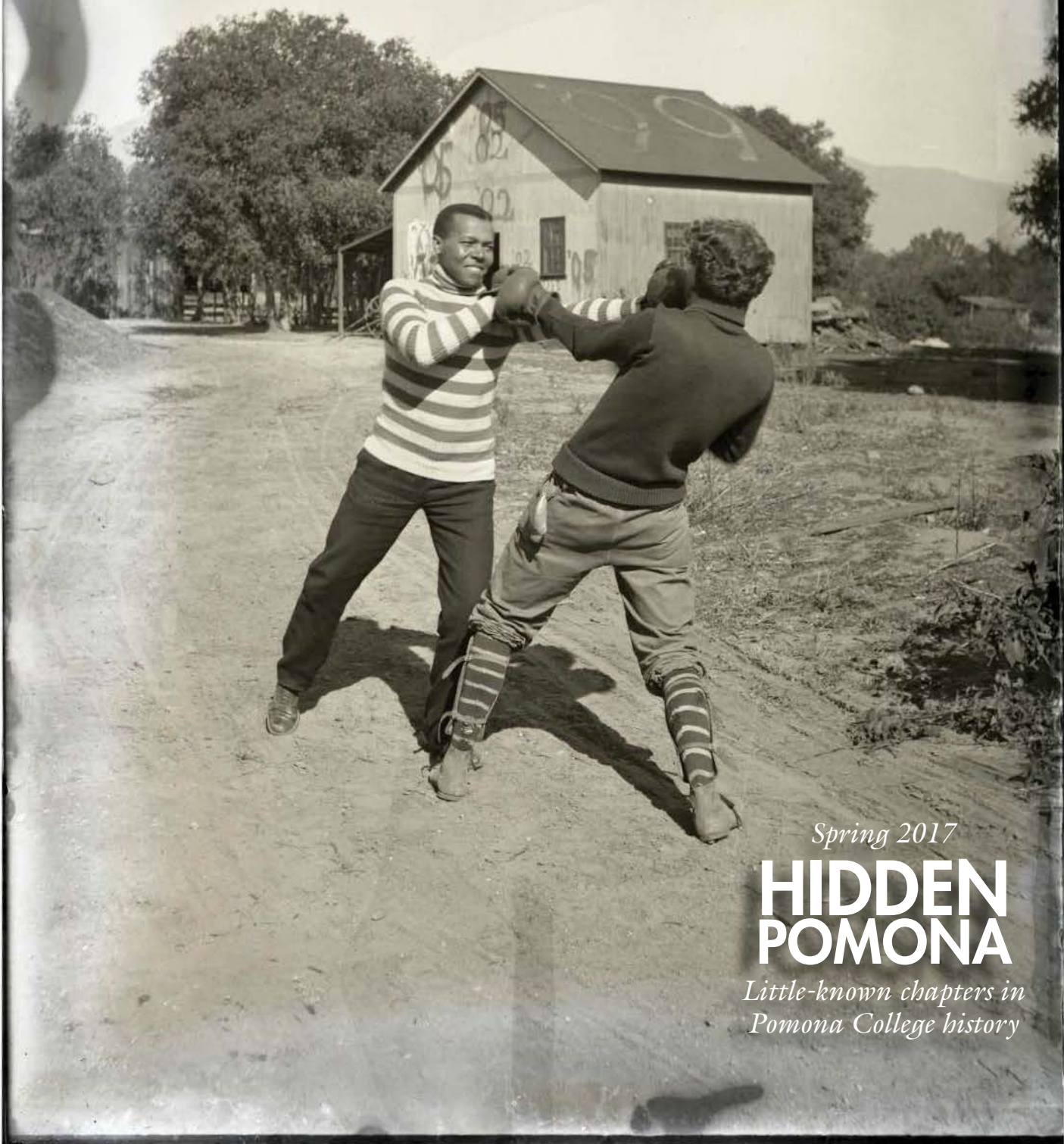


HIDDEN POMONA (Saahil Desai '16 and Kevin Tidmarsh '16 set out to plumb the hidden depths of Pomona history.) p. 28 | **OCELOT COUNTRY** (The endangered little cat has a new best friend—Hilary Swarts '94.) p. 36 | **THE MAGICAL BRIDGE** (For Olenka Villarreal '85, building an accessible playground for her own community was only the first step.) p. 44 | **ZOOT SUIT REBOOT** (Rose Portillo '75 relives her *Zoot Suit* dream-come-true 40 years later.) p. 42

COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Pomona



Spring 2017

**HIDDEN
POMONA**

*Little-known chapters in
Pomona College history*

DO YOU KNOW POMONA FACT FROM POMONA MYTH? TAKE THE TEST.

FACT OR MYTH

Some of these old tales about Pomona are actually true. Others are sheer fabrications or exaggerations. Still others remain mysteries. Can you tell which ones are fact, which are fiction, and which are unknown? (Answers on page 5.)

1 Huns to Hens

Legend has it that Pomona got its unique mascot, the Sagehen, because of a bit of century-old political correctness and some creative cost-avoidance. The original Pomona mascot was far more war-like than the current flightless bird—the Huns. However, that name lost its luster when the U.S. entered World War I in 1917 and the popular epithet for the enemy became you-know-what. The teams had already invested in uniforms bearing the word “HUNS,” so to save money, the “U” was changed to an “E” and they became the “HENS.”



2 The Shakespeare Garden

Almost every student has heard the story that the border of Marston Quad is home to a garden containing plants mentioned in Shakespeare’s plays—pansies, fennel, willows and rosemary from *Hamlet*, violets and thyme from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, daffodils from *A Winter’s Tale*, daisies from *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, and so on. According to the tale, every plant mentioned in the Bard’s body of work is to be found somewhere in the garden.

3 Things That Go Bump

There are several persistent tales of ghosts on the Pomona campus. There's Walter, the worker who fell off the roof of Bridges Auditorium during its construction and has haunted the place ever since, playing pranks with the lights and appearing in shadowy passageways. There's Gwendolyn, who died in the old Claremont Hotel before it became Sumner Hall and occasionally can be seen or heard in its lower level or bell tower. And there's Nila, the ghost of a young woman who reportedly wanders the attic and hallways of Seaver House.



Illustration by Mark Wood

4 The Flying Sailboat

A classic prank that has become Pomona legend happened in 1978. The place was Frary Hall, or rather, the rafters of Frary Hall. In a scene worthy of a Magritte painting, students arriving for breakfast one morning found a 13-foot sailboat suspended in space high above the tables, with sails set and framed in Pomona blue.

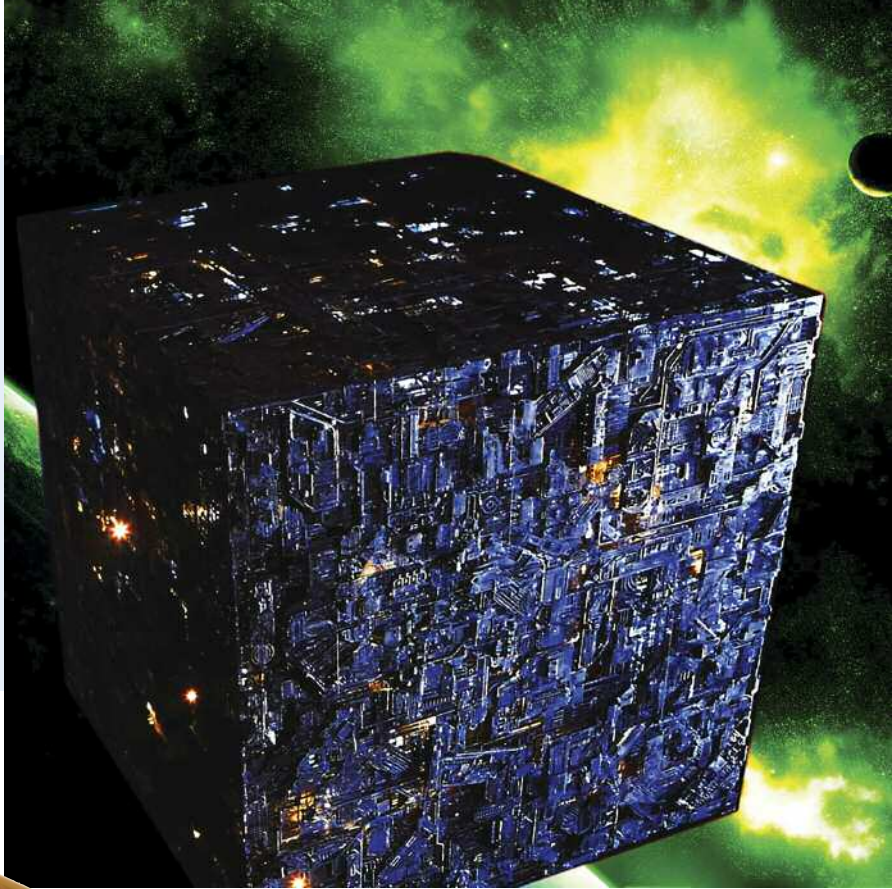


5 The Duke and the Madonna

Is that Little Bridges behind John Wayne and Charles Coburn in the movie *Trouble Along the Way*? That, at least, is the story, which includes Wayne coming to campus in 1952 as Pomona played the role of a small Catholic college in the film. That visit is also remembered for a double-take moment when the sculpture of the flutist in the fountain in Lebus Court was covered by a fake statue of the Madonna.

6 The Borg and the Borg

The story goes that the Borg of TV fame—the swarming, half-cybernetic zombies from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* who lived in a cube with warrens of maze-like hallways—got its name from Pomona’s Borg—otherwise known as the Oldenborg Center for Modern Languages and International Relations, also known for its warrens of maze-like hallways.



7 Winner and Still Champion...

The Men’s Glee Club of 1932 took first place in the Pacific Southwest Glee Club Championship in San Diego, then traveled to St. Louis to compete in the first-ever National Championship, which they won. And since the first National Glee Club Championship also turned out to be the last National Glee Club Championship, Pomona can still lay claim to being the reigning champ.

8 The Roosevelt Shovel and Oak

According to legend, the shovel that Pomona presidents bring out to break ground for new buildings was used by President Theodore Roosevelt to plant a California live oak on campus during his visit in 1903. Arriving at the Claremont train station, Roosevelt was transported by carriage to campus where he spoke to a throng of 7,000 to 8,000 people from a rostrum in front of Pearsons, later planting the tree, which survives to this day.



9 All Numbers Equal 47

The 47 craze at Pomona started in 1964 when Donald Bentley, then Professor of Statistics, presented a paradoxical proof with the title, “Why all numbers are equal to 47.” Two students in a summer program, Laurens “Laurie” Mets ’68 and Bruce Elgin ’68, then embarked upon their own tongue-in-cheek experiment to determine whether the number 47 occurred more often in nature than other numbers, and the rest is history.

ANSWERS

- 1 This is at least partially a myth. The nickname “Sage Hen” appeared in *The Student Life* as early as 1913, when sports editor E.H. Spoor 1915 wrote, “Once again the Oxy Tiger wanders from his lair and comes to peaceful, peaceful Claremont with intent to murder. The Sage Hen will fight—on the field. On the campus she is entirely amicable.” “Hen” and “Hun” were used interchangeably until around 1918, when the latter disappeared, possibly because of its wartime connotations.
- 2 This is a great story, but it’s also a complete fabrication. Students have passed the story down to other students for many years, but there has never been a Shakespeare Garden on Pomona’s campus. No one knows how the myth got started.
- 3 Myth? Probably. But there are those who say they’ve experienced strange things in these buildings and become reluctant believers, so let’s brand it unknown. Some of the facts behind the stories, at least, might be true. We have been told that a record exists in Big Bridges’ archives mentioning an unnamed worker who was killed during construction, and that the *L.A. Times* reported a death at the old hotel that became Sumner. However, we’ve been unable to confirm either claim.
- 4 This story is factual and describes one of the most inventive and challenging pranks ever performed on the Pomona campus. Michael Brazil ’79, who was interviewed by *PCM* in 2002, was one of a group of friends who conceived the daring plan and carried it out.
- 5 All of this is true, including the Madonna, for which there is also photographic evidence.
- 6 Only one person really knows if this is true, and he isn’t talking, so let’s call it unknown. Joe Menosky ’79 reportedly lived in Oldenborg during his college years and played a role in creating the Borg as a writer for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. To our knowledge, however, he has never confirmed or denied this claim.
- 7 This is all true, though the “reigning champion” part is a humorous take on an odd situation, not a serious claim.
- 8 The story about the shovel, so far as we can tell, is completely factual. The shovel has an inscription on the front of the handle noting that it was a gift from the Class of 1898, and another on the back noting that it was used by President Roosevelt on May 3, 1903. However, the tree part is false. The original Roosevelt tree died shortly after planting and was quietly replaced.
- 9 Professor Bentley was, indeed, known on campus for this tongue-in-cheek, fallacious proof that all numbers equal 47 (or any other number), and Mets and Elgin did start the 47 hunt that has continued to this day.

The Right Side of History

History can be complicated, and institutions that span centuries are lucky if they don't find themselves on the wrong side of it on occasion. So I suppose it should come as no surprise that a lot of American colleges and universities are struggling today with the moral implications of their complicated pasts.

In 1838, the priests who ran the Jesuit college that eventually became Georgetown University sold 272 slaves to sugar plantations in Louisiana for the modern equivalent of \$3.3 million. That now-infamous sale—which saved the institution at the cost of condemning 272 enslaved men, women and children to even greater suffering—illustrates the conundrum institutional leaders face today as they look back at times when their predecessors failed to rise above the ethical blind spots and moral outrages of their times.

The history of institutional involvement in slavery is, perhaps, the most extreme example of this. In his 2013 book, *Ebony and Ivy*, Craig Steven Wilder argues that in addition to church and state, America's early colleges were “the third pillar of a civilization based on bondage.” In recent years, institutions like Harvard, Brown, Princeton and Emory have also investigated and publicly acknowledged their own historic ties to the slave trade.

Since you can't change the past, institutions that find themselves on the wrong side of history have to find ways to atone for it today. Georgetown has announced a number of real and symbolic reparations, including a monument to the slaves who were sold, preferential admissions for their descendants and the renaming of buildings in their honor. Similarly, Yale recently decided to rename the residential college that has been, since its construction in 1933, named for John Calhoun, known as slavery's most forceful political advocate.

If there's a lesson to be learned from all this, it's probably that it would be far better to avoid such situations to begin with. But how do you do that? It's tempting to say: Just do the right thing, even when it's hard. And in the final analysis, there's probably no better advice to be found. But at the same time, you only have to look at today's heated debates over a range of questions to see that culture and self-interest cloud our ethical vision, and people on both sides of an issue can feel morally righteous. Today, it's almost impossible to imagine how anyone could have ever defended such a barbaric practice as slavery, and yet, we know that in the first half of the 19th century, the topic was angrily debated in this country and became so deeply divisive that it eventually led to civil war.

So what are the divisive issues of our own time that, at some point in the distant future, will seem so ethically obvious that people will wonder how on earth anyone could have gotten them wrong? And what will be the final verdict of history, once time has peeled away the layers of self-interest, political animosity and cultural bias that trouble our ethical sight today? These are questions we probably should all ask ourselves from time to time.

For my part, I think climate change is likely to top the list. Someday, I believe, when the disruptive realities of a warmer world are indisputable facts on the ground, the denial and inaction of many of today's leaders will be viewed as criminal acts of willful blindness. Philosopher Miranda Fricker suggests that people of all eras should be judged according to “the best standards that were available to them at the time.” By that standard, I think climate deniers will have a lot to answer for someday.

My list doesn't end there, however. It would also include such things as LGBT rights and the treatment of refugees and undocumented immigrants in this country—which I would argue are the civil rights issues of our time.

In all of these issues, I'm proud to say that the college that employs me to create this magazine puts its money and its people power where its values are. I feel confident that Pomona's efforts to do the right thing—including its commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030, its sustained efforts on behalf of the LGBT community on our campus, and its leadership in the fight for the undocumented students known as “Dreamers”—will, on these issues, at least, put it very much on the right side of history.

—MW

Pomona

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DEPARTMENTS

Home Page 1
Fact or Myth

Stray Thoughts 6
The Right Side of History

Letter Box 8
Memories of Virginia Crosby

Pomoniana 10
Two Flightless Birds

From the Archives 13
Lost Holmes

Milestones 14
Bleeding Pomona Blue

Back Stage 16
Staying Inspired

New Knowledge 18
Thinking in Black and White

Book Talk 20
Matters of Honor

Picture This 26
Winter Sunset

Bulletin Board 51

Class Notes 53

Births & Adoptions 59

Obituaries 59

Last Word 64
Slow Art

ON THE COVER

Winston Dickson 1904, Pomona's first Black graduate, boxes with William Wharton 1906 in front of Pomona's original gymnasium. (From the Boynton Collection of the Claremont Colleges Digital Library)



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HIDDEN POMONA



FEATURES

28 Hidden Pomona

Saahil Desai '16 and Kevin Tidmarsh '16 set out to explore some obscure corners of Pomona College history. | BY MARK WOOD

36 Ocelot Country

In the endangered ocelot's struggle for survival, the little cat's new best friend may be Hilary Swarts '94. | BY MARGARET SHAKESPEARE

42 Zoot Suit Reboot

Rose Portillo '75 relives her *Zoot Suit* dream-come-true 40 years later. | BY CARLA GUERRERO '06

44 The Magical Bridge

For Olenka Villarreal '85, creating an accessible, socially inclusive playground for her own child and her own community was only the first step. | BY VANESSA HUA

Memories of Virginia Crosby

When our daughter Beatrice [Schraa '06] was applying to college, she received a brochure saying Pomona professors often formed lifelong friendships with students. That was certainly true of Virginia. I took French 51 from her in the fall of 1968 and several classes after that, including a wonderful seminar on the French Revolution, co-taught with Burdette Poland. My wife, Louise [Schraa '72], remembers her as one of the friendly and accessible professors whom everyone knew. We kept in touch after graduation, and I was working in Paris when she moved there and acquired the first in a series of tiny but exquisite and wonderfully located apartments. We saw her regularly after that, especially in Paris and then when we lived in Brussels.

For Beatrice, Virginia was literally a lifelong friend. Virginia was at her christening in Paris and, although she couldn't attend Beatrice's wedding earlier last year, we had lots of interested emails and calls with good wishes and requests for details and pictures. When she was only 95, Virginia was able to attend the wedding of our daughter Eugenia and spent the evening charming new people and dancing.

You might have thought she would be an honorary grandmother to our girls. Although they certainly knew her better than my mother, that was never the case. Rather, she was always, in the best professorial fashion, an adult friend, even when they were little tykes. Our whole family always looked forward to seeing Virginia, with her interest in all kinds of things, insightful conversation, good humor and fresh outlook, even in very old age. She avoided the old person's tendency to reminisce, but very occasionally something would prompt a perfect anecdote, about the time she saw Hitler, about her one and only deer hunt, about her radio program with her husband, etc. Very occasionally, in the most discreet and subtle way, there came a nugget of advice or guidance as well. We traded articles, political comments and book recommendations with her until shortly before her death. I owed her a book report every year on the annual winner of the Prix Goncourt.

Everybody who knew Virginia remarks on what an extraordinary person she was and what a rich and varied path she had found through life. Louise, Eugenia, Beatrice and I all felt knowing her enriched our lives. We will miss her a great deal.

—David Schraa '72
New York, N.Y.



A long, long time ago—now back when Facebook was nonexistent and I doubted the possibility of becoming “friends” in that technological way. I was ambivalent about this new style of virtual, public, quite anonymous friendship, but I thought she might be eager for the security, given that she was the more cautious, modest 95-year-old person who ever lived. Friends—she prizes and personal bond—was Virginia's gift to me, in 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. Oh call her Virginia. She was Madeline Cady, my middle age French professor—regal, demanding, with a demeanor as efficient as her mastery here. In her presence, I always felt I was cheating. I struggled to make it on time to her 8 a.m. French 51 class. The only thing I could do with confidence were “Dante” and “Virginia.” “Oh, my friend, Madeline, I have not read that excerpt from “The Chorus.”

I received my Pomona College Magazine yesterday, opened it this morning to the last page and came unglued to see Virginia Crosby's beautiful smiling face.

All the memories of a long, wonderful friendship came flooding back. Virginia and I met when we were both completing our B.A. in French in the early '60s. I was a single mom with two young sons and little money for a babysitter, so I would take them with me to Virginia's house, and the two of us would study for exams—particularly those of our favorite professor, Leonard Pronko. I went on to earn a teaching credential in French at CGU, while Virginia got her Ph.D. and—as we all know—became a professor at Pomona.

We kept in contact over the many years, either in Claremont or Paris. In April of this year, I flew down to Ontario to visit friends and learned that Virginia had been diagnosed with brain cancer. I was able to visit her a few days before she died. As I was leaving after the second visit, I whispered good-bye in French. She whispered back in French, “I love you and am so proud of what you have done.” I will forever hold those last words in my memory, along with the many others of our 50-year friendship.

My thanks to Mary Schmich for her article.
—Réanne Hemingway-Douglass '63
Anacortes, Wash.

Thank you to Mary Schmich '75 for her article about Virginia Crosby, which I enjoyed and which inspired these memories.

In the fall of 1967, I tested into Mme. Crosby's fourth-semester French class (French 62), which I survived with a generous B. However, I then had the audacity to sign up for

her “Renaissance French Literature” class the next semester (spring '68). Here I was: (1) the only boy (as a callow 18-year-old, I wouldn't say “man”); (2) the only non-language major (I did economics-math); (3) the least prepared student. However, it was obvious that I was there for the love of the subject, so again, she was generous with my grade.

Toward the end of the semester, an older student (I was still only 18) helped me buy a bottle of red wine, “La Bourgogne de Cucamonga.” I had a silver chalice; so to celebrate Rabelais, we brought this to class, quite against the rules. Mme. Crosby took us off campus across Harvard Ave. and we celebrated: one bottle for about 8 people didn't get us too drunk. I know she got a chuckle out of the silver chalice.

A couple of years later, she invited my girlfriend and me to her home in Padua Hills to look over her husband's state-of-the-art stereo system, and for a very pleasant afternoon on her deck overlooking the valley.

Around 1970, Zeta Chi Sigma voted Mme. Crosby as a member. Not a faculty advisor. Member. (At this same time, we also voted several women students as members.) All of this was against the rules, but in the spirit of the times, we didn't ask.

Did she share with you her story of how she got into writing radio soap-operas while living in a Chicago apartment with “a prostitute in the apartment above and an abortionist in the apartment below”?

I tried looking her up when I was in Claremont a few years ago, but was told that she wasn't doing well.

Let me end with some verses from a poem we studied in her class (Ronsard: “A Cassandre”):

*Las! voyez comme en peu d'espace,
Mignonne, elle a dessus la place
Las! las ses beautez laissé cheoir!
Ô vrayment marastre Nature,
Puis qu'une telle fleur ne dure
Que du matin jusques au soir!*

Thank you for the article, and thanks for letting me share.

—Howard Hogan '71
Owings, Md.

Anguished Father

I am an anguished father, white and privileged, who may lose his adopted, undocumented sons to deportation. My heart is shattered.

—David Lyman '66
South Pasadena, Calif.

Shining Example

Thank you for the inspiring story in the summer 2016 PCM about Judge Halim Dhanidina, who has steadfastly exhibited the courage to promote the values and enforce the laws of our country in the face of the prejudice and fear engendered by the 9/11 attack on WTC. I'm sure I would not have his courage to do the same. He is a shining example of the values and vision we believe Pomona instills in all graduates. His life is (or should be) an inspiration to all Americans.

—Mike Hogan '69
Black Forest, Colo.

Another Cane

“The Cane Mystery” article in the PCM summer 2016 issue was interesting and reminded me of the cane which I now have. The cane belonged to my father, Robert Boynton Dozier (1902–2001), Class of '23.

The cane has the same dimensions as those mentioned in the article: 35 inches long, with a five-inch curved handle. Attached about 29 inches above the base is a 3/4-inch sterling band which is engraved: “R.B.D. '23” (see photo at right).

As I recall the story my father told me many years ago, the freshmen class men beat the sophomore men in the Pole Rush competition. The challenge: Which team could have a man reach the top of the pole the quickest? He felt that the freshmen had done so well because they had a plan as to where the men would be positioned and who would climb where and when. The award was a cane. I do not know how many other men received and kept a cane.

My father really enjoyed having that cane as a special memento of Pomona College and kept it on the umbrella stand in his home. He also found it to be a useful walking aid when he was in his late 90s. I am pleased to have the cane in my living room, though I have not yet needed to use it.

—Bobbie Dozier Spurgin '49
Carlsbad, Calif.



Memories of a Friend

I'm writing to share a few thoughts about the passing of my friend, Richard E. Persoff '49 (see Obits). These are perhaps of more interest to Pomona undergraduates than to alumni, partly because there are few of us left from the 1940s, and partly because the present students are now grappling with the same questions that Persoff faced in the aftermath of WWII: “Is liberal education, including the humanities, relevant to those who look forward to careers in technological fields?”

Persoff used his undergraduate work to learn how to think. And because of that, he was able to continue applying his mind in several areas. That luxury is as pertinent today as it was in the 1940s.

At Pomona, he studied hard and then played hard. Once, emerging from his books after midnight, he roared at me from across the room: “Andrews! Let's go to the snow!” We then exited the world of academia temporarily for some improvised adventure, and then returned with renewed energy to our studies.

He could be critical, but outside his field, he was a champion of tolerance. He liked to strike up conversations with the immigrant workers of the local gravel pits and try to absorb their views on lives so different from ours. He befriended the college gardener, a family man who cared for the plants on campus with as much responsibility as an ancient shepherd might tend to his flock. Richard once visited the hobos who cooked their haphazard dinners on open fires in their “jungle” down by

the railroad tracks. In our college days, the Great Depression and World War II were recent history. We knew songs from nations victimized by the war, as well as some older songs collected by the poet Carl Sandburg—songs that reflected man at odds with society, but whose protagonist could still recognize life's gifts, for castaways often seek community in strange places.

One night, we decided to see what it was like to ride a freight train. We crouched by the tracks as locomotives came by. We felt the earth shake, heard the deafening mechanical sounds and felt the blast of the glowing firebox passing

only a foot or so from us. We ran along next to the slow-moving train, hoping to grab hold somewhere and swing aloft into an empty box car. We quickly realized that if we leapt and missed, we might fall under the wheels, and we wisely postponed our plan indefinitely, but we never stopped searching for the answers of that odd life and the freedom that it symbolized.

I was taken by surprise when good old Dick phoned me to say, “This is the last word you will have from me.” We had given each other the unqualified friendship that holds much of the world together. Thinking of him as I tried to adjust to the loss of his steadfast support, it occurred to me that Dick had finally gotten a grip on his freight train and was just riding off to another great adventure.

With appreciation of Pomona's contributions, past and present...

—Chris Andrews '50
Sequim, Wash.

Andrus Remembered

I was saddened to learn that my senior thesis advisor, Professor William Dewitt Andrus, had passed away (PCM fall 2016). Under his able direction, my thesis topic was a study of a unicellular algae, *Dunaliella salina*. This prepared me for my Ph.D. dissertation on photosynthesis at the University of Bern, Switzerland, in 1966. Prof. Andrus was a brilliant experimentalist and had a sense of humor.

—Katherine J. Jones '61
Alpine, Calif.

Thank You

Last year a note in PCM suggested that we in the community that appreciate the quality and effort that this amazing publication delivers can say “thank you” by sending in a “voluntary subscription.” The latest example, featuring the Oxtoby years, is such a stunning keeper that I am finally moved to action. So, I wish to add my voice to the cheering throng—PCM is an enormous credit to Pomona. We are flattered and fortunate to be on the mailing list. Thank you!

—Joe Mygatt P'13
Stanford, Conn.

CORRECTION: Our apologies to Eric Myers '80, whose name was misspelled in a class note in the fall 2016 issue of PCM. —Editor

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.

[POMONIANA]

Cecil 3.0

There's a new Cecil in town. Since he's at least the third in a direct line of Sagehen costume evolution, let's call him Cecil 3.0.

The old mascot costume—Cecil 2.0—familiar to generations of Sagehens for its round head and dangling ribbon of tongue, has been chirping around campus since 1997 and, after a couple of decades of hard use and washings, was seriously starting to crack, tear and molt. (Not to mention the accumulated—ahem—aroma of years of sweaty occupants that wearers had to cope with when they put on the head.)

Senior Associate Dean of Campus Life Frank Bedoya, in whose closet Cecil 2.0 resided for many years, still has the head of what may have been the original Cecil—call him Cecil 1.0. We were unable to determine when or by whom that Cecil was designed and built, but Bedoya says by the 1990s it was falling apart. “Bill Almquist '98 was instrumental in coming up with the new design, which we had made,” he says.

Over the years, Bedoya not only housed Cecil 2.0—quite often he *was* Cecil. He also worked with generations of Pomona students who also donned the costume to bring Cecil to life for some campus event.

Which brings us to 2017. Since the company that created Cecil 2.0 was no longer in business, there was no question of refurbishing the old costume, so the Pomona-Pitzer Athletic Program and Pomona's Stewardship Office took the lead to create a new Cecil—or should I say Cecils? Due to growing demand, the order was placed not for one costume, but for two.

Cecil 3.0 and his twin (whom we might call Cecil 3.1)—designed and built by ProMo Costumes of Marion, Ohio, based on design concepts provided by the College—are taller, more athletic and a bit more modern-looking than their predecessor. They're also a bit better dressed—able to choose between a basketball jersey, a football jersey and a snazzy button-up with blue and orange flowers.

They also come with a ventilating fan inside the head and an ice-vest to keep the wearer cool under all that heavy velour and padding, even while dancing inside a hot gymnasium. And for now, at least, inside the head, there's that luxurious new-mascot smell.



Spaceships and Laundry

What do a 3D space game, an English-Morse code translation app and an app that monitors the machines in a dormitory laundry have in common? They were all among the award-winning entries created in a single night of furious work during the 10th Semi-annual 5C Hackathon, held at Pomona in November.

Billed as a collaborative night filled with “awesome swag, food and mentorship,” the fall 2016 Hackathon covered a span of 12 hours, from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. the following day, during which student competitors worked in groups to come up with novel ideas and put them into action.

Ziqi Xiong '17, a member of the seven-person team that created Laundry Master, which took second place in the advanced group, said the original idea for an app to let users know when laundry machines were available came from the group's only first-year student, Sophia Richards '20. “We found it very cool because it would involve both hardware and software,” says Xiong. Kent Shikama '18, another member of the team, said he enjoyed the process of “thinking of ways to overcome constraints and executing them.” He cited three memorable hours in the laundry room of Walker Hall, experimenting with an empty dryer and a seismic sensor.

Unlike Xiong and Shikama, two good friends and fellow computer science majors who had partnered in several previous Hackathons, Sonia Grunwald '18 and Peter Cowal '19, who took top honors for best design, had never worked together before. “Two days or so before the event I was standing around in the CS lab complaining that I really wanted to do Hackathon and make some simple game with the 3D models I design for fun,” Grunwald said. “Peter happened to be working in the room and heard me. He said that sounded like a fun idea.” The two-person team was formed, and the result was their winning 3D space game, titled “Tiny Forever.”

The Full Fulbright

Pomona College is the No. 2 producer of Fulbright recipients in the nation among all four-year undergraduate institutions, tying for the position with neighboring Pitzer College. For 2016–17, there were 15 Pomona students who garnered Fulbrights. In the previous award year, 14 Pomona students received the coveted awards, and the College was ranked sixth. This year, Smith College was No. 1 on the list. Among this year's Sagehen projects were a Silk Road journey to study the syncretism of Sino-Islamic identity in China; epidemiological research at the Pasteur Institute's Enteric Bacterial Pathogens Unit in Paris, France; and teaching positions in Indonesia, Vietnam and Colombia.



Pomona's Marine Laboratory, 1913–43

50 YEARS AGO

Marine Zoology Program Ends

Pomona's summer marine zoology program, which dated back, with a few interruptions, to the early part of the 1900s, ended in 1967. From 1913 until 1943, it took place in a College-owned marine biology laboratory in Laguna Beach. After the facility was sold, it continued as a six-week summer program at a rented facility, Caltech's Kerckhoff Marine Lab in Corona del Mar, until 1967.

75 YEARS AGO

Escaping Internment

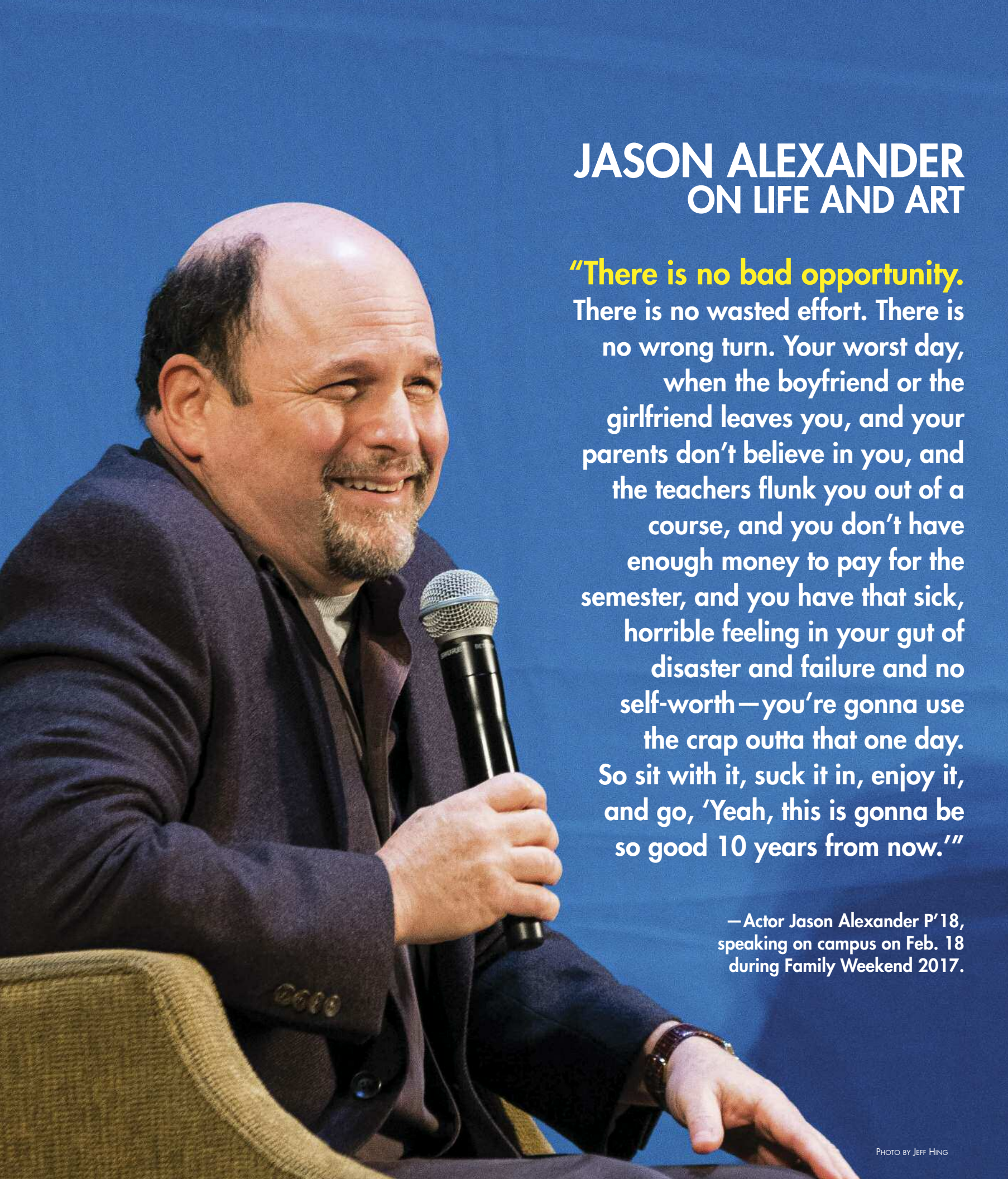
In April 1942, just days before all Japanese Americans in the Claremont area were due to be interned, President E. Wilson Lyon arranged with President Ernest Wilkins of Oberlin College in Ohio for Pomona junior Itsue “Sue” Hisanaga '43 to transfer there. The next day, President Lyon, Dean of Men William Nicholl and a crowd of Pomona students accompanied her and her brother, Kazuo “Casey” Hisanaga '42—who would be allowed to graduate in May despite his April departure—to the train station, where the College band played for them. “Everybody cried,” one student later told Dean of Women Jessie Gibson. After completing her work at Oberlin, Sue was awarded her degree from Pomona in absentia during Oberlin's commencement. (See “Farewell to Pomona” on page 35.)

100 YEARS AGO

The Cosmopolitan Club

The year 1917 saw the first appearance of the Cosmopolitan Club, a college organization created to help grow the number of students from beyond Southern California. Membership in the club was restricted to students who were from Northern California or out of state. Club members were given literature about the College to distribute to friends, in an effort to “broaden the local atmosphere and bring in students with new ideas and new and different viewpoints.”

For more tidbits of Pomona College history, go to pomona.edu/timeline.



JASON ALEXANDER ON LIFE AND ART

“There is no bad opportunity. There is no wasted effort. There is no wrong turn. Your worst day, when the boyfriend or the girlfriend leaves you, and your parents don’t believe in you, and the teachers flunk you out of a course, and you don’t have enough money to pay for the semester, and you have that sick, horrible feeling in your gut of disaster and failure and no self-worth—you’re gonna use the crap outta that one day. So sit with it, suck it in, enjoy it, and go, ‘Yeah, this is gonna be so good 10 years from now.’”

—Actor Jason Alexander P’18, speaking on campus on Feb. 18 during Family Weekend 2017.

PHOTO BY JEFF HING

[FROM THE ARCHIVES]

LOST HOLMES

Along the back wall of the Pomona College Archives stands an overlapping row of heavy bronze plaques. Some are from buildings or spaces that no longer exist; others have simply been replaced by newer plaques.

The plaque at right is one of the largest and heaviest and dates from around 1916, when it was installed in Holmes Hall, the first campus building constructed after the founding of the College in 1887. (The only older building is Sumner Hall, which was built as a hotel before Pomona College was established.)

Holmes Hall was constructed in 1892 as a three-story, kerosene-lit Queen Anne Victorian, but a total renovation in 1916 left it unrecognizable, converting it into a two-story, stuccoed Mission Revival structure to match its neighbors—Bridges Hall of Music and Rembrandt Hall. This plaque was apparently created to celebrate that “rebuilt” incarnation of Holmes.

Originally a mixed-use building housing everything from a chapel to a chemistry lab, Holmes was later associated mainly with theatre. Two years before its centennial, deemed unsafe and impractical to renovate, the building was demolished in 1990 to make room for the current Alexander Hall.

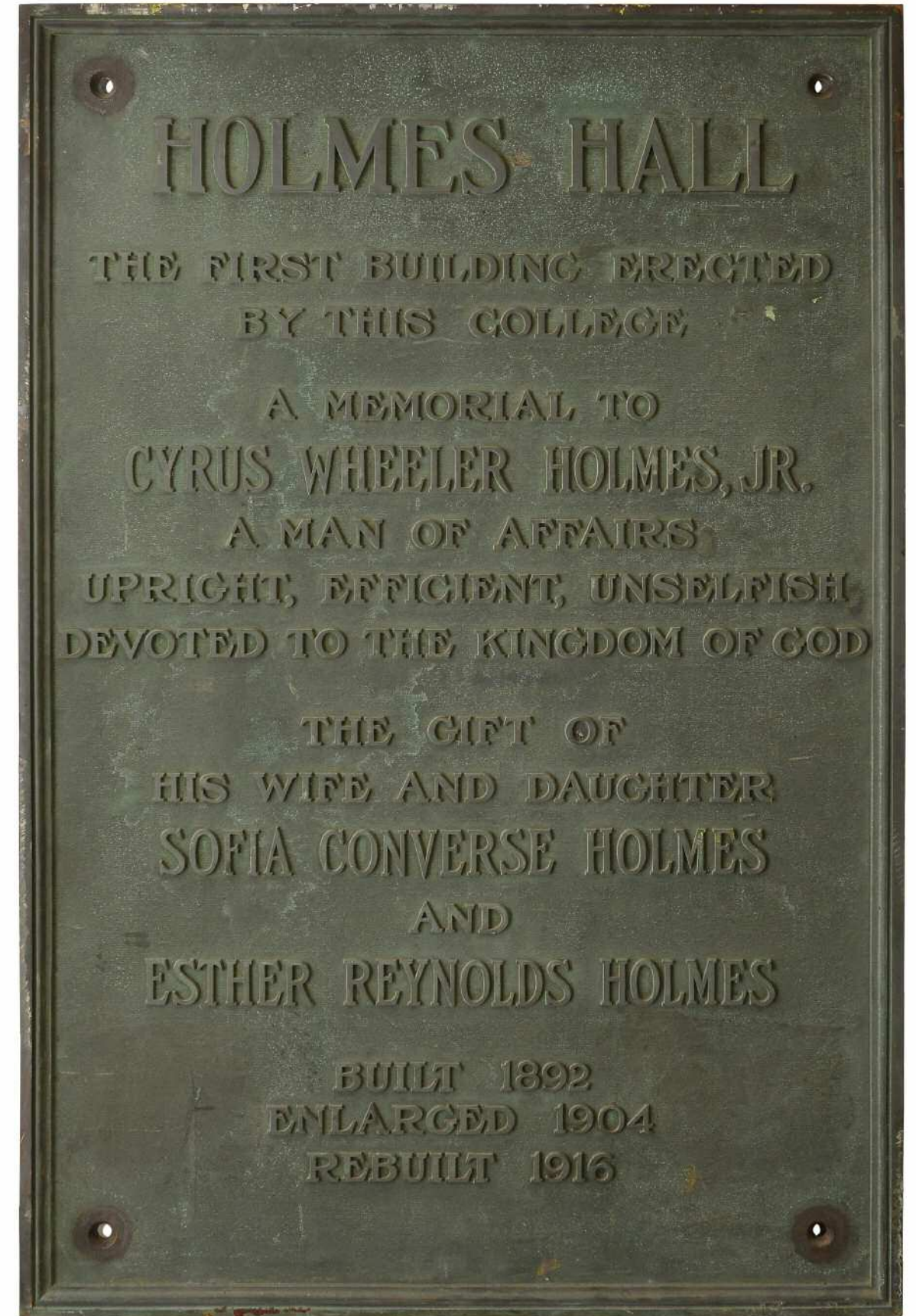
ITEM: Holmes Hall plaque

COLLECTION: Pomona College Artifact Collection

DESCRIPTION: Bronze plaque, 23.5” wide X 35.5” high

DATE: circa 1916

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.





STEWART SMITH '68 REFLECTS UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE BOARD AFTER NEARLY 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO HIS ALMA MATER.

BLEEDING POMONA BLUE

As he retires from the Board of Trustees this spring after a tenure of almost 30 years, including nine years as chair, Stewart Smith '68 has found himself doing a few calculations. Between his father, the late H. Russell Smith '36, and himself, he estimates that the Smiths have been active members of the College family—as students, engaged alumni and trustees—for roughly two-thirds of the College's 130-year existence, including more than half a century with at least one Smith on the Board of Trustees and a grand total of 27 years as chair. And that family history remains open-ended since he's also the father of two Pomona graduates—Graham '00 and MacKenzie '09.

"So it runs really deep in the family," he notes with a wry smile. "We bleed Pomona blue—there's no question—and for many, many, many, many decades."

It's a connection, however, that almost didn't happen. "My dad had applied to Pomona, and was admitted, but realized that he could not afford \$300 tuition, plus \$400 room and board, so he set out to drive to the University of Redlands to accept its offer, which included financial aid," Smith says. "On the way he stopped at Pomona. Trustee Clarence Stover happened to be in the Admissions Office at the time, and overheard Dad explaining that he needed to withdraw his application because he couldn't afford Pomona. On the spot, Mr. Stover offered Dad a job as a carpenter's assistant and, based on that generosity, Dad entered Pomona. A lot of things might have been different had

this chance encounter not occurred. For example, it was in Claremont several years later that Dad met R. Stanton Avery '32, and one consequence of that partnership is the Smith Campus Center."

It's perhaps ironic that Smith will be the first trustee to leave the board because of the mandatory term limits that he proposed and succeeded in passing some years ago—but he also believes it is fitting. When asked how he feels about leaving the board after so many years of service, he quotes Pomona's seventh president, David Alexander: "The essence of Pomona College is constant renewal."

It's a perspective, he believes, that comes with the long view of Pomona's history that he's been privileged to gain over the years. "We come here. We do the best we can for the College. We try to provide it with additional resources and improve it in whatever ways we can. And then the wheel turns, and we move on. And others now, other very competent trustees are in place. And it's a process that is far bigger than any one trustee, even with 30 years of service."

While he was growing up, Smith was aware of his dad's deep affection for his *alma mater*, but he says he never felt any pressure to attend Pomona himself. In 1964, however, after a visit to campus, he decided to apply for early admission. "I can't remember any thought process I had at the time," he says. "It just sort of happened."

But he has much clearer memories of what happened after he arrived. "I'm an example of someone who was an insecure high school student when I came here, and I was able to find outlets," he says. "I was class president and chair of the student court and some things that I wouldn't have thought were in my wheelhouse coming into college. And I graduated with considerably more self-confidence and self-assurance, as well as a very good education."

In particular, he remembers how Professor of Politics Hans Palmer, now emeritus, took him aside and pushed him to do his best. "He wasn't letting me off the hook—a B-plus wasn't good enough if I could do better—and that was one of the best things that could have happened to me," he recalls. "I ended up realizing that I had an obligation to myself—if I'm going to spend the money to come to Pomona, I should maximize what I get out of it."

It was after graduation, when he went on to Harvard Law School, that Smith would realize just how much he had gotten out of his Pomona education. "It boosted me on to a really great law school where I found the work to be less intensive than it was here at the College," he explains. "So I certainly did well there, and it's also served me throughout my life."

In fact, looking back, he attributes his extensive volunteer service in a number of wide-ranging fields to the breadth of his Pomona education. Pomona, he says, left him conversant and interested in a variety of areas beyond his economics major or his law degree. "I've served as chair of an art museum, a college, a university library, chair of the Huntington Library," he says. "I'm on the board of a dance company and a theatre company. I was president of a children's museum and of the Little League. I'm missing a couple, but the point is that they're varied. It's a perfect example of the liberal arts making everything more interesting throughout your life."

He doesn't recall who asked him to join Pomona's Board of Trustees in 1988, but he assumes it must have been President Alexander. What he does remember clearly is that he was "flabbergasted that they would ask me to do such a thing. I'd been involved in Torchbearers and so forth, but I didn't think of myself as a trustee.

But I instantly accepted. And I've certainly never regretted it."

During the ensuing three decades, he's seen lots of changes, not only at the College but on the board itself. "The board used to meet downtown," he recalls. "We met 10 times a year—eight of them not on campus. Now we always meet here on campus. Somehow, just that change seems symbolic—that this is really all about the College and how we're doing, rather than having trustees off in their own world."

Asked what he's proudest of from those years, he pauses to think. "The things that jump out at me are the truly transformational activities that the board was able to support," he says finally. "Policies on diversity and sustainability, for example. Or on accessibility to the College and the financial resources to ensure that, like the no-loan policy. Or the decision that faculty salaries should be competitive with the best in the country. Or decisions around the endowment—our role was just supportive, but the growth of the endowment has been impressive. I think it was \$230-something million when I joined the board, and today it's over two billion and obviously has helped bring the College to the very forefront."

Most recently, Smith helped add to that total as chair of the highly successful *Daring Minds Campaign*, which concluded at the end of 2015 with a total of more than \$316 million raised.

During those 30 years, he's worked with only three presidents—two of whom he helped to hire. "That was a particular privilege," he says, to have the opportunity to participate in those two searches. And we came up with two really great presidents, I believe, so it was all quite worthwhile."

On a more personal note, he remembers the pride and pleasure he took in presenting two of his children with their Pomona College diplomas, though he also recalls some nervous moments leading up to those events. "One of the roles of the board chair here, unlike many other institutions, is to personally sign every diploma," he says with a laugh. "And in the early days, we used a fountain pen, or kind of a quill pen. And when you're not used to using that kind of pen, it can be very difficult. You would get halfway through somebody's name, and it would run out of ink. Or you had too much ink, and it would get really bloody. And you've got 300 of these to sign. So when I got to sign my son's diploma, I was a nervous wreck. I'm sitting and I'm looking—'Graham Russell Smith'—and I somehow have to sign with this pen with just the right amount of ink and without my hand quivering and so forth. So when my daughter came through, I resolved that I would just sign them and I wouldn't look at the names so that when I signed hers, I wouldn't be aware that I was about to sign my daughter's diploma."

The story also prompts a confession from an earlier phase in his life. "When I graduated from Pomona," he says, "the board chair was—who? I've forgotten. But it wasn't my dad. But several years later, he became board chair, and so—I'm 'fessing up here—I informed the College that I had lost my diploma. I hadn't, actually, but I said I had and asked if I could have another one. They said, 'Of course—we have a procedure for that.' And so, I ended up with a diploma signed by my father, and it's hanging on the wall of my office. If you were to open the frame of the picture, you would find behind it my actual, original diploma, but the one that you can see is the one signed by H. Russell Smith."

—Mark Wood

WHETHER WORKING WITH STUDENTS OR ADVISING THE PRESIDENT, SEFA AINA IS FOCUSED ON MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

STAYING INSPIRED

Sefa Aina is unable to sit still. When he thinks, he taps his fingers on his leg; when he listens, he nods along intently; when he speaks, his face breaks open in a smile as his hands paint vivid pictures in the air around him. Being around him is invigorating, but he asserts just the opposite: for Aina, being here, at Pomona College and surrounded by “students who actively *want* to take leftover dining hall food and feed it to people, or go mentor low-income kids, or spend their summer working for the PAYS program” is how he stays inspired.

A prominent activist and educator in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, Aina came to Pomona from his alma mater, UCLA, where he obtained a bachelor’s degree in history and went on to serve as both a counselor and instructor at the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. He recalls his time at UCLA fondly, but remembers being taken aback as a new student by the beautiful buildings, nice statues, fancy food and proliferation of squirrels.

“It’s these sorts of things that make you feel a little awkward,” he explains. “You wonder whether or not you belong. [These universities are] beautiful, wonderful places, but some people aren’t going to feel comfortable or adjusted to the space. There’s privilege. There’s hummus! You don’t feel quite like you fit.”

It’s this feeling of not belonging that Aina sought to alleviate when he became Pomona’s director of the Asian American Resource Center (AARC), and that he continues to work against as the interim director of the Draper Center for Community Partnerships. Aina describes the space he sets out to create for students as one where they can step back from the pressures of school and society and just take a deep breath. “However, it’s important to me that we always become proactive,” he stresses.

Taking identity struggles and turning them into concrete action is at the core of Aina’s activism. During his time at UCLA, the AARC, and now the Draper Center, Aina has established and overseen countless outreach programs in the communities of both Los Angeles and the Inland Empire. In addition to his full-time work at the Draper Center, he also serves as the executive director of the research and advocacy nonprofit Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC), which breaks down the “AAPI” category and focuses on supporting Pacific Islanders specifically.

This may seem like a lot for one activist and educator to juggle, but it’s nothing for Aina. After all, he was selected from a pool of

25,000 candidates as one of 20 appointees to President Obama’s Advisory Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders, on which he served from 2010–2014. The experience, he says “was surreal. I’ve always considered myself someone who would stand outside the White House with a picket sign, and there I was eating the snacks,” he laughs.

At the same time as he was working with the AARC to support AAPI students and advance local social justice activism, Aina was also advising President Barack Obama on the ways his policies were impacting AAPI communities and how his administration could do better. “You have to be able to sustain yourself,” he admits—something he often reminds the budding student activists on Pomona’s campus.

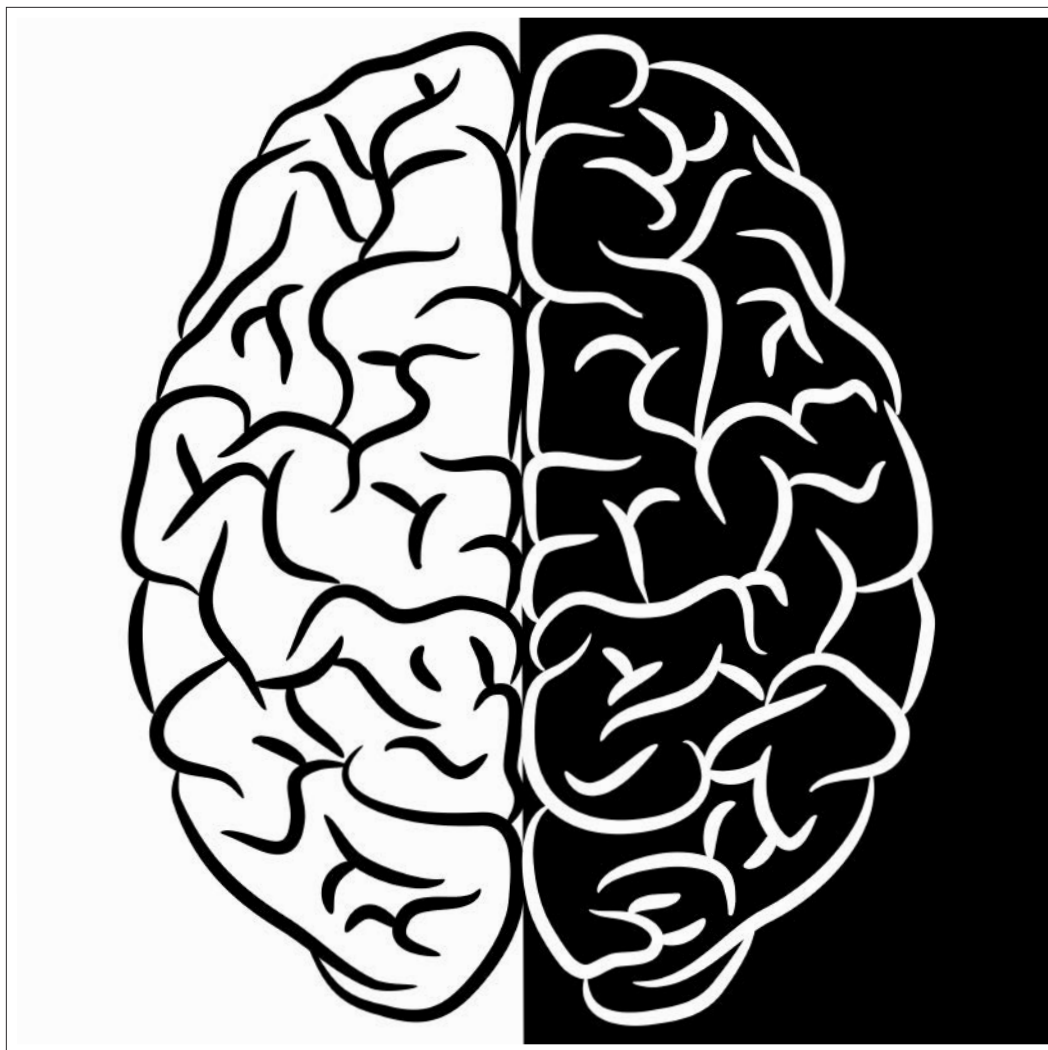
Now that Donald Trump is in the White House, Aina asserts that our collective responsibility is to stay vigilant and active. “We need to understand that the things we do here impact the lives of people around the world,” he says with a firm gesture to the room at large. “The amount of waste and carbon pollution we emit here means that people on islands like Tuvalu, my people, are losing their homeland. They’re environmental refugees. We need to understand the connectedness of things, so that when policies come out, and you say, ‘Oh, that’s not relevant to me,’ you understand that it *is*. It’s you. It’s your neighbor. We have to always feel empathy and connection to people.”

And for Aina, there’s no better place to start than at home, in the communities that surround Pomona’s campus. “I have always believed in the power and necessity of engagement, especially for college students. A lot of people applied to get into these desks and these seats,” he says.

Grinning, but eyes serious, he extends a pointing finger. “*You* got a seat. How are you going to make your seat matter for other people?”

—Feather Flores ’17





PSYCHOLOGY:
Assistant Professor Ajay Satpute

Thinking in Black and White

When people are asked to describe their emotions in black and white terms, it actually changes the way they feel, according to a new study published in the journal *Psychological SCIENCE* by lead author Ajay Satpute, assistant professor of psychology at Pomona College, and principal investigator Kevin Ochsner, professor of psychology at Columbia University. Given only two extreme answers to choose from with no gray area to ponder, participants' feelings in turn shifted to whichever extreme they were hovering closest to. The research has implications for everything from the legal system to daily social interactions.

To function in society, it is important for people to be able to perceive and understand emotional experiences—both internally (for example perceiving if you are feeling good or bad) and externally (perceiving if someone else is feeling calm or angry). This emotion perception helps inform our decisions and actions. And according to Satpute, that emotion perception is actually changed when we're

nudged to think categorically.

"If you think about your emotions in black and white terms, you're more prone to feeling emotions that are consistent with the category you select," says Satpute. "Extreme thinking about emotions leads to emotions that are more likely to be extreme."

In one experiment, participants were asked to judge photographs of facial expressions that were morphed from calm to fearful in two ways. In one set of trials, participants had to choose either 'calm' or 'fearful' to describe each facial expression. In the second set of trials, participants had a continuous range, with 'calm' and 'fearful' as anchors on a graded scale. Results indicated that categorical thinking (either calm or fearful) shifted the threshold for perceiving fear or calm. In essence, when a person has to think about something categorically it changes how they feel about it—pushing them over the edge, in a manner of speaking—if they didn't have strong feelings about it beforehand. These shifts correlated with neural activity in the amygdala and the insula, parts of the brain that are considered important for orienting attention to emotionally salient information and responding accordingly.

"While these findings were observed when judging another person's emotions, they were reproduced in a second study in which participants judged their own feelings in response to aversive graphic photographs," Satpute explains. "So black and white thinking not only affects how you perceive others' emotions, but

also how you perceive your own.

"You could think of it from an optimism perspective but with a twist," he adds. "Our results suggest that if you say that the glass is half empty, the water may actually lower, so to speak."

He explains further in his paper, "Our findings suggest that categorical judgments—especially when made about people, behaviors, or options that fall in the gray zone—may change our perception and mental representation of these targets to be consistent with the category selected."

Consider a juror who must decide whether a police officer on trial acted out of fear or anger when shooting a suspect. Such a judgment involves thinking about emotions in "black and white" terms rather than in shades of gray. Evidence presented in a trial will lead the juror to make a determination: Did the officer act out of anger or objectively reasonable fear? (Fear of imminent threat to their life or others' lives or serious bodily harm?) The categorical nature of the decision helps determine how justice is meted out.

Or think of faces. They move in gradations, says Satpute, but people typically talk about these expressions in categorical terms, calling them expressions of "fear" or "calm," for instance. Similarly, when people perceive their own emotions, their bodily signals may vary continuously, but they often talk about feeling "good" or "bad."

For a lighter example, consider the 2015 computer-animated movie *Inside Out*. In the film, each emotion is personified into a character: Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear and Disgust. There is little room for gray areas—hardly any mixing of emotions—the protagonist is either sad, angry, fearful or happy. The film effectively makes young viewers think about emotions categorically, and thus, may change how they experience emotions.

Satpute is a psychologist and neuroscientist studying the neural basis of emotion and social perception. His research is focused on revealing how people categorize subjective experiences, particularly evaluative categories like good and bad or hedonic categories like pleasant and unpleasant or emotions such as fear, anger or happiness. A long-term goal of his work is to use neuroscience to enable predictions for the kinds of categories people use to describe experience.



HISTORY AND CHICANA/O LATINA/O STUDIES:
Associate Professor Tomás Summers Sandoval

Vietnam Veteranos

Pomona College Associate Professor of History and Chicana/o Latina/o Studies Tomás Summers Sandoval is working to bring the stories of Latino veterans of the Vietnam War to the stage. The project is a continuation of his multi-year research, collecting and documenting oral histories of the veterans and their families. Summers Sandoval is one of eight humanities scholars from across the country awarded a 2017 Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship. The \$50,000 grant will fund "Vietnam Veteranos," his storytelling theatre project to premiere in spring 2018.

The Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship is a new humanities program for faculty members pursuing projects to engage directly with the public beyond the academy.

"Vietnam Veteranos: Latino Testimonies of the War" takes root from Summers Sandoval's previous research documenting the oral histories of local Latino veterans who served in the Vietnam War.

This new project centers on the oral histories of these veterans that have been curated by Summers Sandoval. The oral histories will be presented as a staged performance read by some of the veterans themselves as individual historical monologues, also known as "testimonios" in Spanish.

"I feel honored to receive the support of the Whiting Foundation. It's a humbling thing for me to be part of a cohort of such amazing and engaged scholars," he says.

Summers Sandoval has worked on the topic of Latinos and the Vietnam War since 2011 and is currently working on a book that delves into the social history of the "brown baby boom" and how the war in Vietnam serves as a prism into the experiences of Latino veterans in the 20th-century U.S. "This project is based on that work, an opportunity for me to connect people to this history in an accessible way as well as a deeply personal one," he says.

The project "Vietnam Veteranos" will also draw from the expertise and support of Rose Portillo '75, lecturer in theatre and dance at Pomona (see story on page 42). As a collaborator on the project, Portillo will draw from her experience translating oral histories into theatrical monologues. She will also direct the production and oversee a team of professional actors to serve as coaches for the veterans.

The performance will be staged at Pomona College's Seaver Theatre and an East Los Angeles-based venue in spring 2018. In addition, Summers Sandoval plans to produce a video and accompanying print and digital publication to be shared with a wider audience.

The topic of the Vietnam War is more than academic for Summers Sandoval, who also serves as chair of Pomona's History Department.

"My father is a Vietnam veteran," he says. "His brother, my uncle, are Vietnam veterans. Most of the males I knew growing up were also Vietnam veterans. This work is deeply personal for me. In many ways, it's a way for me to bring my skills as a historian to better understand not only why Latinos made up such a significant share of the combat troops in Southeast Asia but, as important, how the war framed a long-term impact on their lives and the lives of their communities.

"At a moment when political leaders portray Latinos in the United States as criminals, and as economic and cultural threats, I hope work like mine can serve a purpose," he adds. On one level, histories like these humanize Latinas and Latinos. It's both troubling and sad that this is even a need in the 21st century, but it is. The humanities help us understand people within the context of their own complex lives, filled with hopes and desires as well as struggles and contradictions.

"I hope my work presents this generation in this way, as human beings seeking lives of dignity. Perhaps more importantly, Latinas and Latinos represent the future military personnel of the United States. Because of that, I think it's vital for us all to recognize and better understand the enduring impacts of both military service and war."

In the past five years, Summers Sandoval has collected more than 50 oral histories of Latino veterans of the Vietnam War and their families. Two years ago, he received a \$10,000 grant from the Cal Humanities California Documentary Project for a youth-centered, community history project in partnership with The dA Center for the Arts in downtown Pomona, Calif. The project trained local youth and Pomona College students to conduct oral histories of local Latino veterans and their families.

A free exhibition of that earlier project, "Voices Veteranos: Mexican America and the Legacy of Vietnam 2017," was to run from March 11 through April 15 at The dA Center for the Arts in downtown Pomona.

—Carla M. Guerrero

FOR NOVELIST LUCY FERRISS '75, TAKING RISKS IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF WRITING.

MATTERS OF HONOR

Lucy Ferriss '75 is the author of 10 books, most recently *A Sister to Honor*, a novel about Afia Satar, the daughter of a landholding family in northern Pakistan who attends an American college. Over and against Pashtun tradition and family dictates, Afia loves an American boy. Photos of the two of them together surface online, and her brother, entrusted by the family to be her guardian, is commanded to scrub the stain she left. In the book, Ferriss explores two contrasting worlds and entangled questions of love, power, tradition, family, honor and betrayal.

Ferriss talked to *PCM's* Sneha Abraham about the conception of the book, cultural stereotypes and risk-taking in the writing life.

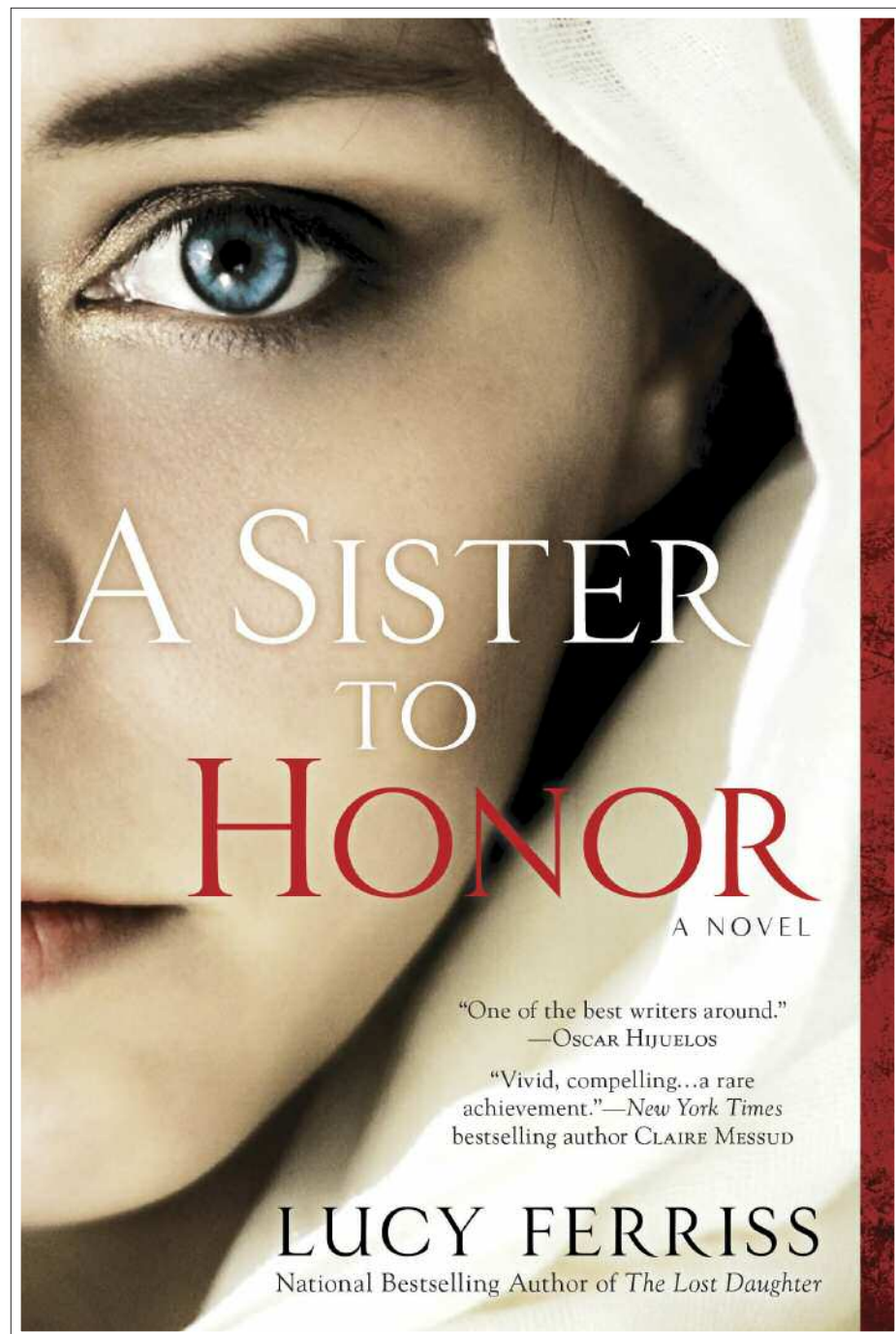
This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity and space.

PCM: How did you get the idea for *A Sister to Honor*?

FERRISS: Well, Trinity College, where I work, has the best squash team in the collegiate world. Nobody in the United States plays squash, so if you're going to have the best squash team in the world you have to recruit internationally. So you have people from Catholic cultures and Hindu cultures and Muslim cultures, and they all come to this little college in New England.

Virginia Woolf explores the notion of: "What if Shakespeare had a sister?" So I sort of applied that to my big interests in the squash team. I thought: "What if one of these guys, particularly from one of these countries with fairly rigid social mores, had a sister who came here?" I Googled: "Where do the best squash players in the world come from?" And they came from the Pashtun area of Pakistan. Which is also where the Taliban comes from.

So people always ask me, "How did you get interested in Pakistan?" I wasn't interested in Pakistan. I was interested in something much closer to home. But it occurred to me that that would be a really pretty interesting situation for a young woman to be coming into. And so I read everything that I could read about that culture. But I continued for a long



time just to be kind of looking at it from the American point of view. Looking at it in terms of: How would you come to understand somebody who is coming from this other place, and so forth? So the coach in the novel was originally my only point of view, and it wasn't going anywhere. I called my literary agent and I said, "You keep telling me that I should write it from the point of view of the young man and the young woman, but I can't do that unless I go Pakistan." And he said, "Well, you have to go to Pakistan then." So I went to Pakistan. And then the story kind of came to life.

PCM: Sounds like it was a series of what-if questions that led you.

FERRISS: Yeah, very much so. What if she came here? She's 19, 20 years old. What if she falls in love? What if she falls in love with a Jew? And then I also was trying to understand. As the mother of an athlete, I was interested in the question of honor. I spent a lot of time with coaches. And I noticed that they would talk always about being a good sport and behaving honorably and calling the line honestly and so forth. Only one thing that they wanted more than all that, and that was to win.

When I started looking into this in other cultures, honor basically lay between a woman's legs. And that was sort of a two-sided question, too. So then I had to think—we hear in this country about honor violence, but what is that really? What is it masking? What else would be going on behind the scenes? So those questions kind of drove me.

PCM: It's an interesting side-by-side when you look at honor and athletics and honor in Pashtun culture. Did you see any parallels or striking contrasts? They're two very different kinds of honor, I would imagine.

FERRISS: Very different kinds of honor. But in both cases I felt as though somebody would say, "There's nothing but good about being honorable." But then, when you hold honor up as this thing, as your kind of lone star and the thing you're aiming at, then all kinds of things go wrong. So that in the end, for the coach the honor is really winning. That's really what's behind a lot of that. And

you compromise a lot of things for that. And obviously, when you have this kind of tribal honor, human affection and human emotion and human fallibility fall by the wayside. So they both have this veneer of something that we want. We want to live with honor. We want people to see us as honorable people. Think about that speech by Mark Antony: "Brutus is an honorable man." But it's always got a kind of dark side.

PCM: Do you see places where honor plays a role in Western culture besides athletics?

FERRISS: I absolutely do. In fact, the way I came to understand honor violence was—I looked at a lot of the court cases, and I spoke with a wonderful woman named Hina Jilani in Lahore, who is on the Supreme Court in Pakistan and is also on the U.N. Council of Elders. She and her sister are the two people in Pakistan who are really reaching out to help young women who are at risk of honor violence. So she talked about how, by calling a crime a crime of honor, then you can almost always get the perpetrator of that crime either off the hook entirely or with a lighter sentence. And so, I tried to think, "Well, what is the similar thing in the United States?" And of course, we have what we call crimes of passion. If a crime of honor is basically killing your daughter or your sister, a crime of passion is murdering your partner or your spouse. And really, crimes of passion are usually there because someone's honor or sense of, usually, himself is threatened because someone has betrayed him—loved somebody else or whatever—and he can't hold his head up. He's been cuckolded. And so we call these things crimes of passion. And if somebody says it's a crime of passion, it's not so bad as a brutal murder. So yes, I think we do have other places. We don't like to think that we do, but absolutely we do. Not to mention that it wasn't that long ago, like 100 years ago, if a daughter in a family was pregnant out of wedlock, that was curtains for that family in terms of their honor in society.

PCM: You've received praise for talking about some tough situations in your book, but there have also been criticisms from others, saying it's promoting stereotypes. How do you walk that fine line between working on compelling topics and cultural questions?

FERRISS: It's a very good question. And believe me I held my breath. My husband first learned what I was writing about, and he said, "You can't write that. You just can't. There's too much anti-Muslim feeling in this country. You just can't go near that topic."

There's no publishing industry in Pakistan, but it's come out in India, which has very strong honor cultures of its own. And I was really nervous at the thought of a Western woman daring to write from the point of view of a South Asian. And I was really afraid that it would just get torn to pieces. And thus far, the reception of it in South Asia has been very positive, which is a big relief. And I also was very concerned about my Pakistani friends, because I forged a lot of bonds when I was over there, and I'm trying to write about individuals—I'm trying to write about characters—but they're going to be seen as representative. And I did not want my Pakistani friends and contacts to feel that I had exploited them or represented anything falsely, given how generous they had been with me.

I have no doubt that I got some things wrong. I've gotten interesting reactions from my Pakistani friends, but they did not accuse me of engaging in stereotypes. There was one guy in London who said what he couldn't find credible about the book was that people in the United States would be so ignorant of the kind of family values and points of honor that would be important to Pakistanis. He said, "That's just ridiculous. I'm here in London, and I know all about it." And I thought, "Yeah, well, but you're not in Western Massachusetts. You may know about it in London, but in Western Massachusetts they have much broader stereotypes already in place." So it is a fine line. You have to expect that you're going to get some things wrong, and all you can say is that you did your damndest to get it right.

PCM: In regards to issues over immigration in general and attitudes toward Muslims from the Middle East or Pakistan, we're in a particular cultural and historical moment in our country. What do you think is the significance of stories like *A Sister to Honor* at this time?

FERRISS: I can't say for sure, but what I would hope is that first of all people would come to understand the meaning of family. ▶

Because it seems to me that one of the troubles that we have is we think of family so differently in this country from the way it's thought of in many other parts of the world—the absolute importance of belonging to a family, of being reunited with your family, of being true to your family. We are a very individualistic culture. And I'm brought up in that culture. I tend to think in terms of the rights of the individual. But there are a lot of cultures that don't. They think in terms of how important it is that you belong to a family. And so, I feel like if I've gotten a little bit of that across, then I may have chipped away at some of the misunderstandings that we have about the people who come here. For instance, nobody could

been allowed to stay a minute longer. I was only there for three weeks.

I went to the Pashtun area, where the capital of that province is Peshawar, a city of two million people. And Peshawar was once the crossroads of the Silk Road. It was once this incredibly cosmopolitan city—everybody knew where it was and everybody went there. The level of culture was really high and so forth. Now, of course, it's just fallen on its knees in the dirt. So even for Pakistanis in other parts of the country, they say, “Peshawar? You're going to Peshawar? Why?” It's considered sort of the edge of the frontier. If you go on from there you end up in the frontier provinces, which is where the Pakistani government doesn't even have any control.

It's a large city, and there was a moment where this guy came running up to me and my host in the middle of the market square. I thought he was going to set up a suicide bomb because he came at it so intently. But he told me that I was the first Westerner he has seen in that city in five years. And so, in a city of two million people, you can imagine how bizarre it was for me to be there.

PCM: No wonder ISI was on your trail.

FERRISS: They learned pretty quickly that I was there. And we also did go driving out to see into the villages in the country and stayed in the villages. Because I didn't want the family I stayed with to be from Peshawar. I wanted them to be from somewhere a little more remote. And I would never have had the access that I had to all that if I had not had a host family.

PCM: How did you find your host family?

FERRISS: Well, I learned that Peshawar was a city of two million people. I thought a city that big has to have a university. So I Googled Peshawar University and I found the University of Peshawar. And since I have an academic address, I found—it was not a

very good website, but I found a department of language and literature. And I wrote to them and said just that I was an American academic coming to do research in their area. Was there anybody that they could put me in touch with to help me? Shazia was teaching at the university. There are women who teach at the university, though many fewer than there used to be, and with not very good working conditions for them. But she was teaching there, and she happened to come into the office as the secretary was looking at this email, trying to figure out where she should send it. And Shazia looked at it and said, “Tell you what—why don't you send that to me?” The next thing I knew she was telling me that I had to stay with her, that she wanted to learn about my book, that her family would take me all around, etc.

PCM: You open the book with the proverb, “Woman is the lamp of the family.” What does that mean to you?

FERRISS: Well, it ties in with another thing which I did not put in there, which—because it's not as poetic—is that a woman carries the honor of her family. That's what the lamp is, I think. It is the light of the family, the honor of the man; she carries that honor. Ironically, a woman cannot have honor. There's no such thing as an honorable woman. What a woman has is shame. So you are the lamp of the family, but you don't light it. You have in that sense the responsibility without too many of the privileges. That's why I wouldn't choose it. Because from a very early age you learn that it is on you. But there is nothing that you can do to have a position of honor. You just have to make sure that the family's honor is carried by you. So that's what it means to me. It's a kind of utility.

PCM: Looking at your bibliography, your books run such a gamut of topics. You said with *A Sister to Honor* the genesis was a series of what-if questions. Is that your process for books in general? Or what's a day in the life of your brain? How do you connect?

FERRISS: I would say what connects all my books is they're all a little edgy. When I teach, I tell my students that writing that

takes no risk is probably not worth writing. And you can take various kinds. Different writers take different kinds of risks. I tend to take risks with my subject matter.

So a day in the life of me is sort of like: How far can I push this envelope? For instance, in *A Sister to Honor*, one of the issues—and this is the kind of question that comes up for me in the writing process a lot in terms of how far do I push the envelope—was whether or not I was going to include any sex scenes. Because on the one hand, you had a young healthy woman, college age in the United States, with a boyfriend. And on the other hand, I had the sensibilities of Pakistanis to think about. I go ahead and push that envelope. It's the one thing that upset my Pakistani friends—why I had to include that scene. But for me, it would not have been realistic without it.

So that's the kind of question that I tend to have at the forefront as I'm writing—that there are all of these quiet signals that we give ourselves all the time, and so we don't go there. That's too tricky to write about; you don't know if you could pull it off; somebody will be offended—that kind of thing. If you do go back, I think all my books have that tension in them.

PCM: Do you have any trepidation or a moment of fear before something goes public because you're taking such risks? Or do you feel like that's just ingrained in who you are by now?

FERRISS: No, I always have trepidation. I actually don't believe any writers who say that they don't.

The book before this was based on the news in the 1990s about young people of a good family who had been found to be leaving corpses of babies in dumpsters. I don't know why that was making the news, but it was. Anyway, so I opened the book with an account of a teenage boy and girl basically still-birthing a child. It's quite graphic. And I thought that, on the one hand, everybody is going to hate this, and on the other hand, this is where the story starts. And I guess if people get past it, then they're the kind of readers who want to read the rest of the book. And if they don't, I guess they just don't like me. So I always feel some trepidation. **PCM**

PROFESSOR GARY SMITH EXPLAINS THE ROLE OF CHANCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

WHAT THE LUCK?

Why does your favorite team have an outstanding season and then struggle to replicate its previous success? You'll look for all sorts of reasons, but it's likely just a matter of chance.

According to Professor of Economics Gary Smith, we are hardwired to make sense of the world and underestimate the role of luck in our daily lives. In his new book, *What the Luck? The Surprising Role of Chance in Our Everyday Lives*, Smith argues that understanding the role of luck through the statistical concept of regression to the mean is the key to realizing that exceptional success is often transitory.

“Whenever there is uncertainty, there is regression. It happens in parenting, education, sports, medicine, business, investing and more. Don't be misled by chance and surprised by regression,” says Smith.

Smith's vision for the book began with an academic paper more than 20 years ago. He noticed that sports commentators tend to believe that outstanding performances will continue season after season. When they don't, the commentators attribute the fall-off to laziness, a lack of focus or a sophomore slump. Along with Teddy Schall '99, Smith showed that baseball performances regress, in that the top players in any season tend to do not as well the season before or the season after.

What the Luck? lies on two main pillars that explain why even the most skilled and talented will regress toward a norm or midpoint. For example, a student with the ability to average 80 percent on her tests, could score 90 percent on a “lucky” day or a 70 percent on an off day.

Second, of those students who do score 90, most were lucky and therefore won't do as well on another test of the same material. They will regress. It is a mistake to conclude

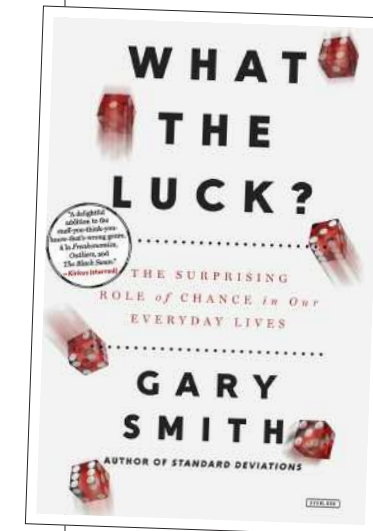
that the student with the highest score is the best student in the class, and it is a mistake to conclude that she didn't study as hard when she gets a somewhat lower score on a second test.

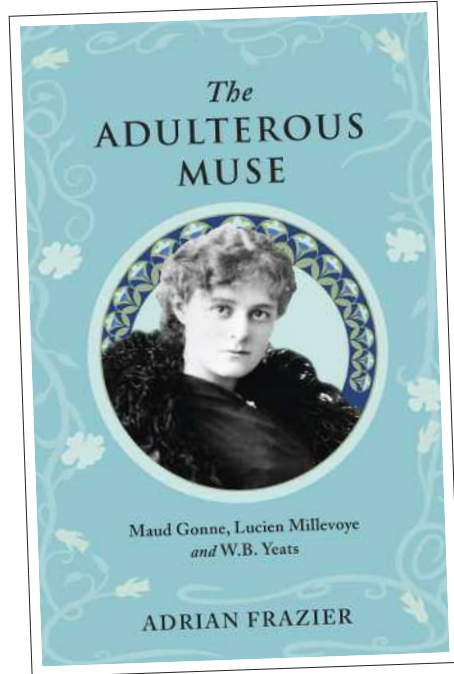
According to Smith, the same principles can be applied to professional sports, medicine and investments. When a team wins a championship, we conclude that it is the best team and expect it to keep winning championships. When it does not repeat, we assume that it's the team's fault—when it may have been lucky to win in the first place. A doctor who sees a worrisome medical test result assumes the patient is sick and prescribes a treatment. When the patient improves, the doctor assumes that the treatment worked—when the patients may not have been ill in the first place. When a stock goes into the Dow Jones Industrial Average because it has been doing well, investors assume that it will keep doing well. When it doesn't, investors attribute it to the Curse of the Dow, when the stock may have been lucky before it entered the Dow.

“If instead, we recognize that chance may play a role, we are less likely to overreact,” Smith says, “The champion is not necessarily the best team; the patient's reading does not necessarily imply disease; and the companies entering the Dow are not necessarily the best investments.”

A prolific writer, Smith is the author of eight textbooks, three trade books, and 80 academic papers. His research interests are financial markets, especially the stock market, and the application of statistical analysis to finance and sports.

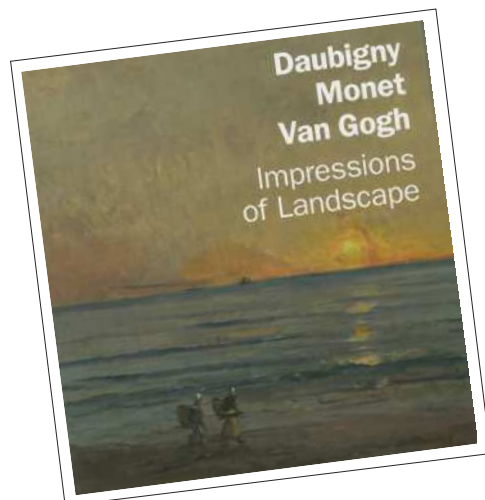
—Patricia Zurita





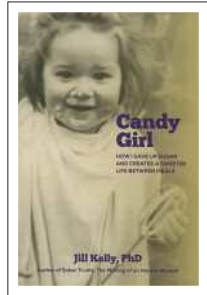
The Adulterous Muse
Maud Gonne, Lucien Millevoye
and W.B. Yeats

Noted biographer **Adrian Frazier** '71 explores the life of one of Ireland's most romanticized figures, Maud Gonne, the charismatic but unfaithful inspiration for W.B. Yeats's love poetry, who was also a leading figure in the Irish republican movement.



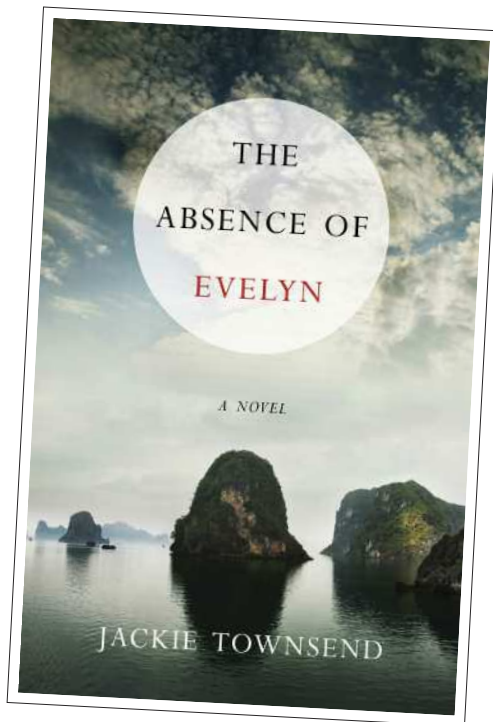
Daubigny, Monet, Van Gogh
Impressions of Landscape

Lynne Ambrosini '75, chief curator at the Taft Museum of Art in Cincinnati, was a lead contributor to this beautifully printed book on the interrelationships between the works of these three major artists.



Candy Girl
How I Gave Up Sugar
and Created a Sweeter
Life Between Meals

In her part-memoir, part-how-to book, **Jill Kelly** '68 relates how she overcame her long-time addiction to food, and in particular, to sugar.

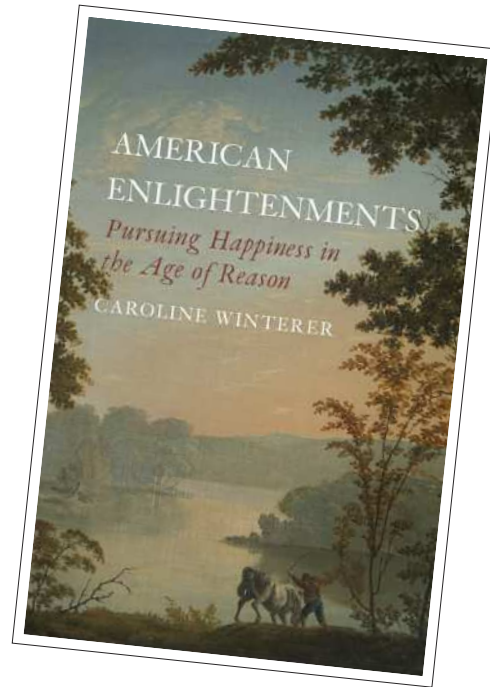
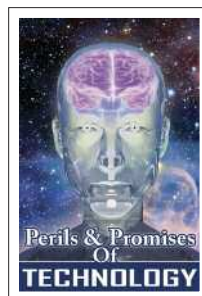


The Absence of Evelyn

Jackie Townsend '87, the award-winning author of *Imperfect Pairings*, returns with a haunting drama about love, loss and identity that ranges from a palazzo in Rome to northern Vietnam, as four people bound together by the various incarnations of love pursue the strands of an unraveling family secret.

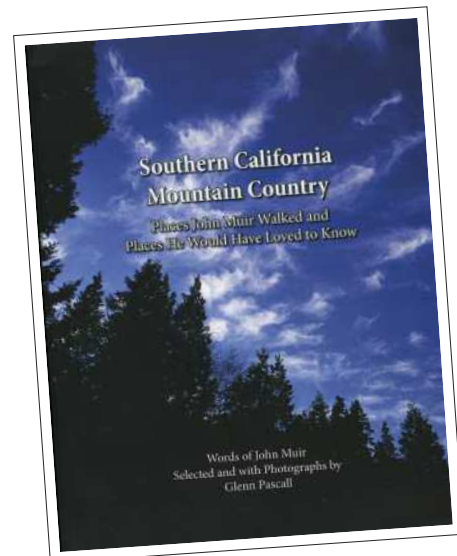
Perils and Promises of Technology

In this collection of essays, psychologist **David Ruben** '69 examines his own relationship to technology and considers some of the key questions about the future of computer-age humanity.



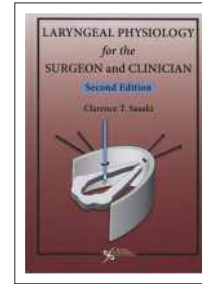
American Enlightenments

Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason
In her groundbreaking new book, **Caroline Winterer** '88, a professor of humanities at Stanford University, explores the national mythology surrounding the American Enlightenment, tracing the complex interconnections between America and Europe that gave it birth.



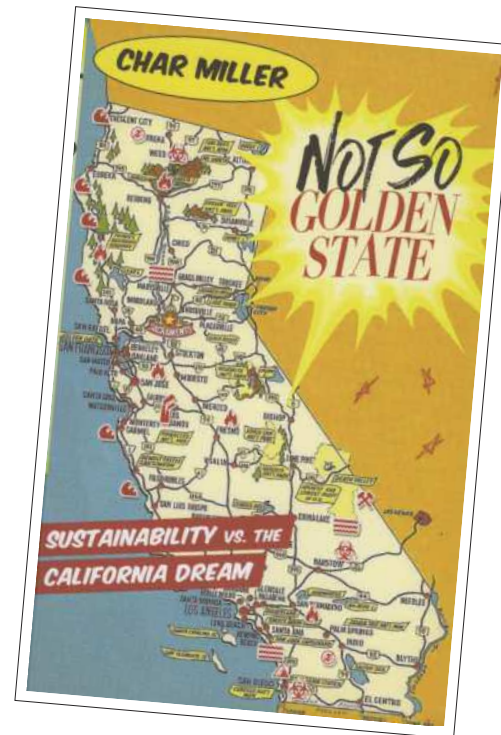
Southern California Mountain Country

Places John Muir Walked and Places He Would Have Loved to Know
Nature photographer **Glenn Pascall** '64 combines his photos of California mountain landscapes with quotes from noted California naturalist John Muir.



Laryngeal Physiology for the Surgeon and Clinician (Second Edition)

Surgeon **Clarence Sasaki** '62 updates his classic text on the functioning of the larynx and the management of diseases that strike that complex organ.



Not So Golden State
Sustainability vs. the California Dream

Pomona College professor and environmental historian **Char Miller** examines the effects of a wide range of human activities on the ecological history of California, tracing the origins of what could be a human-induced natural disaster in the so-called Golden State and beyond.



Interested in connecting with fellow Sagehen readers? Join the Pomona College Book Club at pomona.edu/bookclub.

AUTHOR/PROFESSOR JONATHAN LETHEM DISCUSSES HIS WRITING PROCESS.

HIGH-STAKES WRITING

Bestselling author Professor Jonathan Lethem's new novel, *A Gambler's Anatomy*, is the story of a James Bond-esque international backgammon hustler who believes he is psychic but is sideswiped by the discovery of a tumor in his face. He is then forced to grapple with existential questions, like: Are gamblers being played by life? What if you're telepathic, but it doesn't do you any good?

Which raises another question: Why did Lethem, a critically acclaimed novelist and essayist, choose to write about backgammon and gambling?

"I always lean forward when someone in a story or a movie goes to the casino or steps up to the pool table or goes to the online poker game. So, I began by thinking in the simplest way, 'I want to do that. I want to write a gambling story,'" says Lethem.

Given the high stakes, gambling serves as a rich metaphor for life, he says. "The backgammon board or any kind of gambling arena is a kind of microcosmic world, it intensifies your relationship to life. But it's also an escape; it's a bubble you go into; it's outside of life. While you're there, everything else disappears," he says.

And ultimately, life—the house—always wins, he says.

Lethem, whose nine previous books include *Motherless Brooklyn* and *The Fortress of Solitude*, is known for his genre mixing and experimentation. He says this book is a more deliberate engagement with genre, classifying *A Gambler's Anatomy* as a horror novel, though it doesn't have the traditional scares. Lethem says he wanted to write a book where the reader can't take his or her eyes off of the character's nightmarish descent, which is set in Berlin, Singapore and Berkeley.

Lethem's writing process starts with what he calls "blundering around" and moves to dogged intention. Once he finds a voice that he likes, he works every day. But he says he is not concerned with hours or pages, so as much as with touching the project consistently. When Lethem gets stopped at a cross-

roads, he says, he will just sit there "staring at the page and tolerating the anxiety." While so many other writers toss out lots of material and create alternate scenes that don't end up in their books, Lethem treads carefully. "I try not to put a foot wrong. People sometimes ask you afterwards for the outtakes, asking, 'Could we publish the deleted scenes?' And I say, 'I'm sorry, I don't really generate those.' If I'm turning in the wrong direction and it doesn't please me to write in that mode, I'd rather sit and wait," he says.

Born into a creative family, as a child Lethem thought about becoming a painter like his father, or a filmmaker or cartoonist. But his mother gave him a typewriter, "which was like 'Go,'" he says. By the age of 14, the voracious reader announced he wanted to be a writer. His enjoyment of the craft hasn't dimmed.

"When you begin to break down all the variations that are possible and all the implications of the decisions you're making at a preconscious level when you write sentences, even in that very basic mode, you can never stop being fascinated by it. I like trying to stay an apprentice to the task."

Lethem, the College's Roy E. Disney Professor of Creative Writing, says he finds conversations in the classroom stimulating. "Seeing people trying to enact what they're dreaming up, what they want to get on the page—trying to close that distance between what you visualize or what you hope your reader will experience and what actually lands on the page—is a very rich and very mysterious area of instability," Lethem says.

—Sneha Abraham

[PICTURE THIS]

WINTER SUNSET

Evening falls over
Carnegie and Hahn halls
and the City of Claremont
—PHOTO BY JEFF HING



SAAHIL DESAI '16 AND KEVIN TIDMARSH '16 SET OUT TO SHINE A LIGHT ON SOME IMPORTANT BUT LITTLE-KNOWN CHAPTERS IN POMONA COLLEGE'S PAST. THE REST, AS THEY SAY, IS HISTORY.

Winston Dickson 1904 (in bowler hat), Pomona's first Black graduate, chats with members of the Class of 1906 football team. See "Strangers in a Strange Land," page 30. (From the Boynton Collection of the Claremont Colleges Digital Library)

HIDDEN POMONA

STORY BY MARK WOOD

It begins with two alternating voices, each carefully modulated for audio recording:

“I’m Saahil Desai.”

“I’m Kevin Tidmarsh.”

“And this is ‘Hidden Pomona.’”

The podcast’s signature burst of electric piano music swells, then ramps in the background as Tidmarsh picks up the thread: “Hidden Pomona is a podcast about the forgotten, obscure and overlooked parts of Pomona College’s history. We’ll be releasing episodes every other Friday until the end of April. Stick with us as we uncover the hidden history of our school.”

The theme music fades, and the story begins...

Looking back, the two classmates and friends agree that the idea of a podcast first came to them in the fall of their senior year, in Professor Susan McWilliams’ class on W.E.B. Du Bois and his famous book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. McWilliams recalls that both Kevin Tidmarsh ’16 and Saahil Desai ’16 were excited about their final projects, which involved a journalistic approach that dovetailed with their career interests. For Tidmarsh, it was research into the history of the Black population of his hometown, South Bend, Ind. It was Desai’s project, however—digging deeply into the life of Pomona’s first Black student, Winston Dickson, Class of 1904—that would open their eyes to new possibilities.

As he uncovered lost details from Dickson’s time at Pomona and Harvard Law School and his subsequent career as an attorney in his segregated hometown of Houston, Texas, Desai was struck by the relevance of this little-known story to Pomona students today. “As a student of color at Pomona, it’s hard to feel like you have a stake in its history,” he explains. “It’s much easier, I think, to connect to your school and feel like you belong there when you see other people who have done that in past decades and past generations. So I think doing that research project made me really more connected to the school, but it also made me realize that I wish these stories were more accessible at a broader level.”

As the students discussed these ideas with McWilliams, a plan began to take form that would lead them in a new and wholly unexpected direction. “Somehow, we got to talking about how Pomona is a place where—especially compared to other elite institutions—we have very little written-down history,” McWilliams remembers. “And so, those casual conversations, as they do sometimes at a place like Pomona, became a formal proposal for them to do an independent study—where they would take what they learned in four years of politics classes and their education more generally and do this podcast about hidden episodes in Pomona’s history, especially those that had something to do with what we in political science would call the political development of the institution.”

And so, in the last semester of both students’ four years at Pomona, *Hidden Pomona* was born. Its purpose was simple—to tell obscure but relevant stories from Pomona’s past in the friendly style of radio journalism. “It’s almost like you’re sitting someone down in a coffee shop or in a bar or whatever and telling them the story—it’s just that you can’t see the other person,” Tidmarsh says. “You don’t know who the other person is, but you still want to try to capture that same sort of intimacy with the listener. So that was one hundred percent what we were trying to do—just tell stories.”

Their first episode grew directly out of Desai’s research paper, focusing on Pomona’s early students of color. The next two—on the bombing of the Politics Department in ▶



EXCERPT FROM EPISODE 1:

Strangers in a Strange Land

Desai: “... For the next three months, we’ll be investigating the questions about our school that we’ve had since orientation. What were relations like between the College’s founders and the original inhabitants of the land? How exactly did this decidedly New England-style liberal arts college get founded in the middle of Southern California? And what are the stories of the early students of color at the school?”

“Let’s start with that last one. Right now we’re going to focus on the period between 1887, when Pomona was founded, and 1958, when the College accepted its first cohort of Black students. But for its first seven decades, the College was almost entirely white. That’s not to say that some students of color didn’t attend or even thrive at Pomona, however. ...

“Winston M.C. Dickson arrived in Claremont in 1900 at a time when there probably weren’t any other African Americans in the Inland Empire, and only about 2,000 in the entire city of L.A. He was born to two freed slaves in 1872 in a farming community close to Crockett, Texas, which means he actually would have been almost 30 when he arrived at Pomona. There basically wasn’t any public education for Blacks in the South at the time, so it makes sense that it took him some time to get to Pomona. I’m really curious as to how Winston Dickson could have ended up here in 1900, especially considering that Claremont is more than 1,000 miles away from Houston and that Pomona was pretty much unknown at that point and had fewer than 100 students. Probably the only explanation that makes sense is that the Congregationalist Church played some role in getting him to Claremont. Both Pomona and Tillotson College, a small Black college where Winston Dickson studied before coming here, were founded by the Congregationalist Church. During his four years at Pomona, Winston Dickson seems to have thrived. I looked through all the yearbooks from his time on campus and was absolutely floored by how many clubs and organizations he was a part of—*The Student Life*, the Choral Union, the Literary Society and the Prohibition League...”

Tidmarsh: “Wow, he was all over, as Pomona students are wont to do.”



Top: Pomona’s 1919 Debate Club, including Arthur Williams 1919 (front row, second from left). The College’s second Black graduate, Williams would go on to become a physician in White Plains, New York. Below: Williams’ daughter, Eileen Williams ’50, the first Black woman to graduate from Pomona College.

Desai: “So there’s a ton of photos of Winston Dickson from his time at Pomona, and he really seemed to be an integrated member of his class. In some pictures, he’s standing off to the side, and while he’s a member of an early frat on campus, he’s not pictured in most of their photos, for some reason.”

Tidmarsh: “It’s not hard to imagine why.”

Desai: “What’s really amazing to me is that Winston Dickson was the Class Day speaker for the Class of 1904, and an *L.A. Times* reporter who made the trek to Claremont for the event wrote that he had, quote, ‘the magnetic voice and manner of a trained orator.’ He was actually the first Black graduate of any college or university in Southern California. Then he got law degrees from Harvard and Boston University, and for the next half-century, he established himself as one of the most well respected Black attorneys in Houston, Texas. In 1915, there were just 19 Black attorneys in all of Houston, serving a Black population that had swelled to 30,000 people. Most of the cases he litigated were in the divorce or probate courts, which seemed kind of strange to me, but then I talked to a professor who studies the history of Black Houston, and he said that basically, this was all the work that Black lawyers could do at that point. It was such a difficult profession that many Black attorneys decided to leave it entirely. Over the course of his career, he



became the president of the city’s Colored Bar Association and then later helped found the Houston Lawyers Association, a mentoring organization for Black attorneys that still exists today. From a son of freed slaves to a Pomona-

and Harvard-educated lawyer in Houston, it’s hard not to think that Winston Dickson lived an absolutely remarkable life.”

Tidmarsh: “But to this day there’s nothing named after him on the campus—not yet, at least.”

Desai: “Right. Other schools have buildings and scholarships named after their first Black graduate, but I think it’s pretty surprising that Pomona doesn’t have anything, especially since he was the first Black grad of any college in Southern California. Anyway, after Winston Dickson graduated in 1904, it’s not like Black students suddenly became a frequent presence on campus. There wasn’t another Black student in Claremont for the next 11 years, when Arthur Williams enrolled at Pomona in 1915.

“Born in Houston in 1897 to an influential columnist for the *Houston Informer*, a powerful Black newspaper at the time, Arthur Williams grew up in Houston’s fourth ward, just a few miles southwest of where Winston Dickson lived in Houston. There weren’t that many African Americans in Houston in the early 1900s, so I have a hunch that it must have been Dickson who introduced Arthur Williams to Pomona and then played a role in his coming to the school. ...”

This entire episode is available for download at [soundcloud.com](https://www.soundcloud.com), [iTunes](https://www.apple.com/itunes) or [Google Play](https://www.google.com).



EXCERPT FROM EPISODE 2:

When Carnegie Was Bombed

Tidmarsh: "... The bomb was placed in Government Professor Lee [48] McDonald's mailbox, which led some to question whether the bomber was targeting him directly. Claire McDonald, Lee's wife and a Pomona alum from 1947, remembers how scary of a time it was for them."

Claire McDonald: "Lee called me and said there was bombing going on at his office, and I was to be careful and stay in the house. And the kids were to stay in the house. So we were immediately scared. And I called up my daughter, and she and her husband joined us, and we had a very bad night. Every car that went by, we wondered if they were going to throw a bomb at us."

Tidmarsh: "Professor McDonald was known on campus for being an opponent of the Vietnam War and an ally for the student protesters. However, Professor McDonald was told by law enforcement, and believes to this day, that it was completely random that the bomb was placed in his mailbox. He told us that the bomb wasn't addressed to him in particular."

Lee McDonald: "The mail, all the faculty mailboxes were adjacent to the staircase that goes from the lobby of Carnegie down to the first floor. And the mail is usually delivered in the morning. Our secretary for what was then the Government Department just happened to be coming up the stairs in the—guess it was around four o'clock. I'm not exactly sure of the hour. And she saw this shoebox, wrapped in brown paper, in my mailbox. It was a good question, why it was in my mailbox, but I think the ultimate conclusion of everybody was that if a person was running up the stairs, or in a hurry up the stairs, this was the box on the bottom level of all of the boxes and right in the middle. And that would have been the easiest place to quickly place the bomb."

Desai: "About 40 seconds before the bombing in Carnegie, an identical bomb exploded in a women's bathroom in the basement of Scripps College's Balch Auditorium. While no one was injured, the windows were blown out, and the building needed a lot of repairs."

Lee McDonald: "I also remember that it was Tom Brokaw, who was a pretty well-known NBC reporter for the rest of his life—[he] was a local reporter for the local NBC station in Los Angeles, and he came out and interviewed me. We stood in the Quad."

Desai: "It's worth noting that Pomona and Scripps weren't the only colleges that this happened to. In the late '60s and early '70s, college campuses across the nation were bombed. Just in California, San Francisco State University and Southwest College were bombed within a couple of weeks of the Claremont bombing. In 1970, a bomb at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, killed a physics professor and injured three others. The Department of Commerce and the Portland, Ore., City Hall were also bombed. While some remain unsolved, most of the bombings that were prosecuted were tied to statements against the war in Vietnam."

Tidmarsh: "At Pomona College and across the nation, protests erupted over the Vietnam War and racial justice. It was a tense and tumultuous time that disrupted the status quo in idyllic Claremont. ..."

This entire episode is available for download at [soundcloud.com](https://www.soundcloud.com), [iTunes](https://www.apple.com/itunes) or [Google Play](https://www.google.com).

Carnegie Hall in the late '60s and the relationship between Pomona College's founders and their Native American predecessors in the Claremont area—were topics that had long intrigued them both. The final two episodes—examining Pomona's secret society known as Mufti and relating the story of the Japanese-American students at Pomona during the World War II-era internment—were developed on the fly.

"It wasn't like we had a set-in-stone schedule from the beginning," Tidmarsh recalls. "And it was great to have Professor McWilliams be so flexible with what we were trying to do. She was basically just like, 'Hey, if you have a good idea, go out and do it.'" As a result, he says, they felt free to follow their own curiosity. "And we figured that, hey, if we're wondering about this, there's probably a good number of other people at Pomona who are wondering the same thing," he adds.

McWilliams describes her own role in the process as a mix of sounding board and cheerleader.

"I'll tell you what I told their parents at graduation," she says with a laugh, "which is that in some ways, it was the easiest independent study ever to supervise. They would come to my office, sketch out this elaborate plan for an episode. I would ask a couple of questions, but they knew what they were doing, so mostly, I said, 'Yep, sounds good to me.' And they'd come back two weeks later with an episode and plans for the next one. It really was probably the most *independent* independent study I've ever supervised, which is really a tribute to how competent and talented they were."

But if they made it look easy at the time, today they remember their struggles and failures as clearly as their triumphs. Though both had some journalistic experience, having written for the student newspaper, *The Student Life*, neither student had ever tackled anything so complex or demanding as a podcast. For each of the five episodes, there was in-depth research to be done, interviews to be conducted, scripts to be written and rewritten, music to be chosen, voice-overs to be perfected, final edits to be completed, deadlines to be met, and through it all, a range of new technical details to be mastered.

"There were definitely new skills we had to develop along the way," Desai says. "When I'm listening to them now, I realize how the episodes progressed in quality. There was definitely a big learning curve that we had to overcome."

"Yeah," Tidmarsh agrees. "Right around episode three is when I can start listening to them and not feel totally ashamed of the editing."

The high-water mark of their work that spring, they agree, was their fourth episode—focusing on Mufti, the decades-old secret society known for papering the campus late at night with small slips of glue-backed paper known as burgers, bearing succinct little messages full of double entendres, sly jokes and cryptic allusions to the most current campus controversies, from grade inflation to the difficulty of getting ice in the dining room.

"The research there was the most ambitious," Desai says. "We definitely went into it having no idea whether it would all materialize. That was really scary at first, but everything came together. We put a lot of time into that, and it all really kind of came together at the last minute." One of the things he learned from that episode, he says, was: Never stop hunting for new information. "I'm just glad that ▶



Hidden Pomona creators Kevin Tidmarsh '16 (left) and Saahil Desai '16



EXCERPT FROM EPISODE 3:

The Place Below Snowy Mountain

Desai: "... By the time that some of the early founders of Pomona College arrived in Claremont, much of the Tongva population had been decimated by a major smallpox outbreak in 1862, a generation before the College's founding. After the outbreak, the population of the Tongva in the area fell to around 4,000, a fraction of what it once was. When the founders of the College actually came to Claremont, there was barely a trace of the original people."

Tidmarsh: "The accounts of interactions between the Pomona students and Native Americans around this time are tantalizingly sparse. In an account of Pomona's history, Charles Sumner wrote that, in 1913, quote, 'a party of wild Indians, fittingly mounted, invaded the town soon after daybreak, racing through the streets, brandishing their weapons and giving the war whoop at every turn.' It would be great to have more context or information or anything about this event, but it's all that Sumner mentions. We're left to guess what happened that day."

Desai: "One of the most enduring legacies of the interaction between early Pomona people and the Native Americans of the area is the song 'Torchbearers.' Originally titled 'Ghost Dance,' the song was written in 1890, and it's been performed countless times in a million different versions since then."

Tidmarsh: "The story goes like this. Frank Brackett, an astronomy professor, went with David Barrows, a student at the time who was interested in the local tribes. They went away off campus to the San Jacinto Mountains, around where the town of Idyllwild is today. This land belonged to the Cahuilla people, who'd lived in that area for thousands of years. Brackett and Barrows ostensibly went up there to observe the native people, and the two wrote down what they could remember of the Cahuilla dance that they'd observed. At a college celebration soon after, they broke into the chant they'd half-remembered, but it was a huge hit. Someone wrote words, and another person a melody. The finished product was titled 'Ghost Dance,' and before anyone knew it, Barrows' and Brackett's trip up to the mountains was memorialized. And it was apparently quite the sensation among Pomona students at the time. Some archival photos show members of Pomona's Glee Club performing the song dressed in white robes, dancing around a mock-up of a ritual fire."

Desai: "Fun fact: Barrows went on to become the first person to receive a Ph.D. in anthropology

from the University of Chicago, and eventually he became the president of the University of California system. A lot of his work as an anthropologist had to do with Native Americans. His doctoral dissertation was titled 'The Ethnobotany of the Cahuilla Indians of Southern California,' and he conducted his research by returning to Southern California for the summer. So his relationship with the tribes of Southern California wasn't just some passing craze."

Tidmarsh: "That being said, though, he and Brackett got a number of facts wrong. For one, they interpreted the Cahuilla dance as warlike, and the lyrics reference 'Indian maids and warriors.' But they were just completely off base with this. It wasn't a war dance at all, like they assumed. An article in the Pomona magazine recounting their trip noted that the shaman who was leading the dance was advocating for racial harmony. It was a peaceful dance. In its original incarnation, the song also included bits of nonsense words that were supposed to approximate the Cahuilla language, but neither Brackett nor Barrows spoke the Cahuilla language at the time, so they did the best they could to transcribe the refrain they heard at the dance. 'He ne terra toma' is what they ended up with, but no one's been able to say for sure what these nonsense syllables were actually supposed to mean. ..."

This entire episode is available for download at [soundcloud.com](https://www.soundcloud.com), [iTunes](https://www.apple.com/itunes) or [Google Play](https://www.google.com).

we kept on researching through the entire process and didn't give up at any point."

In fact, they were about halfway through recording the episode when new information forced them to start all over. But as a result of their persistence, the finished product included the first-ever recorded interviews with members of the secret society itself, as well as a revealing discussion of the group's eccentric induction process with Conor O'Rourke '03, whose effort to join the group was ultimately interrupted by graduation.

After the episode aired, the secret group even acknowledged *Hidden Pomona* in one of its signature burgers, with the comment: "Mufti Saalutes Hidden Tidbits: Catch Us If You Conor!"



EXCERPT FROM EPISODE 4:

Catch Us If You Can

Tidmarsh: "... Joshua Tremblay, the editor of *TSL* in fall 2003 actually did a ride-along with two Mufti members for a night, and they told him that most of the 20-odd members at the time had either been approached by an active member or caught them in the act. But good luck trying to catch them. A *TSL* columnist in 1981 wrote that, quote, 'Mufti is to Pomona College what Bigfoot is to Northern California. Nobody's really sure who or what it is, but the telltale evidence for its existence is everywhere.' Conor O'Rourke, who graduated in 2003 ... is one of the few people who can give some insight into how Mufti recruits students. He went through the majority of the induction process, but he couldn't attend the final challenge."

O'Rourke: "My senior year, things had relatively calmed down, I guess, with Mufti, and they seemed to be somewhat inactive. But that spring semester of senior year ... we had been looking closely, I guess, for whatever reason, and came across an unusual message in the *Digester* that on first glance seemed a little incoherent. It was complete sentences and actual words but didn't mean anything either. If you were really reading into it, you might have been able to interpret that it was somehow in reference to a return of some kind. There was something that was trying to make a return to campus. So it was cryptic enough that our 'spidey senses' told us it might be Mufti-related. And the idea of a return certainly fit

with where Mufti was at the time, which was that they were relatively dormant that particular year. So we tangled with this message for a while.

"Eventually, you know—one of us was a computer science major and started kind of taking a more technical approach to deciphering this and used some type of number-to-letter language—I've forgot what it was called. But what happened was that we found that these numbers corresponded to, essentially, a Dewey Decimal code, and the book that came up with those numbers was called *The History of Secret Societies*, or something thereabouts. And that was a light bulb going on. Wow! This has gotta be—this has gotta be it. And so we went to the library—we went to Honnold-Mudd—and we looked up that book. It was there, somewhere deep in the stacks—didn't seem like it had



been checked out for a very long time. It was an old book, from maybe the 1920s or 1930s. So we checked out the book, and we played with it a little bit. ... One of us actually read the entire thing. Again, we were looking for answers. It was kind of hard. And one of us had the idea of kind of cracking open the book—literally cracking open the book. Took a pen knife and made a very small incision on the back cover, and lo and behold, hidden beneath that was a small note that basically said, 'Congratulations. You've come this far. If you want to go further, you know, contact us.' And there was an email address, some AOL address or something like that.

"That was great," Tidmarsh recalls. "I never would've thought as a first-year I would've been name-checked by Mufti before I graduated."

That burger may have been the oddest bit of feedback they received, but it was far from the first or last. "Initially, I wasn't sure how many people on campus, how many students would be interested in it," Desai recalls. "So it was satisfying that there were a lot of students that came up to us and told us that they really enjoyed listening to it, which was a nice thing to hear."

They also heard from a number of alumni as the podcasts were passed from friend to friend on social media. "Our audience just kept getting bigger and bigger with each episode," Tidmarsh says. "I think the biggest one was probably the Mufti episode."

"And it took a day or two to hear back from them, but eventually we did. And their message back was written in a cryptic way, but it was another challenge—once we interpreted what the message meant, it was another challenge to us. The challenge was: they essentially wanted us to bring back the Mufti T-shirt to the Coop Store. You know, it was a very large challenge. So we thought long and hard as to how we were going to do that. I don't know how it came about, but eventually we decided to take the scarecrow from the farm up at Pitzer, and we put a suit on this scarecrow, which fit, actually, quite well, and took him down to the Campus Center and propped him up against the door to the Coop Store, and then pinned to him a document that we called 'Peter Stanley's Last Will and Testament.' And Peter Stanley was, of course,

David Oxtoby's predecessor, and this was his final year as president of Pomona College. So this last will and testament was written as a will in which he was requesting the Coop Store to bring back the Mufti T-shirt. I happened to be writing for *TSL* at the time and in charge of something called the Security Briefs—I don't think this is a section they have any more, but it's essentially a police blotter from CampSec [Campus Security], and I worked that into the police blotter for the week. ... [Mufti] contacted us and said,

'Congratulations—you've gotten this far. And if you want to keep going, you know, you need to meet us out on the Quad at midnight' or something, of this particular night that was down the road. Now unfortunately for me, when we got this response from Mufti inviting us to learn more and meet them on the Quad with a blindfold on—they wanted us to blindfold ourselves—I was already down in San Diego for Senior Week, and I actually got the call about the email from one of my friends, who was a junior and obviously not in San Diego for Senior Week. It was at that time that I thought, 'Darn!' This was happening too late for me. ..."

This entire episode is available for download at soundcloud.com, [iTunes](https://itunes.com) or [Google Play](https://google.com).

Looking back at what they learned during that frenetic final semester, the things that stand out in their minds aren't the technical details they mastered, but less tangible lessons in project management and persistence. "I think the biggest thing that we learned," Tidmarsh says, "was probably how to take a super ambitious project like *Hidden Pomona* and make it manageable—break it down into steps and processes that in the end lead to a finished product."

The project also gave their fledgling careers an unexpected boost. After graduation, Desai was accepted for a highly competitive internship with the NPR news program *Morning Edition*, after which he moved on to his current job as an editor with the *Washington Monthly*, a political magazine in the nation's capital. After taking some time off due to an illness in his family, Tidmarsh applied for and won the same NPR internship that Desai had just vacated.

"I think it's definitely paid off way more than I thought it would, honestly," Desai says. "I didn't do this project for a semester with the idea that, 'Oh, I'm going to do it just so I can get a job or it can lead to some career opportunities,' but it's been so helpful for that, I think, for both of us."

Without *Hidden Pomona*, both students say, that sought-after internship would probably have gone to other applicants with more impressive résumés. "I had been editor of *TSL* but that only gets you so far," Tidmarsh says. "And being able to say that you have experience putting together an ambitious audio project—that's big. That definitely was something that I think they were looking for."

For her part, McWilliams considers the project a perfect conclusion to a Pomona education. "I thought it was one of those projects that are a testament to liberal arts education—where the two of them, at the end of college, put a lot of things together that they'd learned and came up with this interesting and innovative project that made a serious contribution to their community. And so, I was very proud of them."

Today, a year after the last of the five episodes was released, all five remain available to listeners online on the podcast-hosting site SoundCloud, as well as on iTunes and Google Play. They've also become an official part of Pomona history, in both the Pomona College Archives and the special collections of the Library of The Claremont Colleges, which also plans to offer them for download.

That kind of availability was exactly what *Hidden Pomona's* creators had in mind.

"That was one hundred percent an intention of the project," Tidmarsh says, "so that people 20, 30 years from now can use this for their own research and sort of work off the threads of what we have already done."

It ends as it began, with vamping theme music and two calmly alternating voices.

"Thank you for listening."

"I'm Saahil Desai."

"And I'm Kevin Tidmarsh. And this is *Hidden Pomona*."

To listen to any of the five podcasts, search for *Hidden Pomona* at soundcloud.com, [iTunes](https://itunes.com) or [Google Play](https://google.com).



EXCERPT FROM EPISODE 5:

Farewell to Pomona

Desai: "... By now, we can accept as historical fact that the Japanese internment happened in the United States, and most people agree that it's one of the darkest periods in American history. But the root causes of why the government so explicitly targeted Japanese Americans can be hard to parse out, so we talked to Pomona History Professor Samuel Yamashita. He said that the causes of the internment can be traced back to four distinct historical contexts, starting with the advance of European and American imperialism in the 19th century."

Yamashita: "But in most of the colonial world, life was highly racialized, and a kind of caste system based on race was created. I'm a native of Hawaii, and I was born in 1946, when Hawaii was still a colony, and the public school system in Hawaii was segregated until 1947. And you may know that President Obama went to a certain private school in Honolulu—Punohou, what was known as Punohou College. Well, there were private schools for each of the major ethnic groups."

Tidmarsh: "The next context was the nation of Japan's aggression, starting in 1931 with the invasion of Manchuria. This led to international outcry and sentiments against Japanese people across the world."

Desai: "The third context was the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment in the U.S., with bans on immigration and property ownership for Japanese-born individuals. ..."

Yamashita: "Now the last and smallest context is what one might call the Japanese-American context, which found that young Japanese Americans who had college degrees could not get jobs along the West Coast or in Hawaii, and so a large number of them began to move to Japan. ..."

Tidmarsh: "While all of this was happening, Pomona College had started admitting students of Japanese descent from Hawaii. Professor Yamashita's mother was actually among the students who were encouraged to apply to Pomona, although she didn't end up attending."

Yamashita: "Pomona College began to get students from Hawaii in the 1920s, and they were mainly from McKinley High School, the same high school that my mother went to. And I think some of the educators at McKinley High School were from the West Coast, and they were progressive, and they knew about this place called Pomona College."

Desai: "Almost all of the Japanese American students at Pomona during the 1940s came from one of two places. Either they were from Hawaii, and they were recruited to come out to school here, or they were natives of the Inland Empire, from places like Riverside or Upland. But in spite of these policies of recruiting Japanese students, especially from Hawaii prep schools, there were very few students of Japanese descent at Pomona—probably less than a dozen at any given time."

Tidmarsh: "The Hisanaga siblings were among the few Japanese American students during the 1940s. There were three in all who ended up attending Pomona—brothers Kazuma and Kazuo, and their sister, Itsue. They each ended up graduating with a Pomona degree, a year apart from each other but under vastly different circumstances. ..."

This entire episode is available for download at soundcloud.com, [iTunes](https://itunes.com) or [Google Play](https://google.com).

SURVIVAL

IN THE ENDANGERED OCELOT'S STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL,
THE LITTLE CAT'S BEST FRIEND MAY BE HILARY SWARTS '94

OCELOT COUNTRY

STORY BY MARGARET SHAKESPEARE | PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL KELLY

when you get squeezed out of your rightful home. When your food supply dwindles. When you are small and cute and easy to run down. Even though you are standoffish and try to keep to yourself.

In 22 countries, from Uruguay to south Texas, the ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*), one of smallest and most secretive of all wild cat species, is facing this sad plight. Its habitat—thorn scrub, coastal marshes, tropical and pine-oak forests—has shrunk alarmingly, swaths destroyed by building and farming and other human activity. With diminished space in which to establish territories, find secure denning sites and forage for rodents, birds, snakes, lizards and other prey—plus the increased threat of becoming road kill as highway construction boomed in the 20th century—the ocelot has been in the fight of its life. ▶

Back in the 1960s and early '70s, ocelots were nearly loved to death. Laws then did not prohibit taking them for exotic pets or hunting them for their beautiful, dramatically marked fur. Babou, Salvador Dali's frequent sidekick, may have been the most famous of captive ocelots.

In the U.S., as the wild population of these little cats became depleted under development pressures, the fashion industry turned to import, reaching a peak of 140,000 pelts from Central and South American countries in 1970. Toward the end of the century, all these human endeavors had chipped away at the historic U.S. ocelot range—which once stretched from Louisiana to Arizona—cornering the few known remaining individuals in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where Texas meets the Mexican border and the Gulf of Mexico. Wildlife biologists, scientists, researchers, conservationists and other experts started running the numbers and saw that time was running out. Now, even after several decades of legal protection and some active conservation projects, only 55 or so known individual ocelots remain in the U.S.

There are few rays of sunshine in this grim picture, but one of the brightest landed at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge a little over three years ago in the form of wildlife biologist Hilary Swarts '94.

CHARMED BY THE PROMISE of year-round Southern California sunshine, Swarts arrived at Pomona in 1990 from the four seasons of Greenwich, Conn., expecting college to be “a safe way to have an adventure.” She had no idea what that adventure would be or where it might lead, but she knew one thing for sure: “I always liked animals like crazy,” she says. “But it was two professors at Pomona who gave me the idea that you could have this kind of career—that jobs [with animals] other than veterinarian or zookeeper were possible.”

It was in Anthropology Professor James McKenna's courses on biological anthropology and primate behavior that she first encountered the area of study that would become her path into the world. “Animal behavior!” she says, “I was hooked.”

Another mentor, Biology Professor Rachel Levin, introduced her to the kind of research that would become her life's work. Assisting Levin in her study of songbirds—including an eventual trip to Panama to study the communication behaviors of bay wrens in their natural habitat—fed Swarts' enthusiasm and left her convinced that she was on the right track. And at a time when men still dominated the sciences, Levin also gave her confidence that she could succeed. “She showed me how women scientists work,” Swarts recalls. “I got amazing support from her.”

In her senior year, Swarts threw herself straight into fieldwork, flying to Tanzania to spend her study-abroad semester in a wildlife conservation program there. However, midway through the semester, her plan to be immersed in chimpanzee communities took a bad turn: “I broke my ankle, had surgery in Nairobi [Kenya] and spent four weeks at Lake Manyara National Park designing exhibits for the Arusha Natural History Museum.” Instead of taking a planned hike up Mt. Kilimanjaro, she hobbled around on crutches for the rest of her stay.

no electricity. The wildlife was mind-blowing. You'd stand still for five minutes, and all around you would come alive. Life was work and reading books and planning what to have for dinner and socializing with the locals.” She built up her explorer skill set by wielding a machete to cut trails and map sections of unexplored rain forest.

But eventually, despite all the “cool stuff” she was doing, Swarts began to wonder if she was missing the bigger picture. As an undergraduate, she had felt certain about two things: “I would not go to graduate school, and I would never work for the government.” Now, however, those vows were beginning to feel limiting. “I missed education and being surrounded by people who are curious and informed. I was ready to get into more academics.”

Entering the ecology program at the University of California, Davis, she earned a Ph.D. in ecology with an emphasis on conservation. Then, shrugging off that “never working for the government” notion, she took a job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, working on regulatory projects involving endangered species. “Regulatory work is so important,” she emphasizes. But after a while,



Pages 36-37: Hilary Swarts '94 on the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge

Left: Swarts with one of several “Ocelot Crossing” signs on the refuge

Center: Radio-collars are attached with breakable string. This one was dropped by a male bobcat.

Right: Swarts listens to the signal from a radio-collar.

Despite these disappointments, she returned to Pomona and forged ahead. Since the College had no major in animal behavior, Swarts designed her own, combining the fields of her mentors to create a major in “biological anthropology.”

After graduation, she spent seven years project-hopping—from black howler monkeys in Belize to the famous mountain gorillas in Rwanda's Parc National des Volcans. “Each work experience was confirmation that I'm doing the right thing,” she says. “I'd see something shiny and think, ‘That's worth checking out.’ I've stumbled into some pretty amazing situations.”

If she had to pick a favorite, she says, it would be the time she spent in Suriname, monitoring a troop of capuchin and squirrel monkeys. “I lived in a hut with

the day-to-day responsibilities of what she terms “desk biology” began to wear. “It's soul-crushing work,” she explains. “You know exactly what each day, a month ahead, will be.”

So, when a job opening in the wilds of south Texas popped up in her email for a wildlife biologist charged with leading the hands-on effort to save the ocelot in the U.S., she leapt at the challenge.

THE LAGUNA ATASCOSA National Wildlife Refuge is a flat, sunbaked remnant of coastal prairie mixed with thorn bush, bordering on a vast hypersaline lagoon across from South Padre Island. Its dense thicket of low scrub is home to—at last count—15 of the remaining ocelots still living in the U.S., and for Swarts, it's where the fight to save them from extinction is being waged.

Meeting with her here can feel like a bracing seminar in All Things Ocelot. For starters, she'll whip her refuge pickup into her driveway (on Ocelot Road, of course) and say, pointing at the license plate ▷

on her 2000 Buick LeSabre, “Look!” The plate says “OCELOT” (of course), and the vanity fee collected by the State of Texas goes to Friends of Laguna Atascosa for outreach programs.

More important, it quickly becomes clear that she’s a walking compendium of information about the species she’s working to rescue. “We think that these Texas ocelots may have developed great fidelity to thick underbrush because of pursuit by hunters back in the 1960s,” she explains. More facts come tumbling out: Two-thirds of births are single, after a gestation of 79 to 82 days. Kittens stay with their mothers, to learn survival and hunting skills, for up to two years. “Although,” she adds, “I’m beginning to think it may be closer to a year and a half, if the teaching goes well and there is a reliable prey base. And the past two winters have been super wet, so there’s been prey out the wazoo.”

Working with ocelots, because they stay so well hidden, is different from her previous fieldwork, when she could watch the animals she was studying in their own environment (such as following

the following two days, GPS signals from her collar indicated that she was staying put, likely in a den. After a few weeks, GPS showed more activity—she was almost certainly leaving the den for water, repeat behavior that is usual for a lactating female. “On April 15, when we knew she was away and couldn’t detect us, we found the little kitten, tucked under some Spartina. A male, healthy, weighing less than a pound, with his eyes just opened.” Swarts, who took hair samples, DNA swabs and his baby picture (below), was ecstatic to document and report this first confirmed ocelot den at the refuge in 20 years.

“From my perspective they are doing their job—reproducing,” she says. “And ecologically we are in great shape.” However, she has grave concerns that the confirmed refuge population of 15, including kittens, may be approaching capacity. Home range for a female varies from one to nine square miles, depending on the availability of water and prey. For a male, figure four to 25 square miles.

That brings us to exhibit one for the three top threats to survival of the species—habitat loss. Hemmed in by agriculture, highways and

Mexico, had started and stopped several times, partly due to cartel violence. Still, she remains optimistic that, with research and negotiation, a female from Mexico will eventually be allowed to cross the border.

Progress is agonizingly slow—as Swarts stoically puts it, “Conservation is often two steps forward and one step back.” However, she has begun to see encouraging signs. The refuge has cranked up an aggressive habitat restoration project—planting ocelot corridors, extensions of the habitat that ocelots are known to use, with the low-growing, bushy native species they prefer. As a precaution against vehicular mortality, the refuge has closed some of its roads and plans to relocate its entrance. Most heartening, the Texas Department of Transportation is installing 12 new underpasses specifically designed for ocelots at known hot spots on two highways where there have been multiple incidents of road kill. “And now it seems likely they will put wildlife crossings into new road design from the start,” she adds. “This is a sea change—and for this state agency

to come around bodes so well for the state and its environmental future.”

The work is hard, sometimes tricky and frequently thankless. However, it also has its rewards. “I love the element of variety in my job,” she says. “The nuts and bolts. Speaking the legalese. Ocelot outreach. Hearing people’s questions. I get fired up; they get fired up.”

Best of all, there are the little discoveries, the aha moments that move her work forward. That den discovered in April? “It was a surprise to find it in an open area, not in super dense brush,” she explains. It’s new ocelot information, the kind that can drive new policy and practice. In this case, it may lead to a new prescribed burn protocol designed to leave a protective margin outside the brush.

For Swarts, as always, it’s about rethinking the ongoing help this little cat needs, using clues from her ongoing research, then doing whatever it takes. “I want to do everything I can to give these cats the best chance to survive.” [PGM](#)



gorillas around as they nosed about on their daily routines, which she describes as “total soap opera”). In fact, the only time Swarts and her small staff of interns actually see ocelots in the flesh is during trapping season, from October to May, when the little cats are lured by caged pigeons posing as an easy meal, then sedated long enough for blood and genetic samples to be taken. After a quick exam and insertion of a microchip, they are photographed, fitted with a GPS collar, given reversal drugs and released.

“With the ocelots, I’m essentially doing detective work,” she explains. Across the refuge, there are more than 50 cameras tucked into the thorn scrub, monitoring animal activity night and day. Using cameras and GPS collars may not be as immediately satisfying as shadowing gorillas, but it’s the only way she can keep tabs on the elusive little creatures she’s trying to save.

For instance, last year, on March 25, 2016, a heavily pregnant female was captured for routine data collection and then released. On

industry, the refuge itself can’t be greatly expanded. The other Texas ocelots, about 40 individuals, live on limited private lands in neighboring Willacy County, with no safe passage connecting the populations.

And that leads directly to the second threat—vehicular mortality, which stands at an astounding 40 percent. Swarts cites the ugly statistics that piled up between June 2015 and April 2016, when seven ocelots, including six males, were killed by vehicles on roads adjacent to fragile ocelot territory.

Which brings us to the third item on Swarts’ list of top threats to the ocelot’s long-term survival: in-breeding, which occurs when populations are so isolated that no new genes can get into the mix. Even before her arrival in Texas, efforts to freshen the gene pool by bringing in a female ocelot from Tamaulipas,

Left: Swarts visits a wildlife underpass under construction. Though currently flooded, it will be dry when complete.

Center: The first confirmed ocelot kitten at the refuge in 20 years. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photo)

Right: Swarts holds a sedated ocelot, who was then given a radio collar and released. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photo)

ROSE PORTILLO '75 RELIVES HER ZOOT SUIT DREAM 40 YEARS LATER.

ZOOT SUIT REBOOT

In 1978, a young actor fresh out of college got the role of her dreams. Rose Portillo '75 was cast as Della Barrios in the then-new Chicano play *Zoot Suit*, written by one of her heroes, the father of Chicano theatre and founder of El Teatro Campesino, Luis Valdez.

Nearly four decades after her first audition for *Zoot Suit*, Portillo, now a lecturer in Pomona's Theatre Department, found herself auditioning before Valdez one more time last year for the revival of this now-classic Chicano play, which ran from January to mid-March at the Mark Taper Forum.

"I auditioned in the same room I auditioned in 40 years ago with the same person I auditioned for 40 years ago and with the same person across the table from me from 40 years ago," says Portillo. "So, you know, when I walked in the room, we just looked at each other and I said, 'OK, I need to take a moment'—it's very surreal."

The play, written by Valdez, is based on the Sleepy Lagoon murder trial and the Zoot Suit Riots that occurred in early 1940s Los Angeles. The play tells the story of Henry Reyna and the 38th Street gang, who were tried and found guilty of murder, and their subsequent journey to freedom.

Zoot Suit premiered at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles in April 1978, and sold out in two days. The play debuted on Broadway the following year, and was turned into a feature film in 1981. Portillo, who played Della Barrios, Reyna's girlfriend, was in every production. In this current run of *Zoot Suit*, Portillo will play the role of Dolores, Reyna's mother.

Portillo was first introduced to Chicano theatre as a theatre major here in the early 1970s. "While I was at Pomona, I saw 'La Gran Carpa de los Rasquachis' that had a weekend performance at the Mark Taper Forum. It was a Teatro Campesino play and it resonated so deeply with me—it was one of those moments that you don't know what you're missing until you see it. So, I got on a committee to bring Luis Valdez—to bring El Teatro Campesino—to campus." Luckily for Portillo, the committee's efforts were successful and Valdez paid a visit to Pomona soon after.

Portillo, who is also the director of Theatre for Young Audiences, a program of Pomona College's Draper Center for Community Partnerships, started writing and performing plays while still in elementary school. She was cast in everything that was produced on campus—from Tennessee Williams to the Shakespeare canon. And

Portillo's parents, who lived in L.A.'s Silver Lake neighborhood, came to see all of her performances.

It was at Pomona that Portillo first came to identify as a Chicana—a term her parents balked at in an era when the word had negative connotations for older generations like her parents, who rarely talked in-depth about their heritage. "On Parents Day, the Chicano Studies Department had a program and they read the poem 'Yo Soy Joaquin' and other Chicano poetry. I turned to my father, and he was weeping, and it was never an issue after that."

Reclaiming her identity and finding her love for Chicano theatre helped Portillo as she built her career—giving her a voice when the roles for Latinas were nothing more than one-dimensional stereotypes.

When Portillo was cast for the role of Della in *Zoot Suit*, her agent let her know she wouldn't be able to take the role because she had already committed to another project, a film.

Portillo's response to her agent: "I told her, 'That movie is a movie, and this is a dream. You're not stepping on my dream. This is my dream. Make it happen.' And she did."

And her parents were right there beside her. Once the play moved to Broadway, her parents went to New York to accompany her, with her mother staying longer to soak in the city.

Fast forward to 2017, and Portillo's mother will be there on opening night of the revival of *Zoot Suit*, nearly four decades after it first premiered in the same theatre in Los Angeles. "She's 84. A lot of our parents are gone, but she's still around. I think she would've killed Luis [Valdez] if I didn't get the role."

For Portillo, the opportunity to be part of *Zoot Suit* in 2017 is just as special as it was in 1978. "It's very rare that you get to live a full circle within a play, but with such a piece of history—to be able to be part of that history again, there are just no words for it," she says.

"It was timely when it happened. To see Mexicans on stage in original theatre doing a play about a Mexican-American story was earth-shattering and groundbreaking. We sold out before we opened, and to come back in this particular moment of our national history makes it all the more important again."

"And personally, it's so historic for me, to be able to be this age and, at this point in my career, to be able to physically and viscerally revisit this—wearing different shoes and being older and wiser, it's just... It was a dream the first time; it's a dream the second time."

—Carla Guerrero '06

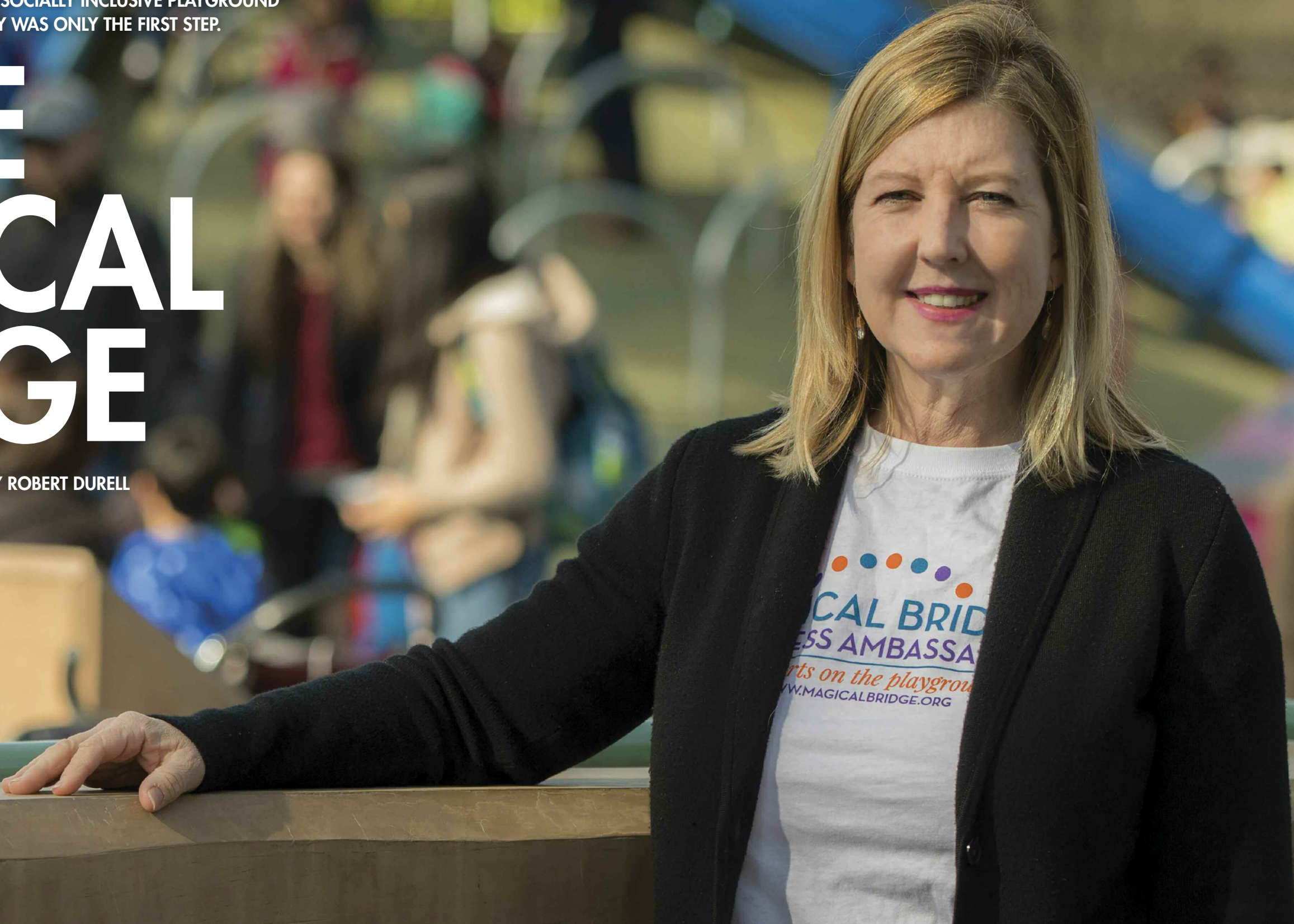


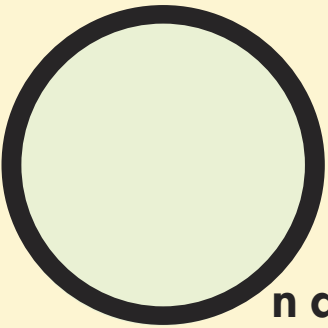
Rose Portillo '75 and co-star Daniel Valdez in a 1978 rehearsal of *Zoot Suit* (left) and reunited in 2016 for a rehearsal of the famous play's revival (below).

FOR OLENKA VILLARREAL '85, CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE, SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND FOR HER OWN CHILD AND HER OWN COMMUNITY WAS ONLY THE FIRST STEP.

THE MAGICAL BRIDGE

STORY BY VANESSA HUA | PHOTOS BY ROBERT DURELL





In a sunny winter morning, Olenka Villarreal '85 is appointing kindness ambassadors, handing out smiley-face stickers to children taking a break from spinning on a giant dish at the sprawling Magical Bridge in Palo Alto, the accessible, socially inclusive playground that she founded.

Boys and girls reach out their hands, exclaiming “I want blue!” “I want red!”

“Will you be extra kind on the playground today?” asks Villarreal. They nod, promising *yes, yes*. After weeks of rain and chill, the playground is packed with visitors of all ages: a beaming Asian grandmother swings on a disc, and a father shouts “3-2-1, blast-off!” and sends his son in a cardboard box down a slide.

When Villarreal’s 14-year-old daughter Ava arrives, she skips and claps. Though non-verbal, her joy and excitement are clear. Villarreal hugs her daughter, who stands taller than her, and strokes her soft, fine blonde hair.

Magical Bridge, which opened in 2015 at a cost of \$4 million, is the only local playground where Ava can run—elsewhere, she trips over the sand or is too big to get onto the equipment sized for younger children. She loves dashing across the bridges that connect the playhouse to the slide mound. “At any other park, she towers over everybody, but when you design for everybody, no one stands out,” Villarreal says.

Now, after hearing from people in Taipei, Greece, and from across the country, she has her sights set on creating Magical Bridges around the world through her new foundation. “I was ready to take a break, but then I received an avalanche of emails and calls. I can’t physically get to everyone who asks questions, so my goal is to create a model that is far less expensive and easily replicable.”

Villarreal’s project has now become her calling, one that began when her daughter was born in 2003. As a baby, Ava struggled to sit up and stand and did not start walking until she was three years old. Eventually, at the advice of doctors, Villarreal started taking her daughter to expensive indoor occupational therapy sessions at a center located 45 minutes away, where Ava could work on improving her balance and coordination. The center was so booked she could only schedule a session for her daughter once a week, and she wanted to go somewhere daily where they lived, in her hometown of Palo Alto.

At local playgrounds, she searched for swings, with their therapeutic vestibular >

Right: a wheelchair-accessible spinning dish at the Magical Bridge playground in Palo Alto, Calif..



(back and forth) movement, but Ava lacked the strength to sit up in bucket seats or hold onto the swing chains. Frustrated, she met with the city's director of parks and recreation, hoping he might be able to direct her to a playground that met the needs of Ava and children like her. She learned that the city's playgrounds were all ADA compliant, but that the guidelines center around access for individuals in wheelchairs and other mobility issues, with ramps and paved walkways; they aren't designed for children with impaired hearing and vision, developmental, sensory, cognitive or autism spectrum disorders.

One in five Americans has a disability, and one in 45 is on the autism spectrum, which has led to a growing push for playgrounds designed for people of all abilities.

As Villarreal soon discovered, parents have often led the charge, motivated by their child: Tatum's Garden in Gilroy, Matteo's Dream in Concord, and Shane's Inspiration in Los Angeles.

The city struck a deal with Villarreal. If she raised money for the playground's design and construction, the city would donate almost an acre of land in Mitchell Park. "I was grateful for the land. Around here, land is gold," she says. "Maybe I was naïve, but I thought, we're in Silicon Valley, how hard can it be to raise money? I didn't know how much it would cost, or what it would entail."

She launched her grassroots campaign, recruiting co-founders Jill Asher, to work on public and media relations, and Kris Loew, who designed the logo, flyers and other marketing materials. She also drew upon the support of her family: her husband, Robert, donated wines from his collection for her volunteer meetings—"You have to keep the board happy!" she says—and their older daughter, Emma, came up with the playground's name while sitting in the back seat of the car, scrawling down ideas in her notebook. Anytime someone crosses over the bridge leading into the playground, they would find themselves in a magical place where barriers to play no longer existed, thus bridging the gap between those living with and without disabilities.

Because Villarreal knew donors might hesitate to write checks to a brand-new group, she joined the board of the Friends of the Palo Alto Parks, a trusted local nonprofit that acted as a fiscal sponsor to collect the contributions. "When the board saw the magnitude of my project, they thought I was a cockeyed optimist," Villarreal says with a laugh. "But they were willing to stick it out, to see how far I could get."

After a career in sales and marketing in Silicon Valley, she was returning to an interest in civic engagement first kindled at Pomona, where she had studied public policy and economics. As she embarked on fundraising, she deepened her research into inclusive playgrounds

to incorporate into the design.

Physical access allows children to get around the playground and get into close proximity to play activities, while social access emphasizes how children can play together. "From a very young age, so much of play is a social experience," says Keith M. Christensen, a play and accessibility specialist who advised Villarreal. "When you are participating equally, you are able to use your abilities and your strengths without the need for assistance or adaptations that might draw attention to differences rather than to similarities."

Within two years, Villarreal and her volunteers raised about \$600,000, but they lacked a detailed set of plans to win over bigger donors. When she despaired, she pictured returning the hundreds of individual donations if she gave up. She also knew people were counting on her. "As my husband said, 'If we don't get this park, we'll have to move out of Palo Alto!'"

She was also dealing with the challenges of caring for Ava, who sometimes had seizures at school while Villarreal was hosting volunteer meetings. "I'd have to rush her to the ER, and I'd tell them to just to continue," she recalls. "You know that stage when your child is one year old, when they're getting up once or twice a night, they're in diapers, and you're feeding them? I'm still in that."

Palo Alto stepped up with money to pay for plans and assigned a landscape architect, Peter Jensen, to help shepherd and advocate for the project. "That was a huge leap forward," she says. After that, they hit their fundraising goal within a year and a half.

Villarreal brought a personal, passionate touch to her pitches, according to Asher, a co-founder. She asked a mother of a child with special needs to make chocolate chip cookies that they brought to every donor meeting. ▷

Above: Families take advantage of a beautiful day at the Magical Bridge in Palo Alto.

Right: Olenka Villarreal '85 with her two daughters, Ava (center) and Emma, at the playground.



“We leave them munching on cookies,” she told Asher. “Every time they put a cookie in their mouth, they’ll think of us.”

Added Loew, the other co-founder: “She’s hard to say ‘no’ to—she finds a job for you, and it feels really good to help. She makes everyone feel special.”

At the Magical Bridge, Villarreal makes visitors feel special, too, chatting with the helpful, bustling air of an innkeeper. “You like it here? Do you know the story of this place?” she asks a curly-haired dad leaning against a wall as his toddler rattles metal bells shaped like flowers that stand as tall as him

“It’s my first time here,” he says. “I read a little bit about it online. My son loves the bells.”

The playground is divided into seven play zones: swing and sway, slides, spin, music, tots, a kindness corner picnic area, and playhouse/stage. Grouping the activities together helps visitors of all abilities navigate the Magical Bridge, which also stands apart from other playgrounds because of how it showcases innovative artists.

Jen Lewin’s interactive laser harp sculptures have been featured at Burning Man, the desert arts festival popular with tech workers. The sculpture—which senses user movement, speed and tempo—is irresistible, inviting people to twirl and hurl their limbs and their bodies under the arch.

“If it’s approachable to everyone, then it’s successful,” Lewin says. “My mission has been to make public art that engages the community.”

George Zisadis’s motion sensors trigger audio recordings: the squishy suck of mud, the slosh of puddles, crunch of autumn leaves, and quacking ducks. You can’t help but run through it again and

again, trying to figure out how it works. “It’s been great seeing the installation become part of the daily experience of the playground,” he says, “offering moments of delight.”

Barbara Butler—a custom builder of luxury play structures, whose clients include actor Robert Redford and singer Bobby McFerrin—designed the whimsical, wheelchair-accessible, two-story playhouse and lookout built around a stony pine.

As Villarreal makes her way through the Magical Bridge, she greets friends and newcomers alike. “Many years from now, when we’re no longer here, I hope that people will know Ava’s story, and will say hello to her,” she says. “She loves when people say hello.”

For many families like Villarreal’s, Magical Bridge has become a welcome routine. Every week, a van transports medically-fragile children to the playground. A mother takes her 35-year-old son; in the past, she had to wait until night fell to bring him to playgrounds so people wouldn’t stare and ask questions. A girl in a tiara and a wheelchair—dubbed by Villarreal as the “Princess of the Playground”—is another regular.

Because not every family can get to the Magical Bridge, Villarreal is trying to bring it to them. She and her co-founders formed a non-profit foundation to replicate two Magical Playgrounds in neighboring cities. If the city makes a financial commitment, the foundation will help raise the rest. Redwood City was the first to join forces with the foundation, and if fundraising stays on track, the next Magical Bridge will break ground late this year or in early 2018.

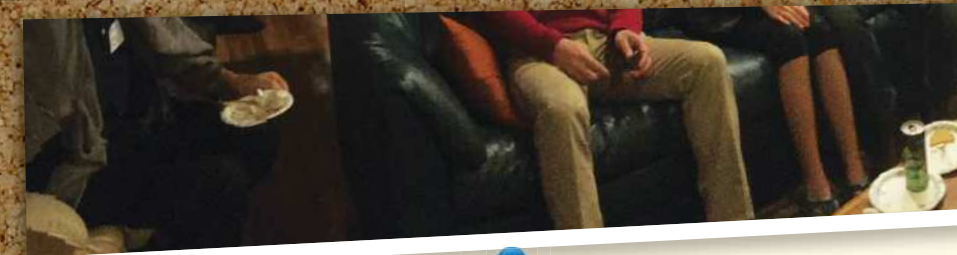
In late February, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted to set aside \$10 million to go toward at least five inclusive, accessible playgrounds. Groups such as the Rotary Club and the

Magical Bridge Foundation would raise matching funds. “It’s great not only for Santa Clara kids and families, but it also demonstrates to other parts of the nation that this is something people can do,” said Supervisor Joe Simitian, who co-sponsored the proposal. “If we each take a little piece of responsibility, we can do something extraordinary. That fits very well with the Magical Bridge approach.”

With each playground, they gain expertise, Villarreal says, learning how to bring down costs, and exploring different equipment options. By the time the foundation finishes its third playground, she aims to sell packages of construction drawings and components that can be customized to work in a variety of terrains, spaces and budgets at parks and schools, spreading the magic of Magical Bridge. “This has been a transformative journey. Doing this type of work is so fulfilling,” she says. “We’re doing something for families. It makes me want to do more of it, to get out and leave our little mark on the planet.” **PCM**

Countdown to Alumni Weekend 2017

Pomona campus is buzzing with preparations to celebrate this year’s reunion classes (and welcome alumni of all classes back to campus) for the party of the year: Alumni Weekend, April 27-29, 2017. Online registration is open through April 15 at pomona.edu/alumniweekend and we’ll be celebrating during Alumni Weekend. Don’t miss this chance to tour new buildings, enjoy a Coop shake on the Quad, attend lectures and performances, catch up with friends and professors and slap Cecil a high five.



Winter Break Party in Los Angeles

Winter Break Party in San Francisco

Winter Break Parties 20+ Years of Sagehen Spirit

Sagehens have been flocking to Winter Break Parties since at least 1994. In January, more than 700 alumni and guests braved winter weather in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C., to take part in the 2017 edition of this favorite tradition.

Frank Albinder ’80, host of this year’s party in D.C., offers Sagehen friends who could not attend a peek into a party:

Where was the reception held? “In the Billiards Room of a historic D.C. apartment building. A friend of mine lives there and arranges for us to use the space every year. I’d say there were about 50 of us this year.”

And there were snacks? “Oh yes. The reception was a Costco special—all your favorite snacks from a company founded by a Pomona alumnus. Everything from giant cheese wedges to giant cookies, giant bags of chocolate, giant chips and salsa, and other large-sized treats.”

A few favorite memories of the evening? “Hearing news from the Pomona campus was great. It was also fun to discover that a recent Pomona alumna had moved into the same building where we held the party just a couple weeks before the reception. I told her she’s in charge next year.”

To be sure you hear about Winter Break Parties and other Pomona events near you, update your contact information at pomona.edu/alumniupdate.



Hundreds of Sagehens Rally in Support of DACA-mented and Undocumented Students

Since President Oxtoby published his "Statement in Support of the DACA Program and our Undocumented Immigrant Students" in November, hundreds of Sagehen alumni and families have reached out to the College to support Pomona's own DACA-mented and undocumented students.

Here are two ways you can make a difference in the lives of these students right now:

- **Make a contribution** to the Student Emergency Grant Fund. Every dollar you donate goes directly to students who request funds, including students with emergency needs associated with immigration (immigration fees or legal resources, responding to family emergencies, etc.). To join the 296 members of the Pomona community who have supported this critical fund since November, visit pomona.edu/give and select "Student Emergency Grant Fund" from the designation menu.
- **If you have legal expertise** related to immigration, join the resource network of Pomona alumni who are offering pro-bono legal services to students with urgent immigration-related needs. The network, comprised of nearly three dozen alumni so far, is coordinated by Dean of Students **Miriam Feldblum**; **Paula Gonzalez '95**, an immigration lawyer based in San Diego; and **Derek Ishikawa '01** of Hirschfeld Kraemer LLP, the College's legal counsel, which is also providing pro-bono services related to this community effort. To join the network, email RSVPStudentAffairs@pomona.edu and include (1) your contact information and current company/organization information, (2) your legal specialty or focus and (3) your availability.



Happy 50th Birthday to Oldenberg!

When Oldenberg Center was built in 1966, it was believed to be the first facility of its kind to combine a language center, international house and coeducational residence in a single building. And with air conditioning, its own dining hall, two-room singles or four-person suites and a great immersion-like environment for language majors, Borgies like **Alfredo Romero '91** remember it this way: "You never had to leave, even if you could find your way out." Learn more about the history of Oldenberg at pomona.edu/timeline/1960s/1966 and celebrate this benchmark for the Borg by sharing favorite photos and memories at facebook/groups/Sagehens.

Are You a Fan of Sagehen Athletics? Why Not Become a Champion?

With scholar-athletes earning SCIAC honors, setting program records and competing in NCAA Championships—among many other achievements across teams—it's a great year to be a fan of Sagehen Athletics! And right now, as Pomona and Pitzer colleges increase their investments in our athletics community, it's a perfect time to become a Champion of Sagehen Athletics.

The Champions of Sagehen Athletics, formed earlier this year, is a group of supporters committed to changing the game for scholar-athletes by giving a gift that goes directly to the athletics program or any one of Pomona-Pitzer's 21 varsity teams. Every gift has an immediate and profound effect in the lives of scholar-athletes and coaches, supporting team travel, upgraded facilities, equipment and apparel, and other tools and resources that allow Sagehens to thrive in the competitive world of NCAA Division III intercollegiate athletics. Learn more about this exciting moment in Sagehen history and become a Champion today at sagehens.com/champions.



ideas @Pomona LIVE RECAP

Climate Change & Cleantech Innovation Event

On February 1, more than 30 Sagehens gathered at the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI) to think collectively and creatively about the challenges presented by climate change. A distinguished panel of alumni and faculty experts included **Bowman Cutter**, associate professor of economics at Pomona; **Audrey Mayer '94**, associate professor at Michigan Technical University; **Amanda Sabicer '99**, the evening's host and vice president of Regional Energy Innovation Cluster at LACI; **Matt Thompson '96**, president-elect of the Alumni Association Board; and **Cameron Whiteman '75**, managing director at Vertum Partners. The Ideas@Pomona program curates the best content from around campus and the alumni community to ignite discussion, share ideas and highlight exciting areas of faculty research. Check out pomona.edu/lifelonglearning to find out more.

Travel/Study
May 30-June 10, 2017

Burgundy: The Cradle of the Crusades

Join John Sutton Miner Professor of History and Professor of Classics Ken Wolf on a walking tour of Burgundy. Burgundy, the east-central region of France so well-known for its food and wine, was also an incubator for two of the most distinctive features of the European Middle Ages: monasticism and crusade. This trip provides the perfect context for exploring "holy violence" in the Middle Ages and its implications for the 21st century.

For more information, please contact the Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement at (909) 621-8110.



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AS AUTHOR OF A BOOK ON "SLOW ART," POMONA PROFESSOR ARDEN REED OFFERS SOME TIPS FOR LEARNING TO TAKE IT SLOW.

SLOW ART

ESSAY BY ARDEN REED

Slow art isn't a collection of aesthetic

objects, as you might suppose; rather, it names a dynamic interaction between observer and observed. Artists can create the conditions for slow looking—think of James Turrell '65 Skyspaces like Pomona's "Dividing the Light." But what about viewers? How can we do our share?

In a given year, more Americans visit art museums than attend any one professional sporting event. They want and expect to take pleasure, learn and share positive experiences with each other and perhaps with their children. Too often the result is otherwise. Despite massive arts education programs, many visitors still arrive at a museum feeling confused or disadvantaged about how to navigate the place—where to go first, what to look at in any given gallery, how to connect with what they find. (There is a particular disconnect for people 40 and under, on whom museums will increasingly rely for support.) As a Jeffersonian populist, I believe that everyone who passes through a gallery ought to feel enfranchised. Everybody, I believe, can have meaningful, maybe even transforming experiences looking at artworks. Whether or not we possess any particular talent, training, art education or technical vocabulary, we all bring the sole necessary requirements: a set of eyes and lived experience. The playing field is level. But how to look is not self-evident.

How? My answer will come as no surprise: pacing can make a world of difference. Magic may happen when you give yourself over to the process and attune yourself to the artwork, listen to what it asks from you. "Notice how with two or three lines I've made this thatched roof," says a Rembrandt drawing. "Look at how the shadows under the plane trees turn purple," says a Van Gogh landscape. Give a painting time to reveal itself, I've said, and it turns into a moving picture—the experience can be that eye-opening. Over time, you will perceive more and more elements of the image, things that you literally never saw before. However closely you attend, you will never absorb an object's every visual detail or nuance. There will always remain more to see. In fact, this inexhaustibility is the sign of art itself.

How, then, to slow down? There are many possibilities, old-fashioned (docent tours, audio guides) and newfangled (smartphone apps, iPads on gallery walls, online learning sources like the Khan Academy). The scores of museum-goers who use them testify to a widespread need for guidance. Each of these options may work. Here, I limit my suggestions to rugged individuals, unwired visitors who follow neither audio tour nor app. Or better, take advantage of any external aid—rent an audio tour because you know nothing about Mughal art—but take time also to shut off the devices and linger.

1 / Believe that you already come equipped with everything you need—those eyes and that life experience. Trust that something surprising can come of the encounter, or simply that the experience might be fun.

2 / Don't go alone. In another's company you'll have more stamina and notice more. (More than three people looking together may prove too many.) Best is a viewing partner who is open-minded, prepared to be patient, receptive to being taken aback. Also, somebody you feel free to disagree with. "Opposition," said William Blake, "is true friendship." Some of my best experiences have come out of seeing things differently from my companion.

3 / Remember that museums are like libraries. Why do people assume that they need to look at everything on display in a gallery when they would never pull every book off a shelf? Be selective. Once I interviewed the Metropolitan Museum of Art's longtime director, Philippe de Montebello. I asked him about navigating art spaces. "My wife loves going to museums with me because I tell her: 'In this room, we will look at X and Z.'" "If we happen not to be your spouse?" I asked. "Head first to the museum shop. The postcards will tell you which works the place prizes most highly. Second, say you're in a gallery with many objects clustered together and another given its own vitrine. Choose the latter. Finally, whatever the guards say, you have to get up close." I would add: start by scanning the room to see if anything calls out to you. Don't even think about pausing before every object. One or two items in a gallery will be enough or more than enough. Don't worry if your pick is not among the postcards; trust your taste.

4 / Grant your chosen object time—how much is tricky, I acknowledge. If, after a spell, nothing clicks, move on. This is a no-fault game. You are nobody's student; there are no *should's*. Eventually you and your companion will find something that you agree is intriguing, striking, ravishing, perplexing, disturbingly unfamiliar—what that thing is hardly matters.

5 / Now let yourself go. Get close, back up, shift from side to side, squint. Notice the surround: does the installation lighting create hot or dark spots unrelated to the artwork? Let yourself wonder about what might seem trivial. Why do Cézanne's tables tilt up? Why do mountains look stylized in medieval depictions of deserts? What is that strange detail on the curving side of a glass vase, in a still life



Dieric Bouts, *Annunciation*, J. Paul Getty Museum

painting of flowers? Might it be light reflected from a four-paned window in the imaginary room? And why is a caterpillar munching on that leaf? Why does one window in an Edward Hopper painting behave differently from its neighbors? There is no telling where seemingly naïve questions may carry you. Remember that frustration is part and parcel of engaged looking; an artwork that doesn't offer resistance may not offer much at all.

6 / Let images "tell you" how they want to be seen. In my experience, they will do so if you "listen to them" with patience.

7 / Don't be in a hurry to speak. Start by letting your eyes wander freely. Then zero in on what seems meaningful, or looks to be part of a pattern, or perhaps is an anomaly. Toggle between focused and unfocused looking. Test what you've registered by closing your eyes and asking yourself what you recollect. Then look again to compare.

8 / Don't screw yourself to the spot. A surefire recipe for distraction is to insist that you concentrate on some work for X minutes. You are sure to chafe. Genuine viewing is always a mix of engagement and

withdrawal, and as I've said, some degree of boredom is integral to the experience of slow art.

9 / Say you are looking at a Renaissance painting of a sallow-faced woman whose reading has been interrupted by a man with Technicolor wings. It's enough to begin by attending to the physical details: the crisp folds of the red linen hanging behind the bed, or the mosaic pattern on the floor, which seems to repeat the design of a stained glass window in the recess at the left. Under the bedchamber's barrel vault a half lunette appears to float above the bed canopy—like a moon, or the book's open clasp. It's good to begin in mystery, because not knowing rouses curiosity. Questions prompted by the act of looking motivate us to learn about the image's content and about its social, aesthetic, political, historical contexts. By contrast, front-loading information—in a slide lecture sandwiched in with a hundred other images—is likely to generate little interest and leave but a fleeting impression. So studies of museum education repeatedly conclude.

Now—and not before—is when the wall label should come into play: what Dieric Bouts painted between 1450 and 1455 is the Annunciation. Wondering what that refers to—I am assuming no specialized knowledge—brings your smartphone app into the picture. You learn that the Angel Gabriel has just told the Virgin Mary—that is, he has announced—that she is to be the mother of God (Luke 1, 31). His message accounts for her expression, a mix of bashfulness (she refuses to return the angel's gaze), shock, humility and fear that she will not satisfy the job requirements. Perhaps Gabriel's words also explain the placement of her hands, which simultaneously express astonishment and are about to meet in prayer. Pursuing your inquiry will teach you that the cloth bundled up at the left-hand corner—a gorgeous, realistic, seemingly gratuitous detail—also symbolizes the great event yet to unfold but already being prepared. This bundle is a visible, external double of Mary's womb. But what of the single pillow propped up on the bed, square between Gabriel and Mary? Another symbol? On the Getty's website you can see Bouts' underdrawing, detect traces of animal glue seeping through the linen, and spot vermilion pigment, thanks to X-ray and ultraviolet analysis. Speed and distraction aside, there has never been a better time to look.

10 / You will get better with practice. You and your interlocutor will become comfortable with each other's rhythms and styles. You will build up categories to scan for: color, composition, mood, atmosphere, form, depth, quality of brushstrokes—fine or broad, insistent or invisible; awkwardnesses, conventional narratives; stylistic changes over time; political controversies. Over time you will amass episodes of close looking and build a mental library of images, a backlog of aesthetic experiences that will serve as points of reference or comparison.

11 / You will experience a range of pleasures: eye-candy, puzzle-solving, meditative or spiritual moments. You will have fun.

... she thought she'd somehow only now learned how to look.
—Don DeLillo, *The Body Artist*

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