

COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Pomona

Spring 2025

THE CREATIVITY ISSUE





The drop-off on
Bunaken Island, near
Sulawesi, Indonesia
Sally Vogel '57



Chickadee Ridge, Lake Tahoe
Rosie Linkus '22



North Windows arch in
Arches National Park
John Carter '78

Pajaro Dunes on
Monterey Peninsula
Dina Mitchell '90



Spring 2025



Sunflower
Bruce Saltzer '75

Nature photo submissions

Coming on the heels of our fall nature issue featuring photographer Grant Collier '96, we sent out a call to alums for their own nature pics. Here are a few of the highlights! Check out more online at magazine.pomona.edu/2025/spring/photo-submissions or with the below QR code.



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Stray Thoughts

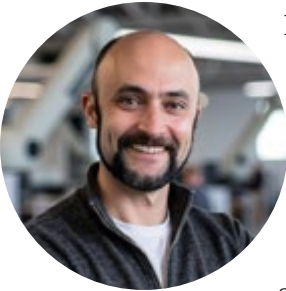
The Art of Seeing Possibilities

Creativity is sometimes seen as the domain of the young—an innate, unfettered spark that dims as we get older. But the truth is, creativity is not bound by age, nor is it confined to the arts. This issue of *PCM* aims to explore different forms of creativity and uncover how we can cultivate it at every stage of life. Whether through professional innovation, interpersonal problem-solving, or even just the way we navigate daily routines, creativity remains an integral part of human experience.

One of the most common misconceptions about creativity is that it belongs exclusively to artists, musicians, and writers. This issue challenges that notion by highlighting creativity in disciplines like science, programming, and even political protest. We speak with Sagehens who have harnessed creative thinking to revolutionize industries, researchers whose inventive approaches have led to groundbreaking discoveries, and individuals who have reimaged their lives in inspiring ways. Creativity, at its core, is about seeing possibilities where others see limitations.

Nurturing creativity later in life requires intention and curiosity. Small changes in our routines—such as picking up a new hobby, engaging in stimulating conversations, or simply allowing ourselves to actually make space for **non**-doing—can reawaken our imagination. We also examine the role of lifelong learning, the power of collaboration, and the importance of staying open to new perspectives. Creativity flourishes when we give ourselves permission to experiment, to fail, and to view things with a greater sense of both purpose and wonder.

In this fast-paced, technology-driven era, we often feel pressured to be productive rather than imaginative. But creativity is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It fuels innovation, enriches our lives, and helps us adapt to an ever-changing world.



I hope some of the topics posed in these pages invite you to explore, question, and reimagine the role of creativity in your own life. Let this issue be both a mirror and a catalyst, reflecting the creativity you already possess and inspiring new ways to express it. After all, creativity is not something we lose—it is something we continue to discover.

—Adam Conner-Simons '08
Guest Editor



THE
CREATIVITY
ISSUE

On the cover and at left: Crew prepares for their weekend spring production of "The Moors."

Features

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What is the role of creativity in steering the work of dancers, poets, scientists and activists?

Creativity? That's Child's Play 28

Mac Barnett '04 has published 60 children's books that have sold more than five million copies, all while tackling tough topics like love, loss and jealousy.

Gaming the System 30

Don Daglow '74 may not be a household name, but his experiences at Pomona helped mold him into the mind behind some of the most influential video games of all time.

Sound-Scouting with Def
Jam CEO Tunji Balogun '04 36

How a Nigerian-born record executive came to run the label that launched LL Cool J, Public Enemy and the Beastie Boys.

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A Hello from Acting President Bob Gaines

Having been a faculty member here for more than 20 years, I'm deeply humbled by the opportunity to lead the College during President Starr's sabbatical. I know the value of Pomona and the kinds of breakthroughs that are possible here, particularly as it applies to creativity—the theme of this issue of *Pomona College Magazine*.

The way I see it, Pomona has a unique combination of magical elements that make its educational experience pop—a delicate fusion of factors that include motivated students, intimate classes, broad resources and an emphasis on curiosity, interdisciplinarity and, yes, creativity.

I feel this dynamic deeply in my connections with peers. Our environment encourages engagement with others in how they see the world, sharing perspectives across disciplines with colleagues in art, music, history and beyond. I've had many thoughtful conversations with my colleagues about the vastness of time, understanding stories etched across giant landscapes, how we as humans sense and understand the world around us, and what it means to be alive on Earth. These kinds of dialogues have helped me shape, refine and better understand my own perspectives, as well as encouraging more

out-of-the-box thinking about many of my own projects in geology.

This kind of cultivation of creativity allows faculty and students alike to adapt and approach challenges from new angles—where some of the most exciting and unexpected outcomes lie. Whether in science, engineering, humanities or the arts, thinking creatively is crucial for new innovation and making a meaningful impact on larger societal forces.

Indeed, creativity and its capacity for “transformative knowledge” is one of the three central pillars of our strategic vision, and a major point of emphasis for several of our future projects, like the new Center for Global Engagement that we hope to break ground on in the coming years.

My experience at Pomona is that creativity is not a finite resource, but something that begets more of itself when cultivated. In my mind it is the most important and essential of human traits—without it, we would be forever repeating the same patterns, rather than finding new paths of inquiry and exploration.

—Robert Gaines
Acting President

Edwin F. and Martha Hahn Professor of Geology



Write to Us at PCM

Pomona College Magazine welcomes brief letters to the editor about the magazine and issues related to the College from the extended Pomona community—alumni, parents, students, faculty, staff, donors and others with a strong connection to the College. Write to us at pcm@pomona.edu or mail a letter to *Pomona College Magazine*, 550 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711. Letters should include the writer's name, city and state of residence, class year for alumni and contact information. With rare exceptions, letters should be no more than 400 words in length. Letters are selected for publication based on relevance and available space and are subject to being edited for brevity and clarity.

Corrections for the Fall 2024 Issue

In the obituary section, the surname of Austin Frank '49's mother, Martha Frank 1925, was incorrect. *PCM* deeply regrets the error.

On page 25 (“Unearthing the Volcanoes”) we erroneously described the Sierra as spanning “some 24,000 square feet,” instead of 24,000 square miles. The mountain range is much more than half an acre! (Spinal Tap Stonehenge, anyone? Thanks for the tip, Peter Wechsler '68).



Facebook Poll

Top three annual Pomona events (past and present)

#1 Harwood Halloween

#2 Smiley 80s

#3 Ski-Beach Day

Other popular events include Death by Chocolate, Freshman Dance, Middle School Dance

Fun fact (via Rachel Paterno-Mahler '07):

“Having a Smiley 2000s today would be the equivalent of having Smiley 80s when those of us that graduated in the 2000s were at Pomona.”

SageChat! The column where we talk to the flock on the Pomona College Alumni Facebook group and share a few responses. Make sure to join the group if you haven't already: fb.com/groups/sagehens



What's the best concert you ever saw at Pomona?

“Gordon Lightfoot at Big Bridges in 1984!”

—Jessica Sitton '85 (see photo on right)

“When Michael [Mahler '74] asked me out for our first date, I said ‘yes’ before I even knew where we were going to go. We went to Big Bridges to see the J. Geils Band and the Eagles—and then saw the Eagles again for our anniversary in 2014. This year we are celebrating our 47th anniversary!”

—Vicki Paterno '75

“The Ramones in 1979 at Garrison Theater [technically at Scripps]. The music scene was changing in good and exciting ways, at least for this Midwest boy. The punk and new wave scene was just busting out in a big way. KSPC was leading the way.”

—Paul Martin '83

“I saw Maroon 5 opening for Guster in about 2001. Now Guster opens for them!”

—Stephanie Lawton '03

“Seeing Ozomatli freshman year at Harwood Halloween was incredible, but it's hard to beat 1999 with Digital Underground, which predictably got shut down, leading to their rapper Shock G leading a mob of us through Lyon [Residence Hall].”

—Adam Boardman '01

“In 1992 Soundgarden performed in front of about 200 of us right before the release of *Badmotorfinger* [their first top-40 album]. They were about to go on tour with Guns N' Roses. It was insanely good music!”

—Ben Johns '95

“At Scripps in 1998[ish] Michelle Malone played a small show at the Motley with a young opening act named John Mayer. I remember liking his songs ‘Neon’ and ‘Comfortable.’ A couple years later he played at Big Bridges with Norah Jones, before she'd won all her Grammys.”

—Brian Daniel Schwartz '01



Jessica Sitton '85 and Pamela Keene '85 with Gordon Lightfoot (photo credit Diane Ung '85)

Beethoven, Bach, Wagner—and Zappa?

50 Years Later, A Pomona Prank Remembered

By Marilyn Thomsen

A 13-foot sailboat effortlessly floats from the rafters of Frary Dining Hall.

One of two doors into the mathematics department magically disappears overnight, leaving only a seamless stretch of blank wall in its place.

A safe containing student grades literally vanishes from Holmes Hall, discovered weeks later underneath the building’s creaking floorboards.

Pranks have played a storied role over the years at Pomona. One of the most ambitious took place 50 years ago, with the pranksters only claiming credit 37 years later. The dossier they back-channelled to *Pomona College Magazine* resulted in a 2012 story finally solving one of Pomona’s most enduring mysteries: Who replaced Chopin with a bust

of Frank Zappa in the frieze on the face of Big Bridges?

John Irvine ’76 and Greg Johnson ’76—juniors at the time of the prank—told *PCM* clandestinely that they “weren’t huge Zappa fans at the time,” even though he had lived in Claremont for a while. They dreamed up the prank when they learned the Mothers of Invention rocker was coming to play Bridges in April of 1975.

“We were looking up at the front of Big Bridges and said, ‘Well, gosh, he should have his name up there,’” Irvine recalled. They envisioned Zappa right alongside other greats—Bach, Beethoven, Wagner and Schubert—over the front entrance. Chopin, they decided, was dispensable. “I’m not big on the Romantics,” Irvine explained.

Pulling off the prank took two intensive weeks of preparation. Obstacle one: how to get onto the roof of Bridges Auditorium? Johnson calculated they could lay a ladder between (long gone) Renwick Gym and Big Bridges and, perched more than 30 feet above the ground, crawl four feet across from one roof to the other. “Being young college students, we were stupid enough to do that,” Irvine told *PCM*.

Johnson and Irvine measured the space they would need to fill: a whopping 15 feet in length and five feet in height. Which led to obstacle two: how to make a replacement frieze light enough to hoist into position, but heavy enough to stay in place. Their answer

was Styrofoam in an aluminum frame, with a papier-mâché bust of Zappa anchoring one end and a marijuana leaf the other. (Zappa was against drugs, but, the pair admitted to *PCM*, “Hey, we know, but it was the ’70s.”) They built it in a dorm room and were putting it together late at night in the Wash—when it began to rain. A quick move to the Mudd-Blaisdell trash room was almost a disaster. The next morning was trash day.

To overcome obstacle three—getting caught—Irvine and Johnson recruited the help of the Statpack, a group of fellow math and statistics students. They modeled the movement of Campus Security patrols in the wee hours of the morning to find the optimal time for evasion. Sometime between 2 and 3 in the morning, the 60- to 70-pound frieze was installed on the front of the building. The statistical modeling must have been sound, because until they finally took credit via *PCM* in 2012, the pranksters’ identities went (almost) undetected. As *PCM* noted, “Frank Zappa was now shoulder to shoulder with Beethoven and Bach on the campus’s most imposing edifice. Chopin had been shown up, and the two math majors had succeeded in pulling off a highly visible prank.”

Just one miscalculation: Zappa’s bust joined the roster of the greats a week after his concert at Big Bridges. “We kind of got an incomplete,” Johnson told *PCM*. “We weren’t quite ready in time.” [PCM](#)

We’ll do it live!

A timeline of some of Pomona’s most memorable concerts

Kurt Vonnegut, 1986

OK, this one’s only tangentially music-related, but besides speaking at Big Bridges, *Slaughterhouse-Five* author Kurt Vonnegut has an unusual Pomona connection. In 1997 he was incorrectly attributed as author of one of the first pieces of viral content: a commencement speech sometimes referred to as “Wear Sunscreen,” which later became the “lyrics” of a top-40 hit released by *Moulin Rouge* director Baz Luhrmann. The actual author? Mary Schmich ’75, who wrote the original words for a *Chicago Tribune* column, which later turned into a book.

No Doubt, 1990

Gwen Stefani’s ska-punk band played at least five shows at Pomona in their early gigging along the Southern California concert circuit, including a May 1990 show that pre-dated their signing with Interscope Records. Three decades later, the

group has released six studio albums that have sold 33 million copies globally, while Stefani has become a popular solo artist (and *Voice* judge) worth an estimated \$160 million. ’90s alums, relive the glory with this fan-captured video from 1994 (see QR code).

Rage Against the Machine, 1992

When Mike Lin ’94 paid the newly formed four-piece rap-metal outfit \$325 to play Harwood Courtyard, they hadn’t even released their debut album yet. Lin remembers lead singer Zack de la Rocha eagerly passing out cassette tapes beforehand, as well as receiving a thoughtful “thank you” note from guitarist Tom Morello afterward. They’ve since sold 16 million records and were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2023.

Pomona College Magazine

Bright Eyes, 2000

When the campus radio station KSPC brought Conor Oberst and his Omaha indie-rock outfit to play a show in one of the Smith Campus Center’s social rooms, station advisor Erica



Indie band Bright Eyes playing Walker Lounge in 2000

Tyron said that she paid them \$800 in cash. Just a few years later, the Associated Students of Pomona College tried to bring them back, but opted against after learning that their booking cost had ballooned to \$50,000.

The White Stripes, 2001

Jack and Meg White—the mysterious red-and-white-adorned garage-rock duo who eventually filled stadiums with arena classics like “Seven Nation Army”—hadn’t yet exploded on the indie scene when they performed that spring on Walker Beach. KSPC still has the original flyer from that fateful concert in their office in Thatcher Music Building.

Taylor Swift, 2012

Touring behind her fourth album *Red*, Swift launched an online voting competition promising to perform at the college that got the most votes proportional to their size—spurring some crafty Harvey Mudd kids to organize on social media to get 5C students to vote for Swift to come to campus. (She ultimately performed at Pomona, at Big Bridges.) For the record, Mudd’s student body president claimed that they didn’t engage in any “illegitimate activity” like bot voting. We plead the fifth! [PCM](#)



Big Acts at Big Bridges

Since its ribbon-cutting in 1931, Bridges Auditorium—also known as “Big Bridges,” to distinguish it from Bridges Hall of Music (“Little Bridges”)—has been home to hundreds of concerts, speeches and events. Here’s our unofficial tally of the musicians who’ve performed most frequently at the 2,200-seat venue.*

Six Times:

Singer-songwriter **Ben Harper**

Five Times:

Folk singer **Judy Collins**

Folk group the **Irish Rovers**

Four Times:

Singer-songwriter **Johnny Cash**

Violinist **Isaac Stern**

Three Times:

Country singer **Willie Nelson**

Pianist **Arthur Rubinstein**

Jazz singer **Ella Fitzgerald**

Pop/standards singer **Johnny Mathis**

The **Preservation Hall Jazz Band**

**based on records taken from the Bridges Auditorium archive, in conjunction with the crowd-sourced concert repository website setlist.fm.*



Ella Fitzgerald performing at Downbeat, New York in 1947. Photo by William Gottlieb.

Other return performers include jazz legends Nat “King” Cole, Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman, as well as folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary. Mime Marcel Marceau also performed here six times!

Big Bridges has been the home to 90 performances from Inland Pacific Ballet, 86 performances by the L.A. Philharmonic, and at least 50 Claremont High School commencements.

Others who’ve spoken here: Bono, Amelia Earhart, Winston Churchill and the Dalai Lama.



Irvine works on the Zappa frieze



A Century of Commencement Speakers



Pomona’s first commencement was in 1894, but it wasn’t until May 1925—100 years ago this spring—that the school brought in outside speakers to dispense wisdom to the new graduates.

As English Professor Bruce McCulley put it in February of that year, “There was a strong sentiment in many quarters that it may be to the advantage of all if the present practice of having [exclusively] student commencement speakers were discontinued and a [person] of national repute as a speaker be secured.”

As Pomona’s reputation grew in the ’70s, the College was increasingly able to procure bigger and bigger names from the worlds of education, public service, politics and the arts.

Here’s a look back at some of the most notable speakers of the last 50 years.

- 1978: Comedian Danny Kaye
- 1981: Actor Richard Chamberlain ’56
- 1982: New York Senator Bill Bradley
- 1984: Civil rights activist Coretta Scott King
- 1987: Choreographer Twyla Tharp
- 1995: Actor Patrick Stewart
- 1999: Actor/comedian John Cleese
- 2004: News anchor Walter Cronkite
- 2010: Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano
- 2022: Gene-editing pioneer & Nobel laureate Jennifer Doudna ’85 [PCM](#)

President Starr inducted into AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY



Last fall Pomona College President G. Gabrielle Starr was inducted into the American Philosophical Society (APS) honoring her extraordinary accomplishments as a leader in higher education.

The APS is the oldest learned society in the United States, founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin. Past members include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Charles Darwin, Thomas Edison, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein and Robert Frost. The society generally elects fewer than 30 resident members annually. [PCM](#)

Notable Quotes

“When we make politics a crusade, politicians will begin to understand that they must serve all the people and not just a select few.”
—**Coretta Scott King, 1984**

“Go out and celebrate, but before you do, spend a few moments writing in your yearbook about how your life and the world unfolded, 47 years from today. After that, go out and do something. Do something that you love. Do something that matters. Do something to preserve and cherish our pale blue dot.” —**Steven Chu, 2011 (U.S. Secretary of Energy and Nobel laureate)**

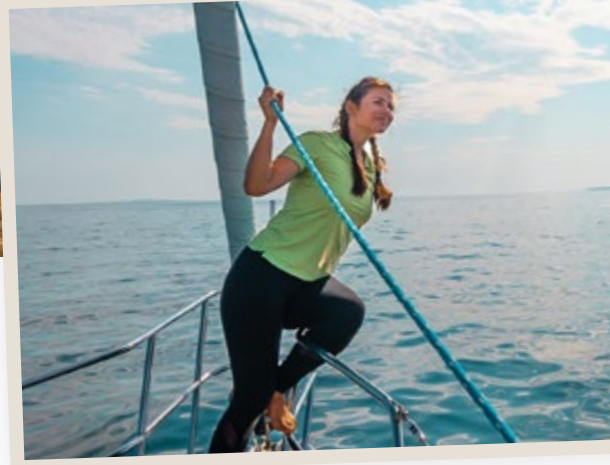
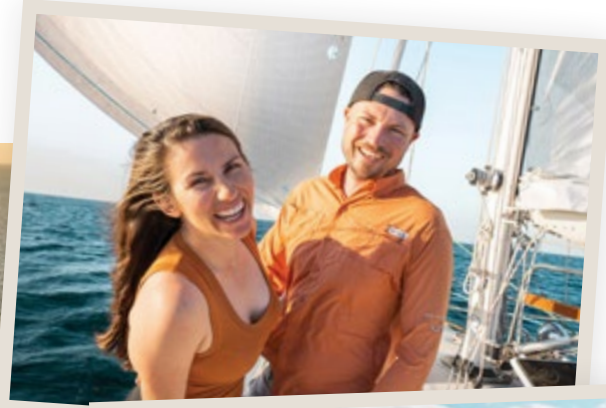
“I suspect that if kinship was our goal, we would no longer be promoting justice, we would be celebrating it...The measure of your compassion lies not in your service to those on the margins, but in your willingness to see yourselves in kinship with them.” —**Father Gregory Boyle, 2014 (founder, Homeboy Industries)**

“Real success comes when you identify what you are passionate about doing, and then you do it 110 percent. ... We all face challenges in our lives—that’s a part of being human. I think what sets apart those that are successful in whatever they want to do is just embracing those challenging moments and turning them as much as possible into opportunity.” —**Jennifer Doudna, 2022**

“Tomorrow you will move on. With an education, with experience and with choices. Make a difference.” —**Patrick Stewart, 1995**

A Decade On-Board and Off-Shore With Sailor Desiree Wicht ’08

By Adam Conner-Simons ’08



Desiree (Golen) Wicht ’08 and her husband Jordan Wicht spent more than half of the last decade on their 30-foot sailboat Atticus (below), braving hurricanes, Turkish warships and even pirates.

After college Desiree (Golen) Wicht ’08 created a bestselling Tetris app, launched a pop-up restaurant startup, scrubbed the decks of John Kerry’s \$100 million yacht and then quit the landlocked life entirely in 2014 when, within three months of meeting her partner Jordan Wicht, she decided to travel the globe in a 50-year-old, 30-foot sailboat—having never before hoisted a single jib.

Over the last decade the Wichtes have cataloged the trials and tribulations of boat life through weekly YouTube videos as “Project Atticus,” with roughly 300,000 subscribers following their adventures doing everything from spearing hogfish in Belize, to fleeing Turkish warships, to spending the pandemic off-grid in Panama, to giving birth to their daughter Isabella on the island of Malta.

“We went on this adventure because we wanted the freedom to be able to go anywhere from the comfort of our economical,

sustainable, floating home,” Desiree says. “As the tiny-home mantra goes, ‘the world gets a lot bigger when you’re living small.’”

Along the way, Desiree transformed from a 20-something who’d never touched a screwdriver, to a seasoned seafarer bartering her boat-repair skills for groceries. She and Jordan had to wear an array of hats ranging from carpentry to amateur meteorology, all while dealing with unusual professional hazards like running out of water and evading Honduran pirates. (The team bootstrapped the 10-year project via merchandise sales, video sponsors, several side hustles and thousands of annual donations from followers on YouTube and Patreon.)

“We operated on the adage that, in 20 years, we’d likely be more disappointed by the things that we didn’t do than by the things we did,” says Desiree.

As of this fall, the Wichtes have returned to solid ground—a decision brought about by the imminent birth of their second daughter Scarlet in January of 2025. After a few months exploring different areas of Appalachia, the couple decided to settle in Bryson City, North Carolina, nestled in the Smoky Mountains—and they continue to film and release weekly videos as they build a mountain homestead DIY-style. While Desiree has no regrets about their time on the water, she says that she’s very happy to be back on dry land for this next chapter of life.



“Project Atticus,” by the numbers

- 10,804 miles traveled
- 2,000+ total days on the water
- 18 countries visited
- 1 pirate ship evaded

How An Exoneree Accomplished ‘The Impossible’

By Brian Whitehead

All Ruben Piñuelas ’21 wanted was a level playing field.

After being incarcerated for nearly 15 years—six of those wrongfully so—Piñuelas knew changing the trajectory of his life in his 40s would require overcoming biases society can put on people with such baggage.

“Pomona believed in me on day one,” he says, “and ushered me into this world of higher education.”

After running from the law as a young adult, Piñuelas now is a second-year law student at the University of Michigan who returned to Claremont to speak at the Athenaeum at Claremont McKenna.

“At one time society threw me away [and] told me I’ll never be good enough to be a scholar,” he says. “What I came back from—I’ve accomplished the impossible.”

Piñuelas started running with a gang in El Centro, California, in high school. In 1999, the then-20-year-old was sentenced to two years in prison for marijuana possession and erroneously placed with inmates serving life terms. He was later charged in connection with a prison riot—he says he was only defending himself in the fight, and was tricked into taking a deal to add seven years to his term.

In 2008, Piñuelas raised enough money to make bail on new conspiracy charges he was facing. While on parole, he helped local groups build houses and enrolled in night community college classes at Pierce College in Los Angeles.

Piñuelas was taken back into custody in 2010 for alleged parole violations and his alleged involvement in a 2007 prison incident involving people he says he never met. In 2011 he was convicted of conspiracy to murder, attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon on an inmate. He was given 60 years to life and sent to solitary confinement in a maximum-security prison in Crescent City.

While in solitary, Piñuelas began studying law, and advocated for his innocence. In 2013 a panel of California appellate justices overturned his conviction based on insufficient evidence. After his 2014 release he returned



to Pierce to earn two associate degrees, qualifying for financial assistance to continue his studies at Pomona.

“Sixty [years] to life, 12 years in solitary, no one comes back from that,” Piñuelas says. “I was in a dark place, but I learned it’s not what’s been done to you, but what you do with it.”

Community college students comprise about two-thirds of Pomona’s yearly transfer cohort, and while most of that group comes from California, the Office of Admissions has bolstered outreach efforts nationwide. Admissions officers attend off-campus events, host open houses and connect with local community colleges for special campus tours and financial aid workshops.

Susanne Mahoney Filback, associate director of preprofessional programs and prelaw advisor at the Career Development Office (CDO), recalls Piñuelas emailing her the summer before his first semester at Pomona about his plan to pursue law. To get accustomed to Pomona he regularly met with her and showed up at CDO law events.

“He knew he wanted to make a difference and that was directly related to what he went through,” Filback says. “He had a thoughtful understanding of why he was here and how he was going to make the most of Pomona’s resources.”

As someone who felt life would always be an uphill battle, Piñuelas was blown away by how reassuring his professors were when he questioned whether he belonged at Pomona. “They always believed in me,” he says. “They gave me everything I needed

to thrive, perform and be the student I needed to be.”

As a psychological science major, Piñuelas especially admired Eric Hurley, professor of psychological science and Africana studies. “It was refreshing to hear from someone I could identify with as a student of color,” he says. Piñuelas took Hurley’s Psychology of the Black Experience course and later became a course mentor in his Intro to Psychology class.

After graduating, Piñuelas continued his studies at the University of Michigan, with aspirations of becoming a trial attorney, a civil rights lawyer and California Supreme Court justice.

“I’m trying to maximize the time I have left,” he says. “A lot of time was stolen from me, but I don’t want to mope. I want to use it as a blessing, an opportunity for others to learn about what I’ve been able to gain from my experience, and to use it to better the world.” [PCM](#)



New Study on Global Benefits and Tradeoffs of Natural Climate Solutions

Innovative research by faculty at Pomona, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and other partners reveals how protecting, better managing and restoring nature for climate change can enhance human well-being, biodiversity and ecosystems.

Charlotte Chang ’10, assistant professor of biology and environmental analysis, is the lead co-author of the new research, which shows that natural climate solution pathways with the highest potential to mitigate carbon also have the most evidence of their impacts on people and nature. Using advanced machine-learning methods and large language models, the researchers analyzed more than 250,000 peer-reviewed publications to assess the benefits and tradeoffs of natural climate solutions. The

study was published on December 2 in the journal *Nature Sustainability*.

“We’ve achieved something unprecedented—the first comprehensive analysis of how natural climate solutions impact every dimension of human and environmental well-being,” says Chang, who is also the inaugural One Conservancy Science Fellow at TNC. “By using open-source large language models, we could evaluate vast amounts of data in ways that were previously impossible.”

This global evidence map will help countries implement natural climate solutions by showing the impacts that pathways such as reforestation and wetland protection can have on human well-being, biodiversity and the environment beyond climate change mitigation.

“Natural climate solutions hold the promise of transforming ecosystems and livelihoods, but their implementation must be informed by evidence,” says J.T. Erbaugh, an applied social scientist at TNC and co-lead author.

“Our evidence base can help ensure that these solutions provide benefits for people and ecosystems more equitably and effectively,” adds Brian Robinson, co-lead author and associate professor of geography at McGill University. “The scale of our evidence base transforms how we understand environmental and climate solutions.” [PCM](#)

New Sea Sponge Species Named for Turrell ’65

By Brian Whitehead

Ever since his mother gifted him a Trilobite fossil at age 5, Edwin F. and Martha Hahn Professor of Geology Robert Gaines has been fascinated with hunting for history.

His latest quest, this one in western Utah, turned up dozens of specimens of a new species of sea sponge estimated to be half a billion years old—one of Earth’s earliest animals. And it’s named *Polygoniella turrelli* after James Turrell ’65, creator of *Dividing the Light*, the Skyspace at Pomona.

This fall Gaines and colleagues from Harvard University described the new species in a paper published in the journal *Royal Society Open Science*.

The discovery is the result of three years of research conducted on a fossil-rich mountainside in Utah, where layers of shale preserved the specimens.

“Because there was preservation of the organic material, rather than a skeleton or a shell, it’s kind of an extraordinary view,” says Gaines, current acting president of Pomona. “This is at the time when animals first diverged from single-celled ancestors, so we are able to capture what the early family tree of all the animals looked like and understand



how the big branches in the animal family tree are related.”

As he pieces together periods of time by exploring new ground and investigating both rocks and fossils, Gaines finds the more he learns, the more questions he has about the history of life. But he remains thrilled to link extraordinary fossils to prehistoric times in his eternal quest to understand the environment in which living things existed.

“For me,” he says, “it’s about the nature of the earliest ecosystems of our own ancestors and their relationship to the Earth system and how they fed on each other. As a student, I recall well the long periods of confusion. But in retrospect I’ve found that I’ve never really learned anything cool without being confused for some period of time first.” [PCM](#)



A Voice for Early Detection: Rhoda Au '82

By Chris Quirk

Alzheimer's disease may afflict more than 6 million people in the United States, but according to the Alzheimer's Association, up to half of those living with the disease have not been diagnosed. Early diagnosis can lead to better health care options and improved quality of life for those who have the disease, which makes quick detection of Alzheimer's critical.

Now, Rhoda Au '82 has created a promising method for determining whether a person with low level cognitive impairment is likely to lapse into more severe dementia from Alzheimer's, using just the sound of their voice. The discovery could help patients and families deal with the devastating effects of Alzheimer's, and also assist clinicians in identifying the best candidates for new drug therapies being developed to curb the effects of the disease.

Au is a professor of anatomy and neurobiology at the Boston University Schools of Medicine & Public Health, and a principal investigator on the Framingham Heart Study team that performed the study. The findings were published in June in the *Alzheimer's & Dementia* medical journal.



Au and her colleagues at Boston University, including Ioannis Paschalidis, a professor of engineering who led the data science side of the study, built an artificial intelligence algorithm that examined recordings of the speech of persons in the program who had exhibited some cognitive issues. The algorithm determined, with 78.5 percent accuracy, whether a particular person would move from lesser cognitive problems to severe dementia within the coming six years.

The research team trained the algorithm to examine the content and syntax of speech using a portion of the recordings of study participants. They then used the AI tool to analyze the speech of a separate group of 166 participants. "Speaking is a very cognitively complex task: when we speak, we are always emitting our cognitive capabilities," Au says. "We actually do this in a common sense way all the time, interacting with friends or family members."

What makes the results of the study particularly powerful is the gold standard nature of the data used. After analyzing early recordings of patients with the algorithmic tool, the researchers checked the algorithm's predictions against the later cognitive conditions of the participants, and were thus able to clearly certify whether the algorithm had diagnosed an individual correctly.

The study was possible in large part due to Au's early intuition. She had joined the

Framingham Heart Study faculty in 1990, and in 2005 persuaded those managing the study to begin to record audio of interviews with the participants.

"One of the things that I've always been very concerned about is that the tools that we have for cognitive assessments are not sufficiently sensitive," Au explains. For instance, Au noticed that during cognitive tests of study participants—a regular part of the study's regimen—verbal responses to questions varied widely, but if a response was incorrect it was simply noted as such. This binary data entry, correct or not, left out a lot of information and nuance that Au was noticing in the interviews. "I was an early adopter of big data," Au says. "I was fortunate enough to be collecting these audio recordings while I waited for the digital voice processing and AI capabilities to develop."

As a result of the interview recordings, by the time Au and her colleagues began their study, they had a trove of patient audio going back almost two decades.

Au's ultimate goal is to use new AI combined with the ease and ubiquity of smartphones to create monitors and tools that can improve brain health over the course of a lifetime, what she calls the precision brain health initiative. "We can change the trajectory of brain health altogether," says Au. "You want people to die with the healthiest brain possible. That's our goal." [PCM](#)



Sagehen Philanthropy Expands Educational Access and Students' Horizons

Pomona's Global Learning, Study Away Programs Get \$2.5 Million Boost

Pomona College received a \$2.5 million gift to support interdisciplinary global education programs and engaged learning opportunities for students from The H. Russell Smith Foundation, Stewart R. Smith '68, P'00 '09, Robin A. Ferracone and MacKenzie C. Teymouri '09. Pomona alumnus Stewart Smith is chair emeritus of Pomona's Board of Trustees, and alumna MacKenzie Teymouri, his daughter, is a current trustee of the College.

The gift, which honors Stewart's decades of service and support for the College, is comprised of \$2 million from The H. Russell Smith



Foundation and a \$500,000 legacy gift commitment from Stewart himself. It builds momentum for the College's planned Center for Global Engagement (CGE), which will house interdisciplinary programs and activities developed through the new Stewart Smith Interdisciplinary Global Engagement Fund. CGE will be a hub where Pomona faculty and students pursuing interwoven disciplines can gather with worldwide experts to explore problems from fresh perspectives.

The College aims to expand study away and other immersive global learning opportunities to all students.

This gift will advance the Global Pomona Project as well as Pomona's new study away Faculty-Led Program, which leverages the depth and breadth of Pomona's faculty expertise. It also will strengthen the College's foundational study away programs.

"It is a simple idea," says Smith. "If knowledgeable and well-intentioned experts from other nations and cultures, along with Pomona students and faculty, get together with an aim to understand where others are coming from, good things happen for our students and our wider world."

Read more at pomona.edu/smith-family-foundation-gift. [PCM](#)



Giving Back to Expand Access to Pomona

Pomona College received a \$1 million scholarship gift from alumnus David Sklar '83 and his wife, Susan Acevedo. Given in honor of their parents, this gift will expand college access for low-income California students who plan to pursue studies in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

Sklar and Acevedo, who share an intense belief in the power of educational access, credit their parents with instilling in them the importance of higher education. "We grew up in California and came from very different backgrounds, but our parents understood and stressed the value of education," says Sklar. "We owe them everything."

Their gift establishes the Rita and Herbert Sklar & Margarita and Jesus Acevedo Memorial Scholarship Fund, named in honor of their parents, which will help broaden access to Pomona and reflects the couple's desire to create opportunities in underserved communities.

"David and Susan's gift will shape the next generation of leaders and ensure the most talented students can access an exceptional education," says Pomona College President G. Gabrielle Starr.

Pomona is a national leader in educational access and remains committed to need-blind admissions and no-loan financial aid packages. More than half of Pomona students receive financial aid. The generosity of the Pomona community, including alumni such as Sklar, makes this possible.

"The whole point of education is to be a complete, well-rounded person," says Sklar. "That's where the liberal arts come in, and we are honored to be able to help the next generation access these opportunities."

Read more at pomona.edu/sklar-acevedo-gift. [PCM](#)

Pamela Prickett: *The Unclaimed*

By Marilyn Thomsen

Pamela Prickett, associate professor of sociology, co-authored a recently published book, *The Unclaimed*, telling the stories of people who were abandoned after death in Los Angeles County. Through narrative nonfiction, the book shares the poignancy of the subjects’ lives and deaths, and the heartwarming ways strangers stepped in to provide dignity.

The Unclaimed was named to the “top books of 2024” lists at *The Atlantic*, *BookPage*, *LAist*, and NPR. In an interview with *PCM*, Prickett shares perspectives on societal alienation and the profound need for connection, offering insights into the importance of reconciliation. (Interview edited for length.)

PCM: You’ve co-written a fascinating book telling the life stories of people whose bodies were unclaimed in Los Angeles County. Who are these people?

Prickett: The unclaimed are people for whom next of kin—usually immediate family—decline to arrange a funeral or burial, cremation or some other form of disposition. When families cannot, or will not, claim a body, it becomes the responsibility of local governments to figure out what to do. Often these governments are resource-strapped and seek the cheapest, most efficient arrangements. In Los Angeles, after 30 days, a body not claimed by family is declared “abandoned” and, unless the person has assets, is cremated by the County of Los Angeles. To give the family extra time, the county stores the ashes for up to three years. At the end of that period, the ashes are interred in a common grave with everyone who died that same year.



PCM: How did you get interested in the topic?

Prickett: I hadn’t thought about it until someone I knew was on the path toward going unclaimed. A quick internet search revealed only a modest selection of news stories about unclaimed bodies in the U.S. A handful were features in the *Los Angeles Times* about the crematorium and annual burial in Boyle Heights. Once I read about the mass burial, I couldn’t get it out of my mind. How had I lived five miles away and not known about it? So I reached out to Stefan Timmermans, who I had worked with at UCLA, and we agreed to embark on this research project.

PCM: The book is, surprisingly, a page-turner. How did your career background contribute to this?

Prickett: I started my career as a journalist, working mostly in television. That experience helped shape my academic choices, including what I study and how I write. I’m committed to making research accessible to many audiences. For this book, we had the good fortune to have a skilled trade book editor who helped us envision it as narrative nonfiction, reading more like a novel. The result is a set of stories that takes readers into the lives of four Angelenos at risk of being unclaimed. We also meet the volunteers, community members and government workers dedicated to providing burials for unclaimed strangers, imparting a sense of dignity after their deaths.

PCM: The number of unclaimed in Los Angeles is rising. Why?

Prickett: The poor have always been more likely than the wealthy to be buried in unmarked graves and so-called potter’s fields. Today, Americans from all walks of life, including people with jobs and homes and families, who think they did everything right to prepare for old age, are ending up unclaimed. An estimated 2 percent to 4 percent of the people who die every year in the U.S. go unclaimed. In Los Angeles County—the most populous in the country—the number has more than doubled since the 1970s.

Shifts in the rate of the unclaimed tell us something fundamental has changed in what Americans are willing to do for their relatives—and it’s far less than in past generations.

PCM: A key commitment among members of the military is to leave no one behind. How is a group of veterans in Southern California acting on that commitment on behalf of unclaimed veterans?

Prickett: This is one way the research has revealed unexpected and heartwarming surprises. Every Wednesday, rain or shine, a group of motorcycle-riding veterans and their supporters, calling themselves Veterans Without Family, gather at Riverside National Cemetery to bury unclaimed veterans. The group takes on the role of surrogate relatives to draw attention to society’s neglect of veterans and express solidarity with their veteran “brothers and sisters,” who were often estranged from their biological families.

PCM: You also write about a group in Boyle Heights who gets together to mourn those they never knew. What motivates groups such as these?

Prickett: I attended that ceremony for the first time in 2015 and was forever changed. It felt incredible to be surrounded by people who were willing to take time out of their busy schedules to honor people they never knew. It’s a 35-minute interfaith, multi-lingual ceremony organized by a hospital chaplain, a man who walks the walk on radical kindness. By the end, you’re reminded that there is more good than evil in the world and that there is a space to create dignity and humanity for all.

PCM: What can we do as a society to reduce the alienation that too often results in people being unclaimed?

Prickett: *The Unclaimed* is a wake-up call to take stock of what really matters in life—social relationships. The book poses the haunting question, “How much did your life matter if no one close to you cares you died?” A few suggestions:

- Reach out and break through social isolation and work to repair broken relationships.
- Talk through the discomfort and sadness we often try to numb. Learn to work through conflict.
- Before cutting off ties, think about the long-term consequences. While some relationships are indeed toxic, sometimes what we label as toxic is simple disagreement. Conflict is integral to social interaction, and the more

we can work to repair fissures, the better off we will be.

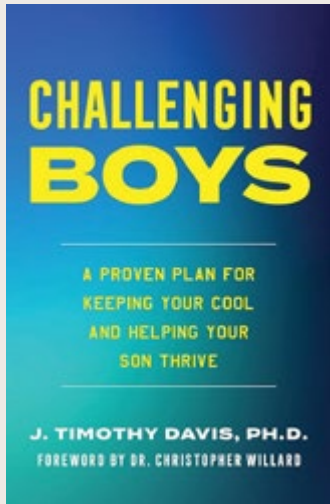
- We can change laws to create a more inclusive definition of next-of-kin. We rely on centuries-old English common law definitions of family to determine who qualifies as next-of-kin. It’s my hope that we push policymakers to assess the right to claiming based on the quality of the tie, not whether it is by blood or marriage.

PCM: How can we as individuals and communities expand our circle of caring?

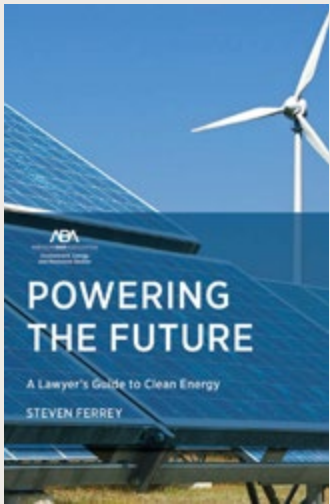
Prickett: I encourage people to attend a local ceremony for the unclaimed. Respect in death can be a rallying cry for respect in life. The unclaimed remind us that unless everybody counts, nobody counts. [PCM](#)



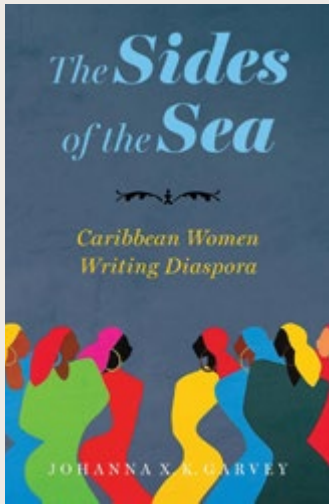
Pamela Prickett



Timothy Davis '86 draws on his experience as a child and family psychologist, father of three and volunteer firefighter.



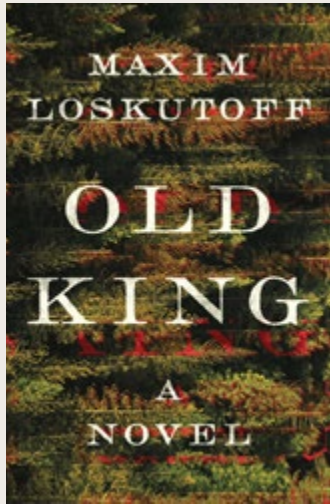
This pragmatic guide written by **Steven Ferrey '72** helps legal practitioners navigate the nuanced dynamics involved in shifting policy around renewable energy.



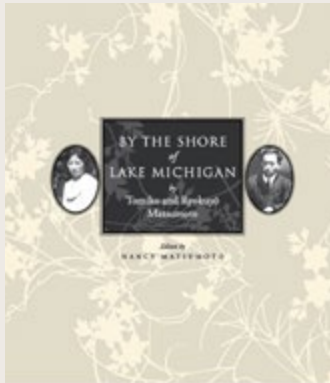
Johanna X. K. Garvey '73 examines theories of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality in the works of contemporary Caribbean women writers.



Lisa Jacobson '84 provides an in-depth account of the alcoholic beverages industries in the United States during the 1930s and '40s.



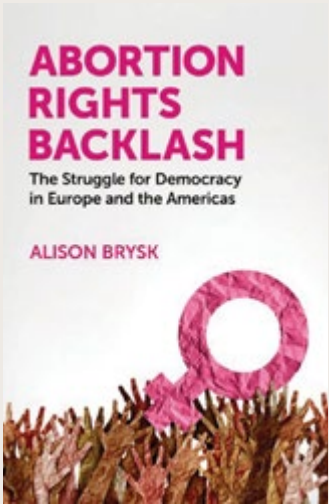
This haunting novel about the end of the frontier dream by **Maxim Loskutoff '07** was named a best book of the year by NPR and Publishers Weekly.



Nancy Matsumoto '80 translated her grandparents' words as they tell the story of their incarceration in concentration camps through Japanese *tanka* poems.



Step into the golden age of Tinseltown with this historical novel from **Ginny Kubitz Moyer '95**, set in Hollywood and the Napa Valley in the 1930s.



A political science professor at UC Santa Barbara, **Alison Brysk '81** explores recent setbacks for reproductive rights across three continents, advancing the argument that the dynamic reflects a struggle between nationalism, democracy and globalization. [PCM](#)

Book Submissions: If you've had a book published and would like to submit it for inclusion in Bookmarks, please send a review copy to **Lorraine Wu Harry, PCM Books Editor, 550 North College Ave. Claremont, CA 91711** or email us at pcmbooks@pomona.edu

Our new “Book Blurbs” column showcases alumni writing.

Marcia Aldrich '75, Enough

This essay is excerpted from Studio of the Voice, by Aldrich, a professor of creative writing at Michigan State University.

I am lying awake in an unfamiliar bed, thinking about success. It is not a king- or queen-size bed, but a double, shared with my husband in a 400-square-foot cottage that I call The Hut. I am lying here, thinking about success, because I have left my home and driven across the country to take up a semester's residence as the Mary Routt Chair in Writing at Scripps College. It is the bottom hour of the night, and ahead of me lies the long ascent of time toward morning.

The Hut sits a few blocks north of Pomona, where decades ago I was an undergraduate. Much has changed in Claremont, yet much remains the same. Old halls have been torn down, replaced by modern structures, yet the streets still carry the thick smell of eucalyptus. Once I earned my degree I moved on to a working life, to commutes on subway and bus, to corporate work and housecleaning, to graduate school, marriage and children, teaching and writing. I didn't envision coming back. And yet this return has felt necessary, even preordained, as if the time for a reckoning has come.

By many measures my return is a sign of success. I have done enough of what I set out to do—be a writer and a professor—to warrant selection to this named position. But I do not feel triumphant. No wreath of bay circles my crown. Just the opposite: I feel as if I'm lying on a bed of nails. Wandering the old campus gardens and courtyards, I meet my younger self, who doesn't give me a congratulatory wave, passing by on her

way to an important appointment. Instead she sits down beside me on the bench under the wisteria and stares into my face, assessing what I have become. Her eyes darken with disappointment. She finds me wanting. *What happened?* she asks. *I thought you would amount to so much more.* I

thought there would be so much more of you. It isn't enough, she says.

How slender she is, yet filled with expectation! Could I ever have been so young and fierce and yet so innocent? How her eyes brim with yearning! She's sure she's going to do something great with her life; no obstacle will derail her. *Little angel,* I say, *what did you expect of me, and why are you so disappointed?*

It is not enough to be a success—there's always someone more successful. I rarely compare myself to someone who has achieved less. **I notice the person ahead of me, not the person behind.** I'm focused on the one who won the prize and forget about the people who were passed over. I ask myself how many among us are where we want to be, who we want to be—as if I could argue my way out of the night. There's always somewhere we want to get, something more we need to accomplish, something to fix. Such dissatisfaction is good, keeps us moving forward. But **too much self-criticism can mist our compass, make us lose our bearings.** When will the tallying end, this measuring of myself against every other, this measuring myself against myself, this feeling of finding myself wanting?

I'm not sure when it hit me forcefully that I was flawed, essentially flawed, and no regimen of self-improvement would change that, but I'm sure my mother had something to do with it. She did a good job convincing me I was doomed to disappoint, that everything about me required renovation, though back in high school I didn't realize that I would disappoint myself more than anyone else. I considered having a T-shirt made that said *I am a deeply disappointing person* because I felt a duty to warn people, to push them away in case they didn't see my flaws and became attached to me. Any success took me by surprise and seemed a mistake. I waited for the correction to follow—I'd be stripped of the part in the play, the teacher would recalculate my A, the SAT's would be rescored, the boy would come to his senses and dump me, the college acceptance revoked. Nothing seemed too small to worry about. I envisioned a grand tribunal sitting in golden chairs in the night sky, glaring



down through my windows and judging me. The tribunal was made up of ancient women with white hair falling past their shoulders to their knees, who would ask in hushed voices: *What did you do today? What do you plan on doing tomorrow? Will it be enough?*

Enough. A word like a high mountain I can't cross to see what's on the other side—perchance a valley of milk and honey where every woman has plenty of what she needs and what she wants and knows she has reached her paradise. She's satisfied—she doesn't hanker after what hasn't been done. Enough. What's enough for me may not be enough for you. I may have wanted to tell my mother and a whole line of mother substitutes that I'd *done enough*, but I didn't because I knew my mother would say, *No, you haven't* and I wasn't sure that she wasn't right.

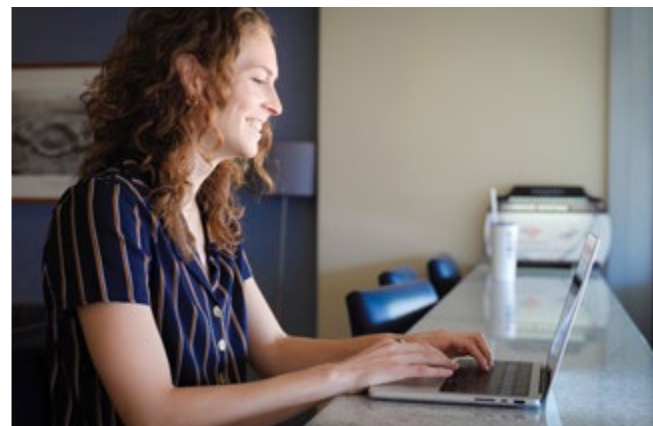
Enough can't be precisely measured, precisely stated because it's part of an emotional economy. One has to guess, make an estimate. How many hours of work is enough to consider myself productive? **How much love is enough to feel loved? How many kisses are enough to feel kissed?** How much money is enough to feel secure? Whatever scheme of measurement used, the evidence suggests it is the rare woman who has enough of anything, who doesn't want more money, more love, more time, more kisses. And in my world it is the rare woman who doesn't taunt herself because she hasn't accomplished enough, who isn't lying awake at night making yet another tally. [PCM](#)





Hooke(d) on sports analytics

By Jeff Hing



Growing up as a Boston Red Sox fan, Melissa Hooke '19 never imagined herself celebrating a championship at Yankee Stadium. Yet there she was, cheering as the "Commissioner's Trophy" was raised into a beautiful October night sky in the Bronx. Hooke, a senior quantitative analyst with the Los Angeles Dodgers, had just become a World Series champion.

Strangely enough, baseball wasn't even her second favorite sport growing up. Hooke was recruited for basketball but also played soccer at Pomona. "I was looking at small liberal arts schools in New England, then visited Pomona and fell in love with campus," she says. "Last minute, before early decision deadlines, I applied."

She played midfield in soccer and guard in basketball, sometimes juggling both seasons. "Especially with our [soccer] team—we made the NCAA tournament a couple of times, so I'd join basketball midseason and have to catch up fast."

Though an accomplished athlete, Hooke prioritized academics. "For me, it was always school first and then sports as an add-on."

Like many incoming first years, Hooke wasn't sure what she wanted to major in, but after taking math and psychology courses, she ultimately declared as a math major.

"It was really my junior fall semester when I took a class with Jo

Hardin [that] I decided that I really did love math and that there were career paths that attracted me," she says.

Hooke's time in the math department also brought her in contact with Associate Professor Gabe Chandler, a former Sagehens baseball coach who built an impressive pipeline to Major League Baseball—not for athletes, but for data analysts. Alongside his colleagues, Chandler has seen a remarkable number of graduates land roles in professional baseball analytics. Though he became Hooke's thesis advisor, he never pushed her toward the sport.

"I don't think I ever mentioned working in baseball, other than [sharing that] such career paths exist, as we've had a lot of alumni working in that space," Chandler says.

Hooke and Chandler's connection extended beyond academics. Athletics took a backseat for Hooke after knee injuries ended her college career, but she joined Chandler's intramural basketball team, "which made a deep run in the playoffs, with Melissa hitting at least one game-winner," Chandler recalls.

Academically, Hooke thrived under Chandler's mentorship, earning Best Paper at the 2020 Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Aerospace Conference for her thesis on Bayesian modeling.

A junior-year internship at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) at the California Institute of Technology introduced Hooke to aerospace analytics, leading to a full-time offer before her graduation in 2019. While her foray into aerospace wasn't necessarily expected, the position fit like a glove.

"I was working on early mission concepts and designs," Hooke says. "Basically, they'd come up with some crazy idea and say, 'we want to fly a probe into Jupiter's atmosphere and figure out what the composition is. And we want to fly these four science instruments.' I would help the team come up with that architecture and estimate the cost based on previously flown historical NASA missions."

Hooke spent five years at JPL, enjoying the space industry before an opportunity with the Dodgers emerged: A former JPL colleague working for the Dodgers and aware of her sports background sent her a job listing and "wouldn't let [her] get away with not applying."

Hooke started with the Dodgers near the end of the 2023 season, just as the team finished with the third-best regular-season record, only to be eliminated in the first round of the playoffs. Heading into 2024, expectations were high.



Among Hooke's duties as part of the 2023-24 analytics team: crunching the numbers to evaluate effectiveness of pitchers lower in the Dodgers' depth chart.

"I think this year was a challenging year for the Dodgers, in some ways, with all the expectations. Obviously, the team dealt with a lot of injuries. And as an analytics department, we had experienced a few disappointing seasons leading up to this. So, going into the playoffs, there's a lot of angst in the office. People are really nervous. A lot of people are too nervous to watch the games."

Hooke's Dodgers job is about removing emotions from decision-making in areas such as player evaluation, game strategy and team management. She primarily works on pitcher evaluation.

"Math has pushed the game of baseball forward. As we get more data, we're able to uncover more about why certain players are good," she explains. "For pitching mechanics, we track pitcher movement, and teams can use that data to extract information about delivery mechanics—when a delivery leads to better outcomes, worse outcomes or even injury. That's how we're helping teams move forward."

While analytics can clash with instinct and tradition, Hooke sees growing acceptance of its role.

"At the Dodgers, the coaches [and] executives really buy into it," she says. "We have a culture of accepting it, and that trickles down to the players."

That buy-in led to another successful regular season as the Dodgers finished with the best record in the MLB. But injuries left their pitching staff short-handed in the postseason. Part of Hooke's job was to identify pitchers in the lower ranks who could contribute to a World Series-winning team.

The Dodgers made it to the World Series, and Hooke found herself on a team-chartered plane heading to New York. After falling behind 5-0 in Game 5, she recalled the team's resolve.

"I think we kind of just said 'well, we'll get it done in L.A.' And then, as the fifth inning progressed and we started coming back, we said 'let's just finish this off.'"

The Dodgers did finish it off, winning 7-6, and Hooke became a World Series champion.

"It was a bit of relief, but also just pent-up from the last few years," she says. "Having a disappointing postseason ending before, everyone expected us to [disappoint again]. It was a celebration. It was different being in New York, but I'm glad that we were because it just tied together that magical experience." [PCM](#)





Alumna Named NCAA Woman of the Year

Alexandra Turvey '24 began her four years at Pomona College remotely, confined to tiny boxes on Zoom at the outset of the pandemic. But even from her Vancouver bedroom, Turvey could tell how special Pomona was by the eagerness of her classmates to create a community despite being scattered across the world. Once on campus, Turvey blazed a trail as a Sagehen, receiving 21 All-American honors as a swimmer and amassing 2,500 hours of basic science and clinical research. In January, Turvey was named NCAA Woman of the Year. “This award truly means the world to me,” she says, “but what is even more special to me is that it gives recognition to Pomona and what a world-class place it is to be a student-athlete.” Turvey, a biology major now in the Harvard/MIT MD-PhD Program, is the first Sagehen to receive the NCAA Woman of the Year award—which recognizes graduating student-athletes who’ve displayed excellence in academics, leadership and community service. Turvey remains thankful to her Pomona professors, friends and fellow Sagehens for creating a safe and uplifting space for her to thrive. “Pomona really exceeded all my expectations,” she says. [PCM](#)

NOW CHECKING IN FOR POMONA: THE COTTRELL SISTERS!

The Cottrell sisters may be far from home at Pomona, but on campus, a piece of home is always near. Elsa Cottrell '28 followed her older sister, Sydney, from Portland, Oregon, to Claremont to play for the Sagehens women’s basketball team. The Cottrells grew up avid sports fans, and in eighth grade, Sydney Cottrell '26 began taking stats for Elsa’s middle school basketball team—the Sellwood Kangaroos. All these years later, Sydney remains a core part of Elsa’s playing career as a statistician and game-day announcer for Sagehens women’s basketball. “As soon as Elsa made the decision to come to Pomona,” Sydney says, “I knew I had to do everything in my power to call her games, even if only to sneak in an embarrassing story or two while on air.” Elsa, a 5-foot-11 guard, was one of seven first-year players on a young Sagehens team that exceeded preseason expectations. As a newcomer, Elsa found the team culture “positive and so encouraging, a rarity in competitive sports.” In her first season, Elsa averaged 13 minutes a game, and until leaving for Germany

in the winter to study abroad for a semester, Sydney sat courtside calling all the action. “As an announcer, I think there is an expectation that you maintain a neutral tone and call the game as it is, providing insights where necessary,” Sydney says. “Thus, it’s kind of surreal having my sister out there, someone who I’ve been cheering for my whole life and who I know better than anyone.” Objective as she was, Sydney says she couldn’t help but smile calling Elsa’s name and number. In the fall, the Cottrell sisters settled into routines—Monday lunches, library study sessions—and embraced the novelty of having a sibling on campus. As Sydney was at her home games, Elsa was a regular at Sydney’s choir and a cappella group productions. “Originally, I didn’t want to go to the same school as my sister because we’ve done everything the same our whole lives,” Elsa says. “But now that I’m here, it’s really nice to have her here.” Adds Sydney: “At first I did have to tell her once or twice that she can’t keep calling me while I’m in class, but I am so grateful to have a shared college experience with her.” [PCM](#)



The Cottrells, Sydney '26 and Elsa '28



Six Sagehens Set for Hall of Fame

Six Sagehens will be inducted into the Pomona-Pitzer Athletics Hall of Fame this summer: Alyssa Corley '11, Anders Crabo '12, Annie Lydens '13, Martha Marich '12, Luke Sweeney '13 and Kirk Jones, Head Athletic Trainer. Corley (softball) remains the program leader in career home runs and runs batted in. Crabo (track and field) was a two-time All-American. Lydens (cross country/track and field) earned All-American honors in both sports. Marich (lacrosse), the career leader in goals, points and draw controls, is the first women’s lacrosse player to be inducted. Sweeney (football) holds the record for career rushing yards. Jones, who has been at Pomona-Pitzer since 1980, is head athletic trainer, as well as a mentor and expert in injury prevention and rehabilitation. The induction ceremony is scheduled for 6 p.m. on May 1 in Edmunds Ballroom. The Pomona-Pitzer Athletics Hall of Fame was established in 1958 with three inductees: Robert Strehle (track and field), Earl Merritt (football, baseball, basketball and track) and John McColl (football, basketball, track and field). More than 300 Sagehens and two teams have been inducted in the years since. Athletes must be 10 years or more removed from their final seasons of competition to be considered for induction. Sagehens also can earn induction as an honorary member, or for distinguished service. For more information, visit sagehens.com/sports/hall-of-fame. [PCM](#)

3 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR GOLF GAME

By Brian Whitehead

Take it from Gabby Herzig '21, a former Sagehens golfer whose career orbits the best in the sport: a round of golf can be enjoyed without shooting a low score. “As a competitive golfer, I’m always trying to play the best I can—it’s ingrained in me,” says Herzig, now a golf reporter for *The Athletic*, a sports website and now the sports department of *The New York Times*. “But ever since I graduated, I’ve been able to find more joy in playing recreationally with friends, co-workers and colleagues from the golf industry. I find I’m always happier and more present during the rounds when I’m not focusing on my score.” Alternatively, for those on the course hunting birdies and low numbers, Herzig offers some advice to shave a few strokes off the scorecard.

1. Don’t overthink things “Golf is such a mental game, but I feel some of the best rounds I’ve played came when my mind was really clear. You always hear the best professional golfers talk about their mentality: see ball, hit ball. Keep it as simple as that rather than trying to direct your body in the middle of your swing to do who knows what. You’re crowding your thoughts and distracting yourself from being an athlete and reacting to the target in front of you.”

2. Short game, short game, short game “Emphasize your chipping and putting. Those are your scoring clubs so spend more time practicing around the greens than you do at the driving range. You’ll think back to some of the best full-swing shots you’ve hit—amazing drives, perfectly online approach shots—and remember you three-putted and bogeyed the hole. Amazing holes materialize if you’re sharp around the green. You don’t want to waste your great full shots on poor chipping and putting.”

3. Commit to your shot “If there’s one thing you can do to increase your chances of success before hitting a shot, it’s to commit to a plan. Whether you’re deciding on the severity of a breaking putt or you’re in between clubs on a par-3, choose your path and then stick to it. Feeling committed over the ball will instantly make you more confident and comfortable, and therefore, more likely to make the swing you wanted to.” [PCM](#)



By Robyn Norwood

Collegial Creativity: A Faculty Roundtable



Esther Hernández-Medina, assistant professor of Latin American studies as well as gender and women’s studies, is a feminist academic, public policy expert and activist from the Dominican Republic.



Jane Liu, professor of chemistry, is also CEO of BRT Biotechnologies, a small-molecule drug discovery startup she co-founded with fellow Sagehen Greg Copeland ’96.



John Pennington, associate professor of dance, is the artistic director of Pennington Dance Group and ARC (A Room to Create) Pasadena after a career as a performer and teacher with the Bella Lewitzky Dance Company.



Prageeta Sharma, Henry G. Lee ’37 Professor of English, is the author of six collections of poetry, including *Onement Won*, to be published in September. She is a recipient of a 2025 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship.

What is the role of creativity in steering the work of dancers, poets, scientists and activists? What follows is a condensed and collated conversation with four Pomona professors from different fields, drawing on themes about the practice and teaching of what it means to create.

Q: Welcome, all. We’re interested in how you think about creativity. Is it innate? Is it a practice, something that can be summoned?

Pennington: I think this has been a question of the ages. You’ve often heard about “the muses descending” and all of these ways that people are creative, and no one can put their finger on it. Over the years, particularly working in a liberal arts college and through my own investigation and curiosity, I’ve found that creativity lies a lot in neuroscience.

There’s the prefrontal cortex; it’s the executive director. There’s also the “fight or flight” response of the sympathetic nervous system. So there’s a saying that creativity comes in the three B’s—the bed, the bath and the bar. If you look at the bed, the bath and the bar, those are three places that you relax and you feel safe, for the most part. The prefrontal cortex kind of shuts off. The “fight or flight” response is not active, either. A lot of artists have said that they have their most creativity before falling asleep or when they wake up, and that’s when the brain is partly shut down.

Q: That reminds me that Paul McCartney [of the Beatles] has said the melody of “Yesterday” came to him in a dream. Have any of you had ideas or solutions come to you that way?

Liu: I don’t know if I’ve solved the problem in my dream but when you’re sort of dozing, something might come in there. I actually will make sure I get up and go write it down. Maybe that’s the key, [since] I’d like to sleep ... I don’t want to stay up and work it out, but I don’t want to forget it, either!

Q: Jane, many of us think first of the arts when we think about creativity. But what is the role of creativity in the sciences?

Liu: Whenever you're doing scientific research or trying to progress science forward, you're never doing the same thing someone else did. It always has to be something new. You need to think: What is the question I even want to ask? That requires creativity. Then, how are you going to approach answering that question or testing your hypothesis? You and I could ask the exact same question but take two completely different approaches based on what inspired us at that time, what our background is, what we read that morning or the conversation we had down the hall. So pulling these different pieces together—and then fitting that into progressing science and doing scientific research—that, to me, is a creative process.

Q: Esther, what are some of the ways you experience creativity in the social sciences?

Hernández-Medina: The area where I use creativity the most is in my teaching. Especially during the pandemic, I really rethought and retooled all my classes. Pomona's Information Technology Services and The Claremont Colleges Center for Teaching and Learning had all these workshops, and I took almost all of them. One way is putting together digital books: We use Pressbooks to collect students' class papers. It makes them feel empowered as authors: "Oh, wait, I am publishing, this is so cool." Some use the link in their graduate school applications. I also sometimes use the link to their papers in the digital book when I'm writing recommendation letters for them. The students are the ones who come up with the

title for the book, the subtitles, the art for the cover. So that's another way of making them reconnect with their creativity. In some of my classes, the final project is now a podcast about their papers, after learning how to produce and edit podcasts at The Hive.

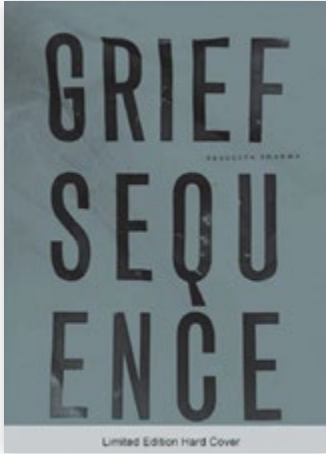
Q: Prageeta, as a poet, how do you draw out creativity in your students?

Sharma: For me, creativity comes from reading and teaching and community and attachment. What is so much fun for me is this class on the theme of diaries and daybooks that I'm teaching now. My late husband was married prior to me, and he left me his first wife's diary she had kept for many years in the 1990s before she died in 1998. She was a really stunning person and it's a beautiful diary. He said, "Please write about her if you feel compelled to." I also have his writings

that he left me, notes for me to read after he passed. So in class we started talking about what diaries mean to us, what kind of writing we find there, and what we hope to imagine for ourselves with private writing. I try to bring questions and subjects and work I'm engaged with to my students, to think and work and share interests together. We nurture, I think, a safe classroom that becomes sacred to our writing and to our ideas of ourselves.

Q: You've been able to keep writing poetry at such difficult times in your life, publishing the collection *Grief Sequence* following the death of your first husband, Dale Sherrard, to cancer in 2015. You tragically lost your

second husband, Mike Stussy, to cancer in 2023, and your upcoming collection *Onement Won* includes poems you wrote during his illness. It's so common for people to try to shut everything out. Did you will yourself to continue writing? Or was it a form of therapy?



Sharma: You know, I feel lucky that Mike was so supportive of my writing poetry. He was always trying to make room for it even as we were in a caregiving situation. But I wanted to document my time with him, too. I see poetry as a record, and that it has a dailiness to it that is sacred.

Q: I'm often surprised at how many young people have suffered losses, a parent or a friend. Does sharing your experience bring out things the students may not have fully expressed before?

Sharma: Yes, students have disclosed to me personal loss, and what I hope to do is just to make them feel supported as best that I can. We think about the tradition of the elegy, the eulogy, the ode. We think about poetic forms as holding so much for them.



Michael O'Malley at Chan Gallery during the closing reception of his exhibition

“My exhibit tests out the possibility that, like objects, I am more akin to process: emerging, changing, disappearing. The ‘exhibition’ changes each day. Sometimes a new form is added. Other times a rearranging or a removal. Arrangements of flowers echo this continuum of change as a practice of engagement and witness.”

O'Malley's "Headless Object" Exhibit

A Professor of Art at Pomona, Michael O'Malley has focused his work on engaging the aesthetics and conventions that shape the built environment. His winter exhibit at the Chan Gallery reflects his belief in art as agency—that we all create from a position in which we “make choices and exert control over the material world.”



Design as a Process for Impact



A visualization lab from the Human-Centered Designed class.

Fred Bolarinwa (HMC '25), Janny Wu (PZ '25), Michelle Tran '24, Cecé Malone '24

What is The Hive?

The Hive, more formally known as the Rick and Susan Sontag Center for Collaborative Creativity, aims to foster collaboration and innovation for students of the Claremont Colleges.

What does The Hive do?

The Hive is a design and innovation center that hosts courses and activities that are exploratory, collaborative, and experiential, including...

- full-credit courses in Human-Centered Design and Impact Innovation
- workshops and events that introduce alternative ways of engaging with the liberal arts
- makerspaces where students are given access to materials for building, prototyping, sewing, screen printing, woodworking, and music production
- courses from around the 7Cs

Who does The Hive work with?

The Hive offers human-centered design collaborations with a diverse variety of community partners, ranging from The LA Department of Health to LAist Public Radio and StoryHouse Ventures.

Visit colleges.claremont.edu/thehive if you'd like to get your organization involved!

Q: Several of you have mentioned the idea of a safe place to create, a safe place for students to be in general. John, tell us your thoughts on that.

Pennington: When I am teaching beginners, I know I have to eliminate the fear of them thinking that I'm going to make them dance. That wall is up immediately because they hear "dance" or "movement" and say, "I'm not a dancer." But the feedback and what they tell other students is that this class is very safe. I know what that means.

I get at beginners through problem-solving, and part of that is improvisation. One of the first exercises is to walk anywhere in the room and then sometimes I guide them and tell them to change directions. Can you walk at a different level? Can you walk high or low? And already we're addressing part of the art form, and that is space design, motion design and floor design.

You put limitations on that creativity, or what can get produced within that problem-solving. Because what happens in any art form, when you tell people, "Just go do anything you want," it is frightening. You need entry points and guardrails, and you need to know where you're headed. Hopefully that becomes something that's embodied in the students so that they say, "What if I went up or down, or did a turn here?" We're trying to put a language to movement and identify some of those movements so that they have a toolbox. During the semester, they get more and more comfortable. They know that I'm not going to ask them to put their leg up over their ears.



John Pennington teaches beginner dance students

Q: I'm hearing again and again about safety, community, collaboration. Esther, you're the co-founder of a group called Tertulia Feminista Magaly Pineda, a monthly gathering of Dominican feminists and activists, and you're also involved with the work of Josefina Báez, a Dominican artist in multiple genres who developed a method she calls "performance autology."

Hernández-Medina: Performance autology is a way to harness your creativity in whichever way you express it. It might be as an artist, but it might be as an intellectual or an activist. The output is different, but you are still creating something.

[Báez] also emphasizes that you are creating a work of art with your life, and that includes taking care of your health and taking care of yourself while doing art. Part of the reason she founded the group was because

she was very concerned about the fact that many artists are socialized to believe that they should do art despite themselves. It's this whole myth about having to be the tortured artist to actually be able to create. And she was like, "No, no, it's the opposite. You need to take care of yourself, so that your art is sustainable, and so that your life is sustainable."

Q: Jane, what about teaching science students to think creatively and in a safe environment?

Liu: I still am figuring that out, because if you're just saying, "Just do whatever you think of," that could cause an explosion.

I think one of the challenges in science is you have to be able to understand some fundamental information first or know how to carry out some techniques. So there is a little bit of, "Know these facts; know how to carry out this protocol," where I don't think there's a ton of creativity there. But you need that first stage to then be able to say, "Now just let your mind wander and be open." Once you have a foundation, you can start thinking about creativity.

Q: I'm reminded that there is creativity in business, too. Besides being a full-time chemistry professor, Jane, you're the co-founder of an early-stage startup, BRT Biotechnologies, in the area of drug discovery.

Liu: We are making a very specific class of small molecules called macrocycles. We're trying to make large collections of these macrocycles

to then sell to a pharmaceutical company or another biotech company, so that they can then find the next big thing.

Just being able to talk about and share the vision with others is a very creative process. There's that 30-second elevator pitch and there's that 20-minute deep dive you might prepare. There's the website you might put together. There are all of these different audiences. And it's constantly this creative process of, "How do I talk about what we're doing in a way that gets other people excited or understanding what I'm feeling and understanding?" No one thing works. It's a different sort of pitch if I'm talking to someone who has a background in biotech startups, versus someone who's just excited about the science, versus someone who has no idea about small-molecule drug discovery, versus someone who really just wants to know about the return on investment.

Q: Let's close with a question about everyday creativity. There was a recent book by music producer Rick Rubin, *The Creative Act: A Way of Being*, that was a No. 1 *New York Times* bestseller. You don't end up on the bestseller list for weeks and weeks because only artists are interested. Is that something you all believe—that everyone, not just the artist, is a creative being?

Pennington: I absolutely do. How do we get through the world without creativity? It's about acknowledging it and giving yourself time to honor it. I don't think many people who have been on one track their whole life have given themselves time. You know where it happens? It happens in retirement. All the hostels, all the painting classes, because they didn't have time or they didn't think they had time. You look at *The New York Times* bestsellers, there will be a book about creativity almost every year.

I do believe that everyone is creative, and that there are acts you can take every day. It's about a moment in improvisation, about a different decision. It's as simple as driving home a different way and seeing something new. It's going to call upon a new response in the brain and challenge your senses. It's stopping and allowing room for something else. [PCM](#)



Serena Lin '25

With Uplift Notes, this Sagehen wants to counter isolation for seniors—and maybe even slow the progression of Alzheimer's.

Connection? There's An App For That

How Neuroscience Research Can Inform Intergenerational Conversation

By Lorraine Wu Harry '97

In an age of pervasive social isolation, Serena Lin '25 thinks that cultivating connection through conversation is something that's still very much in the cards.

Her cards are called "Uplift Notes," and she's sold more than 200 boxes of them. A neuroscience major, she tested her deck on several hundred people of all ages, with a particular focus on bridging the generational gap between young adults and senior citizens, a group particularly susceptible to isolation and loneliness.

At Pomona, Lin studies Alzheimer's disease, which has afflicted both her late great-grandfather and her great-aunt. She says that her work has helped her realize that Alzheimer's treatment is not just about diet and medication, but social engagement.

During her sophomore year, Lin enrolled in a human-centered design course at The Hive, a design center at The Claremont Colleges (see sidebar on page 24). This class, and the mentorship of Hive executive director Fred Leichter, provided the support to create Uplift Notes to help facilitate more social interaction.

To develop the product, Lin consulted with several neuroscience faculty and alumni experts who gave her insights on the complexity of Alzheimer's, including her thesis advisor and Assistant Professor Jonathan King, Professor Karen Parfitt and Daniel Gibbs '73, author of *A Tattoo on my Brain: A Neurologist's Personal Battle against Alzheimer's Disease*. Her ongoing testing of the game has included working with Lyn Juckniess '74 at Pilgrim Place, a retirement community in Claremont. Uplift Notes also has been used at Pomona's Alumni Weekend and Bridging the Gap, a program Lin participated in that addresses religious and political polarization.

Lin is now working on a version of the toolbox specifically for individuals with neurological challenges such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. The 2.0 edition is part of what's driving her senior thesis on social engagement for Alzheimer's patients, with a focus on trying to reduce feelings of anxiety and loneliness.

Her ultimate desire is to get the toolbox into the hands of as many Alzheimer's support groups, hospitals and senior centers as possible. But she also hopes that people of all ages and backgrounds will make use of Uplift Notes as a social engagement tool that's "good for your well-being, longevity and brain health." [PCM](#)



Creativity? That's Child's Play

By Brian Whitehead

By his senior year at Pomona, Mac Barnett '04 knew what kind of stories captivated children.

What he didn't know was how to write them.

Barnett, an English major fascinated by complex poetry and other pieces of fiction, spent his college summers as a camp counselor in Berkeley, California, reading to preschoolers. One book in particular, *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* by Jon Scieszka, kindled Barnett's love for children's literature.

"I thought, 'This is the kind of thing I love and that I study, but these 4-year-olds aren't going to get it,'" Barnett recalls. "But when I read this book to them, they were getting the most sophisticated jokes. That's when I figured out that kids were the best audience for the kind of stories that I liked."

Impassioned his senior year to write for children, Barnett convinced the late author and Pomona Professor David Foster Wallace to let him into his creative writing class. On top of challenging his students to shed their writing habits, Barnett says, Wallace underscored the importance of the writer-reader relationship.

"He had such a focus on taking care of the reader," Barnett recalls. "Him explaining how you, at a desk alone in a room, should have your audience in mind and consider how a sentence or plot twist is going over with the reader—it just made so much sense, especially for picture books, which are usually read out loud to kids. Consider the adult reading and the kid listening."

Twenty years after graduating from Pomona, Barnett has written more than 60 books for children and won myriad awards.

In February, *The New York Times* best-selling author was appointed the ninth National Ambassador for Young People's Literature by the Library of Congress. During his two-year term, Barnett will travel the country championing children's picture books as a quintessential American art form.

"Taking children's books seriously requires us to take children seriously," he says. "Children are misunderstood, overlooked, dismissed, not listened to—and really caring about the books they read requires us to see



Photo: Chris Black

"Pomona taught me how to think from different perspectives, to look at problems in different ways, and to let go of certainty, which I think is often the enemy of literature."

—Mac Barnett '04

Spring 2025



Mac Barnett '04, seen here at his inauguration as National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, draws inspiration from art, music and theatre, and incorporates the complexities of those mediums into his stories. (Shawn Miller/Library of Congress)

them for who they really are [as] dimensional human beings who feel deeply and think in interesting and complicated ways."

Learning how to think

Barnett wanted to be a writer long before leaving the Bay Area for Pomona in the early 2000s.

He started writing poetry in middle school, then plays and novels as he got older. At Pomona, he wrote sketch comedy and developed an interest in journalism and nonfiction that he once thought would turn into a future in academic writing.

As Barnett pondered his career prospects, he says Pomona professors like Paul Saint-Amour encouraged him to be skeptical, thoughtful and curious.

"Pomona taught me how to think from different perspectives, to look at problems in different ways, to let go of certainty, which I think is often the enemy of literature," Barnett adds. "I would be a much less interesting writer if I hadn't gone to Pomona."

One day his senior year, Barnett mentioned to a Pitzer College friend that in the summer he'd discovered the book *Stinky Cheese Man* while at camp. The friend was Scieszka's daughter, who introduced Barnett to her father shortly thereafter.

In 2008, Scieszka was named the first National Ambassador for Young People's

Literature. A year later, Scieszka helped Barnett publish his first book, *Billy Twitters and His Blue Whale Problem*.

Barnett says that, when he left Pomona, he told himself he would take a year and try to write a picture book. If it didn't work out, he would go back to get a Ph.D. somewhere.

"Even when I got my third book published," he says, "I didn't think writing would be a career."

Writing for young readers

Barnett learned early in his career to listen to children.

Writing for kids and adults is similar, he says, in that both appreciate the great themes of literature—love, jealousy, betrayal, discovery. Barnett hit his stride as an author when he started focusing on concerns children have and asking young readers questions rather than answering them.

In 2017, Barnett published *The Wolf, the Duck, and the Mouse*—the picture book he says epitomizes his approach to writing.

"What's powerful about picture books is that they can go very deep very fast," he says. "It's a short form of literature—32 pages, sometimes 40—and not a lot of words per page. But it can get to some of life's deepest questions, and I feel I did that [with *The Wolf, the Duck, and the Mouse*]."

Barnett draws inspiration from art, music and theatre, and incorporates the complexities of those creative mediums into his stories. He says that, because children tend to be insulated from much of the world, children's books tend to feel cloistered from the rest of literary culture—but that the best ones are sophisticated, thought-provoking and challenging.

"As adults, when we encounter something we don't understand, we often push it aside because it makes us feel stupid," he says. "But kids just bravely charge into challenging texts. It's really inspiring to watch."

With more than 5 million copies sold and a stop-motion animated series on Apple TV+ based on his and co-creator Jon Klassen's *Shapes* series of picture books, Barnett recognizes the responsibility he has in writing for a time in a young reader's life.

As National Ambassador, he has the platform to enlighten adults on the power of children's books and the brilliance of the kids who read them. He says that he appreciates living in the space of early childhood, likening it to a train station where kids are constantly passing through.

"I'm sitting there [with my] violin ... [trying] to play them a beautiful piece of music that makes sense in that moment," he says. "Maybe they'll remember the tune when they get where they're going, but even if they don't, all that matters is that I played a good piece while they were there." [PCM](#)

Don Daglow

Don Daglow '74 may not be a household name, but his experiences at Pomona helped mold him into the mind behind some of the most influential video games of all time.

By Adam Conner-Simons '08

Don Daglow '74 has earned much acclaim and multiple awards—including an Emmy—for designing some of the earliest video games in a range of different genres, including arguably the world's first role-playing game (RPG),^{*} the first world-building game, and the first graphical massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG).^{*} Indeed, you can draw a

straight line between many of his contributions and blockbuster games like "Roblox,"^{*} "Grand Theft Auto,"^{*} and "Minecraft,"^{*} that help fuel an industry that rakes in nearly \$200 billion in annual sales.

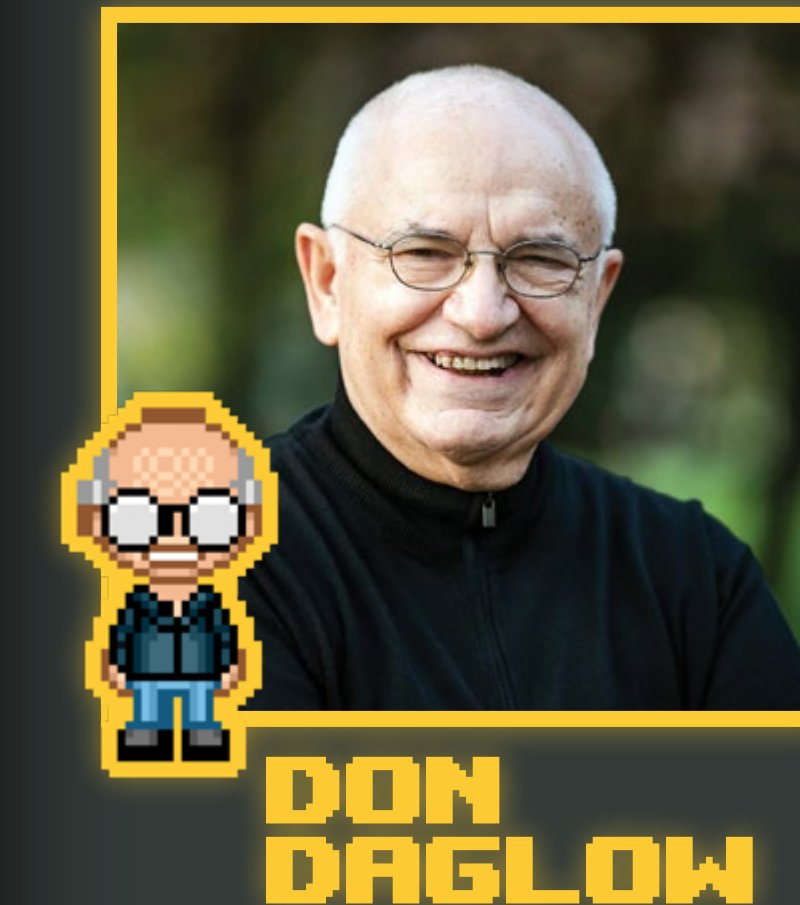
This spring Daglow jumps onto the SageCast podcast for a wide-ranging conversation with Pomona Associate Professor of Computer Science Joe Osborn, who—in addition to having an MFA in game design—conducts research on artificial intelligence and

its impact on interactive systems like video games.

Osborn spoke with Daglow about some of the design pioneer's favorite projects and how the medium has evolved to become a catalyst of creativity for hundreds of millions of people around the globe.

(Please note that this interview has been edited for length and clarity.)

^{*} Confused by all the acronyms? See glossary on page 34.



OSBORN: Before you got to Pomona, what were some of the earliest experiences that felt "creative" for you?

DAGLOW: My original goal when I was in sixth or seventh grade was to be a writer, then a novelist, then a playwright. In high school I was writing plays and had some things performed, and was very much set on that goal, so when I came to Pomona I already had a vision of wanting to do something in theatre. As a sophomore I saw a really innovative production of "The Taming of the Shrew" that just made my head explode in terms of what theatre could be.

In the last couple of decades there's been a bit of a moral panic around video games—some educators, parents and members of Congress believe that they stifle creativity and that kids spend too much time in front of the screen and can't think or imagine things for themselves. How do you feel that video games can inspire creativity in yourself and others?

There's no question that games can inspire creativity in the same way that great writing can. When I was a kid I read Dr. Seuss books and then started writing my own, styled after [him]. I grew up in a family where I was very loved, but also where it got very loud and combative, so retiring away to books and games was part of my defense against the world. It's a place you can go that can give you comfort and perspective, and open up great wide vistas.

This makes me think about some of the specific sources of inspiration you've drawn from in your work, including "Dungeons and Dragons" (D&D)^{*}—also the subject of moral panic in the '70s and '80s. What inspired your interest and embarking on the project of making a "D&D" game while at Pomona?

I started out making games by chance. At the time computers were really only accessible to faculty and upperclass students majoring in math and the sciences. But in 1971 [Math Professor] Paul Yale and Jim Cowart '73 got a grant from the Sloan Foundation and put two computer terminals in the lobby of Mudd-Blaisdell. One morning I walked in and heard the terminals making a clickity-clack kind of sound, and [the folks there] said, "Oh, hi! Want to learn how to use the computer?" You could interact with and play games on it, which [I loved] as a theatre person.

So, before "D&D" came along, I'd been writing games—and plays—at Pomona for several years. For my senior play, Pomona theatre majors had other projects they were committed to, so I had actors join from "Strut and fret" at the other five colleges. Fast forward a year after we graduate, and these actors have fallen in love with this new "D&D" game, and I got a call one day to play. I go, and my brain just explodes [thinking about] all the things this could be. At that point, it wasn't that I wanted to write the "Dungeon" game. It was that I couldn't **not** write it.

"Language—and expression—is how we as individuals take our emotional experiences and translate that into something that registers with someone else."

-Don Daglow

There's a lot of energy right now around large language models (LLMs), but they make content in a very different way from the interactive fiction of the past. How do you feel that [LLMs] compare to the kind of stuff people were doing on computers in the 1980s?

I've got a fair amount of experience with LLMs, and it's really apples and oranges. When I was learning to program at Pomona, I actually wrote an early chatbot called ECALA. I treated it like a game [of] trying to fool the player into thinking they're talking to a real person—and what LLMs do is allow the computer to fool the player much longer than we could. Ask [an LLM] to write a 500-word story ... and you can see the standard story-

beats it's trying to recreate. But it feels like it was written by a human being who's way too self-important and trying too hard.

Compared to what we had 50 years ago, [AI today is] a hell of an accomplishment, and there are certain ways in which it's been a useful tool that can save a lot of time for people. I think there have been some good examples of games that have been enhanced by AI: if it's done selectively, you can get some very nice "non-playable character" interactions that add more depth. The problem is business people start thinking that you can take that good idea being dropped into places selectively and start saying "what if I put it everywhere?" And that's not really how it works. Ultimately the chemistry that goes into human creativity is different, but we should expect machine creativity to continue to improve.

There's always that tension of whether thought prefigures language or language prefigures thought. In the '70s and '80s the former paradigm was dominant, and now we're in a world where it seems like many people believe that a language machine also knows and understands things. It's an interesting debate.

This makes me think of my playwrighting advisor Steve Young. He would always say that passion and emotion are what drive our lives and, therefore, our stories. Language and expression is how we as individuals take our emotional experiences and translate that into something that registers with someone else.

He would say, "Give somebody an idea, and maybe they'll remember it until Monday, but make somebody feel an emotion, and they can't help but remember it on Monday." In fact, maybe they can't stop thinking about it for weeks, months or even years. If you think about movies that hit you hard, or a book that changed how you look at things, that's because the emotion was translated into language, which conveyed the power and the relevance to an individual. In 50-plus years of leading teams and producing video games of all kinds, that perspective has helped almost every single day of my career, which is why I feel such gratitude to Dr. Young. What a gift.

ROOTS OF UTOPIA

You can view "Utopia" as a "building" toy—as a way to make little worlds. Kids have played with building toys for millennia. Games like "Minecraft" have over 40 million monthly users who play seven-plus hours a week. (My own son is among them, and I think he's pulling up the average.) What does this explosion of interest in world-building games say to you about what people are interested in engaging with, and what do you know about how different people have used these games in different ways?

It's a great example of the power of video games, to take established kinds of toys and expand them. When I was a kid I played with my dad's old Erector set, and then Kenner's [Girder and Panel] building set, which was basically plastic pizzas that you could fit together to build buildings and bridges with. It's that continuation of [the idea that] building things is fun.

Just this idea of "what if" is so fascinating: if I do this, what will happen? We face that in real life all the time. If I have the doughnuts for dinner, instead of something with protein and vitamins, what will happen? "Well, I have a good idea, so I think I should have the protein." That's a constructive part of our lives—and I think video games have just made that explode in wonderful ways.

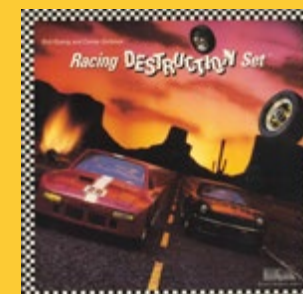


Published eight years before "SimCity," "Utopia" was developed for Mattel's 1979 Intellivision console and later recognized by Guinness World Records as the first simulation video game.

DON'S DEEDS: a brief timeline of Daglow's most groundbreaking games

Widely viewed as the first computer role-playing game (RPG) on non-classroom systems, "Dungeon" was based on the "Dungeons & Dragons" tabletop RPG that had launched in 1974. Developed in the tiny computer room in Daglow's Mudd-Blaisdell dorm, it ran on PDP-10 mainframe computers and represented the first game with "line of sight" graphics pre-dating today's first-person games.

"Utopia" was a pivotal early sandbox game where two players each control their own island. Arguably the first strategy game to incorporate real-time elements versus being exclusively turn-based, it is often referred to as "Civilization 0.5"—a reference to the 1991 turn-based PC game that itself inspired influential games such as "SimCity" and "Minecraft."



"Adventure Construction Set" (with Stuart Smith) and its follow-up "Racing Destruction Set" (1985, with Rick Koenig) represented a fundamental shift

toward "game creation systems" in which users can develop their own games. It included seven small "toolkits" that enabled customized tile-sets, maps and objects to create different worlds, plus a complete original game by Smith called "Rivers of Light."

Another entry in Daglow's "D&D"-related productions, "Neverwinter Nights" is widely considered the world's first graphical massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), spurring a devoted following of users battling monsters in a medieval city. Pre-dating popular games like 2004's "World of Warcraft," in 2008 it was honored with a technical Emmy for its innovation in advancing the field of MMORPGs.





1976

1981

1984


1991


 **There's also a vein of world-building games where [users] are making the actual rules and encounters. When you were producing "Adventure Construction Set" and "Racing Destruction Set," what led you to think that these would be interesting in the market, rather than just be tools for game developers?**

 When I joined Electronic Arts (EA) in late 1983, I was teamed up with Stuart Smith, who EA had signed to do another mythological adventure game ["Rivers of Light"] that he had already created and that they had already signed off on. We were talking about his project, and he said that what he had really wanted to do was something like "Adventure Construction Set." This was aligned with what I had in mind: going back to when I wrote "Dungeon" on the mainframe at CGU, I was thinking "how can we fill all this space [in a game] without having to author everything individually?"

I went back to EA CEO Trip Hawkins and said, "I want to change the game that you all approved." I was naive and new in the process,

coming from this big corporation Mattel to what was then this little startup (EA), I didn't realize that when you do something like that, you might get the game uncreated. But we made our pitch [to EA] to let people build their own adventures. Stuart would do the adventure game he was planning to do, but he'd build it with this 'construction set,' and then we'd have another tutorial adventure that'll show you all the other things you can do with the game.

 **From a user-creativity perspective, do you have experiences of how people have played world-building games like "Neverwinter Nights" and "Utopia" that have surprised you—ways that players' creativity has taken you off-guard?**

 Yes! It happens enough that we have an industry term for that: emergent gameplay. People play with our games in ways we never ever could have imagined. I would say that "Neverwinter Nights" is not about writing a story, it's about the set design. You're creating a world in which other people can play,

and people will think of things you never would have thought of.

[Even] the idea that they would form communities—there are still people today playing the [19]90s versions of "Neverwinter Nights" from AOL, in some cases with people who they've been playing with for 35 years. There are groups on social media that I can go visit where these people still get together. Through the community they've created a world that's infinitely bigger and longer-lasting than anything I ever created. If you provide a grain of sand and it builds into something like that over time, it's just incredibly inspiring.

It can be different ways to play, it can be communities built on top of games, it can be completely new games designed using the same old tools and ways you would never expect. It's one of the wonderful parts of doing game design, to see amazing things [done] not by professional game designers, but by a high school kid in New Orleans, or a medical assistant in Dubuque. They will come up with these brilliant, creative, innovative twists. It's just so much fun to see. [PCM](#)

GAMING 101: A GLOSSARY

Computing & Gaming Concepts

Chatbots simulate human conversation using preprogrammed responses to user input.

Large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT are a type of AI trained on huge amounts of text to generate natural language responses.

World-building games let players design and shape virtual environments or societies. **Role-playing games (RPGs)** involve players assuming different characters in fictional settings, while **"massively multiplayer online" RPGs (MMORPGs)** bring together huge numbers of gamers interacting online in the same **persistent world**, which continues to exist and evolve while players are offline.

Strategy games tend to focus on planning skills rather than instant action.

Games & Franchises

"Dungeons & Dragons" ("D&D"): A tabletop game known for storytelling and character customization, that laid the foundation for modern RPGs.

"Grand Theft Auto" ("GTA"): A crime game franchise where players complete missions and explore its vast open world at their own pace.

"Minecraft": A sandbox game where players build and explore block-based environments. Its open-ended gameplay has inspired countless user-created modifications and worlds.

"Roblox": A platform where users create, share and play user-generated games. With millions of user-created experiences, it functions as both a game and a development platform.

The two main types are **turn-based strategy (TBS)** like "D&D," where players take turns with their actions, and **real-time strategy (RTS)** like "Warcraft," where everyone plays simultaneously.

Sandbox games like "GTA" and "Minecraft" generally lack standardized or predetermined goals, leading to a larger degree of creativity. They are often **"open world,"** lacking traditional levels and borders like walls or doors that limit them to a particular area of play.

Non-player characters (NPCs) like quest givers or shopkeepers are controlled by the computer.

Interactive fiction tools like script generators create written content or character interactions, allowing players to navigate a text-based story by making choices to shape the narrative.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONSOLES

* Years represent U.S. release dates



Atari 2600, 1977
As one of the first systems with interchangeable cartridges that let you play more than one game, made the medium viable for home use **(Units sold: 30M+)**



Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), 1983
Alongside its 1991 sequel SuperNES, played a key role in kick-starting gaming, with its directional "D-pad" becoming widely adopted by other platforms **(Units sold: 62M)**



Nintendo Game Boy, 1989
Ushered in the birth of the portable gaming device **(Units sold: 119M)**



Sony PlayStation, 1994
Introduced 3D graphics and CD-quality sound, as well as more narrative-driven titles **(Units sold: 102M)**

Sony PlayStation 2, 2000
Popularized the idea of consoles as entertainment hubs, with a DVD player and internet collectivity **(Units sold: 160M)**



Nintendo Wii, 2006
Spearheaded the gesture-based interface, spurring further research in augmented reality and virtual reality **(Units sold: 101M)**



Nintendo Switch, 2017
Revolutionized the "hybrid console" both for portability and home systems **(Units sold: 146M)**



SOUND-SCOUTING WITH DEF JAM CEO

TUNJI BALOGUN '04

By Zan Romanoff

It's a Friday afternoon in the middle of January, and Tunji Balogun '04 is multitasking. He has one hand on the wheel of his car and a Zoom call going on his phone, as he navigates to a local In-N-Out Burger for his first real meal of the day. His schedule as the CEO and chairman of Def Jam Recordings does this, sometimes: keeps him busy enough that he can't fit in lunch until after 3 p.m.

On this particular Friday, though, Los Angeles is still reeling from the spate of wildfires that have burned up tens of thousands of acres of land across the county. The sky is blue, but you can still taste the ash in the air. So as he drives, Balogun is reflecting on his place in the order of things: what it means to

dedicate your life and career to creativity when the world is quite literally burning around you.

"I would say I've dedicated my career to trying to uplift forward-thinking, cutting-edge artists making Black music," he says. To him, Black music is a loose and expansive category that cuts across genres, encompassing dance, R&B and pop as well as dancehall, reggae and hip-hop.

Balogun says that the fires that surround his city bring his vision of the power of art into clear focus. "In a chaotic, wild world, people need healthy forms of escape," he says. "Music is one of humanity's creations that brings us closer together [and] serves as a healing force. My approach has been to try to do my part and leave a legacy that I can be proud of."

He's done plenty of legacy-building in the first decade of his career. Since his first internship at Warner Records, which Balogun landed while still at Pomona, he's helped launch the careers of artists including Kendrick Lamar, Khalid, Bryson Tiller, Doja Cat and SZA. Now his role at Def Jam means he's in charge of shepherding the work of hip-hop luminaries such as LL Cool J and Public Enemy's Chuck D as well as newcomers like Elmiene, who Balogun says has "one of the best voices I've heard in my life."

But becoming one of music's most influential tastemakers wasn't the plan when he first got into the business. During that Warner internship, Balogun wasn't thinking about eventually elevating into the executive suite—he wanted to learn the ropes in order to break through himself as a rapper.

Tunji's Take

Kendrick Lamar

I got to work with Kendrick really early in his career. Seeing an artist like him who is such a great example of storytelling and forward-thinking, fearless art from an unapologetically Black American voice—that inspired me. It gave me the goal of, "OK, this is the type of stuff that I want to work on and be a part of throughout my career."

But as soon as he got into the boardroom, Balogun realized that most of the other people there were business majors, not music obsessives. He, on the other hand, was already scouring the internet for up-and-coming acts at a time when that wasn't yet common. He had an enthusiast's deep-rooted knowledge combined with a fan's earnest love of the work. And as Balogun surveyed the landscape around him, it became clear that he probably could have a bigger impact helping facilitate others' careers than narrowly focusing on his own.

He felt like his liberal arts background made him particularly well-suited to the task. "I'm a studious, well-educated Nigerian-American kid who went to schools like Deerfield and Pomona," he says now. "I've always kind of had dual citizenship. I'm in the creative community, but I also can go into board meetings and talk about quarterly finance projections." That flexibility made him an ideal "translator" between corporate and creative.

He also felt a responsibility as a Black man in an industry that has historically exploited Black artists. "Something I noticed when I got my first internship was [that] there are a lot of *artists* who look like me, but not a lot of *executives*," he recalls. "So there's always been a goal in the back of my head to be an advocate and a strong voice for people who don't really have a lot of people advocating for them."

He's been able to do that for many artists over the years—but often at the cost of his own creative pursuits. Dedicating himself to his job means that Balogun rarely makes his own music anymore. So he scratches that particular itch by collaborating with the artists he signs. It doesn't always happen—Balogun never wants to insert his opinion where it's not welcome. But "there are artists who I get really close with, and there would be a level of comfort where they knew that I made music, and then I could contribute as a songwriter," Balogun says.

Tunji's Take

Childish Gambino

(actor Donald Glover)

He's a renaissance man. That guy's talented at everything. He's a savant. He's a writer, producer, singer, rapper, dancer, auteur. That dude's just a "super-creative." He's the closest thing we have to a modern-day Sammy Davis Jr. And also the most gracious, down-to-earth, regular person.

Sometimes that goes far enough that he earns an official songwriting credit, as he did on K CAMP's double-platinum hit "Comfortable." But more often he's just in the studio spitballing, being part of the give-and-take of making something new. "Most of the time I won't ask for or take credit," Balogun acknowledges. "You're my artist. If you win, I win."

After his time at Warner Brothers, Balogun found his way to A&R Interscope, and moved from there to RCA, he went on what he calls "a special run of signings," hooking up with artists including SZA,



Tunji Balogun '04

Photo by Ro.Lexx

Tunji's Take

H.E.R.

She's another supreme creative. Singer, songwriter, producer, performer. I think she's one of the most talented performers of her generation, and someone who has only scratched the surface of her range musically. She broke as an R&B act, but she can really play any genre. I was in the studio when she and Daniel Caesar wrote "Best Part"—one of the greatest songs I've ever heard in person. She's otherworldly.

Childish Gambino and H.E.R. He went on to start his own label, Keep Cool, in 2018. That work earned him the chance to come aboard at Def Jam in 2022.

The idea scared him at first. He had a good thing going where he was, and the idea of taking on more responsibility—particularly on the business side—was intimidating. But ultimately Balogun opted into the opportunity to put his imprint on such a storied label. "Def Jam is one of the last labels that has a mandate to uphold Black music," he says. "I just felt like I was being called to do the role. Spiritually it's kind of what I've been trying to do this whole time."

That transition also thrust Balogun from a largely behind-the-scenes role at RCA into a very bright spotlight at Def Jam. "RCA is an amazing label, and I had a great time working there, but no one's checking that it is living up to the culture of what it's supposed to be," he says. "Things at Def Jam are scrutinized. People are checking to see the types of signings I'm making. I appreciate the accountability of it."

The scrutiny remains intense, but he's also come to appreciate the pressure. It reminds him of just how much Def Jam's work matters to people, and the importance of continuous self-growth. "I tell my artists [that] you can't get comfortable and think nothing's going to change, because you blink and everything has shifted," he says. "You have to remain hungry and uncomfortable in order to evolve."

In addition to the specific pressure of life at Def Jam, Balogun also has to weather the storms of a business model that's trying to figure out where it stands as album sales figures slump and races for TikTok virality reign. But he insists that he's not one to chase trends, instead relying on finding good artists who make interesting work, and being patient in helping them find their audience. "I want to work with people who are staunchly themselves, no matter the platform," Balogun says. "And then they figure out, 'OK, how do I be myself on this new platform, as opposed to [changing] myself to fit the platform?'"

To that end, he's less interested in digital dominance and more focused on finding fans wherever they are. "In music right now, success happens when creativity meets community," he says. "If an artist can actually galvanize people who care about what they're doing, those people become the ambassadors for their songs, for their albums, for their shows. They help spread your music. They put it on their stories, they run your fan accounts. You usually have to start small, but I find that most of the people who are successful in this era understand that it's not about reaching the masses first. It's about cultivating your own little world and double, triple, quadrupling down on it."

As an example of this kind of fandom-building, Balogun points to rapper Doja Cat, who—long before the pandemic inspired many musicians to perform directly for fans online—was streaming on Instagram Live two or three times a week and making songs in her bedroom. "She really did build a bulletproof community of

people who will never leave her, and then layered bigger and bigger songs on top of that," he says.

It's clear that as much as Balogun understands a balance sheet, everything he does comes from a deep-rooted passion for music and creativity. But even the hottest passions can burn out, especially when you have to engage with them in a professional setting, day after day. How does he keep the spark alive?

"I have to constantly revert to 'Tunji the fan,' and remember that, while all the industry stuff is cool, at the end of the day it's really about the artist and the fan," he says. "I have to remind myself not to overthink it. You won't get burnt out [if] you actually love the stuff that you're working on."

When the non-music parts of the job threaten to take over, Balogun makes sure to follow up long days in the office with long nights in his studio staying on top of the latest themes and explorations in music. Some of his breakout picks from his current crop of artists at Def Jam include R&B singer Muni Long and Fridayy, who Balogun describes as a "hybrid artist" mixing R&B, Afrobeat and gospel. He's also excited about Coco Jones, as well as LiAngelo Ball, whose brothers Lonzo and LaMelo are both NBA players. "He's gonna have one of the best years in hip-hop," Balogun predicts.

At this point in our conversation, Balogun has long since picked up his In-N-Out Burger; it's cooling in the car next to him. More calls are coming through, and texts about an artist's song leaking. It's time for him to return to his work: the creative part, the corporate part, all of it. He's tired, but he seems certain that he'll be able to keep his compass pointed north, so to speak, even as he faces the challenges of a difficult job in an uncertain industry.

"I've been a fan, I've been an artist, I've been an executive, and all of those different experiences have informed my approach," Balogun says. "Deep down, I'm still a fan, and still an artist. I'm not putting music together or making records or anything, but I think I have the heart and the soul of an artist." [PCM](#)

Tunji's Take

Doja Cat

Doja is a world builder. She's another one who's sort of genreless. She broke as a rap act and a pop act at the same time, but she can really do anything. I think she's underrated as a rapper—her songs are so big that people kind of discount her lyrical ability. She literally went from the fringes of the internet to being one of the most popular mainstream acts. And I love that she retains her "weird"—she's never homogenized her style, even as she's gotten bigger.

Tunji's Take

Khalid

Khalid was a child prodigy. I think when he debuted people thought he was in his 20s or 30s because his voice was so deep and distinct. But I met him when he was 16, and we put out his album *American Teen* right after he turned 18. He's another one whose genius I've been blessed to witness in person: I was in the room when he wrote songs like "Young, Dumb & Broke," and "Talk" with Disclosure. He's someone who's wise beyond his years.

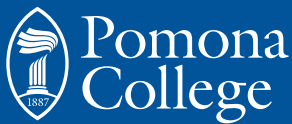


Welcome Back to Pomona

We're inviting all Sagehens to join us on campus **May 1-4 for Alumni Weekend and Reunion Celebrations!** Spend time reconnecting with friends and professors, and visit your favorite Pomona hangouts. This year, we're celebrating the reunion classes of 1965, 1970, 1975, 1978, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020.

Visit pomona.edu/alumni-weekend to register and learn how to get involved. The last day to register online is **April 21**.

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STAY CONNECTED!

Join Pomona's official online community—**Sagehen Connect**—to access the alumni directory, sign up to mentor students as a Sage Coach, message Sagehens directly and more. Visit pomona.edu/sagehen-connect to register today.



San Francisco

Sagehens Flocked to Winter Break Parties

More than 350 alumni, families and friends chirped together in Beijing, Chicago, New York, Seattle, San Francisco, Singapore, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., Berkeley and Orange County, Calif. for Pomona's annual Winter Break Parties in January. Special thanks to our hosts: Frank Albinder '80, Andrew Brown '77, Pomona Trustee Wei Hopeman '92 P'28, Evelyn Nussenbaum '84, Gladys Reyes '09 and Krista Seymour '03. Visit pomona.edu/alumni-chapters to connect with a chapter in your area.



Education



Tech and Media

Sagehens Making an Impact

Read alumni, faculty and student stories featuring the impact of Sagehen philanthropy and Pomona's liberal arts education experience. Visit pomona.edu/stories-of-impact.



St. Louis



New York

Los Angeles Area Alumni Attend Industry Networking Events

Pomona's L.A. alumni chapter hosted a series of industry networking events in January. These events helped Sagehens learn about career paths and build their professional networks by connecting with fellow alumni in a variety of industries including education, finance, law, psychology/mental health, tech and media, urban planning and science. Many thanks to our hosts. Visit pomona.edu/alumni-chapters to connect with the L.A. chapter.

4/7 Celebrates 10 Years of Sagehen Impact

This year marks the 10th anniversary of 4/7, an annual opportunity for Sagehens to come together for volunteer efforts like beach cleanups or sorting groceries at food banks in cities near and far, including San Francisco, Chicago, New York and even Hong Kong. Check your email and social media for 4/7 Day news!



A Message from the Alumni Association



Dear Sagehens,
We're excited to welcome alumni back to campus for Alumni Weekend and Reunion Celebrations May 1-4. Whether you're celebrating a class reunion or just missing campus, you'll find programs and activities created just for you. Be sure to register soon and come join the fun!
To make sure you get the latest information on chapter events, regional faculty programs and webinars created especially for alumni, we encourage you to update your contact information at pomona.edu/update-your-info.

In closing, we're sending healing chirps to our Los Angeles area alumni and families who are navigating catastrophic losses due to the devastating wildfires in January. Our hearts and thoughts are with each of you. If you are on Facebook, our alumni group page has a designated thread where members can find assistance or share ways to help. Pomona is supporting students, faculty and staff who have been affected by providing resources, crucial supplies and schedule flexibility.

All my best,
Andrea
Andrea Venezia '91
Pomona Alumni Association Board President

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p. 55 Crossword
Puzzle Solution

S	I	S		D	N	A	S		M	E	L	D			
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“What are some life lessons you’ve learned since graduating from Pomona?”



Follow the whole discussion on Facebook.

Sagely Wisdom

Last fall **Gordon Elnagar '24** asked the alumni Facebook group a question that spurred a wide and often whimsical discussion: **“What are some life lessons you’ve learned since graduating from Pomona?”** Here are a few highlights!

“I am a geologist and work with construction crews comprised of people who did not finish high school, but are trained tradesmen and craftsmen [who] I have learned so much from. **Education is not intelligence.** Understanding this will allow you to learn from others and keep from looking foolish.”
—**Rebekah Westrup '89**

“Be curious about other people. Challenge yourself to ask questions to really get to know someone more deeply. Career-wise, don’t be afraid to do new things.”
—**Kristin Horne Johnson '93**

“Keep your standard of living as low as possible for as long as possible. Save for retirement. Exercise and eat vegetables. **Sleep enough.** Get a bunch of friends and maybe a pet.”
—**Anna Turner '15**

“You regret much more what you don’t try than any consequences from what you do try. Also, **your work will never replace the time** your family, friends and soul demand of you.”
—**Andrew Minkin '93**

“Put energy into your relationships. **Life will almost certainly not turn out as you planned.** And when life knocks you to your knees, it is the people in your life who will help see you through. The research is very clear: the true key to a happy life is good connections with others.”
—**Bill Patrick '90**

“Everybody has something to teach you. Don’t look down on people whose opinions differ from yours. **Stand up for your values,** even if you’re the only one in the room speaking up. Use the critical thinking skills Pomona has taught you.”
—**Becky Jones '83**

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Every Gift Has a Story

In 1980, Andrew Brown '77 gave \$20 to the Pomona Annual Fund. He was just 25 years old. Since then, he's given back every year, making him one of the longest-running donors in Pomona's history.

What's the moral of Andrew's story? You don't need to make a big gift to make a lasting impact. Join Sagehens whose generosity supports scholarships and shapes transformative student experiences.

Make Pomona part of your story today.

Visit pomona.edu/give to make a gift.

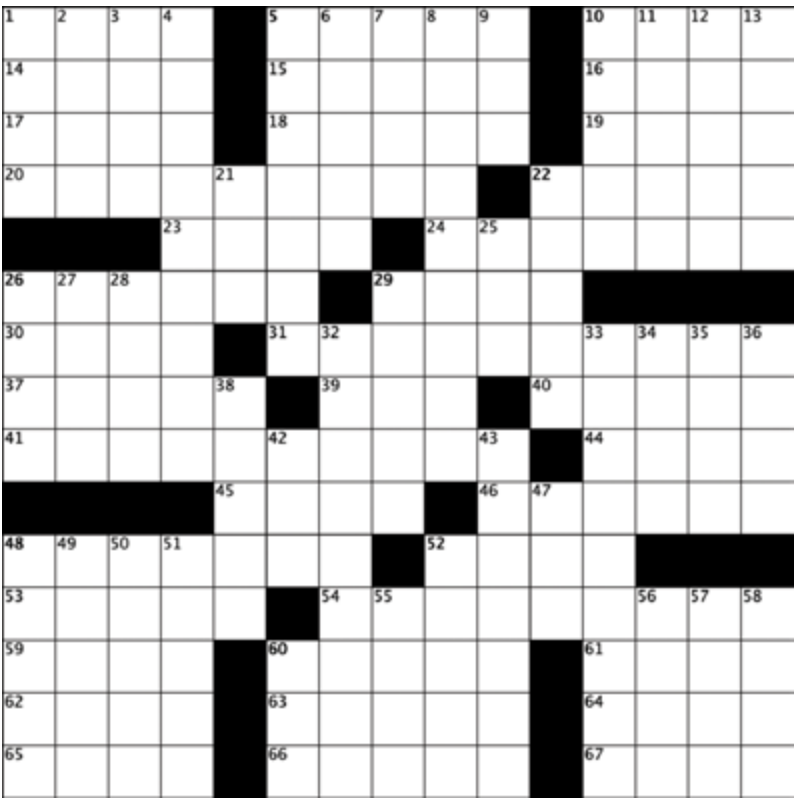


Time Out

"What's the Buzz?" by Jasper Davidoff '23

ACROSS

- 1. Clapton who sings "Layla"
- 5. Held anxiously
- 10. Seaver Theatre event
- 14. "Beloved" novelist Morrison
- 15. Robotic voice in some kitchens
- 16. Sac State?
- 17. "Tag along!"
- 18. Scruffy PM Johnson
- 19. "___ be fun, they said..."
- 20. Culinary projects with a sweet swirl
- 22. Implied
- 23. Low-Scoville
- 24. Affects emotionally
- 26. Shrouded in mystery
- 29. Shaft for water or wishes
- 30. Sub length, notoriously
- 31. Media studies projects that might look down on you?
- 37. Outlook service
- 39. Character's progression
- 40. Dreaded inquiry
- 41. Art projects that drip when activated
- 44. Pack up and leave
- 45. Frequent murder mystery suspect
- 46. One after another
- 48. History citation style
- 52. Emmy-winning Alda
- 53. Un-loft, perhaps
- 54. How you might describe students who create 20, 31 or 41 across... especially if they worked with Claremont's center for creativity?
- 59. Desertlike
- 60. "The Gates of Hell" sculptor
- 61. In need of a massage
- 62. Keep the engine running
- 63. Take ___ (plop down)
- 64. Quick pace
- 65. Fuse
- 66. It follows news or music
- 67. Drinks a bit of



DOWN

- 1. Chisel
- 2. Cowboys QB Tony
- 3. Aware of
- 4. Looking good in projections?
- 5. Said a load of nonsense
- 6. How teachers read
- 7. Long-billed seabird
- 8. Thought's conclusion, per Descartes?
- 9. Prosecuting figs
- 10. Sagehens' corner of D-III
- 11. Come out of one's shell?
- 12. Skateboarding jump
- 13. Ages, as a leafy green
- 21. Yang's complement
- 22. Home of the Oilers and Drillers
- 25. Flamenco exclamation
- 26. Two or three
- 27. 2018 film set in Mexico, not Italy
- 28. Sweet talk
- 29. Oldenborg Center's purview
- 32. Many a KSPC volunteer
- 33. Historians and philosophers
- 34. Vinegar characteristic
- 35. DVR brand
- 36. Gumbo or jambalaya
- 38. Pulitzer-winning Kendrick
- 42. Pester
- 43. Phonetic feature of "Rembrandt Hall"
- 47. Video artist June Paik
- 48. Plank of a debate
- 49. Zombie posse
- 50. "___ Always Love You" (Dolly Parton anthem)
- 51. Let go of
- 52. Like Pomona's mascot, unlike most others
- 55. Step before execution
- 56. Onigiri wrap
- 57. Album release
- 58. Tight fives, for some
- 60. Hall monitors, for short?



Crossword Challenge

The solution is available on page 48.



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