Searching for Kevin

It had been 13 years. His Farm friends had begun to steel themselves for the worst. Then came a message from a stranger.
When Dad overturned a glass, she righted the whole family.

Only Julie kept her cool. The family foundation had always been a little bone of contention between me and Dad. We just had different ideas about what to do with the money. We were both raising our voices when Dad knocked over a glass without even noticing. That’s when Julie, the peacemaker, stepped in and had an impromptu counseling session with Dad which led to a slightly restructured foundation and a much-improved family relationship. We’re blessed that Julie is the financial advisor that set up our foundation. Because intergenerational wealth doesn’t work without intergenerational harmony and for that you must focus on the little things.

— Marie, Santa Barbara
28

Just Curious
When Manu Prakash spotted a microscope in Thailand so expensive that people were afraid to use it, he realized what he needed to do: make an origami version for less than $1. Today, the associate professor of bioengineering devotes half his time to “frugal science” projects.

34

A Friendship Mission
Kevin Bennett, ’90, was a promising young poet who grappled with mental illness and precarious housing. He disappeared after Hurricane Katrina, and his Stanford classmates feared the worst. They got news of him 13 years later—and one of them was on a plane the next day.

42

Westword, Bound
The generation gap of the 1960s played out even in the literary West, with creative writing program founder Wallace Stegner blazing trails in one direction and his famous students Larry McMurtry, Ken Kesey and Edward Abbey in another.
Meet Grace Hu
A graduating senior enters the fourth dimension—and no, we don’t mean Cal, even if she is headed there for a PhD in bioengineering.

A Storied Spring
Brody Malone, ’22, was just one of the student-athletes leading the Cardinal to championships as Stanford announced it would retain 36 varsity sports.

Detective Work
Erica Escalante, ’90, found her calling in community policing, from serving as an LGBTQ+ liaison officer to investigating financial fraud.

Digital
NEW AT STANFORDMAG.ORG
Asian American voices: alumni reflections in a time of increased hate incidents

POSTSCRIPT
Beginner’s pluck
PAGE 64

ALL RIGHT NOW
18 Yurt sweet yurt
19 Waiting for Medicare
20 The Band’s Boswell
21 Blue hullabaloo

DEPARTMENTS
4 Dialogue
8 Editor’s Note
10 President’s Column
12 1,000 Words
54 Biblio File:
57 Farewells
63 Classifieds
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Free Exchange

We received more than two dozen responses to our May feature on academic freedom and its application at Stanford amid faculty debates over COVID-19 policy and the role of the Hoover Institution on campus. Letters here are excerpted, with fuller versions and additional responses at alu.ms/july21dialogue.

Your article was the most fair-minded thing I’ve ever read in Stanford! I assumed an article about academic freedom would be the typical thing I get from Stanford: conservatives are wrong, ignorant and bad people.

As you clearly understand, unpopular views are sometimes right in the end. You don’t have to subscribe to them, but if they are suppressed and free speech curtailed or censored, everyone loses.

You listened to both sides honestly, presented both sides fairly, and really did a great job to let the reader make up their own mind and hopefully gain a bit of insight into the other side’s thinking. That is what is missing in most of our discourse these days.

Tyrus J. Valascho, MS ’02
Clarkston, Michigan

The article filled a critical need to inform Stanford alums of the university’s position, philosophy and approach on a topic where many of us—including “good liberals” too—worry about the trend against free thought in academia.

Alyse Graham, JD ’95
Washington, D.C.

Kathy Zonana cites President Tessier-Lavigne as saying that “academic freedom fortifies the First Amendment.” This statement makes it sound as though academic freedom is simply turbo-charged freedom of speech, granting academics all the rights they have as ordinary citizens plus more.

Zonana would have done well to consult Robert Post, Sterling Professor of Law at Yale, who is an expert on academic freedom, having written two books on the subject. Post makes it clear that universities do in fact hold their professors to certain standards. Chemistry professors may tell tall tales at a party, but they’re not allowed to falsify data in experiments. Stanford, like other universities, formally prohibits the latter and even imposes penalties for noncompliance.

“Academic freedom,” concludes Post, “is not the freedom to speak or to teach just as one wishes. It is the freedom to pursue the scholarly profession . . . according to the norms and standards of that profession.” There’s a reason for this difference, adds Post: Whereas the purpose of the First Amendment is to further the rights of individuals, the purpose of academic freedom is to further the interests of society. So while we rightly welcome a very wide variety of viewpoints, we should not turn a collective blind eye when academics fail to meet intellectual standards.

Joshua Landy
Professor of French
and of comparative literature
Stanford, California

I was quoted correctly noting that Scott Atlas’s “siccing a lawyer” (in fact, one of President Trump’s lawyers) “on a group of 105 faculty . . . is not welcoming disagreement.” In the article, Atlas went out of his way to tell the Stanford College Republicans that he is an expert in health policy, “my field, my lane.” Atlas is a retired neuroradiologist, with no expertise in infectious disease, epidemiology or public health. The 105 Stanford faculty who signed the letter are experts in these fields. Atlas’s remarks and actions as an adviser to Trump about the pandemic undermined widely accepted public health measures such as masks, handwashing and social distancing, and therefore cost lives. With just 4.25 percent of the world’s population, the United States has suffered 15.7 percent of the world’s COVID deaths (597,594 as of June 15, 2021). As Zonana correctly noted, “not every member of the general public can differentiate between the results of a peer-reviewed paper and a scholar’s off-the-cuff remark, especially
Michelle Mello, ’93, and I stated in a recent JAMA article, “When Physicians Engage in Practices That Threaten the Nation’s Health”: “To take the view that respecting freedom of speech requires institutional silence when science is being subverted is to misunderstand the concept.”

David Spiegel
Professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences
Stanford, California

It was refreshing to see an academic article that supports the free exchange of ideas. Your article triggered me to investigate further the underlying issue and I came away with a different perspective on what was important. Pizzo and the 104 colleagues seem to have no appreciation for the need to prevent a panic in the United States, where we were already hoarding masks and other medical supplies needed by our health workers. Nor was there any mention that previous pandemics did require herd immunity to get us safe; no one knew when we would get a vaccine. I find the letter did not support the principle of “First, do no harm.” It did the opposite.

Sid Heath, MS ’66
Fort Myers, Florida

Kathy Zonana’s article is the best I’ve seen from STANFORD on a political dispute as viewed from both sides. My general impression of academic freedom at universities today is that it is drifting toward a myopic view of the world and suppression of views that don’t agree with those of the progressive faculty and left-of-center-trained students. A faculty thinking ratio of 9:1 progressive-to-conservative on solutions to problems and means to betterment of society does not bode well for well-rounded students.

Herb Lindberg, PhD ’58
Grass Valley, California

I am one of the “five professors” who worked on the Faculty Senate presentation about the Hoover Institution.

Director Condoleezza Rice demonstrated excellent instincts of a political scientist when she pointed out that in the 2020 elections, as paraphrased in the article, “Hoover fellows donated in equal measure to Democratic and Republican candidates for office. The Stanford faculty at large? 9:1.” Unfortunately, the article leaves it at that.

One of the things missing from this reporting is any consideration of Hoover’s Board of Overseers, which, according to the institute’s website, “advises and supports the Institution’s senior administration.” Publicly available data suggests that the vast majority of the overseers are Republican donors.

Phil Schultz, MS ’74, PhD ’76
Houston, Texas

There, the ratio is more like 57:7. Furthermore, the board includes some of the most prominent figures from conservative circles, such as Rupert Murdoch and Rebekah Mercer, ’96, MS ’99, one of the key financial backers of the far-right Breitbart News.

Branislav Jakovljević
Professor of theater and performance studies
Menlo Park, California

I wish to draw attention to this passage, where my group is mentioned:

When a group of professors raised concerns about perceived partisanship at the Hoover Institution and asked the [Faculty Senate] to form a committee to study the university’s relationship to it, there was [Professor John] Etchemendy again, proposing a compromise: that the policy institute’s new director, former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, and Stanford provost Persis Drell prepare a report on plans for and progress on increasing the interaction between Hoover and the rest of the university.
**Dialogue**

This is a rather unusual use of the word compromise. It is like lawmakers asking for a congressional investigation of the relationship between the White House and the Supreme Court, and having the president say he will “compromise” by conducting his own study, with the help of the chief justice. I don’t really see how this is in any way a compromise—it is rather a hypocritical act of censorship, in my opinion.

**David Palumbo-Liu**
Professor of comparative literature
Palo Alto, California

I was encouraged by the numerous quotations from President Tessier-Lavigne and professors Etchemendy, Drell and Rice in support of true academic freedom as embodied in Stanford’s statement of principles. I hope they stand firm and do not buckle, even a little bit, to the crescendo of intolerance that unfortunately is coming from a large and vocal fraction of Stanford professors.

**Gary Holzhausen, MS ’74, PhD ’78**
Salinas, California

In multiple places your article amplifies without empirical validation the administration’s rationalizations for allowing the Hoover Institution to evade the standards of academic freedom, partisanship and equity to which it holds the rest of the university.

Since the article quotes me without any explanation of my connection to the conversation about the institution: In 2018, as chair of the history department’s diversity committee, I, along with Professor Allyson Hobbs, spoke out against an all-white, all-male history conference held at Hoover, which made headlines and provoked concern about the partisan and noninclusive institution’s lack of accountability to the university’s mission and standards of equity—even after an investigation into equity issues in 2013. After the 2018 conference, damning reports of Hoover events with similar demographics continued to circulate. As I shared with your reporter, in light of the continued absence of improvement, I repeatedly asked Provost Drell to encourage the institution to create a committee on diversity, inclusion and equity—a common basic step for encouraging inclusion in corporate and academic institutions—to no avail.

**Priya Satia, ’95**
Professor of history
Stanford, California

I am of the firm (if antiquated and Millsian) belief that if you cannot frame the other side’s argument cogently and plausibly, you do not fully understand it and thus cannot confront it adequately. Universities today are too unwilling to allow alternate voices, and too willing to squelch or cancel voices with which they have a disagreement or merely find uncomfortable.

**Keith Wollenberg, JD/MA ’87**
Atherton, California

**Weighty Words**

The May issue included a profile of Stanford’s former dean of freshmen.

**Stanford** should be a leader in the use of gender neutral and gender-inclusive terms. Please move in the direction of replacing the word **freshmen** with other options in future publications.

Half of the entering grade class are women. Some students prefer not to identify by a specific gender. There are many other good alternatives, including frosh, freshpeople and first years.

**Audrey Gold, ’87, MA ’88**
Stanford, California

**CORRECTIONS**

The May article on academic freedom erroneously described the resolution proposed by a group of professors to the Faculty Senate as calling for an assessment of whether the Hoover Institution has a partisan agenda. The resolution called for an examination of the university’s relationship to the institution; the concerns about partisanship were in a separate part of the group’s presentation.

In the May Farewells section, the wife of Robert Melbourne, MS ’55, and the husband of Margot Lippert, ’56, MA ’57, were erroneously listed as deceased, rather than surviving, spouses.

**Dialogue Box**

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To See a World in a Grain of Sand
How a bioengineer and a poet forged their own paths.

IT WAS THE BEST SORT of office-party gift exchange: the kind where there’s thievery and laughter and a couple of coveted items that are stolen three times before they are rightfully owned. And there, at the close of 2015, the most popular gift among the School of Medicine communications staff was a piece of paper.

To be fair, it wasn’t any old piece of paper. It was a sheet of cardstock, colorfully printed and containing detailed folding instructions. Plus a lens.

It was a Foldscope, the $1 origami microscope that was just beginning to be distributed to citizen-scientists, including many children, around the world. The writer who covered bioengineering for the School of Medicine had wrestled one from its faculty inventor, Manu Prakash. Encased in a FedEx envelope, the Foldscope was carefully passed from new owner to new owner before coming to rest with my gleeful boss. (Science writers, it must be said, really know how to party.)

In our profile of Prakash, which begins on page 34, a nationally lauded undergraduate poet, Bennett took a corporate job as a young adult but soon quit to write. His life has been full of challenges, from mental illness to displacement after Hurricane Katrina. Through it all, he has remained true to himself, and his Stanford friends true to him.

Both Bennett and Prakash embody what Steve Jobs said in his 2005 Stanford Commencement address—one of the most popular ever at any university: “Don’t be trapped by dogma—which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become.”

Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m off to fold up a piece of paper and see where my instincts take me.

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Nostalgia and rewards—carry the only credit card for Stanford Alumni. Earn up to 3% cash-back on every purchase and pay no annual fee.

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In May, we marked one year since George Floyd’s murder—a tragedy that galvanized our nation and spurred the Stanford community into action. Stanford students pressed for change in our broader society and on our campus, holding online vigils and creating a memorial for Black lives on the Stanford Oval.

In the weeks that followed, I met with Black students, faculty and staff, who shared their personal experiences with racism on our campus and ideas for meaningful change. Those ideas informed our way forward.

In June 2020, we announced new initiatives aimed at advancing a more just society through education and research and countering racism within our own community. These are in addition to the work already underway under our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access in a Learning Environment (IDEAL) initiative, which launched in 2018 as part of Stanford’s Long-Range Vision.

Creating real and lasting change is difficult, and we have much more work to do. But in the past year, we have taken meaningful steps toward our goals. In March, we announced the first cohort of IDEAL Provostial Fellows, a group of promising young scholars conducting research related to race and ethnicity who will join our campus community for three years beginning this fall. The fellows come from a range of disciplines, from epidemiology to the classics, and additional cohorts will follow. Ultimately, we hope the program will be one pipeline to help diversify the national professoriate.

An update on Stanford’s efforts to promote a more just society and counter racism in our community.

The university has also launched a search for 10 preeminent scholars of race in America—a uniquely large faculty cluster hire that will amplify Stanford’s scholarship and deepen the research into race and ethnicity underway on our campus. Due in part to these efforts, Stanford will welcome the most diverse cohort of new faculty in the university’s history this fall.

In February, Provost Persis Drell announced that she had accepted the proposal to make African and African American studies a full department, which will strengthen our ability to recruit and retain strong faculty in the field.

In addition to advancing racial justice through research and teaching, we are working to improve our campus culture. This spring, we launched a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey to better understand the individual experiences of Stanford community members. We are also publishing new annual demographic data to improve transparency and monitor our progress toward greater diversity and inclusion.

We’ve devoted additional resources to our Centers for Equity, Community, and Leadership, including the Black Community Services Center and the Asian American Activities Center. We’ve also created a Black Community Council, which brings alumni into this process alongside students, faculty and staff. The council oversees initiatives focused on Stanford’s Black community and provides feedback and recommendations to university leaders.

As part of our efforts to improve our campus culture, we’ve also established a Community Board on Public Safety, tasked with gathering community input, analyzing data, and ensuring that the university’s public safety policies and practices are consistent with our values. It is deeply important to me that every member of our community feels safe and protected at Stanford. In the coming months, we’ll continue to draw on the Community Board’s insights as we work to improve public safety at our university.

While we have made progress over the past year, we must continue our efforts to improve. We’ll keep the alumni community informed of our progress, including through events like June’s town hall with Black alumni. Diversity, equity and inclusion are at the heart of our university’s values, and I am committed to working relentlessly to ensure that we continue to change for the better.
The pandemic has shown us the true power, precision, and innovation of Stanford Medicine in researching and fighting COVID-19. It has also proved that Stanford Medicine—made up of Stanford Children’s Health, Stanford School of Medicine, and Stanford Health Care— is at its strongest when backed by a community committed to keeping everyone safe.

Thank you, Bay Area, for fighting alongside Stanford Medicine. For meeting this challenge, and all those to come, together.

Today. Tomorrow. Always.

We are here for you.
Pomp Despite Circumstance

Stanford’s 130th Commencement was almost normal, and man did it feel good. While department ceremonies and Baccalaureate were virtual, seniors celebrated with a Countdown to Commencement party, and the university held two in-person ceremonies—one to confer 3,274 graduate degrees, the other to bestow 1,436 bachelor’s degrees—spread across the stadium grass over two days and with chairs in precise, socially distanced lines. Surgeon, public health researcher and author Atul Gawande, ’87, advised advanced degree candidates to embrace opportunity. Actor, writer and producer Issa Rae, ’07, encouraged the senior class to stay connected. “Trust and believe that your Stanford family will show up for you—in unexpected ways.”

And then there were the little things: walking wackily, waving at real guests in the stands, putting arms around friends and tossing mortar-boards into the cloud-dappled azure sky. After everything, the Class of 2021 graduated in real life, together.
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WHO WE ARE

Meet Grace Hu

When the time-space continuum encounters a force for good.

“Teaching forces me to learn more and become a master in that field because students will come at you with every sort of question.”
IT WASN’T LONG AGO THAT 3D PRINTING seemed like cutting-edge technology. But to hear Grace Hu say it, our 4D upgrade is already here—printing objects programmed to expand, contract or pulse in the fourth dimension: time.

4D printing’s potential, she says, is vast, from artificial organs to self-assembling shelters on Mars. “You imagine that you can 3D print a heart, but you also have to get it to beat synchronously, to connect to veins and other things.”

After squeezing a bachelor’s in materials science and a master’s in computer science into four years, Hu, ’21, MS ’21, starts a joint doctoral bioengineering program at UC Berkeley and UCSF this fall. There she hopes to marry her expertise in material structures and her programming prowess with 4D printing’s emerging powers.

Hu has long applied science for good. In high school on Long Island, she unleashed a blizzard of “cold emails” to land a role in a nanotechnology lab, where she pursued research inspired by her grandfather’s battle with Alzheimer’s. As a college sophomore at Stanford’s overseas study program in South Africa, she taught coding to kids in Cape Town and led kids’ workshops on using the $1 Foldscope, a paper microscope developed by bioengineering professor Manu Prakash’s lab (see page 28), where she had been a research assistant. During the pandemic, she taught people to program through a Stanford-hosted, volunteer-led initiative, Code in Place, which reached 10,000 learners globally.

Helping others has in turn helped her. Hu says she doesn’t excel in traditional measures of learning, like tests. “I struggled even in high school to learn things. My memory is terrible,” she says. Instead, she thrives on projects.

“My grandfather would not remember how to tell time or what streets were what. I didn’t really know what was happening, so I took it upon myself to read and learn more. When I heard about nanotechnology, that it can be used to help people with brain disorders or other neurodegenerative diseases, I thought, ‘That’s something really cool, and I would love to specialize my initial research work on Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s.’

“Doing research at a younger age taught me a lot of skills—being resourceful, learning how to culture cells or to do public speaking and be able to pitch an idea to someone.

“Scientific communication and writing takes you so far. A lot of people might not understand the hard-core, in-depth science, but if you communicate ideas and inspire people, they’ll see what you see.

“Code in Place really gave people hope. A lot of people lost their jobs or couldn’t go back to work, and they wanted to learn how to code so they could do things remotely and contribute to social organizations or volunteer projects. I love hearing from people who email us saying learning how to code inspired them as a young girl in Thailand or as someone in Egypt.

“One thing I really appreciated [about the kids I taught in South Africa] was seeing how hard people would work if they’re given the resources. That’s something I really like getting involved with—enabling people from different backgrounds to learn how to code so that they can elevate themselves in society and contribute to the development of technology and the development of the sciences.”
Those 65 and better can enjoy this vacation destination year-round. Like many resorts, Carmel Valley Manor has impeccable service, three delicious meals a day, acres of pristine gardens with a pool, putting green, limousine service, even a personal trainer. In addition to housekeeping services, most of the apartments enjoy private patios where you can soak up the sunshine 300 days a year. Unlike other resort destinations, Carmel Valley Manor offers three levels of healthcare: independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing, all at no additional cost. What makes a great resort makes a great retirement too.

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GRACE HARTMAN, ’90, isn’t sure now if she even knew what a yurt was when she saw one posted for sale on the notice board of the general store in Wilson, Wyo., a tiny town near Jackson. But after the shake-up of a divorce, she knew she wanted a break from her rat-race job. She knew she wanted to move to the Tetons after visiting her brother, the climber and filmmaker Jimmy Chin. And at $4,000, she knew she liked the price.

So Hartman (née Chin), accompanied by her two kids and her boyfriend (now husband), went all in on yurt life, moving from a three-bedroom colonial in New England to a 320-square-foot wood-framed circular tent in a Wyoming meadow with no electricity or running water. Eleven years later, they’re still there.

It’s not a pampered life, even with the addition of electricity. (One winter relying on a wood-burning stove for warmth as temperatures regularly slumped to low single digits persuaded them to make that concession to creature comfort.) A nighttime trip to the outhouse remains 15 paces into the usually frigid blackness. “It just feels really far when it has snowed heavily,” Hartman says, “because sometimes, we get like 20 inches in a night.”

But it’s gratifying, she says. The low cost allows her to work part-time handling her brother’s finances, ski most mornings and take extended family trips. Her kids have grown up under her nose. The whistles of owl and eagle wings sound overhead. Vacuuming takes 30 seconds. And the house has provided a welcome lesson in needing less. “By the second or third year, I just stopped wanting things because I knew I had no room for them,” she says.

Nothing lasts forever, however. The land they rent is likely headed for development, and Hartman and her husband are designing a conventional home 20 miles away in Victor, Idaho. The architect asked if her kids had any design requests. “I said, ‘Yes, their special request for the house is indoor plumbing.’”
A Storied Spring
Stanford sports will remain 36 strong.

STANFORD ATHLETES HAVE WON more than 520 individual championships in the 100 years since Flint Hanner, Class of 1922, MA ’30, threw a javelin 191 feet, 2¼ inches to claim the first one in June 1921. No other Division I school is within shouting distance of that total.

But until freshman Rachel Heck’s one-shot victory in Arizona in May, no Cardinal athlete had triumphed in women’s golf. Heck made more than Stanford history—she became just the third women’s golfer to sweep conference, regional and national championships. And she set a NCAA season scoring record in the process.

Her accomplishment punctuated a pivotal spring on—and off—the field for Stanford Athletics. In March, junior Shane Griffith became only the second Stanford wrestler to win an NCAA championship. Two weeks later, women’s basketball won a title for the first time in 29 years. Then, on April 17, men’s gymnastics and synchronized swimming raised championships on the same day—with junior gymnast Brody Malone also capturing a second consecutive individual national title.

The synchro and wrestling victories were particularly poignant because both sports were among the 11 varsity programs slated for discontinuation at the end of the 2020–21 academic year, a decision reached last summer in response to the long-standing, pandemic-exacerbated financial challenges of maintaining 36 sports at nationally competitive levels.

But on May 18, the university announced that it would reinstate the 11 sports. “The financial challenges facing Stanford Athletics are still very real,” said university president Marc Tessier-Lavigne, provost Persis Drell and director of athletics Bernard Muir in a letter to the Stanford community. “But we have new optimism based on new circumstances, including significantly improved fund-raising potential in support of our athletics programs and improvement in the financial investment markets.”

The announcement was welcomed by student-athletes and alumni who had kept up sustained efforts to reverse the decision. University administrators had engaged with those groups, including 36 Sports Strong, a group of prominent alumni athletes from all 36 varsity sports who united to raise funds and lobby administrators. “My heart is full of joy for the students who are getting their teams back,” said Jennifer Azzi, ’90, a former member of the women’s basketball team and a representative for 36 Sports Strong, in the university’s announcement.

Ten days after the decision, women’s lightweight rowing—one of the 11 reinstated sports—won another national championship with its varsity four.

When I’m 64  65
People may be waiting for Medicare eligibility to seek cancer care.

WHAT’S ON RETIREMENT BUCKET lists these days? Travel? Volunteer work? Try cancer screening.

Stanford professor of cardiothoracic surgery Joseph Shrager noticed that patients in his practice were diagnosed with lung cancer more often at age 65 than at 64 or 66. It seemed unlikely that the spike had a medical explanation. So he and his colleagues studied rates of cancer diagnosis in 61- to 69-year-olds and uncovered a troubling possibility: People may be waiting to get checked out until Medicare funding kicks in. The jump in diagnoses was more pronounced between 64 and 65 than in any other age transition and could be seen across the United States’ four most common cancers—lung, breast, prostate and colon.

“This suggests that many people are delaying their care for financial reasons until they get health insurance through Medicare,” Shrager told Stanford Medicine. And that, he added, is risky: “If you don’t get the right screening or prompt diagnosis, you are going to have lower cure rates.”
Incomparable
Robby Beyers captured the spirit of the Band for more than 40 years.

In His Signature cargo pants, red shirt and khaki vest, Robby Beyers was easy to miss amid the more exotic plumage of the Leland Stanford Junior University Marching Band. But his camera missed little. For more than 40 years, Beyers shot nearly every LSJUMB football halftime show, as well as many rallies, road trips and other sporting events, amassing a stunning archive of more than 180,000 photographs that are treasured by the hundreds of musicians, Dollies and Trees who rocked out in range of his lens.

Beyers, ‘80, MS ’82, PhD ’89, who died April 12 at 62 from ALS, “was the Band’s Boswell,” says former LSJUMB announcer Hal Mickelson, ’71, referring to the renowned 18th-century biographer. Beyers’s slide shows (the highlight of every Bandquet and reunion) and the enlarged photos he hung in the Band Shak (and tended with a museum curator’s care) reflect the Band’s long history of irreverent, futuristic support of all things Cardinal. “Robby provided proof that we are all part of something greater than a bunch of kids with instruments,” says former Tree Sam Weyen, ’18.

Beyers morphed from a Daily sports photographer into the Band’s documentarian as an undergrad in the late ’70s. It was a role he embraced with characteristic focus, thoroughness and loyalty even as he earned five degrees; contributed to several technological innovations, including microscopy techniques that are used throughout the semiconductor industry; and launched a second career as an attorney and author of hundreds of patents, including the iPhone patent for the smartphone’s user interface (see Farewells section).

Not one to do anything halfway, Beyers continued shooting through the 2019 football season despite his progressive paralysis. When he could no longer hold his camera, he directed shots with the help of his son Danny, friends and iPads mounted on his wheelchair. To the end, being the Band’s photographer was a labor of love for Beyers, who never took a dime for his efforts.

“He was a quiet guy, and I think he lived a bit vicariously through the Band,” says his wife, Elena Camacho Beyers, ’79, a former Dollie. “The Band was his family, his community, his tribe.”

—Kelli Anderson, ’84
A Hue and a Cry

IN SOME WAYS, Stanford was early to the World Wide Web party—SLAC established the first website in North America in 1991. Still, by the mid-’90s, the university proper had yet to develop a decent digital front door. Indeed, it didn’t even control www.stanford.edu, says Christine Kurihara, the school’s first web coordinator—a grad student in computer science had assigned it to himself.

By 1996, however, Stanford was ready to get serious about an official home page. The CS student was agreeable, Kurihara says, happy to see the address finally put to good use. Design, though, proved pricklier.

The die was cast after the Boston-based design consultants stared down Palm Drive, awed at the Main Quad framed by blue skies and golden sun. Here was the essence of Stanford.

Not that you had to be a weather-beaten Bostonian to agree. Just a few months earlier, then-president Gerhard Casper had quoted the university’s first president, David Starr Jordan, waxing poetic to similar effect. “The red-tiled roofs against the azure sky make a picture that can never be forgotten.”

With two university presidents and consultants on a $15,000 contract in alignment, what could go wrong?

Well, alumni and students could ask why the sky was blue—or so vast. The blue background sitting behind an image of the Main Quad may have been inspired by nature’s azure, but it extended over the entire site. It was, to the Cardinal faithful, as if Cal had pulled a Big Game stunt on the university’s home page.

“I recall being bemused that some were so obsessed with Cal that they objected to a blue sky and yellow sun,” says Terry Shepard, then director of university communications. “Do people really want a cardinal sky? What are we, Stanford on Mars?”

Edits were made after the backlash, but the page had been coded line by line. There weren’t the tools that now enable small fixes to big problems. And so the very blue debut of www.stanford.edu continued. In 1998, it appeared in the book Web Pages That Suck. A year later, Stanford redid the site with white and cardinal in abundance.

Still, the more things change, the more they revert to a previous version. Today, the Stanford home page again features the red tiles of the Main Quad against a sky so blue it would make a Bostonian consultant in winter weep. “To paraphrase a biblical saying,” Shepard says, “there is nothing new under the (not-really-Berkeley-blue) sky.”

THE TICKER

Incoming frosh Alexandra Huynh has been named the 2021 U.S. National Youth Poet Laureate. Elizabeth Reese, Yunpovi (“willow flower” in Tewa), has joined Stanford Law School as an assistant professor. She is the first Native American faculty member at the school. And speaking of firsts, Jason Wingard, ’95, is the first Black president of Temple University, in Pennsylvania. He was formerly dean and professor at Columbia University’s School of Professional Studies. You may soon see Sally Ride, ’73, MS ’75, PhD ’78, emblazoned on your pocket change. Images of Ride, the first American woman in space, and writer Maya Angelou will lead the rollout, beginning in 2022, of a series of U.S. quarters depicting notable American women. The Vanishing Half—a New York Times bestseller by Brit Bennett, ’12, about light-skinned Black twin sisters whose lives diverge radically when one assumes a life passing as white—will be adapted into an HBO series. Bennett will be an executive producer on the show alongside Issa Rae, ’07. And Maria “Lore” Aguayo, ’93, MS ’00, has become the third female Civil Engineer Corps officer to be promoted to rear admiral.
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All Right Now

ON THE JOB

Detective Work

It took Erica Escalante a while to sleuth out her career path. But now, she’s a champion for vulnerable elders and a link between the police and the LGBTQ+ community.

(by Deni Ellis Béchard)

If I shoot this gun today and I don’t vomit, I can do this job,” Erica Escalante told the firing range instructor during preparatory training for police academy. That was 1998, in Oxnard, an oceanside city in Ventura County, Calif., and Escalante, ’90, a former linguistics and Slavic languages major, had never touched a firearm. “I didn’t want anything to do with guns,” she recalls. She hoped to join her local police force because its culture was changing to allow officers to work more closely with the community. In the years since, she has achieved her goal, becoming Oxnard Police Department’s LGBTQ+ liaison officer, running LGBTQ+ sensitivity trainings within the department and establishing herself as an expert in preventing elder abuse.

The unlikely path to Escalante’s 23-year career as an Oxnard officer winds through the West but began just a few miles away, in the town of Camarillo. Her last name was Deese-Dobson then, and Camarillo was largely white. Growing up, she recalls being curious about other cultures and the town’s history (Camarillo was founded by two prominent Californios), and angered by her mother’s racist comments. From the time she hit puberty, she knew she was lesbian and that her sexuality wouldn’t be accepted in her community. “I was so excited when I was admitted to Stanford because it was so close to San Francisco,” she recalls, but upon arrival, she was shocked to hear homophobic jokes on campus so frequently. “So I just jumped in the closet,” she says. After graduation, she did a few years of graduate studies in linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin before the law career of the woman she was dating took the two to Seattle. There, Escalante accepted whatever jobs she could find—driving a school bus, folding cardboard in a shipping center, working on a dairy farm. One day, she saw women officers on bike patrols and thought, “Wow, that’s so cool.” This was the mid-’90s, and Seattle was pushing to create a more diverse police force and do community policing, which relies on strong relationships with community members to better protect them. Escalante—an avid cyclist who’d been on Stanford’s team—liked the idea of outdoor work and thought that the police might be interested in hiring someone like her. Growing up, she’d understood that women and children often had no one to go to for help, and she now considered that she might find satisfaction investigating crimes that rarely saw justice. But by then, her girlfriend had a job with the public defender’s office and hated the police, telling her that they all lied to convict people. A few years later, after the couple separated and Escalante moved back to Camarillo to stay with her parents, she rekindled her interest in community policing.

Her introduction to the police department was as a civilian employee. She applied to be a records clerk but scored so high on the entrance exam that the department gave her an IT job upgrading and maintaining computer systems. For the next three years, she familiarized herself with the department’s culture, occasionally hearing about police brutality.
“But I also knew there were a lot of really good, progressive people,” she says. She remained determined to join the force.

During that period, her younger sister, only 19, died of long QT syndrome, a genetic condition that resulted in heart failure. Escalante’s grief delayed her applying to become an officer, and the pain of this period dovetailed with the hardship of her six months in the police academy. One of three women in a class of around 50, she was singled out as too educated. “You’re just here to find out about law enforcement so you can smear law enforcement all over the place,” Escalante recalls an instructor telling her. She became an officer in 1998, at a time when the department was still “an old boys’ club,” she says, where officers tried to look good by racking up arrests. “All you heard about was, ‘Oh, we arrested this big drug dealer’ and ‘We arrested this guy for shooting somebody,’” Escalante says. She didn’t see many officers focusing on domestic violence, child abuse and hate crimes.

The first years were hard. As a patrol and bike patrol officer and then a school resource officer, she recalls “being ignored, invisible, undercut, not recognized for what you’re doing.” She found support in a group of like-minded officers and didn’t quit, keeping her focus on building relationships within the community. She received an award from her local chapter of the National Police Foundation for teaching community classes for women on self-defense against rape and aggression, as well as for running an education and empowerment program for children. She also introduced restorative justice for homeless people in Oxnard, which, rather than ticketing them for minor infractions, such as sleeping in public, encouraged them to use community support services. Later, as a child abuse sexual assault detective, Escalante had a major breakthrough. A 16-year-old boy reported that his godfather was molesting him. She learned that the perpetrator worked in a school, and she found other victims—two boys in a family whose trust she’d previously earned as a school resource officer. Eventually, she helped gather enough evidence that the man was convicted of rape and received a life sentence.

In 2011, Jeri Williams became Oxnard’s police chief, the first Black woman to hold the position. “She did some housekeeping,” Escalante says, recalling how Williams worked to combat the old boy culture and mentored three assistant chiefs, one of whom would ask Escalante to help create Oxnard’s LGBTQ+ training program in 2017. Escalante became the department’s LGBTQ+ liaison officer. In reaching out to community members to help with training other officers, Escalante realized that she had to address their preconceptions about the police and encourage vulnerability. “Everyone in the public thinks they know everything about police officers, because the police are depicted in movies and TV shows,” Escalante says. “Some of them were very resistant to being so open with police. They wanted to go in there like academics, she says. She knew that if that happened, the officers just sit with their arms crossed and remember little.

Escalante encouraged community members to share stories about situations the police could encounter. One described how she came out to her mother, who spoke only Spanish, and how her mother locked herself in the bathroom, threatening to commit suicide. “This is a real thing that police could get called to respond to—a suicidal woman with a knife, barricaded in her bathroom,” Escalante says. “If you’re a police officer responding and the people don’t feel you would be comfortable talking about LGBT+ issues, they’re not going to talk to you about it.”

‘If you’re a police officer responding and the people don’t feel you would be comfortable talking about LGBT+ issues, they’re not going to talk to you about it.’

Escalante has seen many changes, both in her life—she took the name of her former domestic partner, and they are raising a daughter, now 16—and in her department: trainings to respond with sensitivity to people with mental illness, and police academy classes with more women than men. Though still the department’s LGBTQ+ liaison officer, she is now a detective handling fraud and financial crimes, most of which are committed against elderly people. “In our pretty large county, there’s probably nobody who knows more about investigating those crimes,” Sonstegard says.

And the changes have continued—especially since May 2020, when a Minneapolis police officer killed George Floyd. “We police officers can now speak out and say, ‘I don’t know if I would have shot that person in that circumstance,’” Escalante says. Prior to that, she says, police culture was such that critiquing other officers was acceptable only in order to promote officer safety. But since Floyd’s death, her department’s leadership has encouraged open dialogue about race and use of force—formerly taboo topics. “The fact that voices in the community are speaking out so clearly and often,” she says, “is making it a bit easier for us officers to start being honest with each other and have our own hard conversations about what we can do better.”

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How a boy who played with fire (and mercury, and bleach) became a bioengineer who brought $1 origami microscopes (and paper centrifuges, and snorkel-mask PPE) to the world.
A PENCIL ON THE SIDEWALK.

Among our earliest childhood memories is one of the most iconic human tools lying in the dust, waiting to be picked up. But what if microscopy were as common as writing, and we had as many recollections: finding not a nub of pencil but a well-worn microscope; rummaging through a bookbag for that microscope you might have left in there; asking the kid at the next desk over if they happen to have an extra; or, in college, pulling one from your purse between tequila shots to peer at the speck crawling across the dive bar’s counter? This is Manu Prakash’s vision—not only of the microscope but of other heavy and dauntingly complex lab equipment: to shrink them until they fit in your pocket, to make them as cheap and ubiquitous as pencils.

Prakash, an associate professor of bioengineering and a senior fellow at the Woods Institute for the Environment, came up with this idea in 2011, in the Thai rainforest, at a rabies clinic equipped with a single high-grade Nikon microscope. “I had this really strange epiphany in which I could see this beautiful, expensive scientific instrument sitting in the middle of nowhere, but anybody who would want to touch it or do anything with it would literally be scared because one of the [lenses] on it is more than your annual salary,” Prakash says. He began contemplating not only how to create tools that would invite people to experience the science shaping their lives but also how such instruments might change the larger culture, much as the pencil has. “Access to tools,” he says, “can mean an incredible transformation in an individual’s capacity.”

The result of Prakash’s insight was the Foldscope, an origami microscope ingeniously crimped from a sheet of cardstock—with sliders to focus and adjust the view—and manufactured for less than a dollar. Its tiny lens has 140x magnification, similar to that of many research microscopes, allowing users to see objects as small as 2 microns. (A run-of-the-mill bacterium can be 1 to 2 microns thick and 5 to 10 microns long.) Prakash has since expanded on his vision of frugal science, at the core of which is his belief that education, human health and environmental stewardship are inextricably linked, requiring that people be given the means not only to understand but also to care for the earth and themselves. To this end, he has created an ever-growing repertoire of accessible tools, including a paper centrifuge called, appropriately, the Paperfuge and a programmable chemistry kit inspired by a hand-cranked music box. More recently, COVID-19 has pushed him to new innovative extremes: among them, upgrading full-face snorkel masks into reusable personal protective equipment and—vindicating the sweet-tooths among us—repurposing cotton-candy machines to spin polypropylene for DIY high-filtration masks.

But Prakash’s inspiration in many ways...
predates seeing the costly microscope in 2011. He first encountered microscopes as a schoolboy in India. “Only the senior students got access to the lab microscopes,” he recalls. Eager to share their experience, he took home one of the cardboard tubes holding the school’s badminton shuttlecocks and, after furtively disassembling his brother’s glasses, inserted the lenses into it. The microscope didn’t work, but within a few years, Prakash would find a source from which to buy proper lenses. “I revived that subconsciously many years later,” he says. “I love the small world. I feel I can escape in it. I can get lost in it. It’s just so beautiful, and everything around us is built out of it.”

At the root of Prakash’s creativity is a childhood of freedom and scarcity—an origin story in rural India. “All of us have some superpower,” he says. “I’ve always felt this is observation for me. Observing the world is really powerful. I get so much joy out of just watching what literally unfolds right in front of our noses.” But for Prakash, there’s also empathy: a second superpower that he sees complementing the first. “I grew up in environments where I didn’t have much,” he says, “and I carry that burden on my shoulders and in my heart.” He wants others to have the tools to share his joy at science and nature—the sense of wonder that has empowered him and carried him far: from the child manically tinkering and inventing, risking his life to escape in it. I can get lost in it. It’s just so beautiful, and everything around us is built out of it.”

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PRAKASH WAS BORN IN 1980, in Mawana, a village known for sugar cane production, in Uttar Pradesh, one of India’s northern provinces. “This is where, to go from one place to another,” he says, “you would hop on a bullock cart and just hitch a ride.” His earliest memories are of the summers he spent at the house of his grandfather, Sukhvir Singh Shastry (Shastry being an honorific for those who teach Sanskrit), of whose seven children six became teachers. Every morning at dawn, Prakash and his 15 or so cousins had to rouse themselves from their rooftop slumber to join their grandfather on a walk. “Even if we were so little, he would take all of us all the way to the river and back, which was a solid two-hour walk for a kid,” Prakash says. “Every single plant that we could point a finger at, he could say what it was. He could point every single bird, and he could tell what it was. And he would weave these really complex stories about what it means. It was a ritual.” The walks were unlike anything Prakash experienced at school, where the focus was on achievement, not observation. “My first memory of nature,” he says, “and the idea of connecting that with knowledge itself and observation really follows from those long walks.”

During those years, Prakash moved often; first, shortly after his birth, to Shamlí, the hometown of his father, Brij, and then, so that his father could start a business as a general contractor, to Delhi, the crowded capital that made Prakash feel the intensity of the world. “Your senses are exploding,” he says. “You can smell the carburetors and the plastic being burned in one corner, and you can smell the sweets on the other end, and you can feel the mosquitoes on your skin, and you can feel the nice breeze coming from the peepul tree.” A few years later, when Prakash was 8, Brij suffered a serious brain injury in a motorcycle accident and was unable to work for months. Prakash’s mother, Sushma, had recently finished a PhD in political science and suddenly had to support the family. The first job offer came from a community college in Rampur—a town 120 miles east of Delhi. For a year, she took the Monday train that reached Rampur in the afternoon and she didn’t return until the weekend. After Brij recovered and began struggling to rebuild his business, Sushma and the two boys moved to a small house in Rampur, a place that would nourish Prakash’s love of experimentation. In the backyard, he and his brother, Anurag, came upon a little room attached to the landlord’s cow barn. “We opened it and found these beautiful instruments, like analytical balances and rheostats and things that are used in undergraduate laboratories, that were completely covered with spiderwebs,” he says. They learned that a previous tenant had given chemistry tutorials from the house and the landlord had claimed his laboratory in lieu of unpaid rent. Each day, while Sushma commuted to work and taught, the boys were alone. “As long as we would be back home for dinner, there was just this freedom to explore,” Prakash says. “I think that has really just been at the core of who I am.”

One after another, Prakash’s projects obsessed him, and four years in a row, his team won the school science competition—most memorably for making a gasoline-filled model of the Mega Borg, a Norwegian oil tanker that caught fire and broke apart. As the judges inspected the meticulously crafted metal ship, Prakash flicked a switch, causing it to break in half and ignite the gasoline. (“Of course,” he says, “I should have anticipated that this would have made really a lot of people upset.”) To Prakash, fire was a subject more of curiosity than of danger. “You can’t really hold it in your hand, and that makes it
fascinating,” he says. The morning after the Diwali festival, he collected firecracker duds littering the streets and split them, examining the gunpowder with a magnifying glass to determine whether finely or coarsely milled grains produced a different quality of fire. He then amassed gunpowder on a sheet of newsprint. “The question was what will happen if I combined the gunpowder from all of them,” he says. A plume of fire scorched off his hair and burned his hand, resulting in a hospital stay and a scar that he bears to this day.

Other schemes followed. Having found an English translation of a Russian book containing a diagram of the mercury motor created by 19th-century inventor Michael Faraday, Prakash asked a teacher for some mercury and was directed to its location in the lab. (“I thought he meant take [the entire bottle],” Prakash recalls. “When I think about it, it gives me chills that I had in my backpack a liter of mercury.”) Another time, after learning that rabbits have a similar number of bones to humans, Prakash bought one from a butcher and boiled its flesh off in bleach, stinking up his house. “My parents are vegetarian strictly by religion, and this is a huge no-no to be messing around with a dead animal in the house,” he says. As he spent months carefully reassembling the bones, he recalls being astounded that many were nearly too small to see—his first realization that the world is made up of ever-smaller components.

In fifth grade, an experience at school galvanized Prakash’s attitude toward learning. As his teacher talked about rockets, Prakash asked for clarification on how they worked. “The teacher walked to me and slapped me,” he says. “When I look at education in a more philosophical way, I feel that when you don’t give kids the freedom to explore, it’s that slap, like shutting a door.” A sense of defiance took root. “After that,” he recalls, “I kind of was in charge.” Studying for university entrance exams—16-hour days under a kerosene lamp—he felt his creative self being stripped away. (“You become a machine,” he says.) But once accepted to the computer science program at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur, he gave himself over to his creativity, pouring himself into designing an artificial intelligence program that could draw like a child. “I read a lot of psychology books,” he says. “I spent time in schools in the nearby areas just watching how kids draw.” He also started a popular club in which students made robots from trash. But he maintained only passable grades, and prospects for grad school were slim.

But then, Neil Gershenfeld, the director of MIT’s Center for Bits and Atoms, gave a talk to an overflowing hall at IIT. “Afterwards, I was swarmed by students,” Gershenfeld recalls. “Generally, as a group, they were thoughtful, articulate, very impressive, but there was one outlier. There was this cranky, intrusive, difficult student who wouldn’t shut up, who wouldn’t leave me alone, who kept following me. While all the others were asking questions, this student was kind of telling me things rather than asking me things, and just sort of all in all very annoying.” Not long afterward, when
Gershenfeld was evaluating graduate applications back at MIT, he spoke with the director of IIT Kanpur. “He told me I should ignore all of the thoughtful, articulate ones and I should take the difficult one,” Gershenfeld says, “and that was Manu.”

Prakash’s transcripts didn’t worry Gershenfeld. The Bits and Atoms initiative—focused on the boundaries of the physical and digital—attracted outliers. “Manu in no way tried to accommodate to what you needed to do to rate highly,” Gershenfeld says. “He did what he needed to learn and process things on his terms.” As part of its outreach, the center sets up fab labs—community labs equipped for digital fabrication—around the world. Prakash traveled to several countries with Sherry Lassiter, the director of that effort, to establish labs.

“It started back then—his interest in empowering communities both to understand technology and science and to have the power to create that technology for their own purposes,” Lassiter says. She recalls how he designed a thermometer made by lamination that could be manufactured for less than a penny. But Prakash also stood out for the passion with which he shared what he learned. “He was a model for us,” she says.

Nadya Peek, an assistant professor in human centered design and engineering at the University of Washington, overlapped briefly with Prakash in their doctoral program at MIT. She recalls how he became obsessed with their lab’s new CT scanner (which used X-rays to create 3D reconstructions) and repeatedly scanned insects and water droplets in an attempt to observe how the bugs drank, since their small size necessitates a strategy to overcome water’s surface tension. Once, when she complained of seeing a cockroach in her part of the lab, he ran off to find it and scan it. She recalls that with each new obsession, he worked days on end, taking brief naps and showing no sign of having gone home. “He’s intensely focused on the thing that he wants to figure out and everything else he’s just like, ‘I don’t care,’” she says. Prakash was also constantly looking for calipers, intent on measuring much of what he saw. When Peek cleaned out Prakash’s lab area after he graduated, she found more than 70 of them.

At MIT, Prakash did his dissertation on building a computer out of air bubbles, demonstrating that computing can be applied to the processing of materials as well as information. He continues to explore the idea that humans might someday learn from nature how to program matter to self-organize, the way, as a hand grows, it attains its “immense complexity,” he says. “Your hand has on the order of a trillion or half a trillion cells. To build an object of that same complexity with a 3D printer-type approach would take multiple decades, but biology does it because of an algorithmic approach.” This obsession created an immediate bond when he met his future wife, Sophie Dumont, a biophysicist from Quebec and now an associate professor of bioengineering at UCSF. Both were junior fellows at Harvard’s Society of Fellows, a three-year program that allows time to pursue studies however one might choose.

“When I asked her what she works on,” Prakash recalls, “she said something in a very cryptic but beautiful way. She said, ‘I figure out how cells count.’” The idea captured his imagination—cells counting when replicating billions of times, segregating new chromosomes into new cells, rarely making errors. Not long after they began dating, Dumont learned that Prakash wouldn’t receive his doctorate due to unpaid library fines, the result of six years of driving his car to the library, loading it with 50 or 60 books and not returning them on time, or ever. “He had bought his parents their first tickets from India to visit for his graduation,” Dumont recalls. “The entire goal of their trip was to see him get his degree, but then, maybe a week before, he was told he wasn’t going to graduate.” The symbolism of the moment, if not the money spent on tickets and visas, made her want to help. She asked her brother for a loan to cover the fines—around $10,000. (Prakash hasn’t entirely changed his ways: “One thing I feel glad about at Stanford is that as faculty you don’t get fined, or at least I’m not aware of it . . . I don’t know, but I should check.”)

**PRAKASH JOINED STANFORD’S FACULTY IN 2011.** Since his lab wouldn’t be ready for nine months, he embarked on fieldwork with infectious disease institutes in India and Thailand. During that time, he had the inspiration for the Foldscope, which he would later design with one of his first grad students, Jim Cybulski, PhD ’15. “I decided to make 50,000 of them in a lab at Stanford and ship them for free to anybody who would ask for it,” Prakash says—the best choice of his career, he believes. A $100,000 grant from the Moore Foundation enabled him to realize his vision, supplying not only $1 for each Foldscope but also funds to set up manufacturing in the lab and to ship worldwide.

“That was the seed of what is now known as the Foldscope community,” Prakash says.

Today, Foldscopes are easily available online, and 1.5 million have shipped. More than 500 peer-reviewed papers have been published on uses including environmental research, animal health, agriculture and education. Daily, users upload photos—taken with the Foldscope’s smartphone attachment—to the Microcosmos, an online forum. While Prakash admits to having 120,000 unread emails, he frequently peruses the images: fern rhizomes, onion peel cells, bioluminescent microbes, the barbs of a pigeon feather, the pitted lunar surface of Vicks VapoRub.

Prakash himself often uses the Foldscope to inspect the world around him. In Palo Alto’s Baylands Nature Preserve, he observed the single-celled organisms *Spirostomum* perform simultaneous ultrafast contractions—a defensive reaction coordinated without any known signaling—and published a paper...
describing the phenomenon. But while his lab works both to make basic-science discoveries and to develop more tools for frugal science, he also wants to study how the natural world is transforming. “All of us need to become conservationists and see the dramatic changes,” he says. The challenge is giving people the tools. “There are a million Foldscopes out there but 2 billion kids,” he adds. This passion for science and outreach is, Gershenfeld points out, striking. “I’ve been with Manu in state-of-the-art research settings and in labs in remote villages, and he doesn’t draw any distinction. It’s all part of his discovery.”

As Prakash’s frugal science projects expand, the minuscule world remains a theme. In 2020, his lab published the design for the PlanktoScope, a microscope that pumps seawater past lenses and can be easily assembled for a few hundred dollars. Prakash is encouraging the amateur sailing community worldwide to use the PlanktoScope to map the effects of climate change on plankton, which underpin the planet’s food chain and assimilate 30 to 50 percent of its carbon dioxide. “We can really be measuring the planet at the scale that changes are happening,” he says.

Prakash’s lab has also built the Octopi (open configurable high-throughput platform for infectious disease diagnosis in the field), a device that scans blood for malaria 120 times faster than a person can using a traditional microscope. With components also costing a few hundred dollars, it doesn’t use conventional optics (no one stares into an eyepiece) but rather a neural network trained to recognize malaria from 20,000 images. “Diagnosis is the key, because we actually have a cure for malaria,” he says. “But the methods used to detect it are literally 100 years old.”

Not long after Prakash released the Octopi, the global inequities driving him to make cheap tools for science and health care were thrown into stark relief with COVID-19, which disproportionately harmed low-income communities. “In delivering and building health care, if we don’t plan actively for access, we will always end up in these situations no matter how much or how hard we try,” Prakash says. “If you’re going to think about health for all, you have to account for the affordability of it. Otherwise, it’s almost as if it doesn’t exist.”

Prakash immediately set to work. Since the pandemic’s start, 23,534 Pneumasks—full-face snorkel masks converted to reusable PPE—have been deployed around the world, and the PufferFish, a cheap, open-source ventilator on which he collaborated, is being manufactured in India and Kenya. He has worked on decontaminating N95 masks and invented a COVID-19 saliva test that could retail for as little as $1. And one day, while pausing to gaze through a Foldscope at cotton candy—sugar spun into the sweet fibers so popular in his youth—he realized that it resembled filtration material. He ordered several cotton candy machines off Amazon, and his lab began spinning polypropylene like that used in N95 masks to show that this approach could be deployed in a pinch.

Today, Prakash and Dumont live in San Francisco and have twin 4-year-old daughters.

He travels to India once or twice a year, visiting his parents, who offered him the freedom to explore, and his grandfather, who opened his mind to observation—two passions that have led him to believe that we have much to learn from nature. “I am of the opinion that we don’t even know in the 21st century what is possible, what biology can do,” Prakash says. He believes that by building new tools and making them widely available, more and more organisms will be studied, though the revelations won’t be obvious. “Nature has its way of hiding its secrets, and sometimes the fundamental work of making discoveries in biology is underappreciated and only the work of translating it to give a certain value is valued,” he says. “I want to flip that argument. These are both equally important, and we are lacking in the discovery piece.”

While many of Prakash’s projects may seem distinct, they revolve around the three interwoven threads of his vision: education, health and the environment. “If you cannot provide opportunities and a healthy livelihood for people, they will always have to live lives that will have environmental impacts,” he says. “If you cannot create environments that nurture, you will always have health impacts degrading the environment. If you cannot build infrastructure around education, people will neither believe in the health systems and the health services that are available, nor value the environment as much as we should.”

Despite time spent encouraging governments to equip schools with affordable scientific tools, he doesn’t see his role as the person shouting from the rooftops. “I want to turn stones,” he says. He is most passionate about imparting the curiosity that sends him back into nature. “I don’t see many students walking around the campus—it’s a beautiful campus with tons of nature—just exploring the environment,” he says. “If I was transported 50 or 100 years ago, my intuition is that I would have seen students poking at what’s growing in the backyards or in Lake Lagunita. We really have to make sure that we are getting out of the labs.”

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A Friendship Mission

The improbable, coincidental and utterly true story of an alum who went missing for 13 years, and the friends who found him.

By Kevin Cool

Photography by Cheryl Gerber
Cheryl Gerber had seen him for years, a homeless man, lean, and brown from the sun, meandering along the sidewalks of the Esplanade, a leafy New Orleans street dotted with 200-year-old mansions. A professional photographer, Gerber liked walking in the area looking for subjects. It was on one of those outings that she spotted the man sitting on the steps of a high-rise office building. He appeared to be talking to the ground as businesspeople on all sides of him walked past paying no notice. “There was something about him that was different,” Gerber says. She snapped a photograph.

She began noticing the man more often and couldn’t shake the feeling that he had an interesting backstory. “It seemed to me like he might be a writer. I don’t know why I thought that—maybe it was the beard, some kind of Hemingway look,” Gerber says. Despite her curiosity, she was wary about speaking to him. “He seemed unapproachable, and angry.”

She was walking her dog one April evening two years ago when she saw him lying in his sleeping bag scribbling in a notebook. Emboldened, she walked up to him and said, “Hi, are you a writer?” The man looked up with a brightness she hadn’t seen before and answered yes.

They talked for almost an hour. “He told me he went to Stanford. He told me a lot of things that I didn’t believe, given his condition, but the more we talked, the more I realized he was definitely well educated,” Gerber recalls.

His name was Kevin Bennett. Gerber went home and spent the next several hours Googling that name, cross-referencing it with Stanford and every other piece of information she could remember from the conversation. “It was 3 in the morning, and I had to work the next day, but I was so wound up wanting to know more about who he was.”

And then, a clue: She found a reference in the Stanford Daily to a Kevin Bennett as the winner of a poetry prize. Could that be him? She kept digging and came across a photograph on a website that showed Bennett and three of his friends on vacation in 1995. One of the men in the photograph was identified as John Coyle. By now, Gerber was fairly certain that the Kevin Bennett living on the streets of New Orleans and the Stanford poet were the same person.

Sitting there at her computer in the middle of the night, Gerber pondered what to do next. “Something made me think that there were people out there who would want to know where he was,” she says. “But at the same time, what if he didn’t want to be found? You just don’t know if people have decided to disappear from society.”

A search for Coyle turned up an article he had written about a program he was producing “paying homage to my lost friend” whom he described as “poet laureate” at his alma mater. Perhaps, Gerber thought, he doesn’t know where Kevin Bennett is now.

At 5:46 a.m., with the first streaks of dawn appearing, Gerber posted a message on Facebook. “I haven’t been able to sleep a wink,” she wrote, and proceeded to unspool the details of her encounter with Bennett. She found Coyle on Facebook’s Messenger app and sent him a note: “Do you know a man named Kevin Bennett?”

Coyle saw the message later that morning and quickly typed out a reply: “Holy shit! Are you kidding me? We’ve been looking for him for 13 years.”

After so many years of fruitless searching, John Coyle, ’90, had begun to make room for the possibility that his best friend was dead.

Coyle and Bennett had known each other since their middle and high school days in Michigan, when they competed against each other in speed skating. They had separately migrated to Stanford, where they reunited and became inseparable. “We were both relatively poor Midwesterners at a school with a lot of wealthy Californians and some East Coasters. We felt like we didn’t really fit in very well in the beginning,” Coyle says.

Bennett, ’90, had been best man at Coyle’s wedding and an occasional housemate over the years, but Coyle hadn’t spoken with him since receiving a phone call from a jail in Louisiana in 2006. Bennett, who had been in and out of treatment facilities for mental illness, was “going off the rails,” Coyle says, spinning out strange stories about marrying several women who were living in his head. “It was very disorienting.”
The two later exchanged a couple of emails, and then the line went dead. Despite Coyle’s efforts to resuscitate communication, there was nothing but silence from the other end. Worried that something terrible might have happened, Coyle reached out to everyone who might know where Bennett was and how he was doing, but couldn’t locate him.

Bennett’s disappearance alarmed not just Coyle but also a coterie of Stanford friends that included John Wesseling, ’90, Sam Steidl, ’91, Andrew von Nordenflycht, ’91, and Perry Friedman, ’90, MA ’91, as well as Pauline (Sanchez) Steinhoffer, ’91, Bennett’s onetime girlfriend.

Steinhoffer first met Bennett outside the dining hall at Lagunita when she was a freshman and he was a sophomore in the fall of 1987. She was captivated by his manner and appearance—he wore his blond hair spiked à la ’80s rock star Billy Idol and was often seen in a trench coat that billowed out behind him like a cape. “He made an impression,” Steinhoffer says. “If you asked anybody who was on campus during that time and described him, they’d say, ‘Oh yeah, I remember that guy.’” Soon, she and Bennett were dating.

Coyle and Bennett were infamous for the sort of mischief that drives student deans nuts. Two of their favorite activities were exploring the network of steam tunnels that runs under the campus and climbing onto rooftops. “We managed to get on almost every building on campus,” Coyle says. “We weren’t drinkers, so when everybody else was going to parties, we would wander around campus looking for ways to get in trouble.”

Steinhoffer, who marveled at the pair’s audacity, occasionally tagged along on their adventures. “I can tell you that I have sat on the very tip-top of History Corner roof,” she says, laughing.

Although they were never “officially arrested,” Coyle says, he and Bennett had eight police incidents on their campus record that had to be reconciled before they could graduate. “The police knew us on a first-name basis.”

To hear Coyle describe these shenanigans, one might assume he and Bennett were derelict students. In fact, after a slow start, they both thrived academically. And it was Bennett, Coyle says, “who taught me how to write.” Despairing at his mediocre marks in written work, Coyle, who majored in engineering–product design, once noticed a paper from one of Bennett’s classes sitting in his room. “At the top it said ‘A++,’” Coyle recalls. “I was thinking, ‘How do you get A++?’”

When he asked Bennett for his secret, his friend replied: “I just write what I want.” A light went on for Coyle, who abandoned his efforts to follow what he imagined to be the professor’s script and began to write with a new freedom. Today, he is the author of three books on design thinking.

The adjective commonly used to describe Bennett during those days is brilliant. Wesseling, now a neuroscientist living in Spain, has told friends Bennett has “one of the greatest minds I’ve ever known.”

“The way he used language,” Steinhoffer says. “It was almost hypnotizing listening to him.”

As Bennett remembers it, Stanford nourished his intellect and inspired him to pursue the life of a writer. English professor W.S. Di Piero was especially influential. “He told me I’d be a poet,” Bennett recalls. As if to validate it, Bennett won the 1991 University and College Poets Prize from the Academy of American Poets.

Steinhoffer doesn’t recollect any evidence of mental illness during the first year of her relationship with Bennett, but noted that something had changed when she returned for her sophomore year. “He had gone to a dark place,” she says. “I was 19 years old and didn’t know how to deal with that.”

After the couple broke up, “I felt so much guilt,” Steinhoffer says. “It took me years to figure out that Kevin’s
challenges weren’t my fault.”

By his senior year, Bennett’s illness was serious enough that he had difficulty completing some of his courses on time. As a result of that and other circumstances, he didn’t complete his degree until 1994.

Coyle had continued competitive speed skating throughout his time at Stanford, and two weeks after his graduation in 1990 he moved into the Olympic training center in Colorado Springs, Colo., with the rest of the U.S. national team. And for the next seven years, that was his life. In the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, Coyle won a silver medal as part of the men’s 5,000-meter relay.

Bennett, meanwhile, accepted a job as a technical writer at Dow Chemical and later became a consultant for the company. He was making “vast amounts of money,” he says, but working 80-hour weeks, which left no time for personal writing. It was a good professional experience, but ultimately unfulfilling. “It hit me one day that I came out of Stanford intending to be a writer. I’m a writer, that’s what I am.”

By 1997, Coyle and Bennett were back together, sharing a house in Milwaukee while Coyle trained for the upcoming Winter Olympics. But when he did not make the team, Coyle moved to Phoenix with his fiancée. Bennett headed to Seattle. Contact between the two became less frequent, but Bennett was always there for the milestone moments, serving as best man at Coyle’s wedding in 1998, and visiting for the birth of Coyle’s daughter, Katelina, in 2001.

It was around that time that Bennett gravitated to New Orleans, drawn by an invitation to participate in a writing program. He was immediately smitten with the place. For someone attracted to the bohemian mien of an artist working out of a café, enchanted by the sights and sounds of an exotic setting, it was a perfect fit. “I love this city,” he says, dropping his voice for emphasis. “The architecture, the gas lamps with the crowns of fire. I love the people here; they’re very warm. You can talk to anyone.”

He was hired as a parish administrator at St. Anna’s Episcopal Church and had an apartment near the French Quarter. Then, in August 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit. Vast areas of New Orleans were flooded. Bennett lived in the Bywater, one of the few areas of the 9th Ward to escape major flooding, but amid the tumult of the event, he lost everything he owned.

For the next few months, Bennett stayed at the home of St. Anna’s rector, Father William Terry, in Abita Springs, about an hour’s drive from New Orleans. “Kevin was considered part of our family even before Katrina,” Terry says. “Katrina galvanized that relationship with long conversations over many cups of coffee on the front porch.” When he returned to New Orleans in December of that year, Bennett moved into the home of a St. Anna’s parishioner. But when that didn’t work out, Bennett “spiraled into homelessness,” says Terry. For his part, Bennett never uses the term homeless but instead refers to his time on the streets as “living outside.” He had qualified for $1,137 in monthly disability benefits from Social Security, but the government had garnished $270 of it each month to pay off outstanding student loans. That didn’t leave enough to rent an apartment and also pay for other essentials, he says.

Being unhoused led to other problems. Bennett’s access to medication became more sporadic and his illness shadowed
him, occasionally resulting in erratic behavior and turbulent encounters. His call to Coyle from the jail followed his arrest for threatening homeowners whose porch he had slept on to escape the rain.

For a while, Bennett had a phone and a Facebook account, and he and Coyle exchanged a few online messages following Bennett’s arrest. And then, nothing. “The phone number didn’t work anymore,” Coyle says.

Bennett had gone silent before, Perry Friedman says, but he always popped back up and was OK. This time, though, when nobody heard from him after his last note to Coyle, worries about his welfare intensified. “We were afraid the worst had happened,” Friedman says.

Months passed, and then years, and Coyle kept looking, occasionally getting a whiff of a clue. “Somebody who worked at a restaurant in Baton Rouge said they saw somebody that sounded like Kevin,” Coyle says. But there was never anything definitive.

Friedman’s wife, Robyn, recalls the pain she heard in Friedman’s and Coyle’s voices when they talked about Bennett’s disappearance. “It was kind of an open wound; there hadn’t been any closure,” she says.

Finally, although his determination to find his old friend never wavered, Coyle says resignation began to replace hope. He and Steinhoffer occasionally caught themselves referring to Bennett in the past tense. But there hadn’t been a funeral, so Coyle assumed that meant there was still a chance he might find Bennett. Conversations began about hiring a private investigator.

Then, out of nowhere, Cheryl Gerber dropped her Facebook bomb. After Coyle replied to her message, the two spoke on the phone. “Pauline was crying, John was crying, everyone was crying,” Gerber recalls.

“It was such a shock and such a relief,” Steinhoffer says. “I was pretty convinced that Kevin was no longer with us.”

After such a long time, hearing that Bennett had been found “sort of overwhelemed me,” Coyle says. “All of the anxiety, fear, care, love, just washed to the surface.” The next morning, he and his daughter were on a plane headed to New Orleans.

Soon, everyone in the Stanford posse knew that Bennett had resurfaced. “My first reaction was relief, that he was alive. My second one was fear,” Friedman says. “There were lots of ways it could’ve gone wrong—either we could never find him again, or if John showed up he would have nothing to do with him.”

Coyle arranged to meet Gerber at Port of Call, a burger joint on the Esplanade between Dauphine and Bourbon streets where she had spoken with Bennett. As they were waiting in line for dinner, Coyle struck up a conversation with a security guard who, it turned out, was familiar with Bennett. “I see him all the time,” he said to Coyle. Then he pointed to a section of shrubs a few yards away. “He keeps a sleeping bag right over there.”

Coyle walked over to the shrubs, pushed aside the greenery, and there on the ground was a black sleeping bag and pillow. For Coyle, it was a moment of profound relief—here was something his friend owned, proof of life. Coyle assumed this was a place to which Bennett would return, so the next day he filled a small backpack with items meant to validate his identity—a Stanford sweatshirt, a note with his phone number, and a trophy from his speed skating days—and stuffed it inside the sleeping bag.

Gerber had some additional intel about Bennett’s whereabouts in recent days and some of the places he frequented. With those leads, Coyle and Katelina began combing the streets.

For two days they searched without a sign. According to Coyle’s Fitbit, they walked 50 miles in 48 hours. At times Coyle journeyed out on his own, visiting “every single place I would normally avoid”—sketchy-looking alleyways, homeless encampments, freeway underpasses. After receiving a tip that Bennett had been seen at the Canal Street Underpass, Coyle went to check it out. “So, I’m walking through this tent city at midnight seeing people lighting up whatever sort of drugs they had, and thinking, ‘I would never choose to be here, but how else can I find him?’”

Coyle learned later that Bennett had gone to a group home to escape the heavy rains that had descended on New Orleans just before Coyle’s arrival in the city. But at the time, he and Katelina had to fly home without having found his friend, and Coyle
Recognizing Her

1. [In the kitchen]

I live through the small details, the eccentricities
Of the beautiful: the shadows fingerling my mother’s hand
As she lifts a pickle jar into the evening light,
While she is still alive and I am alive to see it.

Light renews itself on her skin, resumes
Its old arguments with grief, the air falls away
To become space. A new world revolves here,
Around her hands as they shape the jar,
Each breath becomes a new god to believe in.
I am lost in the white roses of skin which open
On each of her knuckles, I am held hostage
By the death-defying patience of the smallest things.

2. [At the supermarket]

My mother is testing the ripeness of a plum.
She is fifty-one and lovely, raising the plum
Toward the light, squinting into it like a face
She almost recognizes but cannot remember.

She is holding the plum close to her mouth now
As if to redeem it, to give it another body,
Break its slow circles into hers. A large white
SALE! sign hovers over her shoulder
Like a cardboard angel which will never
Descend, never bring the good news.

The plum’s swollen purple shines,
A twin to the inmost shadow of her mouth,

Silence ripening into a word. It is
As perfect and rotund as the darkness
Hidden in her skull, that precious solitude
She carries with her everywhere—
She once said the strong must always
Taste their loneliness to remain strong.

—Kevin Bennett

was crestfallen. “Cheryl hadn’t seen him; we didn’t know where he was,” he says.

Two weeks passed. Then Gerber contacted Coyle again. She had seen Bennett and described to him her outreach to Coyle, but Bennett was antagonistic and didn’t believe her.

“It was obvious he didn’t trust me; he thought I was trying to trick him by using John’s name,” Gerber recalls. At that point, Coyle wasn’t sure he would make a return visit.

“I didn’t want to fly out there if he didn’t want to see me,” he says.

But a couple of days later Gerber had a better conversation with Bennett, who was more composed. He apologized for his earlier behavior and listened as Gerber related Coyle’s efforts to find him. When she called Coyle this time, it was with better news: “He really wants to see you.”

“Tell him I’ll be there tomorrow,” Coyle replied.

The next morning Gerber relayed the message to Bennett, who was hanging out in the Neutral Ground, a tree-lined median that divides the Esplanade. “I’ll wait right here,” he said.

And that he did. For almost eight hours, Bennett stayed near that spot, waiting and watching for Coyle. Late afternoon, Coyle arrived. He and Gerber went to the place where Bennett had slept, expecting to find him, but Bennett wasn’t there. Then they spied Bennett half a block away, walking toward them. Bennett saw Coyle, hesitated a moment, “and he just came running,” Coyle recalls.

Gerber chokes up at the memory. “They literally stopped traffic,” she says. Bennett and Coyle sprinted toward each other and met in the middle of the street for a hug 13 years overdue.

“I love you, John,” Bennett said.

“I’ve missed you.”

That first night, they slept outside. Coyle says he wanted to steer Bennett back to a more stable, safe situation, but first he and his friend needed to reconnect. He’d come prepared with a sleeping bag, and after Bennett rejected his gentle suggestion to go to a hotel, Coyle threw it down next to Bennett’s beneath a tree on the Neutral Ground. Gerber visited them around midnight.

“They were smoking cigars and listening to Def Leppard.”

It didn’t take long for Bennett’s friends to mobilize, pouring donations into a GoFundMe site that Coyle established. Moreover, Gerber’s Facebook posts had gone viral, attracting the attention of people all over New Orleans. One woman, who had never met Bennett but was moved by his story, contributed $10,000. Meanwhile, Coyle arranged to have the student loan garnishment removed from Bennett’s monthly disability stipend.

On May 7, 2019, one month after Gerber’s first conversation with him, Bennett moved into a 430-square-foot studio apartment. Robyn Friedman took it upon herself to furnish the place. “In 48 hours, she outfitted the whole apartment,” says Coyle, right down to the towels in the drawers.

Bennett has now been in the apartment for more than two years. He and Gerber have become close friends, and Coyle travels to New Orleans whenever he can to see him. In a recent interview, Bennett talked about his friendships, his life on the streets and what his “rescue” has meant to him.

He speaks as one might expect a poet to speak, colorfully and energetically, sprinkling his descriptions with ornate allusions, pausing from time to time to pull himself back from a digression he finds enticings. He is never more animated than when talking about his years on the Farm.

“I’m sure everyone who is reading this article remembers some people at Stanford who they loved; that’s what John is like for me,” he says. “When I’m with John I’m immediately elsewhere, in this beautiful world.”
For someone who was unhoused for more than a decade, his narrative is remarkably devoid of dreary anecdotes. Coyle attributes this in part to Bennett’s innate toughness—he remembers him cracking jokes while being carted off after shattering his arm during a speed skating meet—and his writerly sensibility. “Kevin’s spirit as a writer is what kept hope alive all those years,” he says. “It is clear that part of his essence recognized the romance inherent in living outside.”

He would never have freely adopted such a lifestyle, Bennett says, but when his rental agreement after Katrina went sideways, his finances—already precarious—forced a painful choice: shelter or food. “Imagine all the money you would have if you didn’t have rent,” he says. “Food cost more because I couldn’t cook, but I could get things I liked and enjoy myself. The other option was to get an apartment and live on Pop-Tarts.”

As he heard this, Coyle laughed. This was the playful banter he had so dearly missed. During a recent visit to New Orleans, he recalls, he had dinner with Bennett and the Gerbers. “Cheryl, Mark and I were lamenting the impact COVID has had on drying up our businesses. Kevin pauses and says, ‘Well, I guess I am the only one here at the table with a steady income.’ I nearly spat out my wine.”

Despite the deprivations he has endured, Bennett says his faith has enabled him to see the brightness around him, and delight in simple pleasures. “Imagine this: You wake up in the morning and you go down to the river and it’s beautiful, like the lake you swam in when you were young. You go for a swim in the river and that’s your light. Then you step out and you’re right next to Café Du Monde, a little French café like you see in paintings. You have a cup of coffee and it’s hot and fresh. God is letting you know that you’re going to have a wonderful morning.”

He spent most of his days walking, covering practically every inch of the city. And once, for good measure, he walked to Baton Rouge, 81 miles away. He smiles at the memory. “I was going down to the river and somehow ended up in Baton Rouge. How I did it I do not know, because I had never been there before. I had an excellent time there. And then I walked back.”

At various times, Bennett says, he tried to find housing, but was always foiled by some combination of inadequate funds, lack of affordable apartments and bad luck. “I wanted to get an apartment so I could start to publish,” he says. “Then John and everyone else did this . . . ” His voice trails off. And then he starts to cry. “Thank you so much,” he says to Coyle through a stifled sob. “You brought me back to the world I know.”

For his Stanford crew, reconnecting with Bennett has been profoundly moving. “There is Kevin the person, and then there is the concept of Kevin, which we have carried with us for 30 years,” Steinhoffer says. “He has held us together.”

Gerber still isn’t sure why she walked up to Bennett that night two springs ago and started talking with him. “I’ve spent a lot of time trying to put my finger on what it was,” she says. “There is just something about Kevin that made me think he wasn’t where he belonged.”

But there are reasons to be hopeful: For one thing, Bennett is writing again. “He has gobs and gobs of stuff,” Coyle reports. After all the pain and uncertainty, all the years of not knowing whether his best friend was alive or dead, Coyle cannot bear the thought of losing Bennett again, so he plans to help however he can for as long as it takes. And he can’t resist believing that this saga has more surprises in store. Maybe the book that Bennett has dreamed about will materialize. Maybe the Stanford poet whose verse enthralled his friends and earned acclaim is poised for a breakout. The ending to the story has yet to be written. But Kevin Bennett is alive and he is safe. And his muse is awake.

Kevin Cool is the former executive editor of Stanford. Email him at stanford.magazine@stanford.edu.
As the 1950s became the 1960s—that time of incipient American revolutions—the now-legendary American authors Edward Abbey, Ken Kesey and Larry McMurtry all stalked the Quad in the formative years of their careers. The three writers would become, respectively, a wild-eyed oracle of the new environmental movement, a countercultural hero, and one of the great storytellers of the 20th century.

Among them, they authored more than 65 books. They’ve all left us now, McMurtry the last of them when he died in March in his native Texas at the age of 84. Each reshaped the American West in his own image, creating new archetypes and tearing down traditions. But first, they traveled to Stanford to study in the program built by Wallace Stegner, the man who had already remade the literary West before them.

He would become known as the dean of Western writers. Stegner came to Stanford from Harvard before his Pulitzer Prize for Angle of Repose, before his National Book Award, before his famous Wilderness Letter, which directly influenced Congress’s Wilderness Act of 1964 (see sidebar, page 47). By the time Stegner retired from teaching 25 years later, in 1971, he had taught many students who went on to become household names, from Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, ’50, LLB ’52, to back-to-the-land prophet Wendell Berry, and from renowned English professor emerita Nancy Packer to Pulitzer winner N. Scott Momaday, MA ’60, PhD ’63.

Stegner established Stanford’s creative writing department and the fellowships that now bear his name in 1946, initially catering the program to post–World War II GIs who were returning home with stories to tell. Stegner understood this group of young men and their themes of brotherhood, sacrifice, and the unsettling twists of mind and fate brought about by war. He called them “the best students, and the most motivated, that any professor ever had.”

When the straitlaces of the 1950s started to come undone, Stegner’s writing program began to draw a new breed of ambitious young writer. Abbey arrived in 1957, Kesey in 1959 and McMurtry in 1960. Taken collectively, the writing fellows of the new era were never Stegner’s “best” and far from his favorites, though he remained unfailingly gracious toward them. In style, compositional philosophy and persona, Stegner found himself on one tectonic plate while so many of his students sailed off on another.

In the American West, Stegner saw the possibility of a “geography of hope,” his famous phrase, a place where land and civilization, each carefully tended, could exist in relative harmony. He imagined a cleansing of old delusions in favor of a clear-eyed version of history and ecosystem. He also never fully grappled with the murder and dislocation of Indigenous people by the on-rushing settlers. He penned a land that was vast and gorgeous and empty, not violently depopulated, not filled with ghosts.

The American West has always been a moving target. Each generation has created its own vision of the land to fill its needs. By the late 1950s,
the violent past had mated with a vio-

lent future in which the new American
people had nuked their own land,
irradiating the desert West at the test
sites in New Mexico and Nevada, in
preparation for a global nuclear war
that seemed, at the time, near at
hand. Stegner’s West was not recog-
nizable to his most famous students.
They filled their pages with dangerous
people navigating dangerous ground.
In their West, civilization is not
remedy, nor is it even civil.

Consider Abbey and Stegner: Both
wrote specifically and beautifully of
the red rock desert; both became
nationally lauded conservationists,
Abbey for his radical ideals of eco-
defense, Stegner for his programmatic
preservation of wilderness. When
Abbey left Stegner’s program early,
in 1958, at age 31, nearly broke and
semi-estranged from his wife, his
journals freighted with poverty and
cynicism, he reads like a character
straight out of one of his own future
novels—and just the kind of char-
acter Stegner abhorred. A year later,
in New Mexico, Abbey wrote: “If the
world of men is truly as ugly, cruel,
trivial, unjust and stinking with fraud
as it usually appears, and if it is really
impossible to make it pleasant and
decent, then there remains only one
alternative for the honest man: stay
home, cultivate your own garden, look
to the mountains.”

Stegner would never write such a
thing. The two men had fundamentally
different ideas about what kind of
person the grand Western story was
about. In answer to a version of that
same choice—to withdraw or engage—
Stegner said, “One of the nicest things
about American independence . . . is
that you can tell the world to kiss your
behind and go off. That is freedom; it is
also irresponsibility; social irresponsi-
bility.” For Stegner, the outsize failure of
white Western settlement was restless-
ness, the inability to stay put and build
cohesive multigenerational communi-
ties with stories of substance to tell.

Though not limited to
his geography, Stegner
was a Westerner who wrote of the
West as a novelist, an essayist and a
historian. He invested the people
walking his pages with an unusual
depth of history (European-American
history, to be clear), not to mention
the sensory impressions of immigrants
traveling an alien land, the lurking
fear of vast skies and arid plains, the
joy of water pouring forth out of can-
yons. “The footsteps of history in a
land of fable,” Stegner wrote of the
first Spaniards to reach the Colorado
River in his 1953 book Beyond the
Hundredth Meridian. “Across these
shallows marked by an angling line of
stones, under the fantastic knobs and
baldheads of the Navajo sandstone
at the lower end of Glen Canyon,
Escalante and Maera crossed the
Colorado and added this remote
corner of New Spain to the map of
the world.” At a memorial for Stegner,
Bruce Babbitt, President Clinton’s
secretary of the interior, who realized
some of the goals laid down by Stegner

Edward Abbey:

‘One man alone can be pretty
dumb sometimes, but for real
bona fide stupidity, there ain’t
nothing can beat teamwork.’

Monkey Wrench Gang
in the Wilderness Letter, recalled the first time he read *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*. “It was,” Babbitt said, “like someone had thrown a rock through a window and you could hear all the old ideas just shattering across the floor in the face of a new reality.”

**The specific new world crafted by**

Stegner, the one that blew out Babbitt’s windows, was a West stripped of mythology, hucksters and heroes. “I don’t purvey horse opera,” Stegner said. “I don’t think that six-gun West amounts to much … it never did.” Almost to prove his point, Stegner wrote one of the most praised cowboy stories of all time. His novella *Genesis* contains no six-guns, no fights, no gamblers or desperados. Instead the storyline follows riders and cattle through an unholy—but not unearthy—storm, a simple narrative of work and trust.

In a sense, by attempting to strip the West of mythology, Stegner opened the way for his students to create Western mythologies of their own. It’s hard to imagine making the leap to Abbey’s *Monkey Wrench Gang*—with its iconic struggle of madcap ecoterrorists against industrial America—without the Wilderness Letter to precede it. Similarly, it’s hard to see the path from the *Riders of the Purple Sage* pulp romanticism of Zane Grey to Larry McMurtry without Stegner in between to clear out the dime-store brush.

McMurtry was 24 when he came to Stanford in 1960, and his first novel, *Horseman, Pass By* (one of an eventual 33), was already with his publisher. From the outset, McMurtry declined to purvey nobility or sanctify his protagonists. “I didn’t love cowboys,” he wrote years later, “and I didn’t want to wax poetical about them.” McMurtry would know. He had begun riding at age 3, on a mean, broken-down pony over the stony hills of his father’s small ranch in Archer County, Texas, in 1939. For the next 20 years, until he went to Stanford, cowboying for his father was McMurtry’s work whenever he wasn’t in school, though he understood from as early as he could remember that there was no future in the profession for himself (nor for anyone else, as far as he could tell, given the trend lines of economics and overgrazing).

Stegner and McMurtry parted company over where to locate the beauty, or at least the poetry, of the American landscape. McMurtry praised *In the American West*, a book of Richard Avedon’s photographs, “because it was so brutally antipastoral, so true to the gritty West of drifters and pig farmers, of truck stop girls and truckers.” At the other end of the spectrum of Western aesthetic sensibility, McMurtry criticized Ansel Adams—a close friend of Stegner’s—for turning the West into a parade of pretty but empty pictures by removing the people from the land. And unlike Abbey, Stegner or Adams, McMurtry saw no inherent redemptive power in the land. “In the West,” McMurtry wrote, “lifting up one’s eyes to the heavens can be a wise thing, for much of the land is ugly. The beauty of the sky … prompts us to forgive the land its cruelty.”

Ultimately, his readers disillusioned McMurtry: “I thought of *Lonesome Dove*...
Dove as demythicizing, but … readers don’t want to know and can’t be made to see how difficult and destructive life in the Old West really was.” Instead, McMurtry found that he had created “a kind of American Arthuriad.”

Stegner's writing program at Stanford at the dawn of the 1960s has been seen as a kind of Western Arthuriad, the heroes of the age assembled briefly in one Camelot. The egos around the table were as outsize as the literary quests they would undertake. Chief among them was 24-year-old Ken Kesey, Gr. ’59, who, according to McMurtry, made it charmingly plain “that he meant to be the stud-duck.”

Sometimes a Great Notion sprawls across generations and genres. It is another new West, of rivers and mud and old-growth behemoths felled. Echoes roll through the decades and down out of the canyons, dictating the characters' lives in a story that is a psychedelic mashup of Cain and Abel and Oedipus set in an Oregon logging town during a labor strike.

For Kesey, the West was not merely physical geography. “Stegner,” he wrote, “had traveled across the Great Plains and reached the Pacific…. That was, as far as he was concerned, the edge of the continent, and he thought you were supposed to stop there.” Kesey wanted to go farther, to keep traveling, to enter a new West of the synapses: “I took LSD and he stayed with Jack Daniel’s; the line between us was drawn.”

Given his preoccupation with the arid West, Stegner may never have thought of Kesey as a Western writer. Stegner described Oregon's coast as more closely related to Japan than to Utah. Kesey, in his life and work, pushed forward on multiple new frontiers that were foreign ground to Stegner.

That Stegner and Kesey clashed was no secret. In his biography of Stegner, Jackson Benson, ’52, quoted Bob Stone, another writing fellow at Stanford at the time: “Stegner saw Kesey and what he represented as a threat to civilization and intellectualism and sobriety.” Meanwhile, in a 1963 interview, Kesey accused Stegner of “writing to a classroom and to his colleagues” instead of honestly—a barb honed to wound Stegner.

To Stegner, Kesey manifested the sickness afflicting America. Stegner saw a culture descending into an anti-intellectual and ahistorical morass in which drugs and emotional flights displaced knowledge and creativity. Despite his anti-war and environmental ideals, Stegner thought the young radicals of the 1960s were mostly “harebrained” and did not trust them even to clearly articulate a reformed America, let alone carry change through. Stegner taught sustained work and constant revision as an etched-in-stone principle, while certain of his students thought their manuscripts should flow from their typewriters in billowing rolls of unedited prose just like On the Road (Kesey, who called Jack Kerouac a “prophet,” was matter of fact that One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest had seen little rewriting). Stegner faulted Westerners in general for having a
limited grasp of history, but he worried that the new generation of American youth “had no sense whatever that time didn’t begin yesterday.”

The outward cultural conflict masked a deeper correspondence between Stegner and Kesey. In literature, Stegner believed in carefully honed point of view and clever syncopation of time, and Kesey wrote virtuosic shifts in time and perspective into Sometimes a Great Notion. Far from being pastless or ahistorical, the novel explains that “time overlaps itself,” and the strife of past generations and centuries spills over into the present.

The connections—both philosophical and personal—made in Stegner’s writing program stretched forward through the decades. In 2011, 10 years after Kesey died, his widow, Faye, married McMurtry in Texas, or as McMurtry put it: “I went up and drug Faye out of Oregon.” In 1990, Wendell Berry, a classmate of Kesey and McMurtry in Stegner’s program, read aloud a letter written by Stegner at Abbey’s funeral in the Utah desert.

In the letter, Stegner called Abbey “a red-hot moment in the conscience of the country.” When Stegner died three years later, at the age of 84, Berry in turn wrote a letter for Stegner, calling him “not a red-hot moment, but one that was luminous, clarifying, and steady.” In Berry’s letter, the past flowed into Stegner and the future flowed out from him, from the geographical nexus at Stanford and out across the West and beyond, a clear spring flowing through his students and readers and even into “our country, the American land itself.”

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What the Wilderness Letter Wrought

Stegner’s ‘labor of an afternoon’ struck a chord around the world.

‘Without any remaining wilderness we are committed wholly, without chance for even momentary reflection and rest, to a headlong drive into our technological termite-life.’

Two months after being sworn in as President Kennedy’s Interior Secretary in 1961, Stewart Udall was scheduled to speak at the Seventh Wilderness Conference in San Francisco. After preparing his remarks for the occasion, he threw them out, and read instead a six-page document written by Wallace Stegner, which has since been known simply as the Wilderness Letter.

That America would have large-scale wilderness—that America would maintain a concept of wilderness both philosophical and legal—was not in the least assured. Federal wilderness designation followed nearly a century of conservationism and required an eight-year political struggle, from 1956 to 1964, resulting in the Wilderness Act, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

What I want to speak for is not so much the wilderness uses, valuable as those are, but the wilderness idea, which is a resource in itself. Being an intangible and spiritual resource, it will seem mystical to the practical minded—but then anything that cannot be moved by a bulldozer is likely to seem mystical to them.

Stegner’s letter was intended to be just an entry in one commission’s report on the Wilderness Act. But Udall’s reading of the letter was broadcast on the radio and the text found print through the Sierra Club and the Washington Post. The letter quickly became celebrated as the essential explanation and defense of wilderness, not just of its usefulness, but of its philosophical necessity to the character of the American land and people.

When Stegner wrote again of his Wilderness Letter in 1980, he had discovered that his words had traveled far. From Canada to Australia and Baja California to Kenya, fragments of the letter appeared on posters and in books. “The labor of an afternoon,” he wrote, had “gone farther around the world than other writings on which I have spent years.” Not limited to the American identity, the wilderness ideal expressed by Stegner resonated as a fundamental element of humanity.

Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed… One means of sanity is to retain a hold on the natural world.
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THE BIG CIRCLE
By Emilijan Cucek, ‘59
My book, The Big Circle, is all about Stanford in 1958/59, and how a student from Yugoslavia “survived” the fraternities, lectures and America. So, some 60 years later it could be of interest to the older Stanfordites. Available on Amazon in ebook and paperback.

A Shimmer of Joy: One Hundred Children’s Picture Books
By Chris Loker, ‘72
Children’s books you’ll remember, and new gems to discover. From The Tale of Peter Rabbit (1901) to Last Stop on Market Street (2015), all 100 contemporary picture books selected receive a detailed description and multiple full-color photos. Author Chris Loker explains the qualities that make a picture book successful. https://www.amazon.com/Shimmer-Joy-Childrens-Picture-1900-2015/dp/1567926568

The End of Food Allergy
By Kari C. Nadeau, MD, PhD, ‘06

One Hundred Books Famous in Children’s Literature
By Chris Loker, ‘72
Powerful narrative, unforgettable characters, and illustration that stirs the imagination—iconic literature for children is forged from the same enduring elements as literature for adults. Chris Loker, with editor Jill Shefrin, showcases 100 famous children’s books printed from 1600 to 2000. Buy it from John Windle Antiquarian Bookseller. https://www.johnwindle.com.

How to Stash That Cash
By Christopher Kawaja, ‘98, and Shannon Matthiesen
Most of us know how to balance the immediate needs of a checking account, or invest long term for our retirement plans. But financial advice falls apart in the middle ground—usually known as an emergency or opportunity fund. This breakthrough #1 Amazon Bestseller details, simply and easily, how to invest your funds using nine decades of data.

BREAKING NEW GROUND
By Richard B. Kuhns, BA ’64, LLB ’67
This book tells the stories of Judge Thelton Henderson’s major decisions, including those on the environment, prison reform, gay rights, and Prop. 209. To give the stories depth and context, the book also discusses the nature of judging, Judge Henderson’s approach to judging, and his pre-judicial life.

Imagining Justice for Syria
By Beth Van Schaack, ‘91
This book situates the war in Syria within the actual and imagined system of international criminal justice. It explores the legal impediments and diplomatic challenges that have led to the fatal trinity that is now Syria. Engaging both law and policy around international justice, the text offers a set of justice blueprints, within and without the International Criminal Court.

PLAGUE YEARS: A Doctor’s Journey Through the AIDS Crisis
By Ross A. Slotten, BS ’77, BA ’77
“Slotten's memoir of caring for AIDS patients in Chicago in the 1980s and 1990s could not be more timely… What loudly echoes from Slotten’s account is the commitment of caregivers to confront the uncertainty of a contagious disease.” —Jerome Groopman, New York Review of Books

TO PURCHASE A BOOK, VISIT PUBLISHER’S WEBSITE, SEARCH AMAZON.COM OR BARNESANDNOBLE.COM, OR VISIT YOUR LOCAL BOOKSTORE.
It's All God, A Simple Spiritual Practice
By Ed Dalton, MS '61

The author draws upon more than 60 years of exposure to various spiritual disciplines—some Eastern, some Western, some ancient, some modern—and presents the heart essence of it all in plain language. It is easy to read, and easy to put into practice. Search for Forest Dalton (pen name) in Books on Amazon.

Wake up! A Young Person’s Guide to Spirituality
By Tim Schnabel, BS '15, MS '17, PhD '21

Who are you? Have you found purpose? Peace? As we grow up in this modern, high-tech generation, these fundamental questions have become deprioritized. They are the essence of spirituality, which you might have come across as an inaccessible space, full of abstract language. But this book is different. Here you will encounter a down-to-earth, contemporary guide to meaning and your self.

The Life You Were Made To Live
By Paul Goodman, MBA '73

Deep within the heart of every man is the desire to succeed and win—in all of life. Living the life you were made to live means ending your life with a profound sense of joy and peace, knowing you have led a meaningful and fulfilling life in achieving the goals placed before you by your creator.

The Burnout Fix: Overcome Overwhelm, Beat Busy, and Sustain Success in the New World of Work
By Jacinta M. Jiménez, ‘02, PsyD, BBC

An evidence-based resilience toolkit to find more sustainable ways to succeed at work and life, whether you’re an individual looking to establish a set of resilience habits, a team looking to stay on their innovative edge, or an organization hoping to enhance employee wellbeing. (McGraw Hill, 2021)

Read Write Code: A Friendly Introduction to the World of Coding, and Why It’s the New Literacy
By Jeremy Keeshin, '12

Code is the new literacy. Jeremy Keeshin demystifies the world of computers, starting at the beginning to explain the basic building blocks of today’s tech: programming, the internet, data, apps, the cloud, cybersecurity, algorithms, artificial intelligence, and more. Complex concepts are explained in friendly and engaging ways, with interactive examples and practical tips.

Triumph of the Pawns: Tales of an American Family Imprisoned in Manila in World War II
By William G. Smith, '64

This is a true story of resourcefulness and resilience from the point of view of civilians caught in the middle of World War II, abandoned by their government as mere “pawns of war” and left to create a new life in a Japanese internment camp. It is a fascinating look at a unique situation, namely the largest imprisonment by a foreign power of American civilians in the country’s history.

Running the World: Marathon Memoirs from the Seven Continents
By Melissa Corley Carter, BS ’04, MS ’04

See the world through the eyes of runner, dreamer, and hardworking free spirit Melissa Corley Carter in this stunning book of photography and inspirational reflection. As she runs marathons on each of the seven continents, Melissa discovers new dimensions to the beauty of life and the purpose of her soul. www.ResilienceActually.com/RunningTheWorld

Humanity and the Big Dipper: A History of Our Species in Relation to Seven Stars
By Robert A. James, ’80

This timeless yet evolving pattern of nature has fascinated and guided mankind for millennia—from the Stone Age through the reputed Drinking Gourd to the present day. Rob James takes you on a “beautifully written” mental journey through the science, the history, the multicultural and multilingual stories, the imaginative literature, and the future of an icon that connects humanity as a truly global species.
Birth Order
By Audrey Miller, ’83
Power. Privilege. Paparazzi. Pregnancy. Princess. Birth Order is a glimpse behind the royal curtain that suggests there is more to every story than what you read in the tabloid headlines.

Birth Order

QUIXOTE’S ISLAND
By Sally Moser Small, ’62
Escolastica Rodriguez, granddaughter of one of the De Anza Expedition of 1776, grows up along the Santa Cruz on one of her family’s 12 land grants that stretch along Monterey Bay north to Año Nuevo, cattle country, ranchos famous for their gracious hospitality. A true Californiana “daughter of the country,” a superb horsewoman, a beauty, she dances between two conflicting worlds in a story of love and betrayal.

QUIXOTE’S ISLAND

Fourfold Kingdom of God
By Gerald Paul Kooyers
Fourfold Kingdom of God delves in scientific facts that prove the biblical points and the biblical points prove the science of the universe. Perfect book for scientists who want to explore the interconnection between religion and science. Not a feel-good book, but a must-read book that helps you understand the Bible as it relates to space, time and quantum physics.

Fourfold Kingdom of God

EXPLORE THE GOD IDEA
By Raymond MacDonald Alden Jr., ’44
Reader comments: “I was deeply moved by his synthesis of ideas of God. Lean, straight forward, evocative. A breath of fresh air. Description of our interconnectedness on a cosmic and atomic level. A lucid path showing how the concepts of science and religion are, indeed, reconcilable. An intriguing and compelling way to see the universe and the meaning behind all things.” Just 40 pages worth reading again and again.

EXPLORE THE GOD IDEA

Cross Winds: Adventure and Entrepreneurship in the Russian Far East
By Steven Myers, ’73
In a daring, high-stakes 1992 mission, I became the first American since Charles Lindbergh to fly an aircraft into the Kamchatka Peninsula, one of the least inhabited and most inaccessible places on earth. Invited by post-Cold War Russian leaders to explore entrepreneurial possibilities, what I discovered resulted in audacious plans that pitted my “can do” attitude against a system collapse and fear.

Cross Winds: Adventure and Entrepreneurship in the Russian Far East

The Best of Times: Motifs from Postwar America, Reflections on Nostalgia
By Wyn Wachhorst, BA ’56, PhD ’72
Blending history, memoir, imagery, and analysis, this collection offers poetic reflections on postwar America and the nature of nostalgia. “I have long admired Wyn Wachhorst’s ability to combine engaging ideas with compelling images and lyrical style,” wrote Stanford president emeritus Donald Kennedy, “and this collection of essays some noted in Best American Essays is surely his finest work yet.”

The Best of Times: Motifs from Postwar America, Reflections on Nostalgia
Stanford Authors’ Showcase

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Exuberant Life: An Evolutionary Approach to Conservation in Galápagos
By William H. Durham, ’71
New insights into mysteries of Galápagos: How did tree finches evolve where there were no trees? Why are blue-footed boobies so aggressive, despite comical appearances? Why, in a place famous for species radiations, is there but one marine iguana species? And how did ever-observant Darwin miss the obvious flightless cormorants and penguins of the islands? The answers have important conservation implications.

The Latin American Identity and the African Diaspora: In Context
By Antonio Olliz Boyd, PhD ’75
A discovery of ethnic Blackness in Latin America via the aesthetic voice of novelists, poets, lyricists to verify the DNA presence of Africa in the genetic fabric of Latin America’s Spanish-speaking countries and Portuguese-speaking Brazil making the concept AFRO LATINO an ethnoracial reality. Purchase from: Cambria Press, NY

Collateral Damage: The Brock Turner Case and Recall of Judge Aaron Persky
By Human Justice, ’74
I’m a feminist, mother, RN, and advocate for compassionate justice. This book is an eye-opening factual account of the highly publicized Turner trial and recall of the judge in the case. It’s based on trial transcripts, original documents, detailed timelines, over 300 citations, and input from nearly 100 volunteers, many associated with Stanford. Read the book (Amazon) and come to your own conclusions.

An Anchorage in the Wilderness
By Kenneth Waldron, PhD ’69, Prof. Emeritus ’11
Rejected by the country of their birth, 1400 settlers endured an 8-month voyage in primitive conditions to start a new colony as far from England as possible. The land they found was wilder and harsher than anything they had experienced. With starvation haunting them for years, they overcame their limitations and created a new nation. This historical novel resulted from a Stanford Continuing Studies creative writing course.

Fastlane: My Japanese Roadster on the Information SuperHighway
By James Chandler, ’73
A front-seat, first person ride through the boom and bust of the Internet heyday. “A masterful account of the inner workings of the venture capital community— a must read” —N. Fogelsong, IVP. “Thoughtful, curious about the big picture, a bit Bohemian, and spiced with entrepreneurial zest.” —F. Thibodeau, Artiman Ventures. “Powerful, personal and poignant. This is the inside story of a revolution” —J. Engel, UCB VC Exec. Prgm

The Late Great Cakes of the United States
By Laura Drumheller, ’73, MA ’74 pen name Peregrine Maxson
Arrested for baking and eating a cake, a diverse group of Seattle teens face real life consequences, difficult to comprehend, considering they have been raised by robots and spent their childhood playing virtual games. After a catastrophe at the Hanford Nuclear Site, survival depends on transformative change. While Seattle embraces an experimental lifestyle, there is difficulty getting their youth to comply. Sci-fi, fantasy, YA.

A Psychology of the Soul, From the Infinite Into the Finite
By Herb Puryer, ’57
Discern, from a spiritual perspective, who you truly are, where you came from and where you are going. Understand how meditation truly works and why it is so vital to your soul development. Discover the deep meaning of your Karma and how to find your way to Freedom. Know what to expect when you release from your physical body. Understand the Archetypal meanings of the Bible. Discover the profound need for a New World View.

Visible Means of Support
By Helen Joyce Harris, ’62
A white Oakland youth enters a federal prison in Texas for dealing cocaine. His schoolteacher mother plots to keep this secret from even her mother. Set in the Reagan era, the novel tracks the son’s life inside and his mother’s parallel isolation. Amazon review: “Page-turner alert. The novel reminds us: drug wars cross race and class lines like an ill-gotten Porsche weaving through Bay Area traffic. Wrenching, humorous, hopeful.”

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Every Hill A Burial Place: The Peace Corps Murder Trial In East Africa
By Peter Reid, ’64
Was it a murder or an accident? How should the Peace Corps manage this death where a volunteer (Stanford MA/PhD) was charged with killing his wife? Could the Kennedy Era program be in jeopardy? Reid’s meticulously researched book presents a readable, balanced and critical analysis that sheds light on a baffling death and gives a picture of the lives and work of PCVs in Africa. “I highly recommend this book.” —John Frohnmayer, former chair, NEA. peterreidwriter.com.

Salt in My Soul: An Unfinished Life
By Mallory Smith, ’14
An LA Times and Amazon bestseller, Salt in My Soul: An Unfinished Life by Mallory Smith is a collection of her journal entries over 10 years, which ends with her death at 25. Readers will be mesmerized by this powerful and inspiring portrait of a brave young woman and celebrated writer who did not allow herself to be defined by disease. The LA Times calls it “an exquisitely nuanced chronicle of a terrified but hopeful young woman whose life was beginning and ending all at once.”

Flat Space Cosmology: A New Model of the Universe
By Eugene Terry Tatum, ’78, and U.V.S. Seshavatharam
This compilation, based entirely upon recent peer-reviewed scientific journal publications, encapsulates how the Flat Space Cosmology model has become the primary competitor to the inflationary standard model of cosmology. New ideas concerning black holes, dark energy and dark matter are presented and shown to correlate well with astronomical observations. Available now in online bookstores.

Midnight’s All A Glimmer
By Karen Van Zino, MD, ’81
A rich and varied collection of poems, ancient to modern, are organized around the nine core personality types as described by the Enneagram, an ancient map of transformation melded with modern psychology. Enriched with humor, storytelling and historical bits to entertain, enlighten and inspire, this volume will appeal to those new to poetry as well as those already familiar and to everyone wishing to know themselves at a deeper level.

Brigham Young, Colonizer of the American West: Diaries and Office Journals, 1832–1871
Edited by George D. Smith, ’59
Brigham Young’s diaries and office journals reveal a leader dedicated to the church he led for over 30 years. His record shows him to be defensive of his spiritual and temporal claims to authority and determined to create a modern Zion in the Utah desert. Smith’s careful organization and annotation of Young’s writings provide insights into the mind of Mormonism’s dynamic frontier statesman.

The Creation of Scientific Psychology
By David J. Murray and Stephen Link ’68
This 26th book in the Scientific Psychology Series, edited by Stephen W. Link ’68 and James T. Townsend ’66, emphasizes developments in Germany during the 19th century. Murray and Link map the beliefs, discoveries and mathematics that constitute the origins of Psychology as a science. Former Stanford Professor Richard C. Atkinson, President Emeritus of the University of California, observed: “It is an important book, a great book.”

Cam & Beau
By Maria Cichosz, PhD ’20
Cam and Beau are best friends, roommates, and massive stoners. Life is sweet, except for one crucial thing: Cam will never get up the nerve to tell Beau he’s in love with him. Equal parts gonzo bromance and melancholy longing, Cam & Beau is a novel about unspoken knowledge between people, the parameters of seeing and not seeing, and what happens when familiar things are made strange. camandbeau.ca
Walking Through Fire: A Memoir of Loss and Redemption
Vaneetha Rendall Risner, MBA ’92
A raw and utterly compelling memoir that tells of a life marked by suffering and profound loss. Yet with laughter and heartbreak, honesty and hope, Vaneetha reminds us that the same God who walked with her through fire is present with each of us in our pain—and offers a purpose and peace that is breathtakingly beautiful. www.vaneetha.com

At the Edge of the Haight
By Katherine Seligman, ’75
Homeless at 20, Maddy Donaldo lives with her dog and makeshift family in the hidden spaces of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. She thinks she knows how to survive and whom to trust until she accidentally witnesses the murder of a young man. Her world is upended as she has to face not only the killer but also the victim’s parents and then secrets of her own past. Winner of the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction.

Cactus Flower: A Stream of Poetry: Courage, Resilience, and Femininity
By Priscilla Agbeo, ’18
Priscilla is a poet born in Ghana and migrated to Chicago as a young child. She found refuge in her education where she developed a curiosity about the intersection between the ancient and the contemporary. One that has inspired her to ask big questions, and guided her to all of her blessings. She aspires to incite in others the passion that rests in the ache to participate in the timeless every day.

Ignite Your Story
By Kathleen Schwind, MBA ’23 and Raina Kadavil
Ignite Your Story tells the captivating stories of 40 leaders and game-changers who have overcome the odds to ultimately accomplish their incredible goals. Featuring over half a dozen Stanford alumni, it holds the tips and tricks from successful global citizens, performers, politicians, and business and non-profit founders while serving as an inspiration for anyone wanting to make positive change.

Eddies of the Kern
By Timothy Lemucchi, BA ’59, MA ’60
Eddies of the Kern is filled with the author’s true extreme adventures: summiting Alaska’s Denali; climbing in the Russian Pamirs; kayaking Alaskan wild rivers; dog sledding 400 miles through the Gates of the Arctic; skiing the crest of the Sierra Nevadas and more, all with spectacular photos. Along with the author’s musings on a seventy-five year relationship with the majestic historical Kern River. Available on Amazon books.

Water Music: Adventures of a Journeyman Surfer
David Rearwin, Ph.D. ’73
The wide-ranging and heartwarming story of an inspiring, challenging, and sometimes frightening seventy-year love affair with the sea. Through ups and downs, triumphs and disasters, the author rediscovers his beginner’s mind and learns to see the magic of life from a new perspective. A great summer read—buy now on Amazon or at your local bookshop.

Invincible Spirit Unconquerable Soul: Gratitude Journal and 21-Day Gratitude Challenge
By Erica Denham, ’99
Choosing to have a positive mindset and live with gratitude can improve your life and lead to greater happiness. You are invited to embark upon a gratitude journey. Start with a 21-Day Gratitude challenge, where you will be provided daily, inspirational quotes and activities centered around gratitude. When completed, there are plenty of weekly journal pages for you to record the many examples of life’s goodness. www.stepinpurpose.com

The Orphans of Mirna
By Linda B. White, B.S. ’75, M.S. ’77
A richly imagined tale of the settlement of a new planet in the year 2189, Mirna is a work of wonder and fabulous science with a love story at its heart. As it explores themes of a young man’s coming of age, the meaning of family, and interspecies relationships, it takes us to the realms we all dream about: into the cosmos and into our deepest, best selves. Reminiscent of Tolkien and L’Engle; suitable for young and not so young adults.
For his entire life, he had been an outsider, an exile with no clear origin or home. A simple question for most people—where are you from?—necessitated an entire conversation for him.

—Beyond the Sand and Sea: One Family’s Quest for a Country to Call Home, Ty McCormick, ’10, St. Martin’s Press.
We Recommend

Reconnecting

Earth Keeper: Reflections on the American Land
N. Scott Momaday, MA ’60, PhD ’63; Harper. Sharp, powerful storytelling brings spiritual drought relief.

The Three Mothers: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation
Anna Malaika Tubbs, ’14; Flatiron Books. A closer look at these moms of extraordinary sons is also a celebration of Black motherhood.

Be the Refuge: Raising the Voices of Asian American Buddhists
Chenxing Han, ’09; North Atlantic Books. A young, diverse generation on who they are, where they’re going and how they build community.

United We Eat: 50 Great American Dishes to Bring Us All Together
Capri S. Cafaro, ’96; Story Farm. Reach across the table, reach across the aisle. We (really!) recommend Pepsi Salad, page 118.

Thirty-Three Ways of Looking at an Elephant
Dale Peterson (ed.), MA ’69, PhD ’77; Trinity U. Press. What we do and don’t know about this ambling, astute wonder of the world.
If these weathered walls could talk, they would likely repeat what you’ve just learned on your mid-morning stroll.

In the company of world-renowned Stanford scholars, every day is an epic journey for the mind. Your feet simply follow.

Experience the extraordinary with Stanford Travel/Study.
FACULTY
Robert Lesh “Buzz” Baldwin, of Portola Valley, Calif., March 6, at 93, of pulmonary failure. He was emeritus professor and founding member of the biochemistry department. His research fundamentally changed his field by demonstrating intermediate stages of protein folding. He published nearly 200 articles and was a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was awarded the Protein Society’s Stein and Moore Award in 1992 and the Wheland Award in chemistry in 1995. Survivors: his wife of 55 years, Anne Norris; sons, David and Eric, ’90; and five grandchildren.

David Allenberg Katzenstein, of Harare, Zimbabwe, January 25, at 69, of COVID-19. He was professor emeritus of infectious diseases and global health. As associate medical director of Stanford’s AIDS Clinical Trial Group, he conducted studies that ultimately led to the antiretroviral drugs that have saved the lives of countless HIV/AIDS patients. His later research focused on HIV drug resistance. In retirement, he continued the fight against infectious diseases as director of Zimbabwe’s Biomedical Research Training Institute. He was predeceased by his wife, Sharon Mayes. Survivors: his stepdaughter, Melissa Sanders-Self; two stepgrandsons; stepgreatgrandchild; and three siblings.

Jon Kosek, of Stanford, October 16, at 90. He was clinical professor emeritus of pathology. Over nearly 45 years as staff pathologist for the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, he mentored hundreds of pathology residents and medical students and performed countless autopsies. He was also an avid outdoorsman, runner and bicyclist. The cut-your-own Christmas tree farm he founded in Pescadero, Calif., in 1965 is still in operation. Survivors: his wife, Margaret; children, Ann Akey, Jon, Margaret, Mary Patz and Peter; and 12 grandchildren.

Jared R. “Jerry” Tinklenberg, of Palo Alto, November 18, at 80. He was professor emeritus of psychiatry and behavioral science. He spent eight years in the Army Reserves. After medical school in Iowa and a psychiatry residency at Stanford, he initially focused his research on psycho-pharmacology and drug abuse before shifting to dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. He helped found the Stanford/VA Alzheimer’s Disease Center, which has been treating patients since 1981, and also served on the White House Drug Abuse Council. He enjoyed running marathons, bird-watching and hiking. Survivors: his wife, Mae; daughters, Karla Tinklenberg Jurvetson, ’88, and Julie, ’90, MS ’90; and five grandchildren, including Kyle Callan, ’20, Leif Jurvetson, ’22, Ashlyn Callan, ’23, and Erika Jurvetson, ’24.

Enrié William Dyer Young, of Ashland, Ore., February 14, at 88. He was a Methodist minister in South Africa until his anti-apartheid activism forced him to emigrate, but the experience prepared him to serve as associate dean of Memorial Church, Medical Center chaplain and lecturer in medical ethics. His publications focused on ethics in neonatal and intensive care, and he helped create the Center for Biomedical Ethics. In retirement, he became chief ethics adviser to the institutional review board at NASA Ames Research Center. Survivors: his wife, Margaret; children, Heather, Andrew, Jenny and Timothy; and seven grandchildren.

1930s Helen C. Wadsworth Fraser, ’39 (social science/social thought), of Los Angeles, March 2, at 102. She was a member of Chi Omega and met her future husband at a freshman dance. She was an active volunteer with the Los Angeles Assistance League. As a supporter of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, she helped raise funds to build the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at the Music Center. She also enjoyed golfing and took many Stanford trips with friends. She was predeceased by her husband of 60 years, Ted, ’39.

It was Marion Lewenstein’s dream to become a reporter, a dream she achieved with lots of hard work—and without having earned a college degree, to the surprise of many of her sources. “Some of the amusing situations were because I was always worried about not understanding the technical part of [the coverage],” Lewenstein recalled in a 2014 interview for the Stanford Historical Society. “And sometimes [my sources] would ask me, ‘Do you have a degree in physics?’ No. ‘Do you have an engineering degree?’ No. ‘What paper did you work for before?’ And I would say, keeping my face straight, ‘Women’s Wear Daily.’”

Marion Marcus Lewenstein, a teaching professor emerita in communication and a journalist who was among the first to report on Silicon Valley’s tech industry, died March 6 at her home in Palo Alto. She was 93.

Born in Cleveland and raised by a single mother during the Depression, Lewenstein turned down several college scholarships to help support her family. After high school, she moved to California and was hired as a secretary at Koret of California, taking night classes in the hopes of securing a full-time reporting job at Women’s Wear Daily. Less than a year later, she got that job and would go on to work at Home Furnishings Daily, Electronic News, Time and Fortune.

Lewenstein carried with her a spirit of curiosity as she tackled groundbreaking stories, covering the early days of Silicon Valley despite the fact that she had neither a technology nor a business background. “She was the consummate reporter,” says communication professor emeritus Don Roberts, PhD ’68. “Marion was interested in everything. She could sit down with anyone, even complete strangers, and be in a deep conversation in 60 seconds.”

She joined the faculty in 1975, imbuing students with basic skills in journalism and a sense of its history. “When she got offered the job, she was floating on air,” says her son, Bruce, a professor of science communication at Cornell. Three years later, Lewenstein received the Dinkelspiel Award for outstanding service to undergraduate education. At Stanford, she also served as academic secretary of the Faculty Senate and provided guidance and support for the Rebele and John S. Knight journalism fellowship programs.

Lewenstein and her late husband, Harry, were resident fellows at Schiff House, giving her family an up-close look at the connection to Stanford. “Mom and Dad established lasting relationships with students,” says Bruce. “She left a kind of impression on people that, 30 years later, they wanted to stop in and say hello.”

Roberts concurs. “Marion was one of those rare teachers who always listened,” he says. “It’s a marvelous quality.”

In addition to Bruce, Lewenstein is survived by her daughter, Bailey Merman; three grandsons, including Joel, ’08; and one great-grandson.

—Melina Walling, ’20, MA ’21
Farewells

1940s

Robert Davis Shurtleff, '43 (economics), MBA '48, of Palo Alto, December 15, at 100, of heart failure. He served in the Navy during World War II, then returned to Stanford to complete his degree and spent his career in insurance and private venture capital. He was the Graduate School of Business Class of '48 secretary from graduation until 2020. Survivors: his wife of 68 years, Nancy; children, Robert Jr., Elizabeth Dawes and Janet Zucker; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Robert William "Bobby" Brown, '46, of Fort Worth, Tex., March 25, at 96. He was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon and the baseball team. While at Stanford, he earned the Coast Guard Silver Lifesaving Medal for rescuing the lone survivor of a crashed Navy seaplane. He then enlisted in the Navy and served in World War II and the Korean War, which interrupted both his medical training and a baseball career that included playing for four World Series championship teams. He practiced cardiology until he retired in 1984 to serve as president of the American League. He was predeceased by his wife of 61 years, Sara. Survivors: his children, Peter, Robert Jr., Kaydey Bailey; and 11 grandchildren.

Joan Taylor Mackenzie, '48 (biological sciences), MA '49 (physiology), of Menlo Park, December 10, at 94. She earned her MBA from Golden Gate U. and her JD from the U. of San Francisco. She spent her career first in medical research and then in industrial economics at SRI. In her professional life, she supported women's struggle for equal pay for equal work. She also wrote poetry throughout her life and published her work in 2010. Survivors: her children, Emmy and Philip; and grandson.

Earl Seymour "Duke" Douglass Jr., '49 (political science), of Atherton, Calif., November 27, at 94. He was a member of Phi Gamma Delta and served in the Marines during World War II. He worked as a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle and later switched to owning and managing a religious bookstore in Menlo Park, which allowed him to pursue his passions for travel, family, local history and the preservation of historic buildings. He was predeceased by his wife of 72 years, Barbara. Survivors: his children, Christine, Scott, Stuart, Alan and Mark; 13 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; and two half-brothers.

Sumner Walters Jr., '49 (sociology), MA '49 (education), of Walnut Creek, Calif., January 9, at 96. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. At Stanford, he was a member of Sigma Nu/Beta Chi and rowed crew. He earned his PhD at Oxford and received ordination in the Episcopal Church education department. He also served as headmaster of the San Rafael Military Academy. He was predeceased by his first wife, Norma Jean. Survivors: his wife, Roxanne; children, Sumner Paul, Leanna Kay, Evelyn Page and Mary Ann Marguerie; and five grandchildren, including Hillary Page Iue, '14, MA '15.

1950s

Barbara Jane Timmins Livingston, '50 (history), of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., February 23, at 90. She entered an executive training program at the Emporium in San Francisco and later ran her own interior design business. She served her commun- ities in many ways: as president of the Peninsula Volunteers, board member for Palo Alto Junior League, founding president of Friends of Carmel Forest, four-term member of the city council and president of the Carmel Residents Association. She was also an avid world traveler and tennis player. She was predeceased by her partner, Bob Kohn. Survivors: her sons, Michael and Brian; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Jane Elizabeth McArthur Tuttle, '50 (speech and drama), of New York City, March 29, 2020, at 90. Her acting career included 18 stage productions and roles in more than 250 television shows. After earning her master’s degree in speech pathology from NYU, she began a second career in New York City public schools. She also served as an overnight volunteer at a women's shelter for more than 20 years. An avid world explorer, she traveled in retirement to Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Cuba. She was predeceased by her husband, Jim. Survivors: her stepson, Douglas.

Margaret Joann Harper Southgate, '51 (English), of Norwalk, Conn., February 19, at 91, of dementia. She was an avid reader and tennis player and also enjoyed music, travel and gardening. She was predeceased by her former husband, James Cannon, '51, second husband, John Hand; third husband, Richard Souquet; and son, James. Survivors: one son, Pete Cannon; '73, Jane Cannon and Catherine Cannon; seven stepchildren; and three grandchildren.

Paul Louis Dawson, '52, MS '53, Eng'54 (mechanical engineering), of Culpeper, Va. and La Jolla, Calif., February 6, at 90. As a General Electric executive, he managed projects at the forefront of technology. For reducing pollution in the Netherlands, Queen Beatrix named him a Commander of the Order of Orange-Nassau. In 2005, he earned a PhD in history from George Washington U. He also served as a docent at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. He was predeceased by his first wife, Jacqueline (Begien, '54). Survivors: his wife of 14 years, Kathleen; children, Jennifer Lawrence, Paul, Kristin Wilson and Christopher; five grandchildren; and sister,

Roger Lawrence Mosher, ’52 (history), LLB ’57, of San Francisco, January 20, at 90, of squamous cell skin cancer. He was a member of Phi Delta Theta. After graduating from Stanford Law School, he practiced law, taught at Stanford for his law degree. During his legal career in Silicon Valley, he helped establish the start-up models and venture capital terms still used by entrepreneurs. In retirement, he and his wife jointly operated an antique business for nearly 20 years. He was predeceased by his first wife, Martha (Smith, ’52). Survivors: his wife of 50 years, Chalissa; children, Karen, Amie, Scott, Daniel and Jake; 10 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Leslie Kerns Bradford Wheeler, ’52 (psychology), of Portland, Ore., June 9, 2020, at 90, of cancer. She initially worked in San Francisco before returning to Portland to raise her family. As a dedicated homemaker, she served as PTA president and on the board of the Junior League. She was a talented interior designer and also enjoyed tennis, golf, Stanford football and alumni activi- ties. Survivors: her sons, John, Chuck, ’85, Ted, ’85, and Tom, ’87; and six grandchildren.

Ronald E. Cole, ’53, of San Diego, March 12, at 88. He earned a degree in dental surgery from UC San Francisco. After serving two years as an Air Force dentist, he spent 42 years in pri- vate practice. He was an early supporter of the Gifted and Talented Education program in San Francisco schools and was a member of the dog training community, and devoted fan of opera and classical music. Survivors: his wife of 58 years, Lynn; children, Laura Wendover and Ray- mond; and grandson.

Malcolm Douglas Crawford, ’53 (applied earth sciences), of Las Vegas, February 19, at 89, of a stroke. He paused his education to enlist in the Air Force and marry and then returned to Stanford to complete his degree as an Air Force wrestler. During his career, he designed uranium mines in Wyoming, ran the family farm in Tulelake, Calif., and managed water districts in Oregon, Idaho and California. He was also an avid hunter, fisherman, outdoorsman and chess player. He was predeceased by his wife of 65 years, Linda. Survivors: his children, Douglas, Marcus, Daniel and Anne-Marie; and three grandchildren.

Thomas Scott Edgington, ’53 (biological sciences), MD ’57, of La Jolla, Calif., January 22, at 88, of heart failure. He rowed crew. While intern- ing at the U. of Pennsylvania, he designed one of the first heart-lung machines. Among his notable achievements was the cloning of tissue factor and identifying the pathways it regulates, which earned him numerous awards in the fields of immunopathology and vascular biology. During his 55 years at Scripps Research, he published 70 patents and 462 articles. He also founded five biotech companies. He was predeceased by his wife of 48 years, Joanne (Rogers, ’55). Survivors: his second wife, Sandra; children, Kassy Perry and Scott; and four grandchildren.

Cynthia Jane “Cinnie” Barrick Lewis, ’53 (French), of Pasadena, Calif., January 22, at 89. She was devoted to gardening, attending her children’s activities and introducing her grandchildren to the adventure of travel in Europe. She was prede- ceased by her husband of 47 years, James, and a granddaughter. Survivors: her children, Liz Gillfillan, Peter, Cynti Oshin and David; seven grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Eugene Bernard "Gene" Rauen, ’53 (undergradu- ate law), JD ’56, of Atherton, Calif., December 26, at 92, of prostate cancer. He was recalled to Army duty after his sophomore year, then returned to complete his undergraduate and law degrees. After an MBA from NYU, he began a career as an investment broker and financial adviser, ultimately retiring as a CPA and Prudential-Bache. He was an accomplished photographer, world traveler and outdoorsman who enjoyed skiing, swimming, hiking, fishing and backpacking in the High Sierra. Survivors: his wife of 65 years, Molly; and children, Marjorie and Ray.

Joanne Marion Klemmedson Sullivan, ’53 (politi- cal science), of La Jolla, Calif., February 6, at 89. She initially worked for the Los Angeles World Affairs Council and later for Thomas Cook. She shared her love of travel with her children through family trips to San Francisco, Hawaii, the East Coast and Europe. She especially loved spending days at Horseshoe Beach with friends. She was predeceased by her husband of 58 years, Robert. Survivors: her children, Leslie Bentley, Lindsay Sullivan-Thomas and Christopher; and five grandchildren.

Jack Eugene Teeters, ’53 (political science), JD ’59, of Malibu, Calif., September 11, 2019, at 88. He played French horn in the Stanford Band. He practiced as a CPA and was a director of the Trane Company. He enjoyed surfing, skiing, playing golf, hiking and yachting. He devoted himself to full-time church serv- ice in 1990 and helped form the Anglican Church in North America, which named him an honorary lay
canon. He was predeceased by his granddaughter Amy Christesen Strattenberg, ’03, MA ’03. Survivors: his wife of 69 years, Allan (Farwell, ’53); chil-
dren, Marty Chapman, Cindy Christesen and Byron; and eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.
Miles Carlisle, ’54 (economics), of Chevy Chase, Md., January 13, at 87. After two years in the
Army, he earned his MBA from the U. of Pennsyl-
vania. He started his career in investment finance
with Loomis Sayles and later worked in interna-
tional banking with the International Finance
Corp. He was an avid racquet sport and bridge
player and especially enjoyed curating a collec-
tion of whaling artifacts in the historic home built
by his great-grandfather in 1834. He was prede-
ceased by his wife of 45 years, Margo. Survivors:
her second wife, Kate Clark; children, Mary, Hamil-
ton and Tristran; and four grandchildren.
Beth Yookam Clemans, ’55 (Spanish), of Pacific
Beach, Calif., March 18, 2020, at 86. She met her
future husband on her first day at Stanford, but it
took him six years to propose. After teaching ele-
mantine studies for more than 30 years, she served
and was a member of the Temple Concord out-
reach committee. Survivors: his wife, Diana; children, Karin and Eric, and brother.
Thomas H. Sherman Jr., ’62 (electrical engineer-
ing), of Oracle, Ariz., February 25, at 81, of Alzhei-
mer’s disease. He was a member of Delta Upsilon
and the sailing team. He spent his career with Digi-
tal Equipment in Los Angeles and Maynard, Mass. He
died as an avid skier and snowboard enthusiast.
He and his wife bicycled across the United States
together and visited more than 90 countries. He
was active in Stanford activities throughout his life
and an active member of the Tucson Stanford
Club. Survivors: his wife, Connie; and brother.
Charles Wiley Bischoff, ’63 (political science), of
Endwell, N.Y., February 19, at 78. After earning his
PhD in economics at MIT, he taught at Yale and
Binghamton U. He published in the fields of macro-
economics and econometrics, directed 25 doctoral
dissertations and advised the federal government
and national organizations. He was a lifelong sup-
porter of the civil rights movement; in retirement, he
served his community through the Community Hun-
ger Outreach Warehouse and Binghamton U. Arts
Corps and as chairman of the Temple Concord out-
reach committee. Survivors: his wife of 49 years,
Babs Putzel-Bischoff; daughter, Tracy Putzel-
Bischoff; and two siblings, including James, ’61.
Jared R. B. Hutton, ’63 (economics), JD ’66, of
Orlando, Fla., February 24, at 79, of heart fail-
ure. He was a member of the marching band,
symphony orchestra and Delta Kappa Epsilon. During
his legal career, he was an attorney for Brown and
Brown and then for many years for Carlsberg Corp.
Survivors: his wife, Jackie; daughter, Kathryn; and
sister, Laurel Hutton Brobst Gilbert, ’61, MA ’62.
Burton Jay Krohn, ’63 (physicis), of Los Alamos,
N.M., May 20, 2019, at 78, of renal cancer. After
graduating from Vanderbilt, he earned his PhD at
Ohio State and focused his postdoctoral work on
theoretical molecular spectroscopy. He worked at
Los Alamos National Laboratory for 28 years.
He was also an accomplished classical pianist
and served as music chairman, organist and choir
member for Temple Beth Shalom in Santa Fe
and Congregation Israel in Albuquerque, N.M.
He loved studying Torah Talmud, Jewish thought
and conversational Hebrew. Survivors: his wife of
52 years, Susan; daughters, Laurie Liss and Mollie
Chopin; eight grandchildren; and two siblings.
David Craig Van Vleck Lightwine, ’63 (history),
of Portland, Ore., January 16, at 79, of congestive
heart failure. He earned master’s degrees from
the U. of New Mexico and the U. of Oklahoma.
He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Colum-
bia. He earned his PhD for the doctoral dissertation of
Nicholas A. Baker, ’74 (anthropology), of
Columbia University. He decided to pursue the field herself. After earning her
PhD from Brandeis with a dissertation on two-
career families, she rose to full professor at Boston
College. Her research focused on sexual violence
against women, neonatal intensive care and how
families choose colleges for their children. She
enjoyed skiing and travel. Survivors: her husband,
Ross, MS ’60, PhD ’69; and sons, Brett and Cary.
A. Ross Johnson, ’61 (international relations),
March 5, at 81, of cancer. Having served in
Columbia, Japan, and Nicaragua, he had
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History Scholar Who Saved New York Public Library

The first time Vartan Gregorian stepped foot inside the New York Public Library was in 1956, the year he arrived in America to enroll at Stanford. He was headed for the Slavic section but was so overwhelmed he walked right back out.

“I simply could not believe that someone could walk up those big front steps and enter that extraordinary building without any questions, without any identification,” he recalled in a 1986 New Yorker profile.

Twenty-five years later, Gregorian was tapped to bring the library back to life after years of budget cuts and neglect. For his efforts there and at other leading institutions, including Brown University and the Carnegie Corporation, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the National Humanities Medal. Gregorian, ’58, PhD ’64, died on April 15 after being hospitalized for stomach pain. He was 87.

“It’s like the sun didn’t come up,” says Thomas H. Kean, chair of the Carnegie Corporation, where Gregorian had served as president since 1997.

Gregorian was born in 1934 in the Armenian section of Tabriz, Iran. His mother died when he was a child, and his primary caretaker was his maternal grandmother, whom he referred to as his “hero” in a 2019 interview. She was largely illiterate but used storytelling to teach her grandchildren about integrity. “I learned more about character from her than from anybody I ever met or any book I ever read,” he added.

He used a study-abroad scholarship he had won at the University of Texas at Austin before joining the University of Pennsylvania, where he became founding dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and then provost. After being passed over for the presidency at Penn, he accepted the top post at the nearly bankrupt New York Public Library in 1981. The library was teetering under a $50 million deficit, many of its rare books were moldering in the stacks, and some branches were open for only eight hours a week. But Gregorian—a prolific fund-raiser—embraced the challenge of rescuing what he considered a national treasure. By the time he left in 1989 to assume the presidency at Brown, he had raised $327 million in public and private funds, including through star-studded events with Brooke Astor, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Arthur Miller and James Baldwin. The infusion allowed for numerous improvements, from an extensive physical renovation to computerizing the card catalog, installing temperature controls and expanding days of service, and it placed the library on solid ground.

Gregorian’s eldest son, Vahe, says his father’s work at the library stands out among his many accomplishments.

“The library needed saving,” he says. “Whatever it was he was injected into Brown or Carnegie was substantial and significant, but I don’t know if either of those places needed saving.”

His father had a “genuine warmth to him that is very hard to replicate,” Vahe says. “He wanted to know all about you,” says Kean, “and then he didn’t forget.” On April 21, Kean was celebrating his birthday when the doorbell rang. “It was flowers from Vartan that he’d ordered the day he died,” he says. “That’s the way he was.”

Gregorian was predeceased by his wife. In addition to Vahe, he is survived by his sons Raffi and Daren, five grandchildren and his sister.

—Rebecca Beyer
Laurie Phyllis Levenson Mesibov, ’67 (history), of Chapel Hill, N.C., March 31, at 75, of globlastoma. She met her future husband at Stanford in Paris. After teaching elementary school, she earned her JD from the U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her subsequent 35-year career at the university, where she specialized in public school law, included working in the provost’s office and serving as the first faculty ombudswoman. She made it her goal to swim her age in pool laps each year, reaching 1 mile when she swam 73 laps in 2019. Survivors: her husband, Gary, ’67; sons, Brian, ’94, and Todd; four grandchildren; and sister.

Louis Campbell Schutte, ’67 (psychology), of Kansas City, Mo., January 2, at 75. He was a member of Kappa Sigma. After serving in the Navy during the Vietnam War, he spent his career in information systems management with Burroughs and Long Motor Corporation and as the owner of Internet Solutions Group. He also enjoyed photography, bowling, golf, hunting and collecting smoking pipes and fountain pens. Survivors: his wife of 48 years, Shirley; and brother.

1970s

David Carr Easton, ’70 (general engineering), of Napa, Calif., February 4, at 72, of prostate cancer. He was a member of Theta Chi and ROTC. As founder and director of Rammed Earth Works, he was a lifelong advocate of using local subsoils as a sustainable and low-cost building material. He was involved in the construction of more than 300 projects including Stanford’s Windhover Contemplative Center. He also co-founded Watershed Materials to reduce carbon emissions from cement. Survivors: his wife of 35 years, Cynthia; children, Darsh, Carissa and Thomas; and two grandchildren.

Stephen Wainwright Jubb, ’71 (English), MA ’82 (education), of Oakland, September 10, at 71, of cancer and Alzheimer’s disease. He was drafted by the Dallas Cowboys after playing offensive tackle in the 1971 Rose Bowl victory but opted for a career in music instead. He later earned his master’s degree and worked as a teacher and subsequently as a journalist in Cuba. Directing the Coalition for Equitable Schools enabled him to unite his talents and experience with his commitment to educational activism. Survivors: his wife, Constance, ’71 MA ’73; children, Lucas and Sonya; and four grandchildren.

Greg A. Steltenpohl, ’76 (individually designed), of Los Angeles, March 11, at 66, of complications of a liver transplant. He was a member of Zeta Psi. To support a jazz band in which he played saxophone, he and his bandmates began selling fresh orange juice in 1980, an endeavour that grew into the Odwalla juice company. An E. coli outbreak led to Odwalla’s demise as an independent company, but he saw a new opportunity in non-dairy drinks. In 2010, he founded Califia Farms, one of the most successful brands in the plant-based beverage industry. Survivors: his son, Eli; stepsons, Justin and Evan; three granddaughters; and two sisters.

2000s

Stanislav “Stan” Karas, ’01 (history), of Studio City, Calif., March 23, 2020, at 41, of acute pancreatitis. He wrote for the Daily and played on the College Bowl team. After earning his JD from UC Berkeley, he spent his legal career at Paul Hastings, Janofsky & Walker; Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan; and then at Capstone Law. He specialized in intellectual property, securities and complex civil litigation. Survivors: his mother, Victoria.

Richard Francis Walters, PhD ’57 (geology), of Davis, Calif., January 18, at 90. After 11 years in the oil industry, he brought his computer expertise to the UC Davis School of Medicine. He helped found the UC Davis department of computer science and served as its first chair. He was also a founding member of the choir of St. Martin’s Episcopal Church and Davis Comic Opera Company. He enjoyed the many opportunities he had for world travel. Survivors: his wife, Shirley Newlin, ’51; children, Leslie Tuomi and David; and four grandchildren.

Barbara Braden Ebright Varenhorst, PhD ’64, of Portola Valley, Calif., February 24, at 92. As a counseling psychologist in Palo Alto high schools, she recognized the significance of peers in young people’s lives and developed pioneering peer counseling programs in response. She was co-founder and president of the National Peer Helpers Association and taught others about her work as a visiting instructor at Stanford, Harvard, Johns Hopkins and other universities. She also served on the Vesper Society board of directors and as an elder at Valley Presbyterian Church. She was preceded by her husband, Vern, Engr. ’56. Survivors: her nieces and nephews.

Ole Curtis Griffin Jr., MS ’48 (mechanical engineering), of Phoenix, February 17, at 99. During 28 years as an Air Force command pilot, he flew more than 50 types of aircraft. In civilian life, he was an engineer and program manager for Garrett Turbine Engine. He was also a founding member of the National Air and Space Museum and the American Air Museum in Britain and president of the Phoenix wing of the American Aviation Historical Society. He was preceded by his wife, Victoria. Survivors: his children, Jeffrey, Jennifer Cecil and...
Farewells

and also held a permanent visiting appointment at the German Academy of Science and Letters. In Germany, he received a Humboldt Research Award and also held a permanent visiting appointment at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. He enjoyed long-distance running and classical music. Survivors: his wife, Maj. Allan Giles Walker, MA '73 (communication), of Toronto, March 23, 2020, at 74, of brain cancer. Over a 40-year career in Canadian film and television, he won numerous Genie and Gemini awards. He began as a documentary filmmaker with the National Film Board but soon switched to dramas. His film Bravery in the Field was nominated for an Academy Award for best live action short film in 1979. He was predeceased by his first wife, Ingeborg Dean, '68. Survivors: his wife, Hannele Halm; children, Anna-Kaisa and Sam; two grandchildren; and two brothers.

David Charles Villa, MA '81 (Latin American studies), of Madison, Wis., February 13, at 66, of cancer. He earned his MBA from Northwestern University and worked as an auditor for Arthur Anderson, followed by finance jobs at First National Bank of Chicago, Brinson Partners and the Florida State Board of Administration. At the time of his death, he was CEO of the State of Wisconsin Investment Board, director of the SEC's Financial Accounting Foundation, and co-director of the Marguerite Casey Foundation. He was also president of the Chicago chapter of the National Society of Hispanic MBAs. Survivors: his wife, Jane; daughter, Elena; parents, Fred and Maria; and three siblings.

Frederic Stuart Baker, PhD '87 (philosophy), of San Francisco, December 18, at 74. He worked as a criminal defense attorney. As a devout Roman Catholic, he was an ardent opponent of capital punishment and other forms of torture and a fervent defender of all animals, domesticated or wild. He was predeceased by his wife, Michele Bee. Survivors: his cousins.

LAW

Robert Edgar “Bob” Formichi, LLB '54, of San Anselmo, Calif., February 9, at 93. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He began his legal career in San Francisco with Sullivan, Roach, Johnson & Faraher. He continued to show his work regionally and at shows in New York, Texas and Florida. Survivors: his significant other of 37 years, Lynn McClellan; and children, Jens, JenniferAnne Cavanaugh and Roderick.

Robert Edmund “Bob” O’Malley Jr., PhD '66 (mathematics), of Seattle, December 31, at 81, of pneumonia. He was emeritus professor at the U. of Washington but also taught at NYU, the U. of Edinburgh, the U. of Arizona, Rensselaer, Cambridge, University College Cork, Dublin City U. and the Technical University of Vienna. He published several books and hundreds of articles and served as president of the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics. He loved good food and music and reading about Ireland, American Catholicism and women in science. Survivors: his wife, Candace; sons, Patrick, Timothy and Daniel; grandson; and brother.

Raimo Heikki Tuomisto, PhD '69 (philosophy), of Helsinki, November 22, at 80. After visiting Stanford on a Fulbright, he returned for his second PhD. His multiple books and articles were pioneering works in the fields of social ontology and the philosophy of collective intention. He taught at the U. of Helsinki for 37 years and was recognized by a lifetime achievement award from the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. In Germany, he received a Humboldt Research Award and also held a permanent visiting appointment at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich.
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MOSQUITOES. That’s what I thought violins sounded like. Not all pieces of music displayed such whininess, of course, but enough did to make me dismiss the instrument as not worth learning to play. The piano, on the other hand, caught my fancy when I was 5 and never let go. The wood around the foot pedals on my old upright shows the force of a stubborn 10-year-old who didn’t want to practice, but once I felt the joy of accompanying choirs and instrumentalists, I stopped seeing practicing as such a chore.

When I got to the School of Education in the 1980s, I joined the school’s newly formed choir as the accompanist. Each week, students, faculty and staff, old and young, in and out of key, filled Cubberley Auditorium with music. Our theme-based performances showcased the talents—and humor—of the School of Ed family in a way no conference presentation or journal article could match. Not surprisingly, it was a much-needed counterbalance to my doctoral work.

Accompanying gave way to family and a teaching career, and soon 30 years had gone by. Sure, I played the piano whenever I got the chance, but the intensity was nothing like that of my earlier days. More often I was a concertgoer than a concert performer. My respect for the athleticism and musicality of violinists increased. And after I retired, I decided to learn to play.

When my daughter was young, I’d bought a three-quarter-size violin at a garage sale, thinking she might like to try it out. Like mother, like daughter: She rejected the violin in favor of other instruments. Now, though, the little violin came out of its case, and, with the help of online videos, I attached the bridge, sound post and tailpiece, rosined up the bow and put bow to strings. The musician in me soon realized that to learn correctly, I would need a full-sized violin.

At an online auction house, I bought an inexpensive beauty; tawny spruce top, flamed maple back with fleurs-de-lis—a true piece of functional art. The only problem was that it had a couple of cracks that needed fixing, so I took it to the luthier and came home with a rental. With COVID restrictions in full force, in-person lessons were out, and I again turned to the internet for guidance.

In the work world, I was an expert. But now I am a novice, the proof of it in the howls of our dog when my violin screeches and in the polite words of encouragement from my family. It is strangely liberating to be a student again. My pleasure comes from figuring out fingering, correcting my intonation, bowing smoothly and, finally, turning notes on a page into music.

I’ve brought new life to an old violin. In turn, it has rejuvenated the musician in me.

When she’s not making music, Anne Reynolds, MA ’87, PhD ’88, tackles home improvement projects, tends her beehives and garden, and drags her stubborn dog on walks.
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