking for in a new president?' And I said, 'Well, it seems to me you need someone who has some ability to deal with these disparate issues and to work with these diverse students in a way that makes them all feel like they're being supported or validated.' And that's David. He approaches these things with real concern and understanding for the student experience.

—Jeanne Buckley '65
Chair Emerita of the Board of Trustees

David Oxtoby was my academic advisor, so I got to work with him very closely. I think that he did not want me to shortchange myself in terms of what I could get out of a world-class education at Pomona. **He really believed in my potential, and he reminded me of that constantly.** What was so astonishing to me was the fact that every time we met, even though we only met twice a semester, he knew exactly what we had talked about in our previous conversation and he asked me about it.

—Shirley Ceja-Tinoco '10

In his inaugural address, one of the major themes David stressed was community partnerships. He felt they were very important. And I picked up on that early because that was a passion of mine, and **I said to myself, 'Bingo, I think I have a partner here.'** So we talked a lot about it over the years, and out of that, and with wide campus support, came a plan to build up the Center for Community Partnerships and set it up in perpetuity. And that's what happened. So, it's a joint project we both, I think, are very proud of.

—Ranney Draper '60
Trustee Emeritus

David is not only a renowned scientist, but a powerful advocate for the arts, believing the integration of both is essential to creating the empathy and innovation needed in the world today.

—Louise Bryson
Trustee

I got to know President Oxtoby pretty well when I was ASPC president. I was pretty frustrated at the time because I really wanted the faculty to require a Dynamics of Difference and Power course as a graduation requirement, and I spent my presidency organizing around that issue. One of the problems was that critics kept saying that not enough students wanted the change. I invited President Oxtoby to come speak at a Senate meeting, and I remember him telling us that our job was to do what was right, not what was popular. That was a pivotal moment for me, affirming that leadership is sometimes about sticking to your principles even when you're under attack. That message has stuck with me to this day.

—Lori Kido Lopez '06

The times I've seen him most happy—when I've seen looks of what I would describe as pure happiness on his face—have been after he's talked with students.

—Teresa Shaw
Special Assistant to the President

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Silver / The Liberal Arts

"This time, I would start with silver, element number 47, therefore the Pomona element. A noble metal, it is important both aesthetically in the arts and as a catalyst for new chemistry, and so, it could be a symbol not only of Pomona, but more broadly of the liberal arts."

Some aspects of a presidency are easily quantifiable—gifts raised, buildings built, programs launched. Others, though equally important, are harder to measure. David Oxtoby's role as an international ambassador for the liberal arts falls into the latter category.

A chemist who had spent his entire career up to that point at large research universities, Oxtoby began his inaugural address with these words: "What is a liberal arts college today, in 2003?" He went on to make the case for an education that is broad, personal, and full of opportunities to follow one's passions.

"Growing up as he did on the Bryn Mawr College campus with a father who was a prominent faculty member," says longtime colleague Richard Fass, who served as Pomona's vice president for planning until his retirement this year, "David developed and retained a firm belief in the values of a liberal arts education. He cares about the enterprise we're all engaged with and believes deeply that there is no better way to develop educated and committed minds and hearts. David's passion and commitment are infectious."

That infectious passion was apparent as the years went by, and Oxtoby became a national spokesperson for the continuing importance of liberal arts colleges, writing and speaking about the future of the liberal arts and its response to such challenges as the growth of interdisciplinary study and globalization.

He even carried his message around the globe, traveling to India, Hong Kong and Singapore to offer support to local educators working to adapt the successful American liberal arts model to their own cultures while learning from them in exchange.

"Given the ongoing debate here at home about the value of a liberal arts education, it was good to be reminded that we're all part of an international competition in which U.S. higher education is considered the gold standard, in large part because of its breadth and multiple pathways, including a vigorous liberal arts tradition," he said in a letter to alumni.

While promoting the liberal arts tradition nationally and abroad, Oxtoby also focused throughout his presidency on reinforcing it here on our own campus. He worked with the faculty to restructure Pomona's overly restrictive general education program to give students more freedom of choice. He led a campus-wide renewal of Pomona's commitment to the arts, including the construction of a new Studio Art Hall that is now inspiring more students to explore the arts. In the final year of his presidency, he is continuing this work by spearheading the College's ongoing initiative to provide the Pomona College Museum of Art with a new home suitable for a state-of-the-art teaching museum for the 21st century. ▶

I think David has been an important spokesman for the liberal arts.

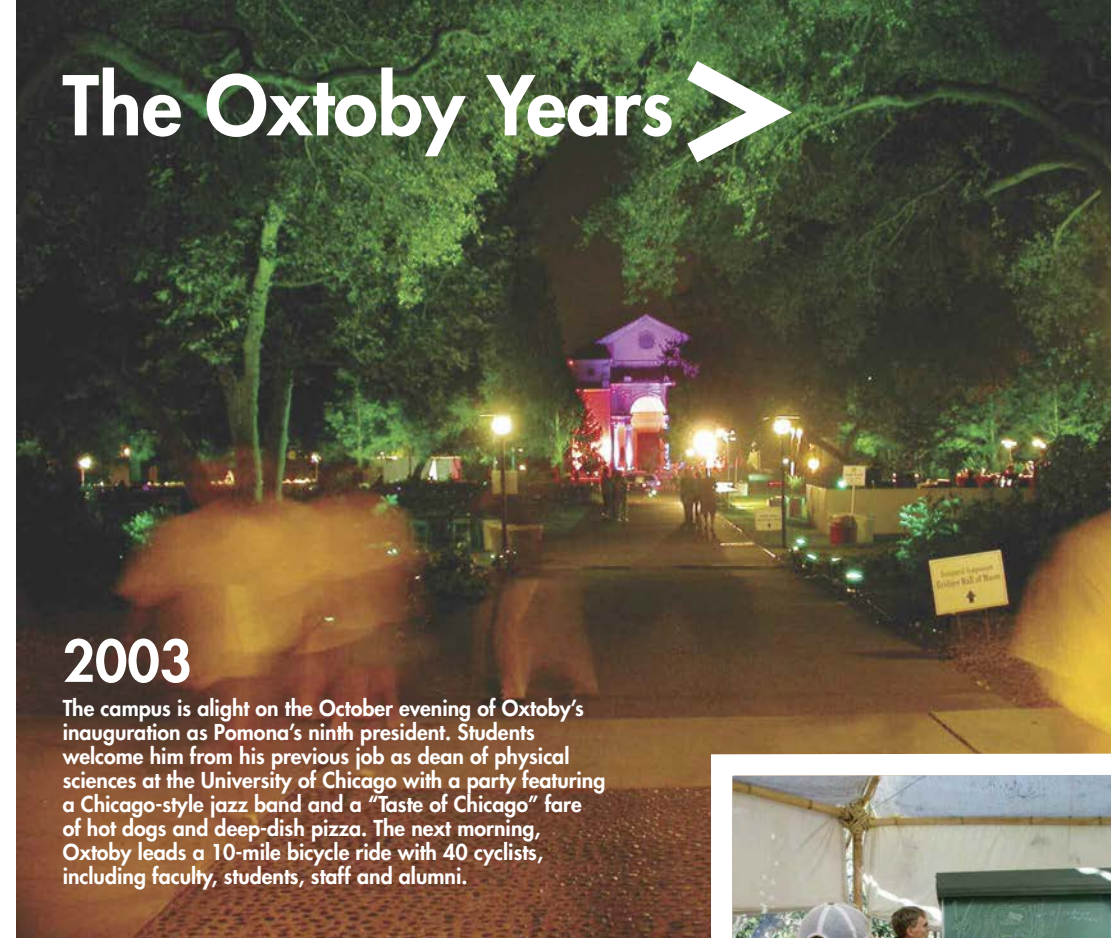
As I look back over the past few years, his message has really resonated in countries like China, where traditionally people would opt for a large research university. To me, it's inspiring to see that more people actually know what Pomona College is and what the liberal arts entail and that more Chinese students are pursuing this experience. I really applaud David for his continuous effort to be at the forefront in conveying the importance of a liberal arts education, in both domestic and international regions.

—Xiaoye "MD" Ma '11
Trustee

When I think about David and Claire, I can't help but think of their consistent support of live performance at the College, especially performances by students. It's very clear that David enjoys not only the music itself, but also the fact that he's hearing students play it and sing it, and his enthusiasm for their efforts is easy to see. Several times he and Claire have been in our midst during a Glee Club tour, and we've sung something for them in particular. That's one of many images I have in my mind—the joy on their faces when we've stood in a circle around them singing.

—Donna M. Di Grazia
Professor of Music

The Oxtoby Years >



2003

The campus is alight on the October evening of Oxtoby's inauguration as Pomona's ninth president. Students welcome him from his previous job as dean of physical sciences at the University of Chicago with a party featuring a Chicago-style jazz band and a "Taste of Chicago" fare of hot dogs and deep-dish pizza. The next morning, Oxtoby leads a 10-mile bicycle ride with 40 cyclists, including faculty, students, staff and alumni.

2007

Pomona dedicates the new Lincoln and Edmunds halls, housing the departments of Psychology, Linguistics and Cognitive Science, Computer Science, Geology and Environmental Analysis, as well as three intercollegiate programs—Asian American Studies, Black Studies and Chicano/a Studies. The buildings receive LEED gold certification. In the courtyard, Pomona's newest work of public art is completed. The *LA Times* calls "Dividing the Light" (below), a Skyspace by James Turrell '65, "one of the best works of public art in recent memory."



2004

The Richard C. Seaver Biology Laboratory is completed, providing state-of-the-art research and teaching labs for genetics, cell biology, neurobiology, plant and animal physiology and ecology. The building receives the College's first LEED certification (silver) from the U.S. Green Building Council.



2006

The College's student-built Organic Farm becomes an official part of campus and part of the Environmental Analysis Program, which offers its first Farms and Gardens class.

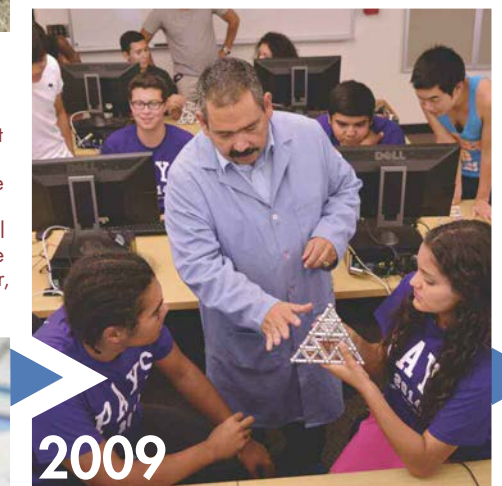


2005

"47 Things Every Sagehen Should Do" challenges student to break out of the "Claremont Bubble" and explore the cultural institutions, outdoor recreation opportunities and other resources of Southern California.

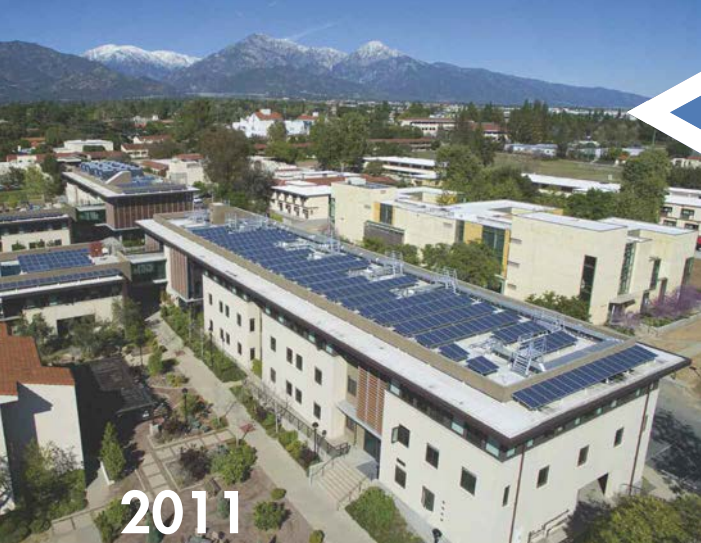
2008

The stock market crash marks the beginning of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, and Pomona's endowment tumbles by about 25 percent. The College freezes salaries and institutes other belt-tightening measures but actually increases funding for financial aid to assist students affected by the events. The College also reaffirms its decision, announced earlier in the year, to no longer include loans in financial aid packages.



2009

The Office of Community Programs is renamed the Draper Center for Community Partnerships, with plans to expand educational and community outreach, including the College's long-term commitment to the Pomona College Academy for Youth Success (PAYS).



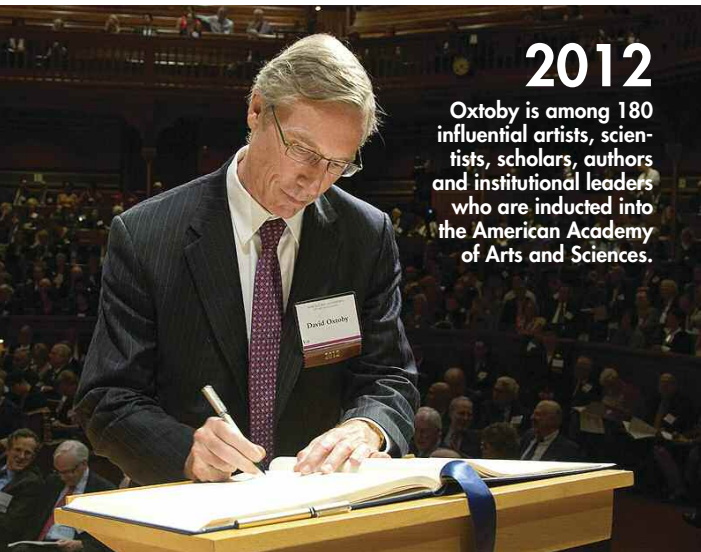
2011

Sontag and Dialynas residence halls open on north campus. The halls, featuring suite-style apartments for about 150 students, are certified LEED Platinum, becoming the first college residence halls in California to achieve that rating and the second such project anywhere in the nation.



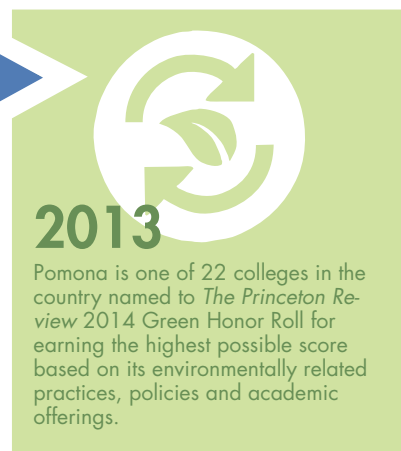
2010

The College publicly launches Campaign Pomona: Daring Minds, setting a goal of \$250 million. The five-year campaign focuses on raising funds for four main areas: increasing endowed scholarship aid, enhancing teaching and learning, improving critical facilities, and expanding the Annual Fund. Five years later, the campaign closes with more than \$316 million raised. (At right, Stewart Smith '68, one of the campaign co-chairs, at the campaign launch)



2012

Oxtoby is among 180 influential artists, scientists, scholars, authors and institutional leaders who are inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



2013

Pomona is one of 22 colleges in the country named to The Princeton Review 2014 Green Honor Roll for earning the highest possible score based on its environmentally related practices, policies and academic offerings.



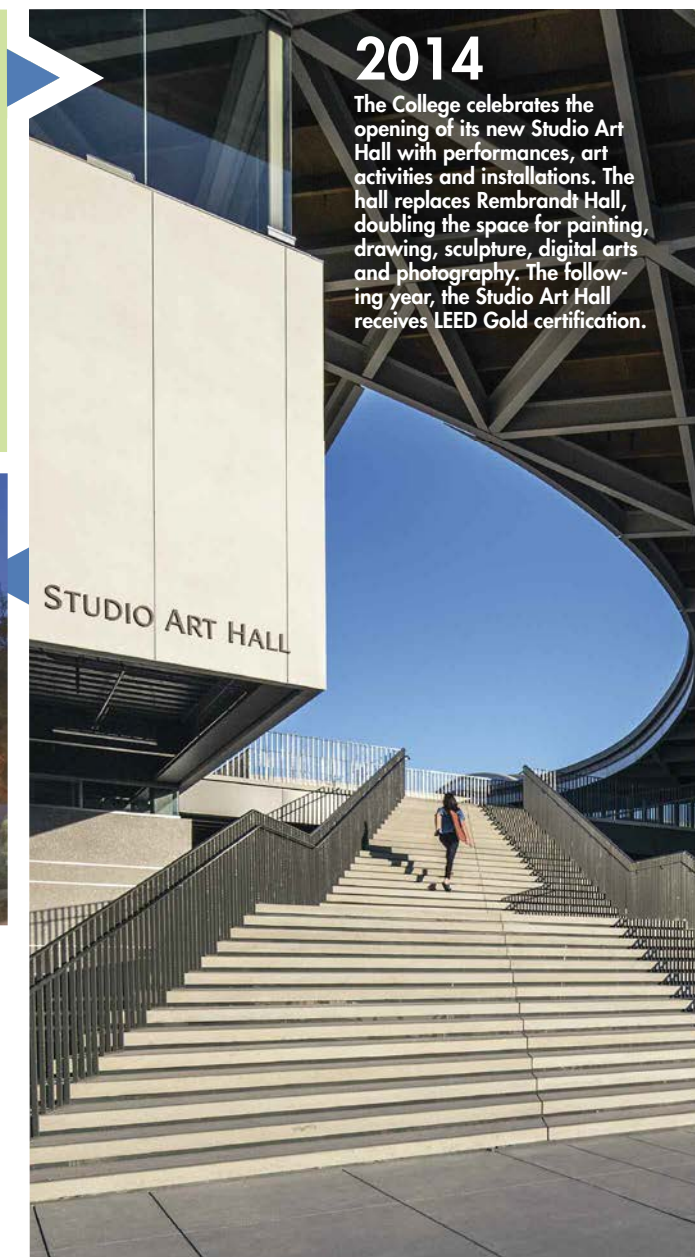
2015

Founders Day marks the dedication of the rebuilt Millikan Laboratory and renovated Andrew Science Hall with an afternoon of family-oriented events and activities. The Millikan and Andrew buildings, which house the Mathematics, Physics and Astronomy departments, are certified LEED Platinum.

2016

Plans are announced for a new Pomona College Museum of Art as part of the College's proposed master plan.

POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART



2014

The College celebrates the opening of its new Studio Art Hall with performances, art activities and installations. The hall replaces Rembrandt Hall, doubling the space for painting, drawing, sculpture, digital arts and photography. The following year, the Studio Art Hall receives LEED Gold certification.

It is hard to imagine Pomona without President Oxtoby. For more than a decade, David served the Pomona community well. He encouraged students to grow intellectually, challenged graduates to tackle big issues, and motivated all of us to take real, meaningful action to make the world a better place. I've come to know David quite well, and I've always been inspired by his deep commitment to fighting climate change. I have spent my adult life working to solve climate change, so it's an issue that is personal to me. It won't be solved by one person or one country. We can only solve this by coming together to learn, educate others and work towards a solution. That's why President Oxtoby's work to educate and engage with students on climate change has been critical to our fight, and it's why I'm more optimistic than ever about finally solving our generation's greatest challenge.

—Sen. Brian Schatz '94
U.S. Senator from Hawaii

He's always done what he thought was right for the institution, even when it was hard. Sometimes, when you're serving others, you have to put your own feelings on hold. He was always able to do that and to listen to people on both sides of the issues.

—Rick Hazlett
Professor Emeritus of Geology

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Carbon / Sustainability

"Carbon now makes me think of sustainability, about CO₂ and carbon taxes. We think a lot these days about bad carbon, carbon that's implicated in global warming and climate change, but it's also the central element of life."

As a noted atmospheric chemist who taught classes in environmental chemistry throughout his presidency, Oxtoby brought an expert perspective and a degree of credibility to the topic of sustainability that few of the nation's college leaders could match. His record in promoting sustainability as a shared, campus-wide commitment began early in his presidency with his involvement in strengthening the still relatively new Environmental Analysis Program and preserving the Organic Farm as an officially sanctioned part of the campus.

Completed the year after his arrival, the Richard C. Seaver Biology Laboratory became Pomona's first building to earn a LEED certification (silver) from the U.S. Green Building Council. That, however, was only the start. Over the following 12 years, with a commitment by the Board of Trustees to sustainable construction of all new facilities, the College would complete four new academic buildings, two new residence halls, and a three-building staff complex, all LEED-certified at the gold or platinum level. Even the College's new parking structure, in a category of buildings that doesn't qualify for certification, was built to LEED gold standards.

In 2014, when Oxtoby set an ambitious goal for the campus to reach net climate neutrality by 2030, he looked back at some of the progress that had been made: "We are working across campus in new and exciting ways to integrate sustainability into our culture. Some highlights of increased engagement include the establishment of the President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability (PACS) to oversee campus sustainability effort and the launch of Sustainability Action Fellowships to fund student involvement in campus sustainability planning. New staff members are managing sustainability efforts and the Organic Farm, and our recent addition of an energy manager will help the College heat, cool and light buildings in more sustainable and efficient ways. Together, we are creating a greater level of consciousness about sustainability across the campus and showing how small and large choices add up to real results." ▸

I read his CV, and I noticed his passion for environmental chemistry. So I said, 'Oh, this is an opportunity.' So I sent him an email and said, 'What if the two of us were to team-teach a course, you know, a serious course in environmental chemistry?' And he thought it was a wonderful idea. And it was a great team effort. David handled everything with the atmosphere, gas-phase, and then I dealt with the oceans and the land—the solid-phase. And he was always prepared, gave clear presentations and was simply on top of the material.

—Wayne Steinmetz
Professor Emeritus of Chemistry

I majored in chemistry, so David factored into my life pretty early on because of his background as a chemist. I was always really impressed by him. I mean, he literally wrote our chemistry textbook for freshman year. I got to know him a little bit when I took the Environmental Chemistry course, but we really didn't get to know each other very well until the end of my time at Pomona, when he helped me with my application to Cambridge. I think he is just such a calming influence. He really takes the time to sit down and listen to what you're saying before he starts trying to give advice.

—Mike Gormally '11

I think President Oxtoby is probably one of the most outspoken leaders on college campuses when it comes to sustainability. For instance, we went to the Climate Roundtable at the White House together last year. That was a small group of about 20 presidents who went to D.C. to speak with leaders at the White House. So I've seen his leadership in that setting, and then you see the emphasis on sustainability here on campus—the energy efficiency of the new buildings, for example—and you see him talking about carbon pricing, which is not something a lot of college presidents feel comfortable doing. But he has such a complete understanding of what's going on, and he's active in the community. He's a real leader and an inspiration to me.

—Tom Erb '18

I have always admired the clarity of purpose President Oxtoby has demonstrated in terms of diversity and inclusion. He understands, at a very fundamental level, that living and learning in a diverse and inclusive environment is the best preparation for students at Pomona College. I've enjoyed working with him on these very important issues facing the College and **I believe our students will reap the benefits of his leadership for decades to come.**

—Ric Townes
Associate Dean of Students

I took a selfie with him and Mrs. Oxtoby at the freshman picnic, and it just felt wonderful to get to know them on the first week of school as a freshman. **I think my friends and my teachers from my international school were all pretty surprised that I got to know President Oxtoby the first week of school,** and were commenting on Facebook, like: 'Wow, you got to know the president already.'

—April Xu '18

What struck me about David when I first met him was his deep personal humility. In all of our conversations about priorities and financial decisions, his thinking is guided by a strong ethical core and a commitment to what is best for students in particular and the Pomona community as a whole.

—Karen Sisson '79
Vice President and Treasurer

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The Halogens / Diversity

"Fluorine, chlorine, bromine and iodine are all members of the halogen family but they look different and have different properties. Now that strikes me as a wonderful symbol of diversity. We're all a single family, the Pomona family; we have lots of things in common, but we're all distinctive as well, and we value and celebrate both our commonalities and our differences."

Numbers never tell the whole story, but sometimes they make for a good starting point. In 2003, the percentage of students of color in the Pomona student body stood at 27 percent. Today, 48 percent of Pomona students are students of color, making Pomona one of the most diverse liberal arts colleges in the nation. Over the same period, the College's international student population has grown from two percent to 12.5 percent.

Behind those numbers were determined and sustained efforts to expand the College's outreach. "It is not enough for us simply to wait for students from different backgrounds to apply," Oxtoby said in 2006. "We must be proactive in identifying and encouraging them."

Among other things, that meant building strong partnerships with such organizations as the Posse Foundation and QuestBridge, which now serve as conduits for highly talented students from underprivileged backgrounds across the country. The College has also built its own program to help promising high school students from the College's own backyard prepare themselves for success at top colleges. Today, the Pomona College Academy for Youth Success (PAYS) still holds a perfect record in gaining its graduates admission to four-year colleges and universities, including Pomona.

Internationally, the College not only stepped up recruiting in Asia; it also expanded its range into South America and Africa. By extending more financial aid to international applicants, the College also succeeded in broadening the demographics of international students to align with the College's goal of making a Pomona education affordable for talented students from all backgrounds.

In 2008, under Oxtoby's leadership, the College also made the commitment to treat all applicants who graduate from U.S. schools the same, whether or not they are documented, thereby enabling undocumented students to compete for admission and aid on a level playing field.

However, Oxtoby has also made clear that there is still a great deal of work to be done here on campus in building a more inclusive climate in which every member of this diverse community can feel equally welcome and invested. "I have several priorities I am focusing on in my last year as Pomona College president," he wrote earlier this year. "Chief among these are advancing a culture of respect and building a more inclusive environment in the classroom and on campus. These goals are essential to the bold and scholarly work we do." ▸

David is, in addition to everything else, a decent and caring person who detests injustice. It has been David's commitment to justice that has led Pomona to the forefront in terms of recruiting, admitting and supporting a student body that is diverse in every possible respect.

—Richard Fass
Vice President for Planning, Retired

David Oxtoby's commitment to diversity and to making the Pomona education accessible to all has been consistent, wide ranging and effective. Because of his leadership, Pomona has partnered with QuestBridge and the Posse Foundation, made the Draper Center and its signature PAYS program an important part of the campus, opened Pomona's doors to Dreamers, and increased the number and diversity of its international students. Each one of these initiatives is significant, but, taken together, they have transformed the College. Talking to students, walking around campus, sitting in classes, you can easily see, hear and sense the effect of the changed student body on the intellectual life of the campus. Those of us who have worked with David on these issues have come to realize that we can depend on his commitment to equity, and diversity. **His is not a fleeting here-today-gone-tomorrow commitment; rather it comes from an inner moral compass.**

Pomona is a changed and better place because of it.

—Shahriar Shahriari
Professor of Mathematics

CLAIRE OXTOBY HAS CREATED HER OWN ACTIVE ROLE AS A MEMBER OF THE POMONA COMMUNITY FOR THE PAST 13-PLUS YEARS.



THE OTHER OXTOBY

There's another Oxtoby who has had a Pomona presence for the last 13-plus years. Claire Oxtoby has a view of the College and a college president's role unique to that of a life partner. But she has been a participant at Pomona, not just an observer.

Eschewing the somewhat archaic title of first lady—too ceremonial, she says—Claire prefers to think of herself as a doer. She is a familiar face in the community, whether meeting with students, talking to staff, attending College events like concerts in Little Bridges or a lunchtime talk in Oldenborg, traveling with the president on Pomona-related trips or auditing a history of photography class.

Claire has felt like part of the fabric of the College, with all the challenges and triumphs woven through what she calls an exciting and dynamic place. Literally living and breathing Pomona 24/7 has meant the occasional awkward moment. Like the student who rang the Oxtobys' doorbell, shower bucket in hand and towel slung over his shoulder, asking if he could shower at their place, because Wig Hall was flooded, and there was no hot water. Claire invited him in to talk, wielded the power of a president's wife, and put in a call to facilities.

Sometime back, Claire read an *Inside Higher Ed* article that talked about how not to be a toxic asset as a college president's spouse. Laughing, she says she didn't find the don'ts all that useful, but the dos were. Simple things, she says, like being friendly, approachable and helpful. She has played the role of a bridge builder, she says.

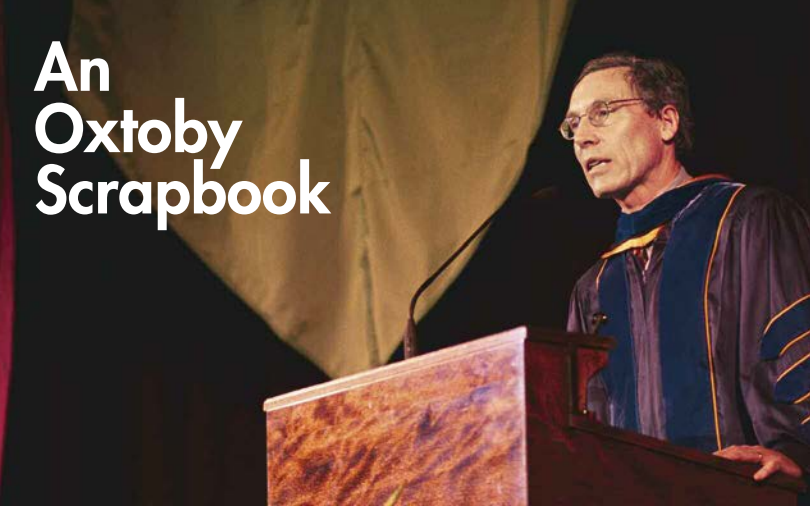
"David has a contract with various expectations, and how the College does as a whole is the metric that he is measured by. But for my job there are no metrics, so it's really about just fitting in and trying to be helpful or make connections in different places," Claire says.

Stories she's heard from students have sometimes led to her connecting them with alumni or a job. She says those personal connections, whether with students, faculty, staff or alumni are among the things she'll miss most about Pomona.

An early education teacher in Chicago before they came to Claremont, Claire still shares David's passion for education. It's something that is positive and forward-looking, she says. Looking back and looking ahead, based on what she's seen at Pomona, she believes the future is bright.

"It makes you feel good about the world each year when we're graduating students. They've had this experience here, they've brought their experiences, they've had more, and now they're going out, and it makes you feel hopeful."

—Sneha Abraham



An Oxtoby Scrapbook



Clockwise from top left: Giving his inaugural address in October 2003; in full gear for one of his beloved long-distance bicycle rides; with Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor in October 2015; teaching his environmental chemistry class in February 2007; raising a toast at the closing celebration for the Daring Minds Campaign in February 2016; speaking to the Class of 2020 at the 2016 Convocation; welcoming Native Americans to campus for the first College-hosted powwow in August 2012; with his wife, Claire, at Trinity College, Cambridge, during his fall 2012 sabbatical; helping to assemble “String Theory,” the 2009 artwork-cum-canopy that provides shade for the annual commencement ceremony in Marston Quad; talking with students during his daily walk to work from the President’s House in 2009; and applauding noted CBS anchorman and honorary degree recipient Walter Cronkite during the 2004 Commencement exercise.



The story of the Sontag Center for Collaborative Creativity **is really the story of how David started out with a dream for The Claremont Colleges**, how he managed to inspire a significant donor and how he managed to bring all of the five undergraduate colleges together to make it possible. And to me that’s characteristic of David—he has an end goal in mind; he is willing to take the time and figure out a process that will allow people to buy in; he is willing to enlist help from lots of different sources to get there; and he’s got an enormous amount of patience in seeing the big picture and being able to find a path to the place he wants to get to.

—**Maria Klawe**
President, Harvey Mudd College

I’m a big fan of David’s, and one reason is his commitment to the arts. He’s worked really hard over the years to figure out, from a physical plant point of view, how we can do a better job of teaching the arts. Certainly, the Studio Art Hall is one example, and his commitment to building a new art museum is another. I know the time he’s put in—his work with the architects, the late-night hearings and City Council meetings. **He’s really put his heart and soul into seeing it forward**, so that we can have these gorgeous buildings that will last years and years for thousands of students to experience and appreciate and to learn under those roofs.

—**Janet Inskeep Benton '79**
Trustee

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Silicon / Innovation

“Silicon is the namesake of Silicon Valley, but in truth, every valley is a kind of silicon valley, since silicon is the basic building block of every kind of rock. But when you separate it out, it becomes

solar cells and semiconductors. It’s not a metal or a non-metal, but a bridging element—that’s the crucial aspect that allows it to expand our ability to do things and to innovate. So in a way, it symbolizes the future.”

“The world needs daring minds.”

With that simple, five-word sentence, Oxtoby introduced the central theme of the Daring Minds Campaign, the fundraising effort that was launched in 2010 and completed in 2015. Pomona, he said, must be a source for global citizens who possess not only the knowledge and understanding to give them mastery of their field, but also the creativity and intellectual daring necessary to use those resources to make a difference in the world.

In the end, the Daring Minds Campaign not only raised a total of more than \$316 million; it changed the face of the College in significant ways. Out of it came a series of initiatives designed to challenge students to create something new or to pit their knowledge and problem-solving skills against dilemmas in the real world. For example, Pomona’s new Studio Art Building provides a state-of-the-art facility for the creation of art in an inspiring and rigorous setting, while the new Intensive Summer Experience program expands opportunities for students to spend a summer in research or an internship and provides funding to ensure that all students, including those whose families depend upon their summer earnings, can afford to take part.

But perhaps the most inventive expression of Oxtoby’s focus on nurturing daring minds came at the close of the campaign, with the creation of the Rick and Susan Sontag Center for Collaborative Creativity. This innovative new center is a place where students can hone their creative abilities by combining their knowledge, energy and creativity with those of other students to take on complex, real-world problems that require collaboration across a range of disciplines.

Though the center is housed at Pomona, its founding also reflected Oxtoby’s longtime commitment to collaborating more closely with the other institutions of The Claremont Colleges. Conceived from the beginning as a five-college endeavor, today the Sontag Center brings together students from across the five undergraduate colleges of the consortium to stretch their creative muscles in ways that are both productive and instructive.

As Oxtoby wrote last year at the campaign’s close: “Our goal is much greater than the accumulation of knowledge—it is the creative use of knowledge and the discovery of new knowledge. We foster wide-vista thinking and doing. Pomona is a place where daring minds thrive both in and out of the classroom as they strive to make the world safer, healthier, more understandable, more beautiful and more just.”

It was very clear to me from my first interview that David was really deeply involved in this search. **You could see in his eyes that he cared a lot about the Sontag Center.** Then David called me personally to talk about how it had gone and what the next steps would be, and he spent some time on the phone with me at 9 o’clock on a Saturday night. And when I came back for a full day, he picked me up at the hotel at 7:30 in the morning in his car. Experiencing his commitment made a big difference in my interest and appreciation of the job.

—**Fred Leichter**
Founding Director of the Sontag Center for Collaborative Creativity

I remember when James Turrell came to campus for the Skyspace project. We visited the site that would become Lincoln and Edmunds and then met with David in Alexander to discuss it. Turrell was talking about Skyspaces and the site and David was really engaged. They started talking about the effects of light, including chemical interactions, and Turrell said something about rust. David leaned forward and said, ‘I’m really interested in rust!’ and it turns out Turrell was too. And off they went, on rust—a real exchange between a scientist and an artist, about rust and art. **That’s David’s gift, to engage with things differently and to expand ideas.**

—**Kathleen Howe**
Director of the Pomona College Museum of Art



GOING HOME TO CARE FOR HER PARENTS SEEMED LIKE A BIG STEP BACK FOR CRISTINA GARCIA '99, BUT IT PROVED TO BE A BIG STEP FORWARD FOR ONE OF CALIFORNIA'S MOST PASSIONATE LAWMAKERS.

THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW...

BY CARLA GUERRERO '06

When Cristina Garcia '99, then a high school math teacher living in Pasadena, was nominated by her siblings to move back to Southeast Los Angeles to care for their ailing parents, she didn't think twice about taking on her new role as caregiver. Moving back home when her family needed her was an easy decision. Garcia says she'd do it again in a heartbeat.

But resettling less than a mile away from her parents' home, she suddenly found herself back in the heart of Bell Gardens, the city she thought she had left for good. ▶

Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia '99 watches as votes are posted for and against her bill, AB1561, to repeal the sales tax on tampons and other feminine hygiene products. The bill passed but was vetoed by Gov. Jerry Brown. —AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli

"I AM KNOWN AS 'MS. MAXI.' I AM THE 'TAMPON LADY' EVERYWHERE I GO. 'MS. FLO.' AND IT'S FINE, I TAKE ON THE JOKES BECAUSE I GET TO EXPAND ON WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE. IT'S NOT SOMETHING TO BE ASHAMED OF OR TO SEE AS SOMETHING THAT IS DIRTY."

When she was growing up, her idea of success had followed the same age-old formula familiar to many: Leave your poor hometown, make something of yourself and never look back. And she had done exactly that. After excelling in high school in the mid-1990s, she had left her hometown, known for its high teen pregnancy rates and polluted air, for the tree-laden and book-filled campus of Pomona College. With a double major in mathematics and politics in hand, Garcia thought she was set for life.

"I taught math for 13 years, and I had a pretty amazing life. I got to teach at the high school level and the college level," she says.

Now she was right back where she had started.

Today, sitting in her district office that bears her current title, California Assemblymember, she recalls the sense of failure that soon enveloped her upon her return home just a handful of years before.

"We had been taught that success was leaving and never coming back to these communities," she says. "And so I felt like a failure, in a way, coming back and giving up my comfy life that I had."

It took a heart-to-heart intervention by her younger sister to help her snap out of it. "She said, 'You have leadership skills and you have a responsibility,'" recalls Garcia. "I was like, you know what, I'm going to start going to council meetings and start asking questions, and eventually that led me to ask more questions."

Garcia started by attending Bell Gardens' city council meetings, trying to get information about the city budget and expenses. She hit a lot of roadblocks and found disturbing practices. Next door, in the City of Bell, residents were asking similar questions, trying to figure out why their taxes were so high. They, too, were hitting a brick wall, with no answers and no accountability from their elected officials.

Then in 2010, the *Los Angeles Times* broke one of the biggest corruption scandals to rock the state in recent memory. At the heart of it was rampant graft and theft of city coffers by a cohort of City of Bell officials. Outraged, Garcia joined with other local activists to form BASTA (Bell Association to Stop the Abuse).

"I saw it as an opportunity for change for the whole Southeast [Los Angeles], since the problems that plague these cities are all very similar. A lot of the dysfunction I saw in Bell Gardens was present in Bell and other surrounding areas," says Garcia.

Largely thanks to the work of BASTA, six Bell officials were recalled. Eventually, they were brought to trial on corruption charges and are currently serving prison sentences. Through this yearlong process, Garcia's resolve for change never wavered.

"Failure was never an option, because failure was not an option for my community. I had a sense of responsibility to take our communities back. I thought I'd be there for three weeks, but it was over



Assemblymember Cristina Garcia '99 in conversation with Assemblyman Ian Calderon of Whittier just before the Assembly unanimously approved her bill, AB1673, which bans lobbyists from hosting fundraisers at their homes and offices. —AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli

a year," she recalls. "Then I was done. I was tired. I thought: I've done my part, and my parents are doing better. I can go back to my old comfortable life."

But by then, that "old comfortable life" was just a mirage.

In 2012 her leadership abilities were called upon again when she was asked to run for State Assembly in the upcoming election. Although she hesitated at first, it was her sense of social responsibility that helped her make the choice.

"We've had absent representation for my whole life. I realized I had to sacrifice my comfortable life and become a public figure. I'd been private all my life. I'd been independent all my life. I'd been doing math all my life, so you don't get to talk to people all the time—and that all changed all of a sudden when I decided I was going to do this. That sense of responsibility has continued to be my guiding principle."

Social Responsibility

Garcia's sense of social responsibility was shaped during her time at Pomona College. She came to campus at a time when anti-immigrant sentiment ran strong in California politics. She protested and organized against Proposition 187, which made undocumented immigrants ineligible for public benefits, and Proposition 209, which ended affir-

mative action in public universities.

"I was very aware of the opportunities and privileges that I had and how different I was from most of my peers back home who didn't get to go to college or who did get to go to college but didn't get to have the same opportunities I had at Pomona—personal attention, study abroad, or when I didn't have money for books, being able to receive a grant for books," says Garcia.

"It came with a sense of social responsibility. There were a lot of social justice discussions on campus when I was there. I was there as Prop. 187 had passed and Prop. 209 was going on, and Pomona College allowed those discussions to happen."

That sense of social responsibility continued to guide Garcia well into her career as a teacher, and in her decision to run for the state Assembly.

In 2012, defeating a longtime incumbent, Garcia was elected to represent the 58th Assembly District, which includes the cities of Artesia, Bellflower, Bell Gardens, Cerritos, Commerce, Downey, Montebello, Norwalk and Pico Rivera. She was reelected in 2014 and is up for reelection again this November.

Garcia came into office with the stated goal of making politics more transparent and rebuilding the public's trust in government, and in 2014, she introduced a wide-ranging package of ethics and transparency measures. Five of these passed and Gov. Jerry Brown signed them into law.

Garcia is proud of that accomplishment, but she's not sitting back and relaxing. She likes to keep busy.

In her four years in office, Garcia has focused on three areas dear to her heart: good government and reform, environmental justice, and elevating and expanding the role of women in society and government. She chairs the Committee on Accountability and Administrative Review, and she is the vice chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus.

"I decided that to be legislator, I was going to legislate to empower other women and change that. There's a lot of work and not enough women, so I want to share the wealth with other women," she says.

Among her most recent and lauded efforts is the so-called "Tampon Tax," a bill that would repeal the sales tax on pads, tampons and other menstrual items. Although Gov. Jerry Brown recently vetoed the bill, Garcia is not giving up.

"I am known as 'Ms. Maxi.' I am the 'Tampon Lady' everywhere I go. 'Ms. Flo.' And it's fine; I take on the jokes because I get to expand on women's health care. It's not something to be ashamed of or to see as something that is dirty," says Garcia with a smile. "It's exciting to talk to young women. It's exciting to see it become a national discussion. It's exciting to see women's health in a different way, and

it's exciting because it affects our day-to-day life."

Recently, Garcia also introduced legislation to revise an outdated definition of rape—an issue brought to light after a judge sentenced former Stanford swimmer Brock Turner to six months after he was convicted on three felony counts of sexual assault. Garcia was moved to action after reading the open letter penned by the unnamed survivor in the case.

"Part of getting rid of our rape culture is talking about it, but it's also about how we define it. ... If we're going to end rape culture, we have to call rape what it is—it's rape."

Investing in Government

Although she's faced a lot of setbacks, Garcia remains undaunted. Picking up lessons from her past, it seems like failure is no longer part of her equation.

When asked what advice she would give a younger Cristina or college students of today, she says simply, "Don't do it all."

Another tough lesson learned.

Garcia says she did indeed try to "do it all" as a Pomona student, a habit that she carried over in her first years in the legislature.

"For a while I tried 20 different clubs [in college], but it's better to find one or two that you're passionate about and be really good at it," she says. "This year I've pared it down to the basics, things I really care about. So I only have seven bills that I'm working on. They're a lot of work, but really hands-on and I'm really passionate about them, and I'm much happier about the work that I'm doing."

Her advice to students: "Find something you're passionate about and get engaged in it and figure out how you're going to be engaged. Take on leadership roles like president or secretary."

And Garcia is helping her constituents of all ages become agents of change. Her annual "There Ought to Be a Law" contest gives residents a chance to submit proposals to improve their community.

Last year, a local fifth grade class invited Garcia to their classroom for a special presentation on the nearly 1.5 million people of Mexican descent who were deported by executive order in the 1930s. "The students felt that history was repeating itself, so they did presentations; they wrote poems and books. They became activists and lobbyists," she says.

Garcia encouraged the students to enter her contest and they won. Last October, they saw their proposal signed into law by Gov. Brown.

This year, all new public school history textbooks will include information about the Mexican Repatriation Act of the 1930s.

"I'm an idealist at heart," she says. "I'm an idealist in the belief of the social contract, that in order to have a government that works for us, we have to invest in it."

That's a tall order, but Garcia is game. Sitting in her district office, Garcia says, "There are times when I joke: Can I retire now?"

Not for a while, it seems.



WHEN OSMAN KIBAR '92 SET OUT TO CREATE A CURE FOR A RANGE OF DEGENERATIVE DISEASES, HE KNEW THERE WOULD BE SKEPTICS.

HOW TO BUILD A FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH (PIECE BY PIECE)

STORY BY ROBYN NORWOOD | PHOTOS BY K.C. ALFRED

Osman Kibar '92 has grown accustomed to skeptics. They don't seem to bother him.

Kibar is the founder and CEO of Samumed, a small San Diego biotech company with new drugs in clinical trials seeking to cure arthritic knees, hair loss, scarring of the lungs, degenerative disc disease and four types of gastrointestinal cancers. Even Alzheimer's is on the longer-term list of about a dozen targeted diseases.

Samumed's goals are stunningly ambitious: What Kibar and his team are trying to do is repair or regenerate human tissues through drugs that target the complex system known as the Wnt pathway, which is a key process in regulating cell development, cell proliferation and tissue regeneration.

The potential is so mind boggling that despite being at least two years from an all important Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of the first of many drugs in its pipeline, Samumed already has raised \$220 million in funding and is completing another round of \$100 million that values the company at an astonishing \$12 billion, making it the most valuable biotech startup in the world.

That eye-popping valuation and the boldness of Samumed's venture landed Kibar, 45, on the cover of *Forbes* magazine in May, the featured figure on a list of 30 Global Game Changers that included Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg. ▷

Though Samumed—named for the Zen term “samu,” for meditation at work or in action—doesn’t have a product to sell yet, the confidence of Kibar, his team and key investors has soared on the early results in human trials of the hair loss and osteoarthritis drugs, which appear to show Samumed’s drugs may safely regrow hair and even cartilage.

The potential of the osteoarthritis drug alone is tantalizing to Finian Tan, chairman of Vickers Venture Partners, an international venture capital company that owns about 3.5% of Samumed and is bullish enough to be seeking to take 30% of the current round of funding.

“It doesn’t matter who cures osteoarthritis. Whoever cures it has the potential to be the largest company in the world,” says Tan, basing his calculations in part on the fact that there are some 27 million osteoarthritis sufferers in the U.S alone.

And Samumed is going after far more than fixing worn-out knees with injections instead of surgery. The firm is developing drugs that target a wide swath of diseases, many of them related to aging.



“After all is said and done, if we have just one approval, then we have failed miserably,” Kibar says. “We call our platform a fountain of youth, but piece by piece.”

Born in Turkey, Kibar came to the U.S. in 1988 after graduating from Istanbul’s elite Robert College high school, which selects only those who score in the top 0.01% of Turkish students on a national standardized test. With a perfect 800 on the math section of the SAT and a 1987 European math championship in his pocket, Kibar had options when it came to college. But he bypassed more internationally famous East Coast schools for Pomona College in part for a climate more similar to that of his hometown of Izmir on the Aegean coast, and in part for the opportunity to attend Pomona on a 3-2 program that allowed him to earn a B.A. in mathematical economics at Pomona in three years, winning the Lorne D. Cook Memorial Award in economics his final year, and a B.S. in electrical engineering from Caltech two years later.

Kibar went on to earn a Ph.D. in engineering at UC San Diego and worked with his graduate school advisor, Sadik C. Esener, to found Genoptix, an oncology diagnostics firm that went public in 2007 and was acquired by Novartis for \$470 million in 2011. Kibar also was a cofounder of e-tenna, a wireless antenna company whose assets were acquired by Titan and Intel. In addition, he had a stint in New York as a vice president on Pequot Capital’s venture capital and private equity team.

Samumed, founded in 2008, grew out of a company named Wintherix after legal disputes with Pfizer. It was built initially on the research of a small group of scientists including John Hood, one of Samumed’s scientific cofounders, who recently left to start a company of his own called Impact Biosciences. Hood’s track record is impressive: He created a cancer drug that led to his former company TargeGen being sold for over half a billion dollars.

Kibar’s intellect and energy are unquestioned. Consider that on the side, he is working through the course outline he found online for a Ph.D. in mathematics at Princeton, just for enjoyment. And once, on a lark, he entered an event on the World Series of Poker circuit and won. Betting against him, it would seem, is at your peril. But with goals so lofty, he does have his doubters.

The *Forbes* magazine cover led to an interview on CNBC that can best be described as skeptical, tossing around words like “too many red flags” and a comparison to Theranos, the medical diagnostic testing startup that went from a \$9 billion valuation to being targeted by federal investigators and losing its partnership deal with Walgreens.

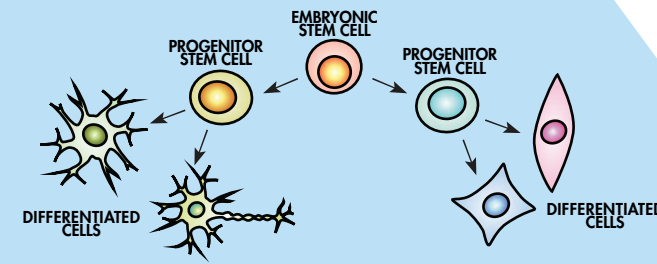
It’s a cautionary tale, but Kibar and industry experts say Samumed is no Theranos. As Kibar says with his typical disarming laugh, “First of all, you know the Taylor Swift song, ‘Haters Gonna Hate?’”

“Every big pharma, every small biotech, every academic center—they have been working on the Wnt pathway, trying to come up with a drug that can modulate the pathway in a safe manner,” Kibar says. “It’s been more than 30 years, and every single one has failed so far. So when we come out and say we did it, there is natural skepticism. Without seeing the data, the so-called experts’ reaction in a fair manner is, ‘Yeah, yeah, everybody has tried it. What makes these guys so special that they will have cracked the code?’ So our response to that is: Just look at the data.”

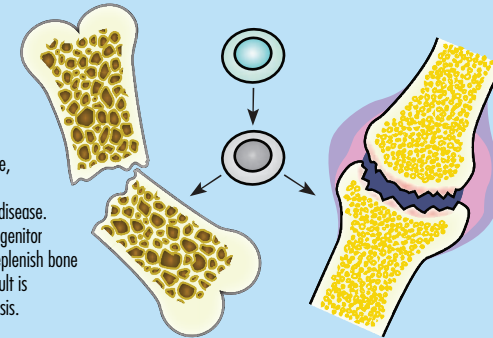
For starters, the company already has been issued dozens of patents by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, has five programs

WALKING THE WNT PATHWAY

Embryonic stem cells give rise to progenitor stem cells, which give rise to different tissues and organs.



Progenitor cells remain active throughout our lives, maintaining the health of the body’s various tissues and organs. However, as we age, these cells may begin to malfunction, causing disease. For instance, if progenitor cells cease to replenish bone cells, the result is osteoporosis.



But if, on the other hand, the same cells cease to produce cartilage, the result is osteoarthritis.

in clinical trials and has begun sharing data with the medical community that shows the hair loss and osteoarthritis drugs appear to be safe and effective in small human trials.

“I don’t think Theranos is a very good analogy for this company,” says Derek Lowe, who holds a Ph.D. in organic chemistry and works in the pharmaceutical industry while writing the widely read drug discovery blog *In the Pipeline*, which appears on a site maintained by the journal *Science*. “You can look at the patents and see the types of molecules [Samumed is] working with,” Lowe says. “This is not one of those where ‘we’re going to change the world but you can’t see anything’ companies like Theranos.”

Kibar shrugs off any comparisons to Theranos and its headline-grabbing fall from grace.

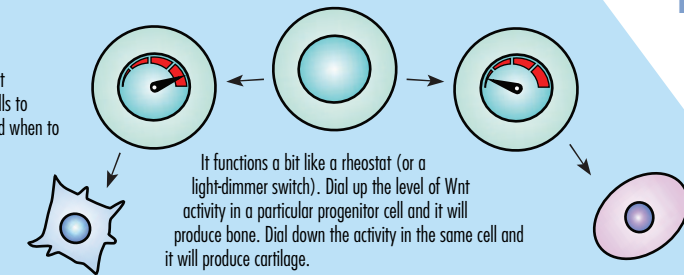
“They’re in diagnostics and they never shared their data, so their whole approach was: ‘Trust us, we got this,’” he says. “Being in the therapeutic field, we’re coming up with drugs; we don’t have that luxury. We cannot say, ‘Trust us, we got it.’ First and foremost, we have the FDA. The FDA is not going to take our word for it.”

The FDA is the gatekeeper, and though less than 10% of proposed new drugs ultimately earn FDA approval, the likelihood increases with each step forward in the lengthy process. The next step for Samumed’s most advanced projects, the hair loss and osteoarthritis drugs, is large Phase III studies with thousands of participants. Some 64% of drugs that begin Phase III studies are submitted for FDA approval and 90% of those are successful, according to a study cited by the independent site fdareview.org.

To begin building support in the medical community, last November at the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology, Samumed presented clinical data ▶

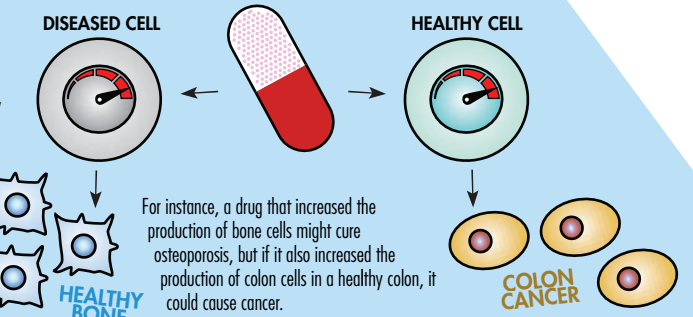
“EVERY BIG PHARMA, EVERY SMALL BIOTECH, EVERY ACADEMIC CENTER—THEY HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THE WNT PATHWAY, TRYING TO COME UP WITH A DRUG THAT CAN MODULATE THE PATHWAY IN A SAFE MANNER. IT’S BEEN MORE THAN 30 YEARS, AND EVERY SINGLE ONE HAS FAILED SO FAR. SO WHEN WE COME OUT AND SAY WE DID IT, THERE IS NATURAL SKEPTICISM.”

The Wnt pathway is a signaling pathway inside a progenitor stem cell that determines which cells to make more of and when to make them.



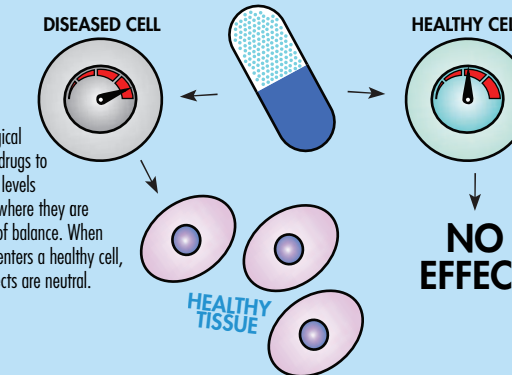
It functions a bit like a rheostat (or a light-dimmer switch). Dial up the level of Wnt activity in a particular progenitor cell and it will produce bone. Dial down the activity in the same cell and it will produce cartilage.

Past efforts to modulate the Wnt pathway have failed, in part, because they affected both diseased and healthy tissues indiscriminately.



For instance, a drug that increased the production of bone cells might cure osteoporosis, but if it also increased the production of colon cells in a healthy colon, it could cause cancer.

Samumed says it has succeeded in safely and effectively modulating the Wnt pathway because the firm has identified biological targets that allow its drugs to affect Wnt activity levels



ONLY in cells where they are already out of balance. When the drug enters a healthy cell, its effects are neutral.

from its Phase I trial of 61 patients for a new drug that seeks to regrow knee cartilage to treat osteoarthritis. Animal studies already had shown that injections of Samumed's compound caused stem cells to regenerate cartilage in rats. The Phase I study focused on demonstrating that the drug is safe in humans, but MRIs and X-rays also suggested a single dose showed what the company called "statistically significant improved joint space width" in the knees of patients who received it. A Phase II study of 445 patients is under way and expected to be complete next spring.

Samumed followed those announcements with a presentation of Phase I data from its trial to treat baldness at the World Congress for Hair Research, and in March presented data from its completed Phase II hair-growth trial to the American Academy of Dermatology. That study of 310 participants showed that hair count in a one-square-centimeter area of one group of subjects' scalps increased by 7.7 hairs (6.9%) and by 10.1 hairs (9.6%) in another, though the largest increase was in the group that received the lower of two doses. The control group lost hair.

Tan, the venture capitalist known for making an early bet on Baidu, the Chinese answer to Google, sticks to his assertion that Samumed, if successful, could be bigger than Apple.

"I think the potential is unbelievable. With the Wnt pathway, when it eventually is totally controllable, the sky is the limit because it is involved in cell birth, cell growth and cell death," Tan says. "The key is nobody has been able to successfully manipulate the Wnt pathway safely and effectively. Samumed appears to be doing it in human trials."

So far, the trials are small, preliminary studies, both Samumed and industry observers note. Since the groundbreaking discovery of Wnt signaling in the early 1980s, no other attempts to modulate it have succeeded, and tinkering with a system that regulates cell development clearly involves risk. In an article titled "Can We Safely Target the Wnt Pathway?" in *Nature Reviews Drug Discovery*, a publication of the journal *Nature*, Michael Kahn, a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine who holds a joint appointment in pharmacy, likened the Wnt pathway to a "sword of Damocles." Put most simply, targeting the Wnt pathway might cure cancer, but could also cause it.

"It is a death or glory target," says Lowe, the industry blogger.

That, of course, lends itself to discussion of the high-stakes gamble reflected in the company's \$12 billion valuation. Investors include many with close ties to Kibar, and he says remaining privately held allows Samumed to proceed without shareholder pressure for quick results and requirements for public disclosure in what is by definition a long-haul endeavor. Inter IKEA Group, the retail giant's private ven-

ture firm, has placed the largest bet among Samumed's mostly anonymous outside investors. The operative phrase is "caveat emptor."

"Anybody who is investing in an early-stage biopharma company has to be ready for it not to work out, because most of these don't," Lowe says. "The hope is just like if you're developing some great new app: The hope is this is going to turn out to be something big."

It's a boom-or-bust world. Kibar and his team know that but remain confident.

"From a technical perspective, we don't lose any sleep anymore, because we have demonstrated safety and efficacy and disease modification in enough programs that we believe we have already validated the broader platform," Kibar says. "In terms of funding, we're also in a fortunate position in that we have all the money we need to bring these programs all the way to approvals. With our first approval, the company will become cash-flow positive. And we have enough cash in the bank to get us to multiple approvals, so that gives us additional diversification."

The management team still on board after Hood's departure is solid, united by decades-old friendship: Three of Kibar's top executives also went to the elite Robert College high school. But he rejects any suggestion that he has simply surrounded himself with high school chums, saying instead that they have all reached such heights in their careers that the only reason a startup could have lured them is because of their confidence in him and his project.

The chief financial officer, Cevdet Samikoglu, cofounded a hedge fund, Greywolf Capital Management, after becoming a director and portfolio manager at Goldman Sachs follow-

ing Harvard Business School. The chief legal officer, Arman Oruc, earned a master's in economics from the University of Cambridge and a law degree at UC Berkeley before becoming a partner in Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, where he represented clients like MasterCard, Ericsson, LG and Novartis. And the chief medical officer, Yusuf Yazici, is an internationally known rheumatologist who has maintained his role as an assistant professor at NYU, where he is director of the Seligman Center for Advanced Therapeutics, which conducts all clinical trials in rheumatology for the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases.

They are on a journey together along a path that still holds suspense.

"These are all long-term projects, taking a molecule from discovery to animal studies to clinical and then commercialization. You're talking a minimum 10 years," Kibar says. "The data—we are sharing it with the FDA, and we shared it with the doctors. Beyond that, no matter what we share, people will either not understand or not care or not believe. So those are the skeptics. And in certain programs, they may turn out to be right. We haven't done it yet."

"FROM A TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE, WE DON'T LOSE ANY SLEEP ANYMORE, BECAUSE WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED SAFETY AND EFFICACY AND DISEASE MODIFICATION IN ENOUGH PROGRAMS THAT WE BELIEVE WE HAVE ALREADY VALIDATED THE BROADER PLATFORM."



THE POKÉMON MASTER

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED POKÉMON GO PLAYER IN THE WORLD? ASK NICK JOHNSON '11, THE FIRST PERSON TO CATCH ALL 145 POKÉMON AROUND THE GLOBE.

STORY BY GORDEN HABER
PHOTOS BY CASEY KELBAUGH

It was lunchtime on a bright early-autumn day in Madison Square Park,

a peaceful, leafy rectangle in New York City. The park was busy with office workers, chatting, eating, or just enjoying the mild weather. I, however, was trying to avoid walking into a tree. ▷

“The trick is to not watch your phone,” said Nick Johnson, a tall young man in a T-shirt that reminded the reader to “Hustle 24-7-365.” Johnson was indeed hustling: He had a long stride and only an hour to teach me how to play Pokémon GO. “Look out for that fence,” he said.

Pokémon, you may recall, are fictional creatures that battle each other with the aid of their human “trainers.” The franchise was created in the late ’90s for the Nintendo Game Boy. It has since spawned dozens of iterations, from card games to plush toys to shrieking cartoons that you wish your kid had never found on Netflix.

The latest version is the wildly successful app, Pokémon GO. Since its launch in July of 2016, Pokémon GO has been downloaded more than half a billion times—and grossed more than \$500 million dollars. For a little perspective, that’s over twice as much money as *Ghostbusters II*.

The point of the game is fairly straightforward. You walk around “capturing” Pokémon. But when I downloaded the app, I had some trouble figuring it all out. First of all, I’m one of those unimaginative types who like to make their avatars resemble themselves. Unfortunately Pokémon GO offers no way to create a myopic bald man. (Are you listening, Nintendo?)

Once I got the game set up, I had problems figuring out how to play it. I was convinced that there was a Pokémon in my kitchen. After 20 or so minutes of fruitless searching, I realized that it was time to call in an expert.

It is no exaggeration to say that Nick Johnson is the most accomplished Pokémon GO player in the world. He was the first person to catch all 142 Pokémon in the United States. Then he was the first person to catch the three remaining Pokémon in Paris, Hong Kong and Sydney, Australia.

When we met in the park, Nick also turned out to be a pretty good teacher—or, Pokémon trainer trainer, if I may.

Like many games, Pokémon GO is simultaneously simple and complicated.

As Nick put it, the game is just a “fancy skin on Google Maps.” Meaning that when you’re hunting Pokémon with your phone, you’re searching for creatures superimposed upon the map. It’s not hard to get the hang of it once you grasp the proportions. For example, what I thought was my kitchen was actually my local coffee shop.

When you get close enough to a Pokémon, you swipe to hurl your Poké Ball—a parti-colored sphere—at the creature. And when the ball hits, the creature is yours.

In Madison Square Park, it took me a few tries to catch my first Pokémon, a cross-eyed, bucktoothed, purple vole named Rattata. It

was waiting for me by the statue of William Henry Seward, Abraham Lincoln’s secretary of state.

When the ball hit the Pokémon, my phone emitted a satisfying ping.

“There you go,” Nick said mildly. Meanwhile I experienced an absurdly outsized feeling of triumph. Perhaps not as triumphant as Seward felt when he blocked British recognition of the Confederacy, but triumphant nonetheless.

The more complicated parts of the game are the hovering “cube lures,” and hatching Pokémon, and raising up levels, and the possibility of having Pokémon battles with nearby players.

Nick explained all this stuff very patiently, and if most of it didn’t take, that’s more my fault than his. Nevertheless, I did glean some wisdom from the Ted Williams of Pokémon.

First of all, don’t use the camera.

“It makes it harder to catch them, and it kills your battery life.”

Second, as he’d already mentioned, “Keep your head up so you don’t die.”

Indeed, as we walked around Pokémon hunting, I almost walked into about 12 people. But Nick looked more at the real world than at his screen. Which is why he’s never had any Pokémon GO-related injuries. Unlike some other people.

“There was a Wall Street guy who was trying to get all the international Pokémon before I did. He broke his ankle in Sydney. He was hit by a car while trying to catch a Kangaskhan. After that he was like, screw this, and he went to Hawaii.”

Nick’s third rule: Walk in a straight line. There are rewards within the game for going certain distances, but the game measures distance as the crow flies: “So if you walk in a zigzag, it’s wasted energy.”

With Nick’s guidance, I caught a few more Pokémon. Then we grabbed a bench to discuss how a mild-mannered 20-something became the world’s greatest Pokémon GO player.

Did he consider himself a gamer?

“Gamer, nongamer—those categories don’t mean anything any more,” Nick said. “When you have 500 million people downloading an app, it just shows that in a way we’re all gamers. When I’m out playing, I meet everyone from little kids to retired people looking to get some exercise. My aunt is addicted to Candy Crush, but I wouldn’t call her a ‘gamer.’”

So if it wasn’t the gaming, how did he explain his obsession with Pokémon GO?

“There are two reasons I started. I watched the TV show when I was a kid, so there was that nostalgia aspect for me a little bit. The second reason was it’s kind of what I do for a living.”

Nick Johnson works as the head of platform for Applico, a tech advisory company. They help their clients build what’s called “platform” businesses. Many of today’s most successful companies—such as Google, Facebook and Uber—don’t make things; they own the platforms that connect people to one another.

In fact, along with Alex Moazed, an Applico colleague, Nick is the author of the recently published *Modern Monopolies: What It Takes to Dominate the 21st Century Economy* (St. Martin’s). The book explains how companies like Facebook gain an almost unassailable market share by “building and managing massive networks of users.”

So Nick wanted to understand the platform of Pokémon GO and how people interacted with it.

“SOME NIGHTS I STAYED UP UNTIL 4 OR 5 A.M. I’D GO HOME, GRAB A LITTLE SLEEP, GO TO WORK, DO IT AGAIN. I MEAN, I WAS TIRED, BUT BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT WAS HEALTHY. I LOST WEIGHT. I STARTED EATING BETTER, BECAUSE YOU CAN’T BE WALKING FOR HOURS ON FRIED CHICKEN.”

Then it became an obsession.

“I was playing the game every day after work,” Nick said. “I’d leave the office and go catch some Pokémon. Suddenly I realized I was close to catching them all. So I figured why not go for it.”

It took Nick two weeks, averaging eight miles of walking a day.

“Some nights I stayed up until 4 or 5 a.m. I’d go home, grab a little sleep, go to work, do it again. I mean, I was tired, but believe it or not, it was healthy. I lost weight. I started eating better, because you can’t be walking for hours on fried chicken. I learned a lot about New York City and I met people.”

“You met people?”

“I did. That’s the thing that a lot of people don’t realize—that there is a social aspect to the game. People are on Reddit exchanging tips and advice. One night I was at Grand Army Plaza in Central Park, and there must have been 300 people out catching Pokémon. Old people, young people, families, tourists. Justin Bieber was supposed to be around, but I didn’t see him.”

“Was that a disappointment?”

“No.”

After Nick caught the 142 Pokémon, he posted on Reddit about it.

“I answered some questions, went to sleep, and when I woke up, I had like 20 media requests.”

After appearing on shows like *Good Morning America* and in national newspapers like *USA Today*, Nick decided to take his Poké Ball around the world. In an admirable display of chutzpah, Nick got Ex-

pedia to spring for business class flights and Marriott Rewards to cover the lodging.

“I stayed in some sweet hotels,” he said.

In the span of four days, Nick caught the three remaining Pokémon in Paris, Hong Kong and Sydney, Australia.

Nick may be right about the pointlessness of categories like “gamer.” You’d expect someone with this level of devotion to be intensely single-minded. But he has other pursuits: He’s into soccer, or at least the European kind.

“American soccer is like Google+,” he said. “The only people interested are those involved with it.”

And with Nick there is a thoughtfulness alongside his intensity. *Wind, Sand and Stars*, the lyrical aviation memoir of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, is his favorite book. He reads serious fiction by J.F. Powers, David Foster Wallace and William Gaddis.

While all these details demonstrate that Nick is a well-rounded guy, they don’t quite explain what drove him toward this kind of digital achievement. When I pressed him on this, he pointed to his T-shirt—“Hustle 24-7-365”—and smiled.

“If I do anything, I do it 100 percent,” he said. “I take everything to its logical extent.”

Nick had to get back to his desk. He had work to do. We shook hands, and the Pokémon GO master of the world headed for his office, his phone firmly in his pocket.

But I already had my phone out. I quickly canceled my next appointment. Then I stayed in the park to catch some Pokémon.

[ALUMNI VOICES]



Aboard the Vallejo

On the first morning of my writing residency, I looked out the window and was filled with dread. ‘It’s back,’ I thought. For months I’d been battling episodes of vertigo, which seemed to strike after changes in elevation. And since I’d just flown from the mountains of Colorado and landed at sea level, I was sure it was back, and just in time to thwart this dream opportunity. Fortunately, what I thought was an imbalance in my inner ear was actually the gentle swaying of the outside world. After all, I was on a boat, a houseboat in fact—the SS *Vallejo*—home to the newly created Varda Artist in Residence (VAR) Program.

The *Vallejo* had a rich history before landing in the hands of Carla and Eric, the current owners and program directors. Originally a passenger ferry in Oregon, after being decommissioned, the *Vallejo* was due to be sold for scrap metal. Fortunately, in the magical year of 1947, Jean Varda bought the boat and turned it into an artists’ haven

in Sausalito, CA. Varda invited others, such as Alan Watts, Gary Snyder, and Allen Ginsberg to join him. Soon the boat was a flourishing artists’ community, complete with a reputation for wild parties that experimented with alternative ways of thinking. The *Vallejo* also became home to many of the Beat poet gatherings, as well as the conversations Alan Watt recorded that came to be known as the “Houseboat Sessions.” After Varda’s death in 1971, the boat changed hands several times. In 2015 the *Vallejo* officially became the home of the VAR program.

Among the other artists with me were a rock musician from New York, a sound artist from Portland, Ore., and a visual artist from New Zealand. Not only was I the only writer, I was also the program’s first poet. Before my arrival, I’d just completed my first full-length poetry collection, *My Dark Horses*, and I was waiting to hear news from publishers. Given that I’d been writing about the rather heavy topic of

my childhood, I felt both a sense of accomplishment and relief after finishing the book, and I was looking forward to using the residency to tackle something new. Originally I’d planned to translate the French poet Arthur Rimbaud’s *Illuminations*. However, only a few days into the project, and with the boat’s rich inspiration, I found myself creating a sheaf of my own new poems that built off Rimbaud’s poetry.

I was delighted by the simple yet elegant space I’d been given for my work. My room was a freshly painted white, and three of its walls had expansive views of Sausalito Bay. Blooming plants were in every corner, and the large windows allowed the fresh air and the music of the ocean and birds to enter. I faced my desk toward the long view of the water and unpacked my favorite collected poems: by Philip Larkin, Robert Frost, Sylvia Plath, and Donald Justice. I placed them next to my computer and was ready to work.

However, no progress was to be made without a strong cup of coffee. I unpacked my stovetop espresso maker and beans and figured I’d be set. After looking around the kitchen, I was surprised to find I’d be grinding my beans by hand and working up a sweat from turning the crank hundreds of times. I eventually grew accustomed to this ritual and even came to enjoy it. But as it turned out, the real coffee challenge was yet to come. One of the unique things about houseboat living is that one must climb a ladder to reach one’s room.

Other than the possibility of a drunken stumble or unexpected bout of vertigo, it hadn’t occurred to me that the ladder would be an obstacle—I was forced to devise a system. First, I’d take a few sips to lower the coffee level in my mug and to give myself a small shot of caffeine, should I need to make a quick save during transport. Then, I’d hold the side of the ladder with my left hand moving the coffee up one rung at a time with my right. Meanwhile, my feet followed suit, one rung at a time, until my coffee and I were both safely delivered up the ladder to my desk and my computer.

I’m sure this looked ridiculous, particularly to the others who simply drank their coffee in the kitchen and avoided the drama altogether. But aside from enjoying my coffee in solitude, I’d developed this quirk of needing a mug of coffee beside me while I worked; thus the struggle was worth the effort.

Bringing an empty coffee mug, or anything for that matter, down the ladder was much easier than tak-

Vagabonds After Rimbaud

Oh, pitiful brother,
I cannot be your sister
you cannot be my brother,
since you are still a mistress
to our late mother—
Many years have passed,
and these days I wonder,
what’s become of you
and what foreign land
do you these days inhabit?
Russia, Japan, China,
in that mind of yours
you were never right.
But what if now we met?
Could I restore you
to your original state;
or would you drag me,
just as She did,
into your dark room
of old howling sorrows?

ing it up. When I first arrived, I’d made a dozen or so trips up and down carrying my clothes and books in small, backpack-sized deliveries. But at one point, the rock musician suggested to me: Why not just *throw* your clothes down? An excellent idea I wished I’d thought of myself! This began the jettisoning of shorts, dresses, and pants to the main level of the boat in a Great Gatsby-esque moment of liberation. I’m sure, at the very least, the Beat poets would have approved.

The program allowed as much or as little contact with the outside world as we liked. Some of the artists spent their days exploring the offerings of San Francisco, while others stayed on the boat. I was of the latter, less hip group.

Among other reasons for this was the chance to observe a tragic pair of resident seagulls. This couple squawked outside my room early each morning; then walked on the roof with such deliberation that I wondered if two very serious lawyers were debating above me. One day I noticed that the gulls had built their nest precariously atop one of the pier’s wooden piles. Upon some investigation, I learned that each year their nest fell terribly into the ocean—the eggs lost to the deep blue. The parents cried out in painful squawks of loss, buried their beaks dejectedly in each other’s feathers, and seemed to mope around the boat until their grief passed. And yet each spring they’d rebuild their nest in the same place, and the same disaster ensued. I wondered what kinds of bird-brained behavior my fellow artists were witnessing on the streets of San Francisco.

From time to time the *Vallejo* hosted its share of social gatherings. These were nothing like the famed wild parties of the Beat Generation, but rather intimate events that allowed each artist to display his or her work. On our last evening, we ate salmon from the local fishmonger, broiled with fresh cherries. We made a colorful salad, cut thick slices of bread and drank plenty of California wine. Each of us gave a short presentation describing how the boat had inspired or changed our work during our stay. Later that night, we piled into a rowboat and quietly reflected on our time spent on the *Vallejo*. For my part, I chose to row—pushing the old wooden oars quietly through the dark waters.

—Jodie Hollander '99

Après Le Deluge After Rimbaud

After the idea of the deluge
ended, a little hare appeared
in the moving flowers, spoke
of rainbows lighting the spaces
of a spider’s web: the colors,
it said, can be seen only
after the years of darkness.
But the stones, the old
unbelievers, remained unmoving
in the streets, and watched
as the same stalls were erected,
the same ships were hauled to sea.
Only the children, looking out
from their big glass houses, saw
the New World like a painting,
like something from a dream.

Welcome

New Alumni Association Board Members

47 hearty chirps to **Jordan Pedraza '09** as she steps into her new role as president of the Pomona College Alumni Association. On October 2, to kick off the first meeting of the 2016-17 Alumni Association Board at the Seaver House, Pedraza welcomed four new at-large members to the Board: **Mercedes Fitchett '91**, **Nina Jacinto '08**, **Ginny Kruger '53** and **Don Swan '15**. Pedraza also shared her goal for the board this year—to foster “the three Cs”:

- **COMMUNICATION**—to raise the visibility of the Alumni Board so alumni have an additional channel to be heard, and also to share more updates and opportunities between the board and the community
- **CONNECTION**—to enhance alumni connections across a range of affinity groups, regions, identities and generations, as well as increase connections between alumni and students
- **COLLABORATION**—to strengthen the productivity of the board as we work to create opportunities and events through special projects and our working committees



Jordan Pedraza '09
2016-17 President of
the Alumni Association

Congratulations, Jordan, and welcome new board members! The Alumni Board is a group of dedicated volunteers who lead alumni engagement efforts and serve as conduits between the on-campus and off-campus Pomona communities. To see the roster of current board members and learn how to get involved, visit www.pomona.edu/alumni/alumni-association-board.

Calling All Lifelong Learners: Join **ideas** @Pomona

Ever wish you could go back to class?

The new Ideas@Pomona program curates the best academic content from around campus and the Pomona community to ignite discussion, share ideas and highlight daring research. To take part, join the Ideas@Pomona Facebook group at facebook.com/groups/ideasatpomona. Not a Facebook user? Check the Pomona College YouTube channel for videos and watch your email and this bulletin board for updates on development of a web-based home for Ideas@Pomona content.

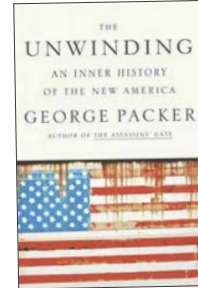
The Pomona College BOOK CLUB



Settle Into Fall

with New Pomona Book Club Selections

Fall semester is well under way and it's time to head back to the library with Pomona! With a national election on the minds of many Sagehens, we've asked faculty across campus to recommend books that approach crucial political and cultural topics in insightful ways. Fall and early winter selections include:



October

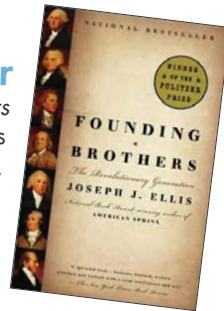
The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America
by George Packer

Recommended by
Associate Professor of
Politics **Susan McWilliams**

November

Founding Brothers
by Joseph J. Ellis

Recommended by
Warren Finney Day Professor
of History **Helena Wall**



December/January

The Plot Against America
by Philip Roth

Recommended by
Associate Professor of
Sociology **Colin Beck**

To join the Book Club and access exclusive discussion questions, faculty notes and video content, visit www.pomona.edu/bookclub.

Career Connections at Pomona College



Panel (L-R): Matt Thompson '96, Wayne Goldstein '96, Bill Sewell '95, Jeremiah Knight '94, Paulette Barros '11

Avery Bedows '19 demos technology from his virtual reality startup Altar Technologies, Inc.

Pomona College Career Connections kicked off its year of programming at Claremont Graduate University's downtown LA campus on September 27 with a panel of Sagehens discussing careers in advertising, digital media and virtual reality. Panelists included Paulette Barros '11, Wayne Goldstein '96, Jeremiah Knight '94, Bill Sewell '95 and Matt Thompson '96. The Pomona College Career Connections program fosters meaningful relationships for Sagehens in their professional lives and provides opportunities for volunteers to help current students as they discover different career paths. To learn more about the Career Connections program and events, visit www.pomona.edu/alumni/careerconnections.



What are **you** committed to at Pomona College?

"For me, opportunities to learn new perspectives and make unexpected connections are what make Pomona's liberal arts education such a transformative, life-changing experience."
—Audrey Bilger,
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

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Alfred Kwok

Associate Professor of
Physics and Astronomy
1965–2016

After receiving the heartbreaking news in late September, the Pomona College community began to mourn the passing of Professor Alfred Kwok, who died while on a trip in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Students, faculty and staff crowded into the Physics Commons, mixing tears and laughter as they shared memories of the vibrant professor who was passionate about physics, the outdoors and life.

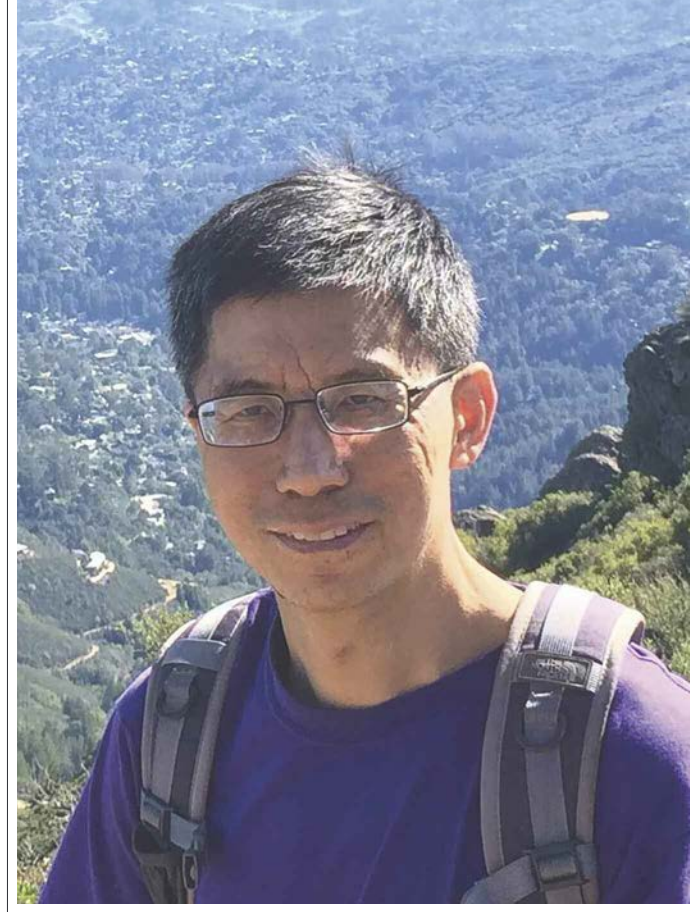
“He was a source of energy and excitement,” said Physics Professor Tom Moore. “He genuinely loved being a teacher. He was always thinking about how to get something across better.”

After the gathering, students came forward one after another to write memories on whiteboards:

“Kwok always stayed in Millikan until 2–3 a.m., and would always help with whatever class you were working on—even philosophy.”

“Professor Kwok single-handedly bridged the gap between profs and students.”

“He always knew what each person was interested in and always had advice and experience to share.”



“He invited me on a ‘moderate’ hike of 22 miles.”

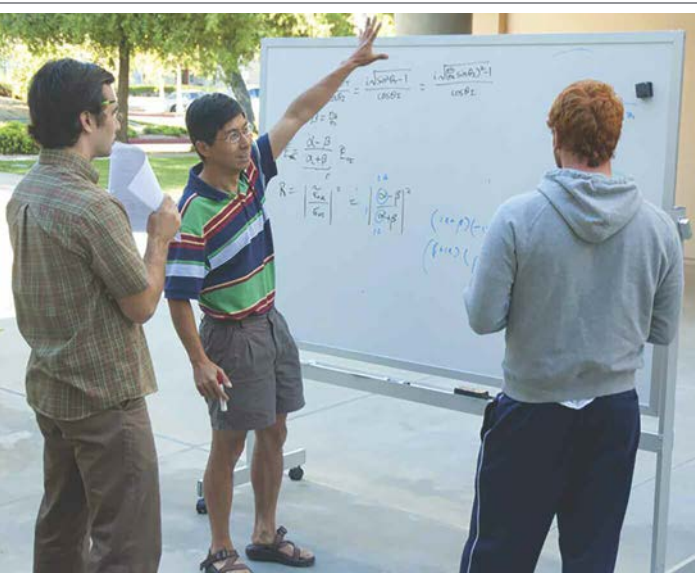
“He’s the reason I’m a physics major.”

Professor Kwok, 50, was an associate professor of physics and astronomy, and a member of Pomona’s faculty since 2000. He grew up in Hong Kong and came to the U.S. for college, earning his B.A. from UC Santa Cruz and his Ph.D. from Yale University. He came to Pomona from Franklin and Marshall College, having previously served as a postdoctoral researcher at the Stanford University Free Electron Laser Center.

Kwok was the recipient of the Becton Prize for Excellence in Engineering and Applied Science and the Optical Society of America, Newport Research Award, Finalist. Some of his research interests included microresonators/whispering gallery modes, laser spectroscopy and nonlinear optics.

Kwok was active in outdoor education trips and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. An avid climber, he loved being in the mountains and sharing his love of the outdoors. His death occurred in the rugged backcountry of Kings Canyon National Park, on the southwest face of 13,270-foot Deerhorn Mountain.

“Anything he loved in life, he always wanted to share, whether it was physics or food or hiking,” read one message on the whiteboard. “His joy in life always bubbled over.”



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CHICAGO TRIBUNE COLUMNIST MARY SCHMICH '75 REMEMBERS PROFESSOR VIRGINIA CROSBY.

Virginia and I



A long, long time ago—way back when Facebook was young—Virginia and I discussed the possibility of becoming “friends” in that newfangled way.

I was ambivalent about this new style of virtual, public, quote-unquote friendship, but I thought she might be eager for the novelty, given that she was the most curious, modern 90-something person who ever lived.

I mean, Virginia’s entire life—for nearly 10 decades—was a testament to the power of humans to evolve.

Think about it: Here’s a girl born, in Oklahoma, before American women have the right to vote. In the 1930s, she lives in Germany, where she joins a dance troupe. After World War II, she lives in Chicago, where she writes radio soap operas. She becomes a professor of French at Pomona College, then a high-ranking college administrator. She raises two kids.

And that’s just the beginning.

After her husband dies, in her so-called retirement, she moves to Paris, alone. She writes novels. She is an early adopter of the Kindle and, when it became trendy in Paris, of boxed wine. She takes Pilates

classes before most Americans have ever heard of Pilates.

Thoroughly modern *Virginie*. Wouldn’t she want to join Facebook?

Non, non et absolument pas.

“I am still unbending in regard to Facebook,” she replied in an email. “Darn it, for me friendship is private and personal—as with lovers, not that that question is an issue at the moment.”

Friendship—the private and personal kind—was Virginia’s gift to me, to many of us in this room, one of the greatest gifts of my lifetime.

When I met her, in 1971, I would never have dreamed that one day I’d call her my friend. Or call her Virginia.

She was Madame Crosby, my middle-age French professor—regal, demanding, with a demeanor as efficient as her matronly bun. In her presence, I always felt I was slouching.

I struggled to make it on time to her 8 a.m. French 51 class. The only things I could say with confidence were “*Pardon*” and “*Répétez, s’il vous plaît.*”

Non, pardon, Madame, I have not read that excerpt from “Huis Clos.”

I gave Madame Crosby no reason to think I was a student worth her time, but in my junior year, I signed up for a semester in France. She was my advisor.

As part of my semester abroad schoolwork, I had to keep a journal, in French. It was a black book with unlined pages in which I recorded exciting moments like, “*Je suis allée au musée.*”

Then the semester ended. Rather than take my prepaid flight home, I decided to stay in France for the summer. But there was a problem.

I had no money. No. Money. And so began a series of adventures that included taking a job on a yacht as a cook for three Frenchmen who, as it turned out, had a very loose translation of “cook.”

Through that summer, I was broke, scared, confused, hungry, elated—and I wrote it all down in my little black journal, which, at the beginning of the new school year, I dutifully brought to Madame Crosby.

I warned her that some of it was very personal, that she might not want to read it all.

A few days later, she summoned me to her office. I don’t remember exactly what she said, but she had read it all. In her crisp way, she let me know she wanted to make sure I was OK.

It was a breakthrough moment in my life. For the first time, a professor at Pomona College made me feel noticed and cared for, and that was the beginning of my friendship with Virginia, the beginning of our long conversation.

As you all know, Virginia gave great conversation. It ranged from just the right amount of tart gossip to books (she loved haute literature and trashy mysteries) to politics (Go Democrats) to the meaning of life.

Once, as I was thinking about all the discoveries and inventions she’d lived through—from the electric refrigerator to the Internet—I asked her what she thought the next great frontier would be.

“The brain,” she promptly said. Until we understand the brain, she believed, we won’t understand anything.

As the years wore on, we talked a lot about aging. She didn’t like it. But she faced it with her bracing humor and candor.

One day while I was in her Paris apartment, a young workman was fixing something in the garden out back. He was sweating, no shirt. She watched him. She sighed. Oh, she said, how she missed the days when she didn’t feel invisible to young men.

Virginia maintained close relationships with a number of former students. They adored her; she thrived on them. My brother Chris, who lived near her in Paris, became one of her dearest friends.

I did have to point out to her, however, that in at least one of her novels, the students were vile, conniving creatures. As I recall, she killed off at least one.

Purely a plot device, she assured me.

My classmate, Talitha Arnold, captures part of what endeared Virginia to her students like this: “What she offered us was so much more than French. But through French, she opened a whole world of

culture, history and travel that I’d only had a glimpse of as a public school kid from a junior high teacher’s family in Arizona.”

Virginia also gave us a vision of how a woman might live a forceful, independent, fruitful life well into old age. For women my age, she was a role model before we knew the words “role model.”

Yet Virginia fretted that she had led a selfish life. She said that to me more than once. She worried that she hadn’t done much for others, hadn’t sacrificed sufficiently. I assured her that she had done something life-changing for many of us:

She gave us her friendship.

Through her friendship—personal, private friendship—she helped us see more clearly. She inspired, excited, encouraged us, laughed heartily at our jokes. She made us feel valued, seen. She made us more real to ourselves.

Virginia loved attention—“I’m a performer” she once said when I asked her the key to her resilience—but unlike many people who love attention, she also gave it, whole-heartedly. She was curious to the point of hungry. How are you? How’s your family? Are you happy?

She often asked me that—are you happy?—and then we’d have a long discussion on the nature of happiness.

This spring, I was among the many people who paraded to her bedside to say thank you and goodbye. I asked her how she felt about all the well-wishers.

“It’s fine,” she whispered, “as long as they can express sentiment without being sentimental.”

To her, sentimentality seemed like a form of sloppiness, but the truth is, she could be very generous in expressing her feelings—her love, her encouragement—though often with an apology attached: “I fear I’m becoming sentimental in my old age.”

Good, Virginia, good. Go for it.

A final thought.

One day this April, when she was mostly confined to bed, she said something in

French as I walked out the door.

Damn, I thought. My French still sucks. I have no idea what she said.

I leaned over her bed. *Répétez, s’il vous plaît?*

She hoisted an imaginary wine glass and in a raspy voice said, “*Vogue la galère!*”

Those were the words, she said, that she wanted to “go out” on.

When I got home, I looked it up. It has various definitions.

Here’s the one from Merriam-Webster:

Vogue la galère: Let the galley be kept rowing; keep on, whatever may happen.

For almost 100 years, that was Virginia, keeping on whatever happened, encouraging the people who loved her to do the same.

Vogue la galère, ma chère amie.

This is the text of a eulogy delivered by Mary Schmich '75 at a memorial service for Professor Emerita of French Virginia Crosby. Schmich is a columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*.

SHE HOISTED
AN IMAGINARY
WINE GLASS
AND IN A RASPY
VOICE SAID,
“VOGUE LA
GALÈRE!”



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