‘Everyone Who Comes to Stanford Is an Explorer’

—Incoming president Jonathan Levin, ’94

Three Cheers for VanDerveer

The 1924 Paris Games
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Up Toward Mountains Higher
Jonathan Levin, ’94, becomes Stanford’s president on August 1. Friends and colleagues say the GSB dean’s even-keeled nature and enthusiasm for tackling tough problems are a match for the increasingly challenging role.

28

Full Circle
Paris, 1924. Stanford sent a female athlete to the Olympics for the first time. The U.S. rugby team counted a whopping nine Stanford-connected members. And a certain diving coach made waves with his daring new approaches.

36

The Legend
In the mid-80s, even Stanford’s players thought Tara VanDerveer would be crazy to come coach the moribund women’s basketball team. But her expectations—for herself and for the Cardinal—helped propel the sport to national prominence.

44
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Jane and Leland placed an extremely high value on parenthood and educating youth. They would say that Jennica Peterson is making great use of her Stanford degree.

Jennifer Williams Bardsley, '99

I recently had a baby and returned to work. And I have felt pressure to continue to prove myself professionally—both because it took too much hard work to get to this point and because I do enjoy it. But I recognize, especially after maternity leave, what a luxury it is that I can do this. That I'm so lucky to be able to afford childcare (and to have a husband carrying the weight when I travel for work). The fact that two college-educated professionals can barely afford to do this is humbling.

Natasha Chen, '06

The generation of women before me worked very hard to be taken seriously in STEM, and my generation was actively recruited by companies that needed engineers. So we were told we could have it all. And when my generation figured out that meant that we would run ourselves into the ground, we were called traitors to the cause. But those tough gals that paved the way have given the generations that followed the right to choose to work, stay home, or some combination that works for each of them.

I thoroughly enjoyed raising my kids. Being home allowed me to be the room mother, volunteer in their classrooms, lead a group at our church, manage the Little League teams, and be a Girl Scout co-leader. So many lives I've been able to touch, beyond those of my family. I regret none of it.

Cindy Jensen, MS '85
San Jose, California

The opening line, “You’re really using your Stanford degree,” made me shiver. How many times has this insult been lobbed at me? Now I chalk it up to jealousy, but back then I didn’t know how to react other than with seething anger and embarrassment.

After my first son was born, I did go back to work full time as a primary care physician, but the demands were overwhelming.

Caring People

In May, Jennica Peterson, '99, wrote about how full-time parenting isn’t always seen as worthy of a Stanford degree.

Old Fashioned

In May, we asked what was funky, fresh, or fire when you were on the Farm. Here’s what you said.

In the early ’50s, women’s everyday wear was a skirt, a pullover sweater, saddle Oxford shoes and socks, and sometimes a bead or pearl necklace.

Catherine Wells, ’55

Stanford freshmen women in 1964 showed up in dyed-to-match skirts and sweaters, and penny loafers. We were forbidden to wear pants on the Quad. By the time we were seniors in 1968, we were wearing bell-bottom jeans, peasant blouses, Birkenstocks, and love beads. Whiplash changes!

Cheryl Volmert, ’68

Rolled-up jeans, polo shirts, white Vans, and hoodies around your waist.

Frank Pape, ’89

Boxer shorts for women. Everything hugely oversized—T-shirts, sweatshirts, flannel shirts. Fashion during the Grunge era in the early ’90s was simply not flattering, IMHO!

Caroline Fox, ’94, MA ’95

Tube tops, high-waisted jeans with flared hems, platform flip-flops, winged eye liner.

Elizabeth Reeds, ’01
I spent the next dozen or so years at home with my boys—raising them to become intellectual thought leaders, wonderful men who respect intelligent women, and men who know their way around a kitchen. It took all of my Stanford education to pull that off.

Cheryl Fong, ’88
Tustin, California

Screen Play
At Stanfordmag.org, Annie Reller, ’24, wrote about bringing back FLiCKS, which died out with the rise of streaming media.

I must thank you and your cohorts for bringing back our favorite early ’60s weekend activity. FLiCKS was probably instrumental in maintaining a reasonable sanity level among students in that era of political assassinations, rising levels of conflict in Vietnam, and ever-increasing concerns about the military draft. Nothing was better than those incomparable Sunday Night FLiCKS with their weekly dose of Road Runner cartoons and paper airplane building and flying.

Rob Burrington, ’64, MS ’65
Palm Springs, California

I am so excited for the student body to experience such a laughter-filled and memorable experience. FLiCKS was something I always looked forward to so that I could unwind with fellow students by mimicking movie quotes in unison, tossing TP, blowing bubbles, and generally witnessing creative student chaos at its finest. Bravo to you for reviving this treasured Stanford tradition!

Omar Chyou, ’95
Broomfield, Colorado

Dressed Down
A May story covered the FashionX runway, a student event that sold out MemChu.

With puzzlement I read about a popular on-campus fashion show that took place at Memorial Church, complete with “pulsating music and models showing varying amounts of skin.” Am I the only one to express discomfort at this use of the facility? Many alumni regard this as a sacred space. I’m sure it was an enjoyable occasion, and I am all for celebrating students’ artistic creativity. In the future, though, I suggest the Cantor Arts Center or Bing Concert Hall would be a beautiful and far more respectful choice.

Theresa Johnston, ’83
Truckee, California
Convergent Evolution
How our profile of the incoming president took shape.

“When I’m writing” a feature story, I begin thinking it’s about time to wrap up the reporting phase when the themes of the interviews start to converge.

For our profile of Jonathan Levin, ’94, that happened during the fourth interview. I had six more scheduled.

The people with whom I spoke used a remarkably consistent set of adjectives to describe Stanford’s incoming president: Kind. Humble. Calm (or unflappable, if you prefer the 50-cent version). Optimistic.

Michelle Bhatia had a similar experience when she applied to be chief of staff at the Graduate School of Business, where Levin is dean for about two more weeks. “I’ve interviewed for a number of jobs, and what was interesting is that every single person used the word kind,” Bhatia says. “Yes, kind. And it’s not a word that comes up with executives often. They’ll say they’re nice, they’ll say that they’re collaborative. The word that came up with Jon was kind. And I will assert that that is very accurate.”

“Jon is so humble,” says professor of medicine William Robinson, ’89, PhD ’95, MD ’96, Levin’s longtime friend and wilderness companion. “He’s very down-to-earth and just wants to be part of the group working together to make everybody successful and to help everybody be as effective as they can in their own roles.”

“He is so calm,” says economics professor Liran Einav, one of Levin’s most frequent scholarly collaborators. “Maybe twice in 20 years I’ve seen him get slightly irritated. He’ll be great in terms of not letting the emotional part of the job, or people complaining, affect what he wants to do.”

“I think his very can-do, optimistic spirit is exactly what we need,” says Paul Oyer, the GSB’s senior associate dean for academic affairs. “He will sit down with the anthropologists and make them feel like he’s excited about their research, because he probably will be excited about their research.”

Levin’s signature qualities, his colleagues say, make him a superlative choice to lead Stanford at a time when higher education is under pressure nationwide. “It’s a tough job, but I think he has as good a chance as anybody I’ve ever met for overcoming the challenges that a university president faces right now,” says economics professor and Nobel laureate Paul Milgrom, MS ’78, PhD ’79. “He’s able to hear the concerns of people from a whole variety of backgrounds. He listens well, and he thinks through what he’s hearing and comes up with solutions that are sensitive to multiple perspectives and multiple needs. That’s a big conflict reducer.”

Plus, of course, he’s one of us: the first Stanford alum to hold the presidency since 1968. “I think alumni can expect someone who gets Stanford,” says GSB associate dean for alumni affairs and external relations Derrick Bolton, MA ’98, MBA ’98. “He genuinely cares what alumni think about Stanford today, about how Stanford shaped them, about advice that they have for him as a leader.”

Those are just a handful of the observations—albeit characteristic ones—I gleaned in those 10 interviews. You’ll find more beginning on page 28. Here’s to a future of kindness, humility, calm, and optimism.

Email Kathy at kathyz@stanford.edu.
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AWARD-WINNING RETIREMENT LIVING
It has been a tumultuous year. When Chair of the Board Jerry Yang ['90, MS '90] asked me to take on the interim presidency, there was no thought of the dissolution of our 109-year-old athletic conference and then shortly afterward a tragic war in the Middle East. I want to offer a realistic report and assessment of each and how they affect our basic mission of excellence with integrity in research, education, and clinical care.

Let me start with the war and campus protests. In the week following the terrorist attack of October 7, Provost Jenny Martinez and I came to see that our primary responsibility was to protect the physical safety of the campus community while preserving space for expression of First Amendment–protected free speech. It was not to announce our personal judgments or to claim to speak for the institution, since members of our community hold different and sometimes conflicting views.

The administration has worked diligently to try to calm the waters. The provost and I have met repeatedly with students engaged in activism. Leaders from across campus have been meeting continually to monitor the situation and to discuss the best approach to avoid violence and to minimize disruption.

In the longer run, there is much work to be done to suppress anti-semitism and Islamophobia, which have no place in our community. I am grateful to the two committees who are gathering information and providing recommendations to improve the campus climate.

Our approach has been partly informed by the changing context, including the House hearings on December 5 and April 17. Over the past five months, elite universities have become a focal issue in national and state politics. It is crucial that we act responsibly to protect the integrity of our institution in a period of intense political scrutiny.

With the dissolution of the Pac-12 and Stanford’s transition to the ACC this summer, we solved one challenge—but it turns out to be just the beginning of more challenges. Stanford is rightly proud of its unique position as the leader in college sports as well as research and education. An Athletic Advisory Committee has been formed to support our ambitions.

Our student-athletes were very clear that they needed membership in a Power Four conference to compete at the highest level. A task force is working on ways to mitigate the impact of travel on the academic experience of athletes. But it is also clear that college sports are profoundly changing, fueled by issues such as name, image, and likeness payments; collectives; revenue-sharing with athletes; and obligations of Title IX.

In the midst of the tumult, the great work of our faculty and students continues unabated. While the past 8 ½ months have not been easy, I am deeply grateful for the broad support of most of the community and for the outstanding leadership of Provost Martinez, who, like me, had no idea what she was getting into when she accepted the job last summer. I trust that our new president, Jon Levin ['94], will enjoy the same support to ensure that Stanford continues to lead the world in research, education, and clinical care.
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Meet Tilly Griffiths

Two degrees down and a world of reporting ahead.

“Writing was a form of advocacy for me. There’s a lot that people with disabilities experience that isn’t so empowering. I think it’s important to find a way to share that with your own voice.”
I am very focused on my appearance—my hair, my makeup, my outfit—because I feel like they’re things that are within my control. But things that are outside of my control—there’s a lot about my body and the way I show up that I can’t change—I’m very at peace with those things. They don’t really occupy any space in my mind.

I’ve always loved the world of media. I won a Pride of Britain award [for fund-raising] when I was 8, and around that there was a lot of media, live television. I had received support from charities, and I started out doing little speeches about what my chair meant, what I was able to do. I genuinely wanted to help other kids get these chairs.

My master’s thesis is about people with disabilities becoming parents, and how they navigate pregnancy and also parenthood and raising a child—what that looks like with different disabilities. It’s something that doesn’t really get talked about.

“My chair is a part of me. I want it to be the best that it can be and make me feel good. A lot of people comment on the bling on my chair. I’m like, people are going to see it, so I might as well make it something positive that they can talk about.

I was excited about getting the master’s in journalism because storytelling has been such a huge part of my life, but also I was very excited about homing in on the data skills. To be able to translate numbers into a story that then can illustrate impacts is such an important skill.

“I am very focused on my appearance—my hair, my makeup, my outfit—because I feel like they’re things that are within my control. But things that are outside of my control—there’s a lot about my body and the way I show up that I can’t change—I’m very at peace with those things. They don’t really occupy any space in my mind.

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IN EARLY 1924, the Daily announced a contest: A local company was offering $100—nearly $1,800 in today’s money—for the best Stanford motion picture written by a student. Filming would soon follow.

Nearly 50 years before, British photographer Eadweard Muybridge had rigged up a dozen cameras to fire in rapid succession as one of Leland Stanford’s trotters galloped by. The results helped birth the motion picture. Yet when showings of the winning student film—Stanford Days—began, it was only the “second film showing Stanford scenes,” according to the Stanford Illustrated Review.

The film was written by grad student Robert Fitzgerald, MA 1924, and billed in the Daily as a “perpetual record of undergraduate life at Stanford.” The plot features a woman torn between attending Stanford and Cal who goes for a walk in the woods and is scared up a tree by a tiny bear. When a passing Stanford athlete shoos the animal away, her decision is made. At Stanford, the woman is drawn to both the jock and a scholar. In the end, she unites her romantic rivals, and the academic tutors the athlete so he can continue to play for Stanford. “No pains have been spared to make it as true to life as it can possibly be made,” the Daily wrote on the day of the film’s debut.

The cast included sophomore Lloyd Nolan, Class of 1926 (left), who’d soon scrap his studies for a Hollywood career that would stretch into the ’80s, including nearly 100 films, dozens of TV shows (his final appearance was in an episode of Murder, She Wrote), and an Emmy. But Stanford Days is perhaps more sought after as a window on a lost Stanford. One scene involves the female lead—Margaret Richardson (later Hay, right), Class of 1924—unwittingly breaking a taboo spelled out in the Daily: “Women shall not walk up and down nor sit on the law steps.” Other scenes include footage of the 1923 Big Game, and of the streetcar that once connected campus and Palo Alto. When the movie was screened again on campus in 1934, the Daily was already noting its “archaic 1924 slang” and inclusion of many “landmarks now extinct.”

Alas, the film itself is now one such landmark. “We’ve always kept an eye out for this film, as requests for it come up once or twice a year,” university archivist Josh Schneider says. “Unfortunately, as far as I am aware, a surviving copy has never been located.”
A Simple Recipe

The aspirations of a prefab-ulous kitchen.

THE THORNIEST ROOM to construct, in any type of building, is the kitchen. Which is what Armelle Coutant and Candice Delamarre learned from speaking with more than 200 people in the construction industry as part of a group project for their master’s program in civil and environmental engineering. To build a kitchen, skilled workers—carpenters, electricians, plumbers, tilers—from as many as eight trades rotate through a construction site in a delicate dance of coordination. A fractional mistake from any of them can bring an entire project to a halt.

After graduating, Coutant, ’19, MS ’21, and Delamarre, MS ’21, co-founded Kit Switch, a public benefit corporation that creates and installs machine-made, prefabricated kitchens with the goal of simplifying the design and construction process. “It’s hard to standardize a kitchen at large, and that’s why we decided we were going to standardize smaller blocks and make it modular,” says Delamarre. The building blocks—one with a stove, another with a sink, a third focused on storage—are visually indistinguishable from traditional versions except that they are deeper; a large panel on the back holds the electrical and plumbing components. Thanks to that panel and the modular design, the kitchens require two workers just a day to install, rather than the typical weeks to months, with no special skills required.

“It’s more labor efficient, it’s more cost efficient, it’s more schedule friendly,” says Tom Hardiman, executive director of the Modular Building Institute, an international trade association. It’s also safer, he says, because it eliminates the need to customize materials on site. All that’s welcome in an industry responsible for 20 percent of U.S. workplace deaths, in a country facing skilled labor and housing shortages.

Last year, Kit Switch installed six kitchens around California, and it has larger-scale projects in the works. The co-founders are currently expanding kit offerings to include bathrooms and more, aiming to create flexible buildings capable of responding to changing needs. “The interiors are really what determines whether a building becomes obsolete,” says Coutant. For her and Delamarre, it’s what’s on the inside that counts.

The Rumor Mill

Why it goes round and round.

YOU DIDN’T HEAR IT from us, but… your wisest ancestors probably gossiped. Scientists believe we’ve been talking behind each other’s backs since the age of hunter-gatherers, and it’s an impulse that gave gossipers an evolutionary edge. But why? wondered Michele Gelfand, a professor of organizational behavior at the Graduate School of Business. To find out, Gelfand and her fellow researchers built a game theory–based computer model populated by agents that interacted using one of six conversational strategies. Over thousands of iterations, as the agents analyzed and adopted one another’s strategies, gossipers proliferated.

The researchers found that gossip helped promote cooperation and deter selfishness—no agent wanted to appear self-serving around someone they knew would spill that tea later. “As more people are thinking about others’ reputations, they’re getting concerned about their own reputations too,” Gelfand said in an interview with the GSB. Ultimately, about 90 percent of agents became gossipers and reaped the rewards of the rumor mill. One caveat: For gossip to do good, it had to be true—at least mostly.
A Running Start
Brooke Raasch is racing to give kids sports prosthetics—and an active childhood.

BROOKE RAASCH has long known that sport-specific prosthetic legs are expensive. He’s worked in orthotics and prosthetics business development and communications for years and is married to Paralympic runner Sarah Reinertsen. But when he learned that blades, or lower limb prosthetics for runners, cost relatively little to manufacture, he started asking questions.

“How does a foot that costs $200 to make become a $20,000 leg?” he says. Since prosthetics for running and sports are generally not covered by insurance, their cost is top of mind for many amputees and their families. The answer, as for many issues related to U.S. health care, is complicated, but Raasch, ’90, MA ’90, believes the solution includes driving down out-of-pocket costs. Through his nonprofit Running Is a Right, Raasch hopes to provide at least 1,000 children with running blades before the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. The blades are from Copenhagen-based sports equipment company Levitate and retail for about $2,000.

Raasch has raised about $150,000 so far, and Running Is a Right has become a program of the Dave McGillivray Finish Strong Foundation. Through a partnership with Shriners Hospitals for Children that began in 2022, he has already matched dozens of kids in cities from Portland, Ore., to Boston with blades and taught them how to use them. Wearing a blade, kids can play more actively with their friends, participate in gym class, and compete in sports.

“You put it on them, and they’re running away,” says JoAnne Kanas, corporate director of orthotics and prosthetics at Shriners. “You have to chase them down to align it.”

Raasch sees his efforts as part of a growing awareness of adaptive athletics. This year, NBC’s coverage of the Paralympics in Paris is expected to exceed 140 hours on TV (and 1,500 live hours on Peacock, the network’s streaming service)—up from less than six in 2012. “This movement is already building,” he says. “I just need to be yet one more person giving it a push.”

—Rebecca Beyer

THE TICKER
Nike co-founder Phil Knight, MBA ’62, has been awarded the Degree of Uncommon Citizen, Stanford’s most prestigious alumni volunteer service award, for his game-changing contributions to all seven Stanford schools and numerous initiatives across campus…. Speaking of game-changers, Katie Ledecky, ’20, the most decorated female swimmer in history, and Ellen Ochoa, MS ’81, PhD ’85, the first Hispanic woman in space and the second female director of NASA’s Johnson Space Center, are among the latest recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor…. Stanford sailing is at a high point of its own. In May, the team came away with two of four national championship titles—in the ICSA women’s team and women’s fleet events…. And Stanford women’s golf can join in the celebrations. The team won its second NCAA championship in three years after a 3–2 takedown of UCLA.
Grad alums! Come back to campus and revisit the beautiful places and outdoor spaces that made Stanford yours.

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All Alumni Day
October 26, 2024
It was January 2023 when Leigh Newman, ’93, first opened an advance copy of the novel The Covenant of Water. She was searching for one more book, in her relentless quest for a perfect pick, out of the millions published each year, to recommend as reading material for her famous boss, Oprah Winfrey.

The Covenant of Water, by Stanford professor of medicine Abraham Verghese, seemed like a long shot, says Newman, an award-winning author and essayist herself. She notes that the multigenerational family saga set in India weighs in at a hefty 736 pages. She cracked it open anyway, read the first 200 pages, then set it down on her dining room table and walked away. Still, that first line, “She is twelve years old, and she will be married in the morning,” lingered.

Newman had recently landed a new job as books editor for Oprah Daily, the multimedia successor to O, the Oprah Magazine. Part of her job is to curate books to share with Winfrey as potential selections for Oprah’s Book Club. So, essentially, Newman is the woman behind the woman who influences the literary tastes of millions.

“To be clear, Oprah picks her own books,” Newman says. “She’s the best reader I’ve ever met. My job is finding that perfect book that she will love.” That means weeding through the thousands of advance copies sent to the Oprah organization, then speed reading the most likely choices at a rate of six to 10 per week. (“I’m an exceptionally fast reader,” Newman says. “Terrifyingly fast.”) Every so often, she sends Winfrey the books she believes in, books she can’t put down, the ones that move her—sometimes a handful, sometimes just one—then keeps her fingers crossed.

“We shoot for about five picks a year, but it varies,” Newman says. “There’s no system. If I really love a book, I’ll just send that and say, ‘This book is spectacular. Please stop everything and read it.’ It’s the dream job of my life. Because I love books, I can’t think of a better job in the world.”

The journey that brought Newman to this position began three decades ago, when she graduated from Stanford with a double major...
Andy

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Dear reader,
My wish is for all to drink from the grail; embedded in arc of rainbow; seeded within; forged in consciousness of our inherent will; the grace that comes from knowing things; thereby spreading the embrace of Father for all.
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This is now your gift to give to others once unveiled at your birthday celebration: the gift of freedom, with love and respect.
Andy

ALL RIGHT NOW | SPOTLIGHT

in economics and English, then moved to New York to become a writer.
“I love to write, so I’ve luckily made my living off of writing and editing since I was 21,” she says. She started out working for Doubleday Publishing and Reader’s Digest, and then earned an MFA from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2006. For about 10 years, she worked as a travel reporter, swimming with dolphins in the Galápagos and tracking tigers in Nepal. After her second child was born, she switched editorial gears again, publishing essays and short stories in the New York Times, Harper’s, and the Paris Review, among others. From 2011 to 2018, she did a stint working for the Oprah Winfrey Network as the deputy editor of its website. She didn’t work directly with Winfrey, she says, but she gained an understanding of how Oprah’s Book Club worked and what its membership wanted in a website.
In 2013, she published a memoir, Still Points North, about her parents’ divorce and growing up in Alaska, and in 2022, she came out with a book of short stories, Nobody Gets Out Alive, which was longlisted for the National Book Award.
“When I found out I was longlisted, I was in a chair getting my hair done,” Newman says. “I’m, like, crying and trying to explain why I’m crying. All these people are looking at me like I’m crazy. I’ve got the tinfoil in my hair.”
Today, in addition to her role at Oprah Daily, Newman teaches creative writing to MFA students and spends her mornings working on a novel. It’s this experience as a writer that Winfrey makes note of.
“As an author herself, with a keen eye for words that resonate, Leigh is an ideal person to have in this position, helping me curate the best books for our audience,” Winfrey says via email. “Sometimes her tastes are quirkier than mine, but we always align on what makes sense for engaging, stimulating, and inspiring readers.”

Since Winfrey launched the phenomenon now recognized worldwide as Oprah’s Book Club in 1996, it’s become “arguably the most influential book club in the world,” according to the New York Times. Reese Witherspoon’s and Jenna Bush Hager’s clubs have made inroads, as has the crowdsourced newcomer #booktok, with 200 billion views on TikTok. But Oprah’s is still the elusive endorsement publishers and authors dream about, says Krishan Trotman, vice president and publisher of the Legacy Lit imprint at Hachette Book Group.
“We can’t predict it,” Trotman says, adding that she is still waiting for one of the books she has published to be picked. “You just sort of have to hope.”
Winfrey introduced the club on The Oprah Winfrey Show with The Deep End of the Ocean by newcomer novelist Jacquelyn Mitchard. The book jumped from 14th to 1st on the New York Times bestseller list for fiction (Mitchard’s only book to have nabbed the top spot), selling more than 3 million copies, and was made into a film starring

‘I do think I know Miss Oprah’s taste in books. I think she likes books that have a classic element, that are timeless. Books that have a beautifully written sentence.’
Michelle Pfeiffer. Subsequent club picks have ranged from classic novels by Charles Dickens to buzzy bestsellers like Wild by Cheryl Strayed, which has sold more than 4 million copies.

The book club has gone through a couple of transitions: In 2002, after a 14-month hiatus, Winfrey resurrected the club with East of Eden by John Steinbeck, Class of 1923, and went from recommending a new book every month to a few times a year, and in 2012, the year after her TV show ended its 25-season run, she relaunched the club online. These days, she waits for the right book, Newman says. Newman's job, as she sees it, is helping find that singular choice that meets the Winfrey criteria—a high bar, she says.

“I do think I know Miss Oprah's taste in books,” Newman says. “I think she likes books that have a classic element, that are timeless. Books that have a beautifully written sentence. We're looking for a wonderful, compelling story that has a lot of emotional stakes in it, a lot of heart. It's not just written to be smart. It's not just written to be a good story. There's some deeper meaning.”

Newman is proud to say that during 2023, her first year on the job, she recommended four of the five Oprah picks: Bittersweet by Susan Cain, a nonfiction book on sadness; Let Us Descend by Jesmyn Ward, '99, MA '00, a novel that tells the story of an enslaved girl in the years before the Civil War and that Oprah calls “a vital work for our culture”; Wellness by Nathan Hill, a “hilarious and tender exploration of love, marriage, life hacks, and technology”; and, for the 101st pick, The Covenant of Water. (The first title of 2023 was Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano and was given to Winfrey by Creative Artists Agency before Newman was hired. In 2024, Winfrey selected The Many Lives of Mama Love by Lara Love Hardin. “Someone had sent it to her,” Newman says. “We don’t know who. She read it and sent it to me. I loved it. She did too. And it was our first pick of the year.”)

Newman had returned to The Covenant of Water after that first try, still thinking: “This isn’t a pick for us. I’ll just read a little bit more.” But at about 500 pages in, she knew the novel was meant for Oprah's Book Club, so she sent it along. It didn’t take Winfrey nearly as long, Newman says. She knew by page 17. Winfrey's been so enthralled by the book, she's handed it out to strangers at the beach and produced a six-part podcast talking about the book with Verghese.

Inspired by stories from Verghese's maternal ancestors, The Covenant of Water introduces Big Ammachi, matriarch of a Christian family in Kerala, India, then follows three generations of her family from 1900 to 1977 through mysterious drownings, afflictions, colonialism, and independence. “It’s one of the best books I’ve read in my entire life,” Winfrey says on her website. “It’s epic. It’s transportive. Many moments during the read I had to stop and remember to breathe. I couldn’t put the book down until the very last page. It was unputdownable!”

As is tradition, Winfrey announced the book's selection in a personal phone call to the book's author, surprising Verghese about a month before publication. (Newman arranges the calls with the publishers.)

“I didn’t believe it at first,” says Verghese, who was working in his home office in Menlo Park when the phone rang around 10:30 a.m. one day in April 2023. “I answered the phone and this voice said, ‘Hi, this is Oprah.’ It sounded like her voice, you know, everyone knows that voice, but I thought someone was pulling my foot.

“We talked for about 45 minutes, and I could tell this was no routine call. She was deeply moved by the book, told me that it was in the top three books she had ever read! We talked about the characters—Big Ammachi and Baby Mol, in particular—and talked about the struggles I had over a decade to bring this to light. There were times during the call that I know I teared up listening to her, and I suspect she did. It was a dream come true.”

Meanwhile, Newman continues to plow through books, chasing the stuff of Winfrey's—and authors' and publishers'—dreams. “I don’t always finish all of them,” she confesses. Two she did: the latest Oprah's Book Club selections, Long Island by Colm Tóibín and Familiaris by David Wroblewski. Ditto some additional compelling reads that she can’t yet divulge. “There are new picks coming out that I found for her,” she says. “But that is all still a secret.”

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A Wave Goodbye
Graduates urged to stay fluid in times of change.

THE 2024 COMMENCEMENT was perhaps destined to focus on change. Many of the 5,416 people receiving their degrees on June 16 had their education disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 1,838 members of the undergraduate Class of 2024, most of whom missed out on an in-person high school graduation and spent their frosh year remote, attending Senior Dinner on the Quad and donning regalia meant putting a cap on the pandemic era at Stanford. Meanwhile, 105-year-old Virginia Hislop, '40, MA '24 (right), closed the book on a master’s degree in education that was interrupted by World War II.

The academic year was marked by campus tumult over the Israel-Hamas war. As President Richard Saller spoke, roughly 250 graduates participated in a silent walkout to attend an alternative ceremony in support of Palestinians. “While at Stanford,” Saller said as they departed, “you’ve gained the tools and analytical skills to help you understand the world, analyze its shortcomings, and work on solutions that will make things better. I urge you to continue to be open to other points of view. Don’t let your convictions shut out your ability to listen and learn. I want to urge you to embrace your future with gratitude and with optimism while acknowledging the suffering of others.”

Commencement speaker Melinda French Gates shared a teaching by spiritual leader Ram Dass (formerly known as Richard Alpert, PhD ’57): As two waves approach the shore, the bigger one sees only disaster ahead, while the smaller wave reassures the big wave that all will be well, because “you’re not a wave. You’re water.” The story, French Gates said, “captures what it’s like to experience enormous transition without losing the core of who you are.” She encouraged graduates to seek out their small waves in life—the people who can “help you imagine yourself as the person you want to become.”

All Right Now
JULY 2024
COMMENCEMENT 2024

Clockwise from top right: Charles Russo; Erin Attkisson (2); Summer Moore Batte, ’99; Erin Attkisson; Andrew Brodhead/Stanford University
All Right Now

SEND-OFF

The COVID Class Chronicles
How it started/how it’s going, in the words of seven seniors.

BY CHRISTINE FOSTER

FOR THE CLASS OF 2024, senior year included appreciation for the little things. Watching TV with roommates. Playing a nightly game of Bananagrams in their co-op. Wandering the aisles of CVS with friends, picking out snacks. This was, after all, the cohort that entered Stanford in 2020, attending classes virtually and, in most cases, living off campus. Stanford has been following seven members of the class ever since.

Three of the seven—Logan Berzins (economics with a minor in data science), Eva Orozco (international relations with a minor in human rights), and Kevin Thor (Asian American studies)—graduated in June. Sala Ba (mechanical engineering), Elena Recaldini (computer science), and Jenna Reed (political science) will stay an additional year to earn master’s degrees—Sala and Elena in their undergraduate fields of study, and Jenna in public policy. Stacey Lubag, who has been considering medical school since sophomore year and made a final decision to pursue it last fall, will finish her bachelor’s in design and pack in a few more premed requirements.

STACEY: As a daughter of immigrants, I was very hesitant about the whole stereotype of what your parents want—for you to go to med school. I think the only part of me that didn’t want to do that was the part of me that was contrarian. I realized that even though it was my parents’ dream, it was also my own. I think this year has been absolutely my best year on campus yet. I’m really grateful that I have more time, because if this was my last year, I would be so sad to leave.

JENNA: I’m the baby of my family. All the grandparents, aunts, and my parents, honestly almost more than me, harbor bitterness that they didn’t get to see my high school graduation. There’s just even more excitement than usual to get to see Wacky Walk or see me actually getting my degree.

They’re still influenced by their unusual introduction to college, whether that involved Zooming into class at 3:30 a.m. (Elena), living in special-circumstances housing with social distancing (Kevin), or quarantining before joining the football bubble (Logan).

EVA: My joke answer is that they created a legion of people who are tired of the word unprecedented. I don’t think I’ve used that word in any of my papers this entire time I’ve been here, just because of how much it traumatized me that year.

SALA: It was a dark crucible when we first got to know Stanford. When I got here as a senior, I was like, “Oh my God, I’m older than everybody else.” These kids don’t remember the mandatory twice-a-week testing. People don’t remember outdoor functions we had to go to.
because all the Row houses were closed and couldn’t throw parties.

**STACEY:** They’re gaining these traditions back that we didn’t have. We’re kind of playing this catch-up game. But I’m a very big believer that everything happens the way it does for a reason, and I wouldn’t be who I am today if it wasn’t for being part of the COVID year.

Being a part of that virtual year has brought a pretty strong foundation for all of us. I think we had this underlying sense of empathy for each other in that way.

**LOGAN:** There’s a little bit of a gap in visibility of what actually happened and the hardships people went through. I think it’s important to know we were getting put in hotels for weeks at a time, just, like, sitting by ourselves doing nothing, just to play the sport we love.

**JENNA:** I find myself talking to some of my underclassmen friends, and they’ll be like, “Oh, what freshman dorm were you in?” And I was like, “I wasn’t in a freshman dorm.” I think there’s just a kind of asterisk.

**ELENA:** I have my crowd. I know what I like to do on campus. I know all the spots that I like. I feel very domesticated, if that makes any sense.

I’m in Xanadu. The Row is just a beautiful place to be. I can just go from front porch to front porch and kind of socialize with others. When it’s sunny outside, everyone’s sunbathing on the grass in front of the house.

**KEVIN:** I am being OK with not having to uphold myself to other people’s expectations. I think that’s a big breakthrough for me.

I live in Kairos, which is a co-op on the Row. And I literally love it. I’ve been able to find such a close, tight-knit community. I just feel so loved. Kairos is a queer, BIPOC, art-centered co-op. It’s funny because I catch myself saying “Oh, I’m going back home” instead of “going back to Kairos,” which I think is very significant as well.

**EVA:** My pronouns changed. I use they/them pronouns. Today, my grandma sent a text where she used the right pronouns for somebody who uses they/them pronouns, and I was like, “Oh yes!” My family has been really great with everything. That’s something I’m really lucky to have.

**ELENA:** I went to Chile to practice Spanish, which felt really great for me because I grew up hearing it in my household but kind of stopped speaking it around the house.

We got to do Patagonia and the Atacama Desert. It was really cool to see those two kinds of biomes. This was the first time that snow actually fell on me.

**SALA:** I feel like Stanford’s overall quirky vibe still exists. That hasn’t changed at all. It was kind of maybe dampened a little bit by COVID. But it’s all around. There is this unique Stanford alchemy that carries through.

**LOGAN:** I would go straight to motivation and adaptability. Every single Stanford student is going to make the necessary adjustments. To the core is a strong spirit that they’re going to drive to be the best and nothing’s going to get in the way.

**ELENA:** Studying abroad was a breath of fresh air. Going to Oxford was always my dream growing up. Then I decided to come to Stanford, but I still had that yearning to go to Oxford. I really, really like the old Gothic architecture. I think study abroad always brings you closer to your cohort, even if you don’t know anyone there, just because you’re in a completely new place.

Several plan to continue their education. While Sala was serving on a committee that interviewed prospective faculty members, she realized she wanted to pursue a PhD. Kevin hopes to earn a master’s in Asian American studies.

**SALA:** It was a window into PhD life because I could ask questions about teaching and research. I was like, “Wait, this is kind of interesting. This sounds kind of cool.”

**KEVIN:** I’ve been adopting the idea that the world is my oyster. I’m not quite sure what the future agenda is. I can do a lot of things. As long as I apply myself to it, I know I can. “A four-year-long summer camp.”

**ELENA:** I’m from Tokyo. I’m from a hardcore city. Coming here, it’s what I envision American kids’ summer camp would be. The palm trees and the warm environment, and everyone’s always outside. It was like I attended a four-year-long summer camp. And it was great.

**SALA:** By the time my class finally got to Stanford, most of the upperclassmen who were supposed to maintain traditions were mourning the Stanford that could have been, because the last time they experienced Stanford was when they were the freshmen and sophomores. So, instead of having a Stanford experience made for me, I had to forge it myself, which ended up working out in the sense that I had to learn what I liked and wanted in order to figure out what I wanted to get out of Stanford. I had to do a lot of self-growth.

**STACEY:** No matter what I do, I will always be fine, both academically here at Stanford and for what Stanford sets me up for beyond. I am not afraid at all.

Christine Foster is a writer in Connecticut. Email her at stanford.magazine@stanford.edu.
President’s Award for the Advancement of the Common Good

You are invited to nominate alumni who, through their commitment and actions, create real and lasting positive change.

Nominations due November 3, 2024
goto.stanford.edu/PresidentsAward

2024 honorees announced

Stanford University celebrates the innovative and dedicated alumni who make significant and sustainable contributions to improving the human condition across nonprofit, government, academic, and business sectors. The President’s Award for the Advancement of the Common Good pays tribute to these individuals and their achievements. Congratulations to the 2024 recipients, recognized at the June Commencement ceremony.

José Padilla, ’74

As executive director of California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), Padilla championed the rights of farmworkers and others experiencing rural poverty for nearly four decades, providing free legal services to around 48,000 rural farmworkers annually. Before joining CRLA, Padilla helped develop a community-based low-income credit union, a bilingual community radio station, and an immigration center serving Central American refugees.

(Image courtesy José Padilla)

Fred Swaniker, MBA ’04

Swaniker supports innovation and responsible corporate practices in Africa and serves as a global leader in social entrepreneurship. He is the founder of the African Leadership Group, which develops ethical and entrepreneurial leaders for Africa, and matches them with career opportunities through the African Leadership Academy, a pre-university program; the African Leadership University, an undergraduate and postgraduate institution; and Sand Technologies, which trains software engineers and data scientists.

(Image courtesy Fred Swaniker)
Up Toward Mountains Higher

From the Foothills to the Bay, Jonathan Levin sees a range of opportunity.

By Kathy Zonana
To run the headwaters of the Kern River, in eastern central California, you strap a 45-pound kayak to your back and hike 21 miles via Whitney Portal, the gateway to Mount Whitney, the tallest mountain in the continental United States. Then you kayak 54 miles downstream, largely through Class V whitewater (“extremely long, obstructed, or very violent rapids,” according to the International Scale of River Difficulty). At multiple points, you have to portage—pull to the side, climb out of the kayak, and carry it along the bank till it’s safe to put in again.

“When you’re kayaking something like the Kern, you’re dependent on your partner,” says professor of medicine William Robinson, ’89, PhD ’95, MD ’96. “You never run a rapid unless you can see a very clear line. Your partner’s helping you portage, and then holding your boat when you get in and launch. It is the ultimate in trust.” Which is why Robinson, then a Stanford fellow in rheumatology, embarked on the adventure in 2002 with Jonathan Levin, then an assistant professor of economics. Their bedrock confidence in each other dated back to their days at Camp Kabeyun in New Hampshire, where they learned to paddle canoes, roll kayaks, and prep wilderness meals. “Jon’s just cool and collected and clear-thinking,” says Robinson.

Levin, a member of the Class of ’94 who double-majored in English and math, the winner of the 2011 John Bates Clark Medal for the most significant American economist under 40, and the dean of the Graduate School of Business for the past eight years, becomes the university’s 13th president on August 1. He succeeds classics professor Richard Saller, who has served as interim president since September. Levin will be the first Stanford graduate to become the university’s president since J.E. Wallace Sterling, PhD ’38, who served from 1949 to 1968, and the first undergraduate alumnus since Donald Tresidder, Class of 1919, MD ’27, who served from 1943 to 1948.

Robinson believes Levin’s even-keeled approach to looking for a line down the river—“collecting oneself, clearly thinking about the situation, not letting too much emotion get injected, and then helping make decisions such that the group traverses the rapid in a highly successful and safe way”—will serve him well in the high-pressure situations that a university presidency can present. “I couldn’t think of a more perfect person to be the president of Stanford,” Robinson says. “I think it’s a very challenging job in this time. I mean, you see all these other university presidents in the crossfires of Congress and of protests, and I think Jon’s experience and perspectives, but also his approach and his thoughtfulness, will go a long way to helping Stanford be effective in this pretty wild world we have right now.”

The Adventurer

It was the promise of the Sierras that drew Levin, at 17, to Stanford. “I grew up reading obsessively about wilderness exploration, including Yvon Chouinard and Royal Robbins and Lynn Hill, who were putting up these climbs in Yosemite, big walls,” he says. “In my mind, the intellectual part of Stanford has always been tied to the place, to being outdoors, to the sense of exploration of being in California.” Many weekends, he and his friends—some, like Robinson, whom he’d known since Camp Kabeyun, and others he made at Stanford—would head for the hills, climbing and skiing and kayaking. As president of the Stanford Kayak Club, Levin taught others how to kayak on an often-full Lake Lagunita. “That was my first leadership experience at Stanford,” he says. “It was not a highly structured organization.”

Levin majored in English because he loved literature, and in math because it was hard. The first day of freshman year, he was sitting in Math 43H, Honors Calculus, surrounded by about 90 nervous classmates. The professor, Peter Sarnak, PhD ’80, walked in, leather jacket and all, “and he doesn’t even look at the class,” Levin says. “He just comes in and he just starts writing math. And I have no idea what he’s talking about. I mean, none. It’s just math. So much math.”

The second day, the same thing happened, except with about 60 classmates. The third day, there were perhaps 30 remaining. “And he walks in, and this time he takes off his leather jacket and he hangs it up and he looks at the class and he says, ‘This is about the right size.’ And then he starts teaching.”

Levin was energized. “First of all, I had not been in an environment where I knew everyone else in the class was smarter than me and better at math,” he says. “I never understood anything that was happening during class.” So he’d knuckle down outside of class, a process, he says, that helped set his professional path. “That is really what research is,” he says. “You find things that you don’t understand and then you just want to go figure them out. And you have to have the confidence that if you don’t understand something and you work hard enough at it, it will come together. It will crystallize.”

Three years later, as a senior, he found himself drafting an application for grad school. It wasn’t crystallizing. “I wrote one of my essays about being out on a kayak trip with friends and bouncing around on a dirt road trying to do a math problem set,” he says. “I was trying to link these things in this essay, and I was struggling. And I showed it to a friend and he said, ‘Oh, there’s a common theme in the things that you like to do. You like to navigate difficulties.’”

Levin sees this mindset all around him. “Everyone who comes to Stanford is an explorer,” he says. “You could be coming as a first-generation student from the Central Valley. You could be coming as a robotics PhD student from Delhi. You could be
studying political science, or you could be trying for the Olympic swim team. Everyone who comes to Stanford has this sense that you’re going to set some ambitious goals and you’re going to work hard and persevere.”

Out and Back

In 1994, Levin planned an expedition suitable for commemorating his graduation from Stanford. “I had this brilliant idea, which was I would take my roommates and Amy, who was then my girlfriend, and we would go on an expedition in the Brooks Range of Alaska north of the Arctic Circle, hike into this river, and canoe out,” he says. “It was a 28-day trip, and it rained for 27 days. And I didn’t realize that the batteries in my camera were dead until afterward. So we ended with no record of that trip except a bunch of blurry, dark photos. And Amy still married me, which was a good outcome.”

Jonathan Levin and Amy Nussbaum met in English class as high school sophomores in New Haven, Conn. “I had noticed Amy, and she had noticed me a little less,” Levin says. “It wasn’t until we were seniors that we started dating.” Soon, he was off to Stanford and she to Cornell. “We wrote letters, physical letters, actually, because it was very expensive to call long distance,” Levin says. Grad school brought greater adoption of email, as well as opportunities to be in the same locale on and off, while Jonathan earned a master’s degree in economics from Oxford and a PhD from MIT, and Amy an MD from Yale and an MPH from Harvard. The Levins married in 1999, and the following year, moved to the Bay Area, where Amy began an internal medicine residency at UCSF—she now practices in Menlo Park—and Jonathan joined the Stanford economics faculty.

Levin returned to California as an economic theorist. “Stanford was like, here’s a stack of yellow pads and a box of No. 2 pencils and get to work,” he says. Levin’s early scholarship was on how to optimize relational contracts—those in which the parties (say, employer and employee) are typically more motivated by the desire to stay together than by the terms of a formal agreement. But he soon found himself captivated by the empirical possibilities enabled by big data. “There was this huge change happening in the field—actually in all the social sciences—which was the availability of data just started to go up exponentially,” he says. “It just opened up all these questions of things that people had theorized about, that people had ideas about. And now you could go measure them.”

A large dataset is a boon to an economist, especially one with an exploratory bent. In collaboration with economics professor Liran Einav, and often additional colleagues, Levin examined markets in subprime auto loans, eBay transactions, and health care. For example, by comparing Medicare Advantage with traditional Medicare, they were able to see that while the private Medicare Advantage plans provide benefits at lower cost, most of the savings is in the form of reduced utilization of care and accrues to insurers rather than participants. “Some of that care is what you would consider wasteful, and some of that care is what you might consider not necessarily wasteful,” says first author Vilsa Eliana Curto, MA ’13, PhD ’15, then a doctoral advisee of Einav and Levin and now an assistant professor of health policy at UCLA. “Overall, the papers help contribute to a more informed understanding of the consequences of having this large expansion of people enrolling in private health plans to receive their Medicare benefits.”

Another major thread of Levin’s research is applying economic theory to optimize the design of auctions and marketplaces. “I came to Stanford right at the time when there was the emergence of a new field in economics: market design,” he says. “Not only could you use the tools of economic theory to understand things around you, you could take an engineering approach to the world and get out and try to solve problems using the tools that we had.” With economics professor...
Paul Milgrom, MS ’78, PhD ’79, and others, Levin helped design the FCC incentive auction that repurposed traditional broadcast TV spectrum into the wireless broadband licenses that underpin modern broadband services. He also worked with a team led by Michael Kremer, who was on the faculty at MIT when Levin was a grad student and is now at the University of Chicago, to design an advance market commitment for pneumococcal vaccines in the developing world.

Kremer’s concept, Levin says, was to combine the advantages of an incentive for innovation with those of demand in the marketplace: set aside money to subsidize the vaccine, but only disburse it to those who met the market test. “And so that’s when I got involved, was how do you design that system?” Levin says. “At first, it was like an intellectual puzzle. And then of course you think, OK, what does it actually mean when you design an economic mechanism that works? In this case, it changes the access that children in dozens and dozens of countries have to early childhood vaccines. Pneumococcal disease had been one of the two leading causes of death in the developing world, and vaccines are one of the most cost-effective ways to improve health,” he says. “So it was incredibly rewarding. I can’t take credit for hardly any of it, because there were so many people involved. And Michael really had the idea.” The idea, by the way, also underpins Operation Warp Speed, the U.S. government program that subsidized the development of vaccines for COVID-19.

The pneumococcal project is characteristic of Levin’s body of work, says Einav. “It’s a collection of very elegant ways to approach theory and data and marry them together, all in the context of, how is it going to make the world a better place?”

Curto is thrilled to see Levin appointed president of Stanford. “Jon is somebody who clearly has a lot of integrity,” she says. “He cared a lot about our analyses being correct, about publishing things that were accurately reflecting the data.” Moreover, she says, “he is the type of person who could really build consensus and listen to different groups of people and be able to distill different views and make good decisions based on that.”

Milgrom, who shared the 2020 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences with GSB professor Robert Wilson for their work on auctions, agrees. Milgrom has known Levin since childhood, when Milgrom and Levin’s father, Richard, ’68, were colleagues at the Yale School of Management. Rick Levin would go on to serve as Yale’s president from 1993 to 2013. But back in the day, “I could tell in faculty meetings, before [Rick] had any administrative appointment, that this is a guy who understands,” Milgrom says. “People would say stuff that made no sense to me, and he was able to hear them. And Jon inherited that. Jon really listens. He can really hear what people are saying, even when their conventions are different. And I thought, Oh, I’m looking at like father, like son.”

Not only that, but Levin’s work “is so, so celebrated,” says Milgrom. “That’s important for a university president.”

An Optimist’s Mission


Levin is naturally inclined toward the latter camp. “Jon’s the perpetual optimist, glass overflowing all the time, but not in an over-the-top way,” says Robinson. “It’s understated, and it’s like, ‘We can do this.’”

Take the question uppermost in the public’s mind: how to handle free expression, dissent, and protest on campus. “I think the principles are very simple. The execution is not always simple,” Levin says. “The university has a very noble and distinctive purpose, which is inquiry and learning. And in order to support that mission, we give students and faculty a very broad range of freedom of inquiry—what to study and think about; and expression—what they can say
and write. It’s actually different than in a democracy. In a democracy, it’s there to protect the citizens from tyranny. At the university, the freedom is there to promote inquiry and learning. And at the same time, we have other rules around expression that are there to protect the freedoms of other people. You can’t disrupt a class; you can’t disrupt an event; you can’t interfere with other people being able to get to class or go to events or participate in activities.”

To get a sense of Levin’s approach in action, look to the GSB. “I’m really proud of the culture of the school, and that was in evidence this year,” which he calls a “very complicated” one. “Particular students, but also the faculty and the staff, were so willing to engage in discussion and debate and to talk about complex issues and to do everything in a really open, curious, respectful way,” he says. “I think it was a model for how educational institutions should navigate challenging times.” He relies on a set of ideas from sociology, introduced to him by GSB professor Neil Malhotra, MA ’05, PhD ’08, to set the tone. “You can have an environment where people respond to disagreement or something going wrong or a conflict by escalating. It’s a culture of honor,” says Levin. “You can have an environment where they respond by appealing to authority or social media. It’s a culture of grievance. Or you can have an environment where people respond by talking to each other. That’s a culture of dignity. So we want a culture of dignity, and that’s something we talk about with the students here from the very moment that they arrive. I always tell them—I use this line from Ted Lasso—’Be curious, not judgmental.’”

Meanwhile, the university itself, Levin says, should not be a discussant. “Universities are not social justice organizations,” he says. “They create immense societal good. And it is absolutely the freedom of the faculty and the students to be involved in political affairs, but it’s not the role of the university. Universities would do well where they can institutionally step back from politics and leave room for the faculty and students to debate and have discussion.”

Furthermore, Levin says, he has come to the view that it’s “really not a good idea” for university leaders to issue statements on political topics. That “actually undermines the educational mission because it sets the wrong example for students,” he says. “What we really want is students to come to recognize that most of the issues that come from the world are complex and more nuanced than they might have otherwise thought. So we want students to think slowly, to ask a lot of questions, not to rush to think that everything is simple and clear-cut and has an obvious answer that just needs to be said more loudly and more forcefully than the way everyone else is saying it. And certainly not to be said in a 400-word email sent around 30 minutes after some global event.”

Levin “always comes back to principles,” says GSB associate dean of external relations Derrick Bolton, MA ’98, MBA ’98. “He’s always thought about it in advance, or if he hasn’t thought about it in advance, his real-time thinking is so sharp and precise that it seems like he has. You couldn’t imagine a better spokesperson for higher education than Jon. He just deeply believes in universities.”

Of course, Bolton allows, Levin grew up as the eldest son of two Yale faculty members: Rick, the economist turned dean turned university president, and his Stanford classmate Jane (Aries) Levin, ’68, a literature scholar who led Yale’s Directed Studies frosh humanities program. “I think people focus too much on Rick, by the way, and not enough on Jane,” Bolton says. “The stories Jon’s told me about growing up—when people came over to their house for dinner, Jane made every person who was there the center of attention. And those are lessons that I see in Jon. He’s a hundred percent Mom and a hundred percent Dad.”

**Good Natured**

On the morning of April 4, Bolton was wrapping up a call with his team. “At 9:58 I said, ‘I’m going to give you a heads-up on something that’s coming in two minutes. Stanford has selected its new president, and that president is Jon Levin.’ And I couldn’t get through anything beyond that.” Bolton wipes his eyes at the memory. “I had been hoping that he would be selected,” he says. “But the level of emotion still surprised me because it renews your faith in an institution. It felt like Stanford was reasserting its place in the world. We are fundamentally this optimistic place, this forward-looking place. We are still a place about scholarship and our impact in the world. We are still a place of community and relationships.”

He wasn’t the only GSB senior administrator experiencing mixed emotions. “I feel like I responded a little bit like a toddler who doesn’t know how to manage her feelings,” says assistant dean for academic administration Charlotte Toksvig. “He’s going to be an amazing, amazing leader for all of us. He is modeling the behavior we want to see across campus for all the members of the community. And we’re going to miss him terribly at the GSB.”

Levin’s first foray into academic leadership...
was to chair the department of economics, which he did from 2011 to 2014. “It was not a natural step to go into leadership,” he says. He was an award-winning teacher who enjoyed being in the classroom; he had stellar colleagues and graduate students; his research agenda was going well. That left just one other consideration: opportunities were knocking. “Amy and I had actually thought about leaving Stanford, but we basically had decided, OK, we love it here, we’re going to stay,” Levin says. “And I thought, well, if I’m going to stay at Stanford for another 30 years, I want to be part of the best economics department in the world, and so I should invest some time and effort into helping to make that happen.” He became chair, he says, at a “very fortuitous time”: a generation of younger faculty was coming into its own, and the department had “a great run” in hiring, recruiting two future Nobel laureates and four Clark medalists. “It was just a lot of momentum and enthusiasm and I realized I really like helping the other people around me to succeed,” Levin says. “And I really like having this collective effort to have a common goal and to have strategy for getting there and then to have collective successes.”

A couple of years later, then-provost John Etchemendy, PhD ’82, called. Would Levin consider becoming a candidate for the deanship of the Graduate School of Business? This, too, was not a natural step. The department of economics is in the School of Humanities and Sciences. “I had never been in a business school,” says Levin. Being a business school dean “was not an aspiration of mine.” To Etchemendy, he said no. “And then he called me back two weeks later and he said, ‘Have you thought more about it?’ And I said, ‘No.’ And he said, ‘I think you should think more about it.’ Then when I started talking to the GSB faculty, I realized he was right.”

At the GSB, Levin has focused on faculty recruiting—some 40 percent of the faculty has been hired during his tenure—as well as increasing student diversity and financial aid. He has also tried to make the GSB more open to the world, through executive education and global programs, and to the university, with a pilot program that offers undergraduate courses. The school has ignited a Business, Government, and Society initiative that aims to address complex societal issues that affect organizations and leadership: “sustainability, the strength of democracy, geopolitics, the broad societal effects of technology, and then concerns about how well our systems create broad shared prosperity and what is the role of business in ensuring that we have broad societal progress,” he says. In the end, Levin says, what matters most is the strength of the school’s faculty and students. “The strategy for academic institutions is really not complicated,” he says. “You go get the best faculty in the world and the best students in the world and you make sure they have the resources to succeed and the freedom to do it.”

Well, maybe it’s a little complicated, says Paul Oyer, the GSB’s senior associate dean for academic affairs. “Over my time here, faculty have gotten more abstract and technical, and the students have gotten more focused on the practical,” Oyer says. “Part of our job is trying to help people see that there’s a positive side to that tension rather than just a negative side.” Levin, Oyer says, brings to that process “total credibility with the faculty,” because of his academic credentials, and at the same time, “street smarts and ability to sit down and talk to students about what they’re doing.”

Those types of conversations invigorate Levin, says his chief of staff, Michelle Bhatia. “There’s a lot of structure to his calendar, but there’s actually a lot of space for him to walk around, talk to people, learn, interact with faculty. He loves his colleagues, he loves the students. He gets his energy that way,” she says. “He takes his meetings a lot of the time down in GSB Coupa”—the café downstairs.
from his office—“so that he can just be out and talking with people and learning from people.”

In fact, say his GSB colleagues, Levin’s approachability could pose a conundrum as he assumes the presidency. “I think one of the challenges for him as president is going to be how tight his schedule is and how tight access to the president is,” says Bolton. “Because most of my meetings with Jon, we tend to do walk-and-talks. And it’s inevitable that as we’re walking, a student will stop and ask for a selfie, or a student will stop and ask for something. And inevitably Jon takes the time to do it. I think he really loves that.”

**Vantage Point**

These days, Levin doesn’t get up to the Sierras as often as he used to. A new generation of Levins and Robinsons attend Camp Kabeyun together, and Levin says his sons, Ben and Noah, who are entering their senior and sophomore years of high school, respectively, have surpassed him at whitewater kayaking. His daughter, Madeline, a rising senior majoring in English at Yale, is a strong hiker and “a much better reader than I ever was,” Levin says.

On the weekends when he can’t get to the mountains, Levin contents himself with running the Dish (counterclockwise if possible; clockwise if the knees demand the more gradual downhill). “I’ve been doing that run for more than 30 years, and I still get that same feeling,” he says. “When you come up over the top and you look out at the beautiful California hills and look down at the campus, you just envision all of the aspirations and adventures people are having.”

Those people, Robinson points out, are everyone from frosh to faculty. “When we go whitewater kayaking, frequently you’ll have all these people at different experience levels. Some people are completely novice and other people are super expert. But then you help them function together to traverse a river—and rivers take you to places you can’t access by foot; they take you on journeys in this very special way to new places and new experiences.” Similarly, at Stanford, “the whole enterprise needs to go on this journey for excellence in all these different fields,” he says.

“You need everybody to succeed,” Robinson says. “And so how do you work with a group such that everybody has both a safe and amazing experience?” With, he says, a leader who is calm in choppy waters and who likes to see around the bend.

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PREVIOUSLY, IN PARIS: Clockwise from top left: White dives for gold; Ernst and Greta Brandsten prepare for a plunge; officials open the Games; the Olympic Village makes its debut; Stanford rugby players bring drama to the Paris pitch; and Neher sets sail for France with her fellow Stanford Olympic divers.
1924, THE SUMMER OLYMPICS WERE HELD IN PARIS.
They were the first to be broadcast on radio. The number of women competing slightly more than doubled from the 1920 Games—to 135. The first Olympic Village debuted, complete with running water. And, oh yes, Stanford athletes claimed 21 medals (all in men’s events and more than the combined school total up to that point), leaving notable impressions—on the field, in the water, and, well, possibly on the bruised faces of Parisians.

In 2024, the Olympics are again in the City of Light. NBC’s Peacock will livestream more than 5,000 hours of coverage. About 5,250 women will participate. The Olympic and Paralympic Village promises a fitness center and global food options. And Stanford-affiliated athletes will no doubt do what they do: clean up. According to Stanford Athletics, they’ve won 296 Summer medals since the school’s Olympic debut in 1912, mostly for the United States, mostly gold. And since the 1990s, mostly in women’s events. In 2020, athletes with Stanford ties earned 26 medals; just one went to a man.

We don’t yet know how the 2024 Games will turn out, but we can tell you that the 1924 Games lit a rough-and-tumble spark that set off a tradition of Olympic dominance. No matter what, we’ll always have Paris.

—Summer Moore Batte, ’99

A CENTURY AGO, IN PARIS, STANFORD MADE ITS MARK AT THE SUMMER GAMES—WITH MOXIE, MEDALS, AND A LITTLE BIT OF MAYHEM.
EAGER TO KICK OFF THE OLYMPICS IN STYLE, the French all but begged the United States to send a rugby team to Paris in 1924. Against all odds, the Americans had beaten them for gold in the 1920 Games, a humiliating defeat that—four years later—offered the French an enticing upside. A rematch in front of a revenge-hungry home crowd would be the perfect way for the hosts to begin the Games avec fracas.

There was just one hitch. In the four years since the last Summer Olympics, Americans had essentially forgotten rugby existed. A special invitation was in order. “The entire French community is awaiting your response, which, if negative, will result in deep disappointment and sadness,” the French Olympic Committee wrote to its American counterpart in September 1923. The Gallic guilt trip worked. Newspapers were soon spreading word that tryouts for a U.S. rugby team would begin that December.

By the time the 22 U.S. team members—including nine current and former Stanford players—docked at Boulogne-sur-Mer on April 28, the warmth of the invitation was nowhere to be found. The French Olympic Committee failed to appear at the port upon the arrival of the Americans, the first U.S. contingent to have reached France. Authorities seized their luggage and denied them entry. The athletes, seasick from the rough voyage, reacted as if they were already facing their opponent. “They said we couldn’t get off the boat, we didn’t have any visas,” Norman Cleaveland, Class of 1923, one of the team’s (speedy) backs, recalled seven decades later. “So we said, ‘That’s what you think.’ We charged through the gendarmes and through the barriers.” The U.S. consul eventually untangled the mess, but the “Battle of Boulogne” was just the beginning. The Americans’ quest for rugby gold in 1924 would go down as one of the most controversial in Olympic history. The result, in the words of rugby historian Tony Collins, was “arguably the biggest shock ever in world rugby.”

The Pitch
It is somewhat misleading to talk about the American team representing the United States. There was really only one state involved. Even the team’s coach referred to them as the “California rugby team.” And no entity was more central to California’s unique relationship with rugby than Stanford. In 1906, Stanford and Cal had imported the “English game” to California after a nationwide spike in deaths had made football seem untenable. While a violent sport itself, rugby had rules, such as a ban on blocking, that avoided early 20th-century football’s mauling mass plays, the culprits behind much of the carnage. Schools across the state, from Santa Clara College to the University of Southern California, soon joined the scrum.

USC would return to football in 1914, Cal a year later, but Stanford students voted in 1916 to stick to rugby. Then, in the fall of 1918, World War I put the university largely under control of the U.S. Army, which considered football a better outlet for future fighting men. In 1918, orders were issued to revert to the gridiron, a decision that would prove permanent even as civilian rule of campus returned. The U.S. team that went to the 1920 Olympics—nearly half from the Farm—was essentially the California rugby experiment’s last hurrah. Even their surprising gold medal in Antwerp stirred little new interest in the sport, least of all at Stanford, where a new 60,000-seat football stadium soon testified to the changed order. “Rugby passed away almost unnoticed last quarter,” an article in the Stanford Daily from January 1923 noted. “The sport that for 1906 until 1918 held undisputed sway during each fall quarter on the Stanford campus . . . had but a few mourners at its funeral. This is the first year since the rugby game was taken up in 1906 that the old English sport has not been played on the Farm.”

With no new collegiate rugby stars, the 1924 U.S. team was drawn from a ragtag collection of relics—who had hardly touched a rugby ball since the last Olympics—and rookies recruited from football. Their obvious shortcomings likely helped explain the French appetite to play them. “France
was very insistent that the title-holder enter a team so that she might be given the opportunity to remove the laurel wreath from the crown of her dear brothers from the USA,” wrote Dudley DeGroot, Class of 1924, MA ’29, PhD ’41, a hulking former captain of the Stanford football team, who was new to rugby. Cleaveland was blunter: “They were looking for a punching bag.” The Californians intended to punch back. They practiced through the spring, then embarked to England for a series of warm-up matches. They lost two of three games but kept the scores respectable. One of the English players suffered a broken leg in the third game, evidence of the fact the Americans could compensate with force for what they lacked in skill.

For several reasons—including that Wales, England, and Scotland had a long history of competing as separate teams, and that English rugby leaders generally saw the Olympics as the wrong venue for the game—Britain did not send a rugby team to Paris. In allegiance, neither did Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, the southern powers associated with the British Empire. In fact, besides the United States and France, the only rugby team in Paris in 1924 was Romania, whose lack of experience all but assured a gold medal rematch between the Americans and the French.

Goals

Winning still seemed a long shot. The French were in their own backyard, fielding players honed against Europe’s best. The U.S. athletes were 5,600 miles from home, and they were beset by a sense of being unwanted. “Many times we were treated with open hostility,” the U.S. team manager wrote to American officials, claiming the French used their control of local fields to stop the Americans from scrimmaging. There were reports of U.S. players being spit at on the street. And when they hopped a fence topped with barbed wire to finally get in a practice at the main stadium, their locker room was cleaned out by thieves. During the U.S. rout of Romania, the French crowd booed the Americans with a vehemence that stunned the players, not least because only six years had passed since U.S. troops had helped the French win World War I. “Why they harboured such an open hatred for a nation who had done so much for them will never be understood by the members of the American rugby team,” DeGroot wrote.

The French grievances were layered. The U.S. team’s reaction at the port had gone over badly, and their manager had publicly battled over everything from filming rights to who’d referee the game. Plus, the U.S. intervention in the war and subsequent peace wasn’t cause for universal hosannas. “The Americans were not regarded as heroes for bringing France her liberty,” author Mark Ryan writes in his 2009 book, For the Glory: Two Olympics, Two Wars, Two Heroes, a deeply sourced account of the 1924 U.S. team. “They were a reminder of recent French weakness.” But a major antagonism was the style of American rugby itself—more football-like violence, less rugby-like skill. “As for the method employed, it is that of the pugilist,” the French newspaper Le Petit Journal wrote, “always that of the pugilist.”

That resentment reached fever pitch in the final after two French players, including the team’s star, fell to injury and the Americans surged into the lead. Soon 40,000 spectators weren’t only shrieking and
It wasn’t the only way Neher stood apart from the larger group. The modern Olympics had begun in 1896 as an all-male endeavor. And though women had joined in 1900, progress had been minimal. In the summer of 1924, women made up just 4 percent of all Olympians, their participation limited to fencing, tennis, and swimming and diving. Aboard the America, the gender split was slightly less severe, but Neher was still part of a rarefied group, one of only 25 women among some 300 men. Viewed from a modern Stanford perspective, however, she was something even more special. At a university that has come to be synonymous with female Olympic excellence—in the 2020 Games, Stanford-affiliated women won 25 medals, more than most countries—Neher, an alternate in the high dive in 1924 and a competitor in 1928, represents the beginning of Stanford’s female Olympic tradition.

Her introduction to aquatics had nothing to do with competition. When Neher was around 10, her father—a “dog paddler,” by Neher’s account—and a friend were caught in a rip current and pulled out past the pier in Long Beach, Calif., not far from her Los Angeles home. Her dad was rescued, but the other man drowned. “My father decided at that point that I should learn how to swim and learn how to swim well,” she said. By the time she was 13, a local “college of swimming” was hyping her prowess in a newspaper ad as the “Girl Fish” who would “eat, write, sing, sew and sleep under water and swim with hands and feet tied.” A woman noticed her doing laps and invited her to try out for the elite Los Angeles Athletic Club.

Perhaps she wasn’t quite fast enough or her petite stature—she was 5 feet tall—simply seemed suited for diving, but her coach suggested she try the springboard. She took to the new sport immediately, finishing second at junior nationals the summer after her high
school graduation. But it was at Stanford where she blossomed under the husband-and-wife coaching team of Ernst and Greta Brandsten, both former Swedish Olympians. “They were really gung-ho on having a woman who would be a diver,” Neher later recalled. No matter the time of year or the conditions, one of them would meet her in the morning at the women’s swimming pool. “I can see myself going out on that springboard,” Neher said in a draft of a speech, “and there would be a layer of frost on it.” Other times she’d dive over a sand pit, her coaches pulling tight a rope belted to her waist before she ate dirt. “It saved time,” she said. “Within a few seconds I could be right back on the board.”

Eventually, the Brandstens took her to Searsville Lake, where the couple had constructed 16- and 32-foot-tall high diving towers, the latter more than three times as high as the springboard. High diving was a tough sport. It wasn’t uncommon for divers to lose teeth bottoming out in shallow pools. At Searsville, Neher would climb a three-story ladder with missing rungs. The platforms would sway in the wind, and natural fluctuation in the lake’s water level meant Neher was never sure exactly how far she was diving. Without a car, she sometimes walked the five miles each way to the lake and back. But she loved it. “Right from the start I knew that high diving was my thing,” she said. “I used the platform better than the springboard.” With the Brandstens’ encouragement, she tried out for the Olympics. Her sorority, Delta Delta Delta, provided the money for the three-night train journey to the New York trials. Eight days later, she was on the America, setting off for France.

The logistical challenges hardly stopped at the Paris docks. Swimmers and divers were lodged on the far side of the city from the pool and spent several hours each day commuting on buses. Practice sessions turned into a Tower of Babel as divers from different nations struggled to communicate. And organizers had built the diving platforms facing the width of the pool, not the length, creating a nightmarish situation where divers couldn’t see the water as they ran up to certain dives off the top platform. “All we could see were the cement seats on the other side of the pool,” Neher said. “Psychologically, it was terrifying.”

As an alternate, Neher wasn’t called on to compete in Paris, though in 1928, she went to Amsterdam with a roster spot. (She was joined by high jumper Marion Holley [later Hofman], Class of 1930, in the first Olympics

'TAKING FLIGHT: Neher, the first female Stanford athlete to travel to the Olympics, spent more than a week aboard the America with her male Stanford counterparts (above) after countless training dives in the Stanford pool (right) and at Searsville Lake.
that included track events for women.) But the Dutch diving platforms weren’t completed in time, and the result was a return to the 1924 site. “Darling as [the Dutch] were, they sent us by train to Paris, back to that pool where we had to go through that again,” she said. Neher said she always thought that if she’d medaled, it would have been the most important day of her life. That was not to be. Her most lasting Olympic memory was the emotion of the 1924 opening ceremonies in Paris, walking into the stadium. “We came out of that darkness, that tunnel, into the light of day,” she said. “Well, the whole place, I couldn’t believe it, it just came alive. Coming out into the bright light and having everybody stand up, and people were standing and cheering and shouting and waving flags, and the tears rolled down our faces.”

Neher, who would go on to become a teacher and a school administrator, and who died in 2001 at age 95, wasn’t successful in her bid for a third Olympics. But she did return to the Games—in Los Angeles in 1984, when she served as an ambassador on the Spirit Team, made up of former Olympians. Before the opening ceremonies, she’d been concerned about how Americans would greet the country’s geopolitical rivals. But as in Paris, the event surpassed her expectations. “I’ll never forget when they had that parade of nations and those athletes from China marched in, it just seemed to me as though 90,000 people must have stood up at one time,” she said. “And I thought, ‘That’s it. Our audience understood what the Olympic Games really mean.’”

Much has changed in the century since Neher watched those 300 men and 24 women train on a steamer bound for Paris, not least this: These Olympics mark the first Games in which men and women will compete in equal numbers.

AT THE 1924 GAMES, Stanford-trained divers swept the men’s springboard and “fancy” platform diving events—gold, silver, and bronze times two. A Farm feat, to be sure, but also an accomplishment that remains unmatched a century later and is credited largely to one man: Stanford and U.S. Olympic diving coach Ernst Brandsten. “Diving was nothing in this country before he got here,” says Bruce Wigo, the historian at the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

Brandsten, who coached diving—and swimming, and water polo—at Stanford from 1916 to 1947, launched an era of American diving domination, reshaping the sport with innovative teaching methods and contributions to equipment improvements. The 1924 men’s sweep included Al White, Class of 1924, who became the first diver to take gold in both the 10-meter “fancy” platform (soon merged with “plain” into a single platform event) and springboard diving events—a feat matched in 1928 by Pete Desjardins, ’32. The United States had arrived.

Born in 1883, Brandsten grew up in Sweden, the birthplace of modern diving. German and Swedish gymnasts had recently begun training over water to secure softer, safer landings when they practiced jumps, flips, and twists. Brandsten graduated from the Stockholm School for Swimming in 1902 and embarked on a young adulthood that reads like a madcap adventure—travel through the United States, work on fishing vessels, a mapping expedition for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. In 1910, he and a friend launched “Vikings from Sweden” in the Bay Area, a diving show that capitalized on a craze for daredevil stunts.

Brandsten won no medals competing for Sweden at the 1912 Olympics but two weeks later claimed the country’s national diving title. He became Stanford’s aquatics coach in 1916 and began building a powerhouse with

‘ERNIE’S BOYS’

NINE GOLD MEDALS

Diving

1920: Clarence Pinkston, Class of 1921, platform
1924: Albert White, Class of 1924, platform, springboard
1928: Pete Desjardins, Class of 1932, platform, springboard

Swimming

1920: Norman Ross, Class of 1916, 400 freestyle, 800 freestyle, 1,500 freestyle
1924: Wally O’Connor, Class of 1927, 800 freestyle relay
his wife, Greta Johansson Brandsten, Swedish gold medalist in the first women's Olympic diving event, in 1912, and, starting in 1916, director of the newly built Roble women's pool. The couple also built and operated a recreation area at Searsville Lake, complete with beaches, boats, picnic facilities, and, naturally, high-dive platforms.

As Brandsten pushed diving to become increasingly acrobatic, Stanford divers were subjected to his revolutionary training techniques. They walked tightropes to improve their balance. And to pack more dives into shorter practice periods—Brandsten believed that becoming a champion diver required 80 practice dives a day for six years—they dove off a board into a sandpit, for dry-land training.

Brandsten's influence extended to diving boards themselves. At the 1924 Paris Olympiad's Les Tournelles swim stadium, controversy swirled around possible dark-of-night tampering with the springboard's fulcrum point to benefit specific divers. After the Games, Brandsten, with fellow coach Fred Cady (who led USC's diving team for 33 years), sought to prevent future such controversy by designing an adjustable fulcrum that readily adapted a springboard to each diver's preference. Brandsten also developed laminated springboards with a Douglas fir core, which increased bounce height, giving athletes more time in the air to perform intricate dives. His patented design was the basis of more than half of America's springboards until the 1950s, when it yielded to the newfangled aluminum boards that remain the standard today.

In Paris, Brandsten's divers dazzled. The U.S. team included nine men and one woman (Neher, an alternate) from Stanford. The Stanford men “far outclassed all other divers in the Olympics,” claimed the Stanford Daily, “just as America far outclassed all other countries in the entire swimming meet.” Of 15 diving medals awarded that year, Brandsten's team nabbed 11; Australia, Sweden, and Great Britain scrabbled for the remaining four. Over the four Olympics in which Brandsten served as coach—1924, 1928, 1932, and 1936—his American charges vacuumed up 42 of 51 men's and women's diving medals. His Stanford athletes—divers and swimmers—earned nine Olympic gold medals, and his divers won 25 Amateur Athletic Union national championships.

Brandsten, the so-called father of diving in the United States, coached on the Farm for 31 years, a Stanford aquatics tenure only surpassed in 2010, by former men's swim coach Skip Kenney.
Career Wins **1,216**
National Championships **3**
Final Fours **14**
Tara VanDerveer? *Priceless*

**THE LEGEND**

By Sam Scott

FOR THE RECORD: VanDerveer in January after her 1,203rd career victory, which made her the winningest coach in college basketball history.
They weren’t alone. VanDerveer’s friends—and father—didn’t think she should look twice at Stanford. But VanDerveer’s entire relationship with basketball was born in defiance of expectations. She’d grown up in a time and place where girls were hardly supposed to play a sport, let alone make it their livelihood. After turning down Stanford athletic director Andy Geiger, VanDerveer reconsidered. Stanford promised better weather, excellence in education, and, comically in retrospect, a more relaxed pace, where she might find time for skiing, sailing, and enjoying the arts. And most important, as Geiger had made clear, Stanford was one of only a handful of schools to make a full financial commitment to women’s athletics. When VanDerveer accepted, her father—an often a prescient man—told her mother their daughter would be unemployed and living with them in three months. It was a graveyard job, he said.

Hardly. When VanDerveer retired this spring as the winningest coach in college basketball history, she thanked her parents for their love and support but served it with a gentle rib. “My father was right about one thing,” she said. “The Stanford job involved digging, but instead of a graveyard job, it has been a gold mine job.” VanDerveer’s résumé gleams with the results. She leaves coaching with 1,216 career wins, three national championships, 14 Final Fours, and a near-perennial spot atop the Pac-12. And most important, as Geiger had made clear, Stanford was one of only a handful of schools to make a full financial commitment to women’s athletics. When VanDerveer accepted, her father—an often a prescient man—told her mother their daughter would be unemployed and living with them in three months. It was a graveyard job, he said.

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“She was that visionary in the same way that others in Silicon Valley, in the tech world, were,” says Sonja Henning, ’91, one of 34 Stanford alums to play in the WNBA. “She figured out how she could have the influence necessary to give us an opportunity to reach our potential when others in the room thought we should just be happy we were there.”
The Buildup

Her debut year at Stanford didn’t suggest the glory at hand. VanDerveer’s first season on the Farm stands as the only losing campaign in her 46-year career. But the team was already changing, says Sorenson, who thrived on the intensity that infused everything from defensive drills to their home summer workouts. One early “Tara-ism” was: “Mental is to physical as four is to one.” (Her players are reportedly compiling a book of such bons mots.) At one point, VanDerveer had players write out goals, and Sorenson’s was to get to a .500 winning percentage. VanDerveer was in disbelief. “She was like, ‘Wait, what? Your goal is to be .500?’” Sorenson says. “We are here to win a national championship.” The team had been 9–19 the previous season.

It would happen in stunningly quick fashion. VanDerveer’s first recruiting class brought a pair of future Olympians to campus: Jennifer Azzi, ’90, the program’s first All-American, and Katy Steding, ’90, now a Stanford assistant coach, who pushed the team to the .500 threshold in their first year, 1986–87. The following season brought the three-point shot to college ball, and VanDerveer embraced it—Stanford attempted double the number of three-point shots compared with the national average. (Another Tara-ism: “Do the math. Three is worth more than two.”) By the fall of 1989, VanDerveer believed she had her players on the cusp. She invited Stanford women’s swimming coach Richard Quick to help push them over. Quick’s teams at UT–Austin and Stanford had won six straight NCAA titles, and, as Henning recalls, he told the players to stop thinking, Oh, wouldn’t it be nice to win a national championship, and start getting comfortable with being national champions. “The next day we came in and there’s a sign in the locker room that says, ‘Get comfortable with it. 1990 National Champions,’” she says. In April 1990, the team won Stanford’s first NCAA championship in women’s basketball. Two years later, they won again.

Success brought VanDerveer the Olympics gig. Typically, the coach would spend six weeks or so bringing the U.S. team together. But third-place finishes at the 1994 World Championships, 1992 Olympics, and 1991 Pan American Games had set alarms ringing. More was needed. VanDerveer had to step away from Stanford for a year to lead a dozen players against teams across the world in full-time preparation for the 1996 Atlanta Games. The team had the financial and marketing backing of the NBA, which was contemplating a women’s league and considered gold the only acceptable medal outcome. “The only person who can mess this up,” NBA commissioner David Stern told VanDerveer over lunch one day, “is you.” VanDerveer wore only red, white, and blue down to her socks for the entire year. The team went 52–0 before the Olympics and 8–0 during them, dispatching Brazil by 24 points to win gold. VanDerveer was the only female head coach in sight. “What followed that historic moment changed the game forever,” reads VanDerveer’s entry in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, “as the seeds for professional basketball for women began to take root.” Within the year, two U.S. professional women’s leagues would launch: the short-lived American Basketball League, which featured Azzi and Steding among its headliners, and the WNBA.

But VanDerveer knows as well as anyone how thin the line is between glory and heartbreak. Back on the Farm, she had more than a dozen teams she says were as good or better than her championship sides. She often talks about the stacked 1997 team that fell by one point in overtime to Old Dominion in the Final Four—“the hardest loss ever”—and her admiration for point guard Jamila Wideman, ’97, who rallied her tearful teammates afterward by saying, “I’d rather lose with you than win with anyone else.” It would be more than a decade before four-time All-American Candice Wiggins, ’08, would lead the Cardinal back to the Final Four in 2008, the beginning of a run of six Final Fours (including two championship games) in seven years. And yet the program’s third title remained out of reach, the breaks sometimes literally not going Stanford’s way. Another of VanDerveer’s oft-remembered moments is star center Jayne Appel, ’10, not wanting to take off her uniform after losing, in her final game, to Connecticut in the 2010 Finals. She had played with a sprained ankle and broken foot.

It would take 29 years from VanDerveer’s second title to her third in 2021, the culmination of a nomadic year bobbing, weaving, and testing through the pandemic. For nearly 10 weeks, her players lived out of duffel bags, played on the road, and practiced in a high school gym in Santa Cruz, which allowed contact sports. The final game against Arizona came down to a desperation heave by the Wildcats that seemed to hang in the air, a long season boiled down to a long second. It bounded off the back of the rim. Stanford 54–Arizona 53. VanDerveer’s reaction at the buzzer was occluded by a black mask, but her joy was on full display the next day as hundreds lined the streets at an outdoor campus parade to honor the team.
**Love and Basketball**

This January, VanDerveer surpassed Duke’s Mike Krzyzewski as the winningest coach in college basketball history. Thousands of fans and dozens of former players watched as confetti rained down on VanDerveer, who donned a custom jacket far more ornamented than her preferred quarter-zips. The Nike-designed piece was covered from front to back with 1,203 tally marks, one for each win. Afterward, she opened up about what it had meant to coach a sport she had barely been able to play growing up. “I’m so jealous because I never got to do what they get to do,” she said, “but I’m able to watch a little girl’s dream play out through them.”

VanDerveer fell in love with basketball doing the three-player weave in elementary school gym class in upstate New York. But for her early life, playing opportunities for girls were scant. If she saved her money and bought the best ball, she realized, she could get into boys’ pickup games. Often, though, she was left to shoot hoops in her neighbors’ driveways by herself. In junior high, she volunteered as school mascot to get close to the boys’ games but had a habit of keeping the huge bear head tucked under her arm to get a better view. (“It’s the only job from which I ever got fired,” she says.) Her gym teacher wrote, “To the best basketball player, boy or girl, in the school” in her ninth-grade yearbook, but such praise was almost cruel without a way for VanDerveer to apply her skill. It was only when her parents sent her to private school midway through high school that she got to consistently play organized ball.

She played her first year of college hoops at SUNY Albany, then transferred to Indiana. Before every practice, she sat silent, high in the stands, watching Indiana men’s coach Bobby Knight put his team through its paces, beginning and ending each practice with the sort of repeated patterns she would later adopt at Stanford. (“At the end of practice, we always had to make 12 free throws in a row,” says Nneka Ogwumike, ’12, a WNBA star with the Seattle Storm. “And if you didn’t, you had to run. It was just a way of life.”) In 1973, with VanDerveer the starting point guard, the Indiana women made it to nationals in Flushing, N.Y. When Indiana lost to finish fourth, VanDerveer’s mother—who had never before seen her daughter play college ball—tried to console her, saying it was only a game. “Mother,” VanDerveer replied. “It’s more than a game.”

The limits of VanDerveer’s time on the court had been made clear when she was one of 60 women to try out for the U.S. national team in 1972. “Fifty-nine were better than I was,” she later wrote. “I think I put people on the national team just by guarding them.” After Indiana, VanDerveer intended to take a year off to travel the country and then go to law school. But she
was broke and back in her parents’ basement by Christmas. Her dad spurred her into action. Her sister Marie’s newly formed high school team had just been shellacked 11–99, and he made her help. A new path emerged. She enrolled in a master’s program in sports administration at Ohio State and got a grad assistant position with the women’s basketball team, living off food stamps and driving a rusted-out Volkswagen.

“She’s representative of a self-made American woman who never really got a hand up from anyone,” says Sally Jenkins, ’82, a Washington Post sports columnist. “She came out of an era when it was denigrated to be a female athlete and it was denigrated to be a female coach, and you certainly didn’t go into the profession thinking you were ever going to get rich at it.”

By the late ’70s, Title IX, the federal law mandating equal educational opportunities for men and women, including in sports, started to slow the headwind. In 1978, VanDerveer took over as head coach at the University of Idaho. The team had been 2–18 the year before her arrival. They would be 26–5 after her second season. Early in her Idaho tenure, the local newspaper wrote a preseason profile on the men’s team.

VanDerveer called to ask for equal space for the women. At one game, a radio guy warned her that the men’s game started right after theirs. If the score was tied after regulation, they’d need to settle things in sudden death rather than by playing a full overtime period. “And I said, ‘If anyone comes on the court, there will be sudden death,’” VanDerveer told ESPN in 2021. “But I will be killing them.”

In 2021, she was one of the fiercest voices when news spread that players at the men’s NCAA tournament had amenities far superior to the women’s, including better food, training facilities, and COVID testing. “Women athletes and coaches are done waiting, not just for upgrades of a weight room but for equity in every facet of life,” she said in a blistering statement that pushed the NCAA into an investigation of itself. Such advocacy is part of why her stature extends well beyond the court.

In 2022, after chemistry professor Carolyn Bertozzi won the Nobel Prize, she was introduced at a Stanford football game, as is tradition. But as the Farm’s first female Nobel laureate, Bertozzi wanted to do something at women’s events, which is how she arrived in VanDerveer’s locker room during a game versus Arizona State. A lifelong basketball fan, Bertozzi admired VanDerveer’s coaching but also saw her as a champion for overcoming the kind of sexism that she had faced as a young scientist unable to get a job in an organic chemistry lab. “When you went into chemistry labs, it was all guys,” Bertozzi says. “It was very much like a locker room.” Meeting VanDerveer, she says, ranks as one of the biggest perks of winning the Nobel.

“I was nervous,” she says. “She’s a hero.”

### Strategy First

VanDerveer is not the cuddliest personality, nor the most extroverted presence, nor even the most astute talent scout, but she has surrounded herself with coaches who fill those gaps. “Be sure they complement you more than compliment you,” she told the New York Times earlier this year. Perhaps her most distinguished role within the coaching ranks has been that of the professor, says Smith, the journalist writing a book about her. VanDerveer is a master tactician, strategist, and educator, as aware of her opponent’s strengths and weaknesses as her own. “Some folks will say, ‘Look, we’re going to match our best stuff with their best stuff, and let’s see if we win,’” Smith says. “And Tara is like, ‘You’re not going to have your best stuff. I’m taking your best player out of the game.’” Trisha Stevens Lamb, ’91, a star on the 1990 championship team, remembers VanDerveer liking another team’s in-bounds play so much, she drew it up at halftime and started using it during the same game. The late Pat Summitt, the longtime coach of the University of Tennessee and the winningest coach in college basketball when she retired in 2012, used to relish her annual battles with VanDerveer. “Pat said the same thing to me every year: ‘Tara’s going to absolutely pick us apart,’” says Jenkins, who co-authored three books with Summitt. “Pat loved playing that game because it was such a great diagnostic. She knew Tara was going to expose every weakness.”

VanDerveer’s savvy isn’t just her own grasp of Xs and Os, says former Stanford star Vanessa Nygaard, ’97, who was recently head coach of WNBA team Phoenix Mercury. It’s that she can share that vision with young players in ways they can quickly understand and act on as a unit. “One of the things that makes her great is her ability, her complete understanding, that allows her to explain things simply,” Nygaard says. “That is so hard to do as a coach or really in any job. Even when I was with Phoenix, I was calling her: ‘Hey, what do you think I should do in this situation?’”

She never lost her edge. Stanford won the Pac-12 regular season in 2024 for the 26th time under VanDerveer’s leadership, a testament to her willingness to adapt, evolve, and rethink as old advantages faded, new strategies emerged, or the type of players she had at her
disposal simply shifted. The child of two educators, VanDerveer is a lifelong learner. For years, it was common to hear her playing piano in hotel lobbies, a later-in-life hobby she pursued with gusto. That ability to embrace the new was crucial to success in a program in which she couldn’t always get the players needed for a certain system of play. With Stanford’s admission standards, VanDerveer arguably drew from the smallest pool of recruits in the country. Still, she remained the yardstick for comparison. “For everyone in our conference, it’s ‘Tara, Tara, Tara,’” says Charmin Smith, ’97, MS ’00, another of VanDerveer’s former players and the head coach at UC Berkeley. “You’ve got to game-plan like Tara. You’ve got to scout like Tara. You’ve got to defend like Tara.”

It was a history of achievement built on lots of effort. Back in the ’80s and ’90s, Stanford players called their coach Video VanDerveer, or simply TV, for her appetite for breaking down game film. One of the reasons VanDerveer stopped playing the piano is that the digital age has produced a never-ending stream of clips to watch. “It’s actually not the case that people can sort of float above the details and be great leaders,” says Condoleezza Rice, director of the Hoover Institution, former Secretary of State, and a longtime VanDerveer friend and fan. “She is hyper prepared. I always said about Tara something that I like to think about myself, which is she has higher expectations of herself than anybody could ever have of her.”

Transition Time

VanDerveer had contemplated retirement many times before. Once, a decade or so ago, the late John Arrillaga Sr., ’60, one of her great supporters, persuaded her to take the summer off after hearing her detail how exhausted she was. The job is 24/7, and though she still has the energy for the 7, the 24 was getting increasingly draining. While she is enthusiastic about Stanford’s new home in the Atlantic Coast Conference—“the All-Coast Conference,” she jokes—she is concerned about other changes sweeping the sport, including the consequences of the combination of money to players and unrestricted transferring. For nearly two decades, she’s had Kate Paye, ’95, JD/MBA ’03, on her bench. “She’s a brilliant coach,” VanDerveer says. And as the last season progressed, she told Paye she was thinking about stepping back. “When the season was over, I took a week to just really reflect,” VanDerveer says. “More than anything, I asked the question, ‘Do you have the energy with what is going on right now to be the best coach for Stanford?’” she says. “And I couldn’t honestly say to myself that Kate wouldn’t do a better job.” As the eldest of five siblings, VanDerveer is also in the best position to take care of her 97-year-old mother, Rita. “I just feel like I want to be available for my mom.”

She has offers to do books, podcasts, and even a movie. “If I were to start with anything, it would be writing children’s books about basketball,” she says. When VanDerveer was in ninth grade, the school librarian contacted her dad to tell him, as a matter of concern more than accolade, that his daughter had read every book in the library on basketball. None of them, VanDerveer recalls, had girls in them. Thanks in large measure to her, there’s a new narrative.

Sam Scott is a senior writer at Stanford. Email him at sscott3@stanford.edu.
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**Review**

**Going Up?**

*IF SILICON VALLEY PRIDES ITSELF on its secret sauce, then *Think Remarkable: 9 Paths to Transform Your Life and Make a Difference* is author Guy Kawasaki's invitation to a meal at the chef's table. In this slim volume, the software evangelist and entrepreneur shares the nine key “ingredients”—including embracing the art of storytelling and leading with integrity—that he promises will help his readers be(come) remarkable.*

As a product manager turned permaculture practitioner who recently and unknowingly practiced Kawasaki's advice to "change horses"—as in, totally shift my career—I'm ready for the recipe.

Kawasaki, '76, encourages lifelong learning, experimentation with new ideas, and reading “before, during, and after formal education.” He champions the idea of a growth mindset and recommends planting many seeds, literally and metaphorically, because “most will not sprout.”

For someone so successful—Kawasaki is the veritable father of secular evangelism, an early Apple employee, and a serial entrepreneur—he comes across as a refreshingly humble human. Being remarkable, he says, means making the world a better place, which is not equivalent to amassing money.

*Think Remarkable* is full of directive guidance, but it doesn’t read like a conduct manual. Anecdotes, research insights, and practical strategies come together in a seamless and well-organized flow that underscores his point about the power of pairing stories with facts. There’s the story of Andrea Lytle Peet, who, after learning that she had ALS, challenged herself to run 50 marathons, and of the “pivotal moment” that changed Kawasaki's perspective after a woman mistook him for a landscaper in his own front yard. In both stories—and dozens more—he urges readers to maintain grit and grace in their journey toward remarkableness.

The book is replete with valuable tips, but some of Kawasaki’s anecdotes feel less universal than others, and his penchant for the Santa Cruz surf scene features in just about every chapter. Look for the wisdom amid the paddling and ocean-watching metaphors, and you’ll soon welcome Kawasaki’s tow-in to the big waves of being remarkable. Now that’s the juice! ■

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“You can always use technology to retrieve facts. Critical thinking is harder.”

—Guy Kawasaki, ’76, and Madisun Nuismer in *Think Remarkable: 9 Paths to Transform Your Life and Make a Difference*, Wiley
WE RECOMMEND

Contemplation

Other People’s Words: Friendship, Loss, and the Conversations That Never End
Lissa Soep, MA ’95, PhD ’00; Spiegel & Grau. Written or spoken, the voices of our loved ones remain with and sustain us in a sort of afterlife of their own.

Mind Magic: The Neuroscience of Manifestation and How It Changes Everything
James R. Doty, founder/director, CCARE, and adjunct professor of medicine; AVERY. No more wishful thinking—science-backed steps aim to help you transform intentions into reality.

Open: Living with an Expansive Mind in a Distracted World
Nate Klemp, ’01, MA ’02; Sounds True. Remember your pre-device attention span? You can reclaim your focus—and marvel at what you’ve been missing.

Table for Two: Fictions
Amor Towles, MA ’89; Viking. Fate plays a recurring role in these seven stories by a novelist known for the resonance of his work.

Still: The Art of Noticing
Mary Jo Hoffman, MS ’89; Phaidon. Rest your eyes—this display-worthy tome is a former aerospace engineer’s photographic paean to the beauty of nature’s found objects.

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Mary Jo Hoffman, MS ’89; Phaidon. Rest your eyes—this display-worthy tome is a former aerospace engineer’s photographic paean to the beauty of nature’s found objects.
Boss Lady
By Alli Frank, MAT ’99 and Asha Youmans
Set in Palo Alto, Stanford and SFO a riotously funny, emotionally real novel about a mess of a heroine who is desperate to resolve her past so she can finally rediscover who she was always meant to be. For more information visit www.alliandasha.com.

Leadership 911: How The Best Transformation Leaders Survive & Thrive
By Fletcher McCombie, MS ’09
Seventy percent of business transformations fail. The odds are your next transformation will fail too. This book is for transformation leaders that want to outperform despite our stressed-out, meeting-packed, break-neck speed-of-change businesses. No hacks. No biases. Just transformation expertise backed by science and proven by business leaders. leadership911book.com

STILL: The Art of Noticing
By Mary Jo Hoffman, MS Aeronautics and Astronautics ’89
Every day for over a decade, Mary Jo Hoffman has made a photo of found nature. For Hoffman, a former aeronautical engineer, this daily ritual cracked open profound revelations about connectedness, placeness, and life. Her new book is the astonishing culmination of the STILL project, with 275 breathtaking photos from her enormous archive accompanied by her perceptive and oft-times humorous essays.

At Home: A Client’s Appreciation for Authentic Architecture
By Deborah Lencioni Lapp, BA ’81
Deborah Lapp, (Debbie Clark ’81), articulates how organic architecture has impacted her physically, emotionally, and even spiritually. A retired English professor, Lapp encourages architects to educate their clients, students, and builders to appreciate architecture, design, and a life that is authentic, nourishing, and inspiring. Practical wisdom and more than 100 photos. www.DeborahLappWords.com

The Next Half Century
By Alan Nevin, MA ’61
This highly informative book offers a thought provoking view of what is in store for the world in the next 50 years focusing on the massive changes in population, lifestyle, education and employment patterns across the globe. The narrative is accompanied by dozens of full color exhibits. Nevin makes a powerful case for the advancement of third world into second world countries.

Farm Foundation: An Illustrated History of Stanford Football
By John Platz, BA ’84, J.D. ’89, M.B.A. ’89
A 420-page, coffee-table-sized history of the Stanford Football program, from the 1890s beginnings to the Ernie Nevers/Wow Boys/Wow Boys teams preceding World War II, to the latter 20th century Jim Plunkett/John Elway/Steve Stenstrom elite quarterback period, to the recent Andrew Luck/Christian McCaffrey golden era of New Year’s bowl games and Heisman finalists. Includes more than 160 photos of players and memorable games.

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.

Election Hacks: Zeidman v. Lindell: Exposing the $5 million election myth
By Bob Zeidman, MSEE ’82
A brief description: Was the 2020 election hacked? MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell claims to hold proof of voting machine tampering that threw the votes from Donald Trump to Joe Biden. Stanford alum Bob Zeidman, who invented the field of software forensics, examined the data and found bogus information, manipulated results, and dangerous conspiracy theories. Election Hacks is about standing up for the truth at any cost.
Juris Ex Machina
By John W. Maly, MS '01

In this debut sci-fi novel by John W. Maly, A.I. has replaced judge and juror, and the justice system has become airtight. Yet somehow, a well-intentioned young kleptomaniac named Rainville falls through the cracks and is wrongfully convicted of mass murder. He is exiled to Wychwood Prison, where the dead outnumber the living, and where the inmates are also the guards. He soon becomes a marked man. In this race-against-time, Rainville must escape and save not only himself, but the city that exiled him. Can he do it?

Else B. in the Sea: The Woman Who Painted the Wonders of the Deep
By Jeanne Walker Harvey, '81

This beautifully illustrated children’s picture book biography about a daring artist combines art and science. Else Bostelmann painted what she saw underwater as well as never-before-seen deep-sea bioluminescent creatures discovered during scientist William Beebe’s 1930s Bermuda bathysphere expeditions. Else’s paintings were published in National Geographic magazine for all to experience. (Ages 4-8)

Under Mountain Shadows
By William D. Frank, BA ’74; MA ’75

"By detailing the story of the long friendship between Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas and Kay Kershaw, the gender-defying female "spinster" who operated a famed Cascade Mountains dude ranch, Frank explores two overarching issues that continue to be controversial today: preserving wilderness land to protect marginalized spaces of openness and preserving the right to privacy to protect safe places for personal sexual identity and expression." —Gary L. Atkins, author of Gay Seattle: Stories of Exile and Belonging.

All That Really Matters
By David Weill, Former Director of the Center for Advanced Lung Disease and Lung and Heart-Lung Transplant Program at Stanford

Joe Bosco is an arrogant, hard-charging transplant surgeon whose ambition knows no bounds. After doing his surgical residency, he passes on a job offer from Stanford, taking a position at a private hospital, fraught with moral and ethical transgressions. Joe makes it to the top but soon realizes he needs to save another life ... his own. Download the first chapter for free at DavidWeill.com.

HIDDEN WOMEN: Mines, Temples and Parklands in Celtic Europe
By Jacqueline Widmar Stewart, SLS '76

Gold, secular abbeys and imperial perils all converge in this 6th and final Hidden Women series book as the author tracks her grandparents’ escape from Europe. Both sides of the ocean menaced those fleeing to America at the turn of the 20th century. The treatment of women mirrors societal conditions; do miners’ lives reflect whether justice is open to all? Includes woodcuts from De Re Metallica, translated by Lou Henry Hoover. www.hiddenwomenbooks.com

What Might Have Been
By John C. Kerr, BA ’70

What Might Have Been carefully examines nine of the most fateful decisions made in the 19th and 20th centuries, considers alternatives that were not chosen, and asks the provocative question how the course of history might have been fundamentally altered.

Ward Rounds
By K. Dale Beernink, M.D. ’65

K. Dale Beernink, M.D. tells "part of the story of the hospital ward in the form of a series of verses." Written from the point-of-view of a medical intern, each poem introduces a characterization of a patient with a particular disease. The author’s voice—both analytical and empathetic—intersects directly with the emotional reality of each patient providing a rare look into the rich complexity of doctor-patient relationships. Paperback. Order from: badgerm421@gmail.com

Trailblazer Founders: Breaking through Invisible Boundaries
By Deepti Pahwa, LEAD Executive Education, ’20

Every startup founder dreams of building a Unicorn. With more than 20 years as an innovation coach and founding a Stanford Alumni Startup Accelerator, Deepti offers a roadmap in her award-winning Amazon-bestseller. She emphasizes thought leadership and networks as strategic tools. Featuring stories of diverse founders, she demonstrates that success isn’t bound by gender or ethnicity but by one’s convictions.

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Brothers of the Red Velvet Chapeaux
By Kathryn McLane PhD, ’75
This collective memoir shares the true stories of eight classmates at Union Theological Seminary, who traveled to Asia as missionaries in the 1850s. These young men endured such perils as marauding Kurds and Arabs, severe weather, disease, and persecution by the leaders of other religious sects with the strength they derived from their camaraderie as the brothers of the red velvet chapeaux.

Clearing the Air in Los Angeles:
The Fight Against Smog
By Carl R. Oliver, ’62
Los Angeles was once known as the Smog Capital of the World. Today, the city has changed “air you can see” into “air you can breathe.” While the fight to eliminate pollution in the city continues, modern smog is not the thick, oppressive, silver-blue haze that for sixty years—1943 to 2003—drove people to move out of Los Angeles altogether. Celebrate the key discovery by Professor Arie Haagen-Smit.

The Long White Coat:
Death Can Wait
By C. Robert Pettit, MD, ’63
Slip into The Long White Coat, a spellbinding tale that drops you into a bustling San Francisco Emergency Hospital where medicine, mysterious deaths, and love affairs are seamlessly penned by the surgeon and award-winning author, C. Robert Pettit MD. The novel is a first-hand view of the ruthless and fierce competition Dr. Lewis Merritt encounters on the steep pyramid of surgery trauma team training where only one in four resident-surgeons reach the top.

The Un-Poet
A Memoir of Microtales
By Ratko Blackheart, ’68
Narrative, lined pieces with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Unique in the history of writing.

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An Encyclopedia of Bending Time
By Kristin Keane, PhD ’23
This formally inventive memoir, written in the style of an encyclopedia, is the author’s attempt to both remember and map grief in the wake of her mother’s death. Turning to narratives about alternate universes and time travel—from quantum physics to Quantum Leap—Keane puts thinkers like Albert Einstein and Roland Barthes into conversation with pop culture touchstones such as Interstellar and Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland to explore what it means to lose someone, and what remains of a person after they’re gone.

Electron Flow in Organic Chemistry:
By Paul Scudder, BS ’71
The scientific method starts with proposing a reasonable hypothesis. This book uses the rigorous crosschecks of an expert to give you the ability to make reasonable guesses on how an organic reaction works. It is based on General Chem principles rather than memorizing reactions. It uses 12 core elemental mechanistic pathways and a “generate and select” process to give you an expert’s intuition.

Just Like Click
By Sandy (Brown) Grubb, BA ’75
A perfect summer kids’ book, Kirkus Reviews calls Just Like Click “compulsively readable.” Eleven-year-old Nick steps off the comic book pages he creates and ventures into the night as an undercover superhero to save his home and his father’s job, which would be a lot easier if he had actual superpowers. Just Like Click is a superhero story for a new era! Learn more at sandygrubb.com.

Panic Peak
By William Liggett, BS ’67, MA ’68
How can a single glacier grow dramatically while hundreds are shrinking around the world? This paradox confronts a young glaciologist Kate as she looks down at her research site, buried under shocking mounds of new snow. Little does she know that Mount Olympus is in the bull’s-eye for a sophisticated geoengineering experiment being conducted by a scientist funded by a secretive oil cartel.

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Farewells

FACULTY

Walter A. Harrison, of Stanford, March 6, at 93. He graduated from Cornell and earned his PhD at the University of Illinois before becoming a professor of applied physics at Stanford in 1965. Well-known in scientific circles for his direct and honest approach, he won international acclaim as a researcher and an author in solid state physics, the theory of metals, semiconductors, and electronic structure. Survivors: his sons, Rick, John, Bill, ’84, and Bob; six grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

David Korn, of Boston, March 10, at 91. He was the dean of Stanford Medical School from 1984 to 1995 and former vice president of medical affairs for the university, and held numerous other positions, including chief of the pathology service at Stanford University Hospital. Later he became a professor of pathology at Harvard Medical School and the inaugural vice provost for research at Harvard. He was a member of the National Academy of Medicine, a founder of the California Transplant Donor Network, and a presidential appointee as chair of the National Cancer Advisory Board. Survivors: his wife, Carol Scheman; ex-wife, Phoebe; sons, Michael, Stephen, ’83, and Daniel, ’84; step-daughters, Rebecca Fiduccia and Joanna Fiduccia, ’06; 11 grandchildren; and 21 great-grandchildren.

1940s

Mary Ann Walker Dillon, ’43 (political science), of Carmel, Calif., March 27, at 102. She married her classmate and helped him grow his fledgling family nursery, Four Winds Growers, into a now 75-year-old business. While living in Fremont, Calif., she started 22 Girl Scout troops, promoted recycling through TriCity Ecology, and was a founding member of what became the League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City. President from 1980 to 1982, she was honored for 50 years of service in 2007. She was predeceased by her husband of 72 years, Don, ’43. Survivors: her children, Mary Helen Seeger, Deborah Dillon-Adams, and Don Jr.; six grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren; and brother, Charles Walker, ’56.

Arthur Cahan Mathews, ’44 (social science/social thought), of Florence, Ore., January 30, at 101. He was a member of Delta Tau Delta. He served as a Navy aviator in World War II. He worked in the employee benefits field as a group insurance and pension consultant, becoming a partner at, and ultimately retiring from, the San Francisco firm David H. Walker Company. He was a founding partner of Allied Administrators Inc. He was an Alpine skier and an avid golfer and was a member of the Stanford Golf Club for over 60 years. Survivors: his sons, Alan, ’71, Arthur Joseph, and Michael; and two grandchildren.

1950s

John Casey Baldwin, ’50 (international relations), of Moraga, Calif., May 24, 2022, at 96. He served in the Air Force. After graduating from law school at UC Berkeley, he served as deputy district attorney of Alameda County from 1954 until his retirement in 1990. Known for his keen intellect and brilliant wit, he was a devoted family man and loyal friend. His passions were vacations to Lake Tahoe and Yosemite, Stanford Cardinal and San Francisco 49ers football, dogs, and his wife and daughters. He was predeceased by his wife, Ruth. Survivors: his daughters, Cindy Strauch and Anne Robertson; and four grandchildren.

Reid Weaver Dennis, ’50 (electrical engineering), MBA ’52, of San Rafael, Calif., March 14, at 97. He was a member of Delta Tau Delta and served in the Navy. He was a pioneering venture capitalist who managed funds for Fireman’s Fund and American Express and later founded Institutional Venture Partners. He was an eternal optimist and an adventurer, logging 9,000 hours in Cessna and Grumman aircraft. He served on the San Francisco Opera board for 34 years, 14 of them as chairman. Survivors: his wife of 76 years, Peggy; children, Reid Jr., Suki, Harry, and Don; 11 grandchildren, including Stewart, ’13; and 17 great-grandchildren.

Barbara “Timmy” Levison Napolitano, ’50 (philosophy), of Bethesda, Md., January 24, at 95. In the early 1970s, she published the CO2

English Professor, Avant-Garde Scholar

Most nights, while her husband and daughters slept, literary critic Marjorie Perloff typed away on her IBM Selectric, her younger daughter sometimes waking to the clacking of the keys as it echoed through the house. Perloff stole those midnight hours to write after full days of teaching, hosting dinner parties, and catching up with soap operas, such as The Bold and the Beautiful. “It sometimes seems scientifically impossible that someone could pack that much into a 24-hour period,” says her longtime friend and former colleague Robert Pogue Harrison, a professor of French and Italian.

She became famous for close reading—analyzing word by word, line by line—even while most of her contemporaries had turned their focus to broader interpretations. She wrote more than a dozen books, roughly 250 scholarly articles and book chapters, and hundreds of book reviews, all presented in accessible language, free of complex terminology, so that anyone could begin to understand what she saw. She didn’t owe her striking productivity to ambition, Harrison says. “She was just in love with her work.”

Marjorie Perloff, a professor of English and one of the world’s top scholars of avant-garde poetry, died on March 24. She was 92.

Perloff was born Gabriele Mintz in Vienna to a family of well-off Jewish intellectuals. She was 7 years old when Nazis invaded the city, leading her family to flee to the United States. They settled in the Bronx, N.Y., with little money. Even after changing her first name to Marjorie, “she always felt like an outsider,” says her daughter Carey, ’80. “She was always fascinated by people who didn’t quite fit the mold.”

Though Perloff consumed the classics, her passion was poetry on the cutting edge. She liked “leaning into the ambiguity and difficulty,” says Craig Dworkin, ’91, MA ’92, a poet and a professor of English at the University of Utah who studied under Perloff. Already fluent in English, German, and French, she learned to read Italian and Russian so she could study a wider range of literature. Perloff’s facility with language and interest in artists on the margins helped her recognize greatness in unexplored places. She was one of the first academic literary critics to examine the work of New York School poets, language poets, and conceptual poets, including Frank O’Hara and Charles Bernstein, says Dworkin. Ultimately, he says, Perloff validated avant-garde poetry “as a legitimate topic of literary study.”

She did it all joyfully. Dworkin remembers his many conversations with Perloff about how dour and self-serious literary criticism could be. “One or the other of us would say, ‘Why do it if it’s not fun?’”

Perloff was predeceased by her husband, Joseph. In addition to Carey, survivors include her daughter Nancy, ’79, and three grandchildren.
Farewells

JULY 2024

Ross Valley Reporter was president of the Marin County chapter of the Giannini Foundation, San Francisco Opera, Fine Arts Museums, Merola Opera Program, Laguna Honda Hospital, Fall Antiques Show, Museo Italo-Americano, and Junior League. She was an accomplished equestrian, tended an impressive rose garden, and was an avid San Francisco Giants fan. She and her husband established the Villa Mt. Eden Winery in Napa Valley and won many gold medals at marquee wine competitions. She was predeceased by her husband, James, ‘52. Survivors: her children, Keith, Kevin, Robin McWilliams Mathews; seven grandchildren; and sister. Janice Joyce Hanson Sorensen, ‘53 (speech & drama), MA ‘54 (education), of Seattle, February 2, at 92. She participated in student drama and in the choir. She taught English and drama and was an English department adviser at Lincoln High School in Seattle, and later spent 17 years as a substitute teacher in Seattle public schools. She was an active partner in her husband’s ministry at several churches. Later she ran the popular “Faisinway Fridays” social hour at her condominium community. She found lifelong joy in swimming, her family, gardening, Guemes Island, Wash., and her church. She was predeceased by her husband of 41 years, Reuben. Survivors: her children, Joan Rice, Philip, and Eric; seven grandchildren; and sister, Shirley Hanson Knutson, ‘50. Aiton Eastman Clark, ‘54 (basic medical sciences), MD ‘57, of Laguna Beach, Calif., February 23, at 92. After completing his pediatrics residency at the University of Minnesota and UCLA, he moved to San Francisco to serve as a medical officer in the Navy. In 1962, he established a pediatrics practice in Laguna Beach. He retired at 83 after practicing for 52 years. He is remembered for his adventurous spirit (summiting Mount Whitney at age 73), goofy sense of humor, and unique office pets, like rescued raccoons and parakeets. Survivors: his wife of 68 years, Patsy; children, Karen Clark Baker, ‘78, Kenneth, Duane, and Eric; 10 grandchildren, including Ashley Baker Clave, ‘07, MA ‘08; 13 great-grandchildren; and brother, Richard Jay Monteith, ‘54 (sociology), of Modesto, Calif., March 6, at 92, of pneumonia. He was a member of Delta Tau Delta and played rugby and football. He built a career in agribusines before

Pop Cinema Pioneer and Hollywood Mentor

When rain ruined filmmaker Roger Corman’s weekend plans to play tennis, he took a swing at writing a script instead—and ended the day with one in hand. “We wrote the script that afternoon and shot that section in two days,” he told David Letterman in 1982, pointing to a production still of a young Jack Nicholson in the 1963 horror film The Terror. Corman routinely made movies in under two weeks—and sometimes, for as little as a $30,000, he did it in two days. He produced more than 200 films rife with explosions, fake blood, and nudity. “I’m willing to do almost anything in a film except bore the audience,” Corman told Jeremy Racton in a 1990 interview on Face to Face. Those profit-driven pictures collectively launched the golden age of independent directors, including Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese.

Roger W. Corman, ‘47, the so-called Pope of Pop Cinema and the founder of New World Pictures, died on May 9. He was 98. Corman graduated from Stanford with an engineering degree and took a job at U.S. Electrical Motors. He quit after four days and found work as a messenger, then story analyst and screenwriter, at Twentieth Century–Fox. After his notes were used in a film without attribution, Corman struck out on his own. So began a marathon of low-cost, full-lift productions. “I actually think that he was the most effective and efficient multitasker perhaps in the history of the film business,” says Gale Anne Hurd, ‘77, who began as an executive assistant for Corman and was producing within two years. “We called it the Roger Corman School of Filmmaking. You essentially learned everything—literally everything,” says Hurd, who later produced The Terminator and The Walking Dead. Corman never gave “first chances,” says Brad Krevoy, ‘78, his friend and occasional filmmaking partner, and the founder of the Motion Picture Corporation of America. Filmmakers brought their projects to him because “he would allow them to make the movie they wanted to make,” says Krevoy. “But at the same time, Roger would develop his own material and then hire a first-time director like Ron Howard to direct.”

Beyond the buckets of blood and sexy nurse outfits, Corman “always wanted to put some sort of statement in,” says his daughter Mary, ‘07. His 1962 film The Intruder, starring a young William Shatner, tackled the topic of racial integration in the American South. It was the first of his films to lose money, so he worked to ensure that his later films, such as cult classics The Masque of the Red Death and The Trip, prioritized entertainment value.

Even when pressures mounted on the set, “people [were] more important than the movie,” says Hurd. Once, when Hurd was growing frustrated with an unprepared sound effects editor, Corman pulled her aside. “Gale,” he said, “it’s only a movie.”

COURTESY CORMAN FAMILY
venturing into public service. Known as a fiscal conservative and a friend of agriculture, he worked in the farm equipment business in Turlock and sold packaging supplies to the egg industry before entering politics with no prior experience. He was a California state senator from 1994 to 2002 and served for 12 years on the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors. He was predeceased by his stepdaughters Stacy Foster and Heidi Kellison. Survivors: his wife, Jeanne; sons, Rick and Scott; stepdaughter Holly Evans; and six grandchildren.

Harold William “Mike” Anderson, ’55 (history), MA ’62 (education), of Colorado Springs, Colo., November 17, at 90. He was a member of Phi Delta Theta and played football. He entered the Air Force after earning his master’s and enjoyed a 25-year career in the military, where he was a decorated pilot and a patient teacher. After retiring, he worked on the family property in Black Forest, Colo., trimming trees, building a house, and caring for animal inhabitants. He was predeceased by his grandparents Oliver Elston and Jerry. Survivors: his wife, Janet; children, Elizabeth Slay, Victoria Jar- don, Michael, Gary, and Timothy; 13 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Judith Martin Garland Harrington, ’55 (history), of San Francisco, January 13, at 90. She was active in the 1960s antiwar and civil rights movements. She became an artist in the 1970s, working in many media including collage, handmade paper, paint- ings, and prints. Later, she became a noted James Joyce scholar, publishing articles in the James Joyce Quarterly and the James Joyce Literary Sup- plement. The National Library of Ireland published her monograph on Joyce in 2004. In the 1990s, she was a dedicated volunteer at AIDS Treatment News and Project Open Hand. She was predeceased by her husband of 61 years, Richard. Survivors: her chil- dren, Mark, Chris, Kate, and Megan; six grandchil- dren; two great-granddaughters; and three siblings.

Donald F. MacGinnis, ’55 (international relations), of Villa Park, Calif., January 19, at 90. He was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma and ROTC. He met his wife at Stanford at a fraternity party, and they were mar- ried at the Stanford Chapel. He had a spiritual inter- est in his youth and was involved in a life-changing experience with Jesus Christ at the age of 33. He loved travel- ing with his family, making memories in the great outdoors, and connecting with his mother’s relatives in Scotland. Survivors: his wife of 68 years, Dottie (Kooken, ’56); children, Cathy Regan and Doug; ’80; five grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Loren Day Smith, ’55 (international relations), of Venice, Fla., January 13, at 90. He was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon and played baseball. He served in the Army. He worked for the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., spending two years in Belgium and France. He was the general manager for Car- sadia at International Flavors & Fragrances, and the general manager of fragrances in New Jersey at Universal Flavors & Fragrances. He and his wife were avid golfers and tennis players. They were longtime members of the French Club while living in Toronto. He was predeceased by his wife, Norma. Survivors: his children, Sabrina Smith Hinsch, ’84, Gretchen Hinsch, and Danielle Hinsch.

Elizabeth Ann McCollister Stone Coggin, ’56 (history), of Evanston, Ill., June 24, 2023, at 88. She participated in student government and in the choir. For decades she sang in the Glencoe Union Church choir and organized receptions in the par- lour. She was an enthusiastic reader and reading for one of her many book clubs. She learned to love sailing, dancing, and traveling, especially to her home in Naples, Fla. She was predeceased by her first husband, Fred Stone, ’56, MS ’57. Survivors: her husband, Skip; children, Marylyz Stone, Catherine Stone Bowe, ’82, and Charlie Stone; stepdaughters, Laura Smail, Anne Codnham, and three siblings.

John Laurence Doyle, ’56 (mechanical engineer- ing), MS ’59 (engineering science), of Portola Valley, Calif., January 12, at 92. He was a member of Phi Delta Theta and played rugby. He served in the Royal Air Force. He was briefly a rocket engine ther- modynamicist before beginning graduate school. He was a founding member of Friends of Christ’s Hospital, and served on the boards of Hexcel, Analog Devices, and Xilinx. He enjoyed snow- and waterskiing, tennis, hiking the Sierras, flying, and traveling. Survivors include his wife of 58 years, Judy, and two sons.

Patricia Ann Tewksbury Stofle, ’56 (speech & drama), of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., March 2023, at 88. She was a speech and language pathologist at El Camino Hospital and later went into private prac- tice. In retirement, she and her husband owned and managed a bed and breakfast in Carmel, Calif., for eight years and later worked at the Monterey Bay Aquarium for 25 years. They traveled to all seven continents to see a wide range of animal species. Her husband of 66 years, Rod, ’56, passed away in November 2023. Survivors: her children, Mark, Tracy Loun, and Tricia Bland; five grandchil- dren; eight great-grandchildren; and three siblings.

Sterling Roderick “Rod” Stofle, ’56 (political sci- ence), of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., November, 2023, at 88. He was a member of Phi Sigma Kappa. He served in the Air Force as a second lieutenant. He spent his career in San Francisco, working in human resources at States Steamship Company and Marcona Shipping Company. He was a founding member of Spyglass Golf Course and served as a Marshall at the Bing Crosby (now AT&T) Pebble Beach Pro-Am golf tournament for 25 years. He was predeceased by his wife of 66 years, Patricia (Tewksbury, ’56). Survivors: his children, Mark, Tracy Loun, and Tricia Bland; five great-grandchildren; and three siblings.

Donn V. Tognazzini, ’56 (philosophy), of Santa Maria, Calif., October 6, at 89. He was a member of Sigma Chi and played rugby.

Donald Dale Bade, ’58 (economics), of Santa Rosa, Calif., November 4, 2022, at 85, of lymphoma. He was a member of Theta Delta Chi. He was a lifelong entrepreneur with careers in busi- ness, real estate, and agriculture. He loved collect- ing wine, skiing, golf, and international travel, having visited some 45 countries. Survivors: his wife of 63 years, Carol (Tally, ’60); children, Debo- rah Lorenzana and David; and four grandchildren.

Isabel Frances Shaskan, ’59 (political science), of Davis, Calif., January 5, at 86, of complications from pneumonia. As a teenager in San Francisco, she attended art classes at the Legion of Honor that prepared her for a life in the arts. She earned a master’s degree in the history of ideas from Brandeis and a joint degree in art and art history from UC Davis. She then taught art history at Sac- ramento City College until her retirement in 2010. She painted almost every day. Survivors include her brothers, Geoffrey and Edward, and nieces and nephews.

1950s

Alan Gregory Gibbs, ’60, MS ’61, PhD ’65 (mechani- cal engineering), of Anacortes, Wash., January 10, at 84. He worked for many years as a nuclear engi- neer at Battelle Nuclear Energy Company in Rich- land, Wash. He was fluent in Russian and translated mathematical documents for the U.S. government. An avid mountain enthusiast, he belonged to the Inter- Mountain Alpine Club in Richland and summited Mount Saint Helens, Mount Adams, and Mount
Rainier, among other peaks. He played opera, classical and folk music, art, and poetry.

Leo Morrion Krulitz, '60 (political science), MBA '69, of Santa Fe, N.M., October 16, 2021, at 83, of a stroke. He contributed to the Stanford Daily and was in the Stanford Band. He graduated from Harvard Law School. He was vice president of Cummins Engine Company and CEO of Parkland Management Company. As the solicitor of the Department of the Interior during the Carter administration, he led efforts to effect legal changes to safeguard the environment, including passing the Alaska Lands Bill to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Denali National Park. Survivors: his wife of 61 years, Donna; children, Cindy and Pamela; and five grandchildren.

Donald Waldo Mitchell, '60 (biological sciences), of Seattle, November 1, at 84, of sepsis. He was a member of Theta Xi. He graduated from Harvard Medical School. While in the U.S. Public Health Service, he traveled to Wisconsin, India, Thailand, Ethiopia, and Atlanta. After a residency in pulmonary medicine, he entered private practice in Renton, Wash., retiring in 2000. He volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, Physicians for a National Health Program, the Seattle Public Schools’ classroom-aide program, and Plymouth Congregational Church. Survivors: his wife of 57 years, Pam; sons, Robert, Kenneth, and Andrew; four grandchildren; and siblings, Sarah Mitchell Clark, '63, and John, '56, Eng., PhD '63.

Margaret Teresa Andrade O’Brien, '60, MA '61 (education), of San Francisco, February 22, at 85. Inspired by her mother’s dedication to education, she embarked as a career as a teacher before transitioning to the fulfilling role of devoted mother. Her nurturing spirit and unswerving support enriched the lives of her children and grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband, John, MD ’64; and son Robert. Survivors: her children, Patricia, Tim, Margaret, Jennifer Welsey, and Megan; and 11 grandchildren.

William H. Robertson, ’60 (electrical engineering), of San Jose, April 13, 2023, at 92, of heart failure. He was an electrical engineer in the Bay Area. Survivors include: his wife, Pauline. James Allan Brandt, ’61 (mathematics), MD ’70, of Bainbridge Island, Wash., November 11, at 84. He was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma and played football. The skilled hands that guided him through intricate surgeries also swung a bat at Stanford, drove a golf club at Wing Point, and held a fishing pole in Puget Sound. He was a quick study, a quiet visionary, and a risk-taker. He started a food-safety company, Ozone International, with his son, Jonathan. He enjoyed driving his four tractors, incubating duck eggs every spring, and harvesting apples in the fall. Survivors include his wife, Linda; children, Lauren and Jonathan; ’86, stepson, Brian Schmidt; and grandchildren.

Geoffrey Alan Graham, ’64 (biological sciences), of San Clemente, Calif., February 1, at 83, of Alzheimer’s disease. He served in the Air Force as a flight surgeon and medical chief of flight medicine. After graduating from Creighton University Medical School, he became one of the first 1,000 physicians to be board-certified in radiation therapy. For 38 years, he was the medical director of radiation oncology at Upland, California’s San Antonio Community Hospital, where he chaired many committees and received the Turner Physician Award. He was predeceased by his wife of 57 years, Sheila (Dorman, ’65). Survivors: his children, Alan, Michele Graham Silverman, ’93, and Marcia Brauchler; eight grandchildren; and sister.

Linda Lucile Woods, ’65 (psychology), of Spokane, Wash., March 7, at 81, of pulmonary failure. She contributed to the KZSU radio station and began her diverse musical and vocal talents to the Gonzaga Symphony. She initially taught early elementary grades, music, and special education, but later taught at an alternative high school and helped imprisoned teens work toward their GEDs. An accomplished violinist and violinist, she brought her musical talents to the Gonzaga Symphony, Project Joy Orchestra, Mozart in the Park, and Day Out for the Blind. In retirement, she learned French. Survivors: her daughters, Natalie Hudson and Joanna Collins; five grandchildren; and two brothers, including Keith, ’62.

Elizabeth Gage, ’68 (art), MBA ’80, of Seattle, February 20, 2023, at 75, of ALS. She worked at Sunset magazine before moving to the Netherlands, where she was the subscription director of Time magazine in Europe for 12 years. With her MBA, she became a financial analyst and then international fulfillment director for Time-Warner. She later worked for the Stanford Travel/Study program and as a beautician at Origins Skincare, an assistant manager at Starbucks, and a stylist at CABI Clothing. She helped found Project Redwood to alleviate global poverty. Survivors: her siblings, Tom, ’72, and Annie; and nieces and nephews.

David Eugene Nelson, ’68 (political science), of Ukiah, Calif., February 17, at 77, of respiratory failure. He was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma and played football. After graduating from Yale Law School, he returned to Northern California to work as a public defender and then moved to Mendocino County, the center of the illicit marijuana industry. He became a leading criminal defense lawyer on the North Coast, applying compassion and the law to break cycles of addiction, economic injustice, and generational trauma. He was active in local politics and was appointed Mendocino Superior Court judge in 2003. Survivors: his wife of 38 years, Judith Fuente; daughters, Julia Newberry and Jessica; four grandchildren; and three siblings.

1970s

Victoria Allan Fleming Brant-Zawadzki, ’71 (communication), of Newport Beach, Calif., March 26, at 75, of Parkinson’s disease. She attended Stanford as a fifth-generation legacy. She earned a master’s in education at Xavier University and a master’s in marriage and family therapy at Pepperdine University. She was a source of stability, wisdom, wry humor, and genteel entertainment for her friends and family. She was engaged in world events and loved to travel. She was the foundational rock for her husband’s work as a physician and leader at Hoag Hospital. Survivors: her husband of 49 years, Michael, ’71; children, Graham, ’07, MA ’08, Alex, and Nicole; and grandson.

John Lewis Hughes, ’71 (history), MA ’76 (German studies), of Boulder, Colo., February 4, at 74, after emergency surgery. He was in the Marching Band in Gaertner Hall and the Madison Band and eventually held top roles in planning and budgeting as associate vice president and then senior associate dean. He earned an MBA from UC Berkeley. He was an ultramarathon cyclist who rode the 750-mile Paris-Brest-Paris five times, becoming the first 1,000 physicians to be board-certified in radiation therapy. For 38 years, he was the medical director of radiation oncology at Upland, California’s San Antonio Community Hospital, where he chaired many committees and received the Turner Physician Award. He was predeceased by his wife of 57 years, Sheila (Dorman, ’65). Survivors: his children, Alan, Michele Graham Silverman, ’93, and Marcia Brauchler; eight grandchildren; and sister.

Douglas Robert McDonald, ’71 (biological sciences), of Perrin Valley, Calif., February 3, at 74. He was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. He enjoyed a long career of 45 years, Karen; children, Jennifer and Cameron; three grandchildren; mother, Shirley (Beine, ’43); and two brothers.

John Thomas Montague, ’71 (electrical engineering), of Portland, Ore., February 15, at 74, of Creutzfeld-Jakob disease. He worked for Stanford and then for Los Alamos National Lab, where he wrote operating system software for the Cray-1, the world’s largest and fastest computer at the time. He then worked at Intel and Logic Automation before co-founding Model Technology. In retirement, he volunteered at Chapman Elemenary School and served on the boards of the PSU Pio Pico State Schools, Portland International, and Third Angle New Music. He enjoyed playing the piano and supported local artists. Survivors: his wife, Linda Hutchins; son, Eric; and three siblings, including Jane, ’73, and Ruth, ’79.

David Nathan Shore, ’75 (Spanish), of Mill Valley, Calif., January 20, at 70, of pancreatic cancer. He was in the Marching Band. A born adventurer, he worked for the international rafting company Sobek Expeditions, pioneering rivers in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia and appearing on Ameri- can Sportsman, his favorite show growing up. Retir- ing from adventure guiding, he founded Marin Financial Advisors, and served as an adviser to the Marin County Pension Board. After selling his company, he retired to adventuring, from skiing in Ant- arctica to bow-hunting in the Sierras to motorcycling through the West. Survivors: his wife, Zoe Sexton-Shore; daughter, Savannah; stepchildren, Brooke Baldwin, Cody Baldwin, Brianna McNiss, and Chad McNiss; and brother, Larry.

Rick Thomas Haselton, ’76 (political science), of Portland, Ore., May 17, 2023, at 69, of ALS. After graduating from Yale Law School, he returned to his home state and ultimately became the chief judge of the Oregon Court of Appeals. As a young attorney, he helped lay the groundwork for the 1981 Supreme Court case that won equal pay for female prison guards in Oregon’s Washington County. He was known for his intellectual rigor, extraordinary productivity, and faithful allegiance to the law. He converted to Judaism as an adult and served as president of his synagogue, Kesser Israel, in Portland. Survivors: his wife, Sura Ruben- stein; and daughter, Malia.

William Arthur Wernerke Jr., ’77 (economics), of Cedarburg, Wis., February 27, at 68. He contrib- uted to the Stanford Daily. He used his experience running the family business, Cedarburg Lumber, into helping other small business owners make smart decisions at Pegasus Partners. He also worked at The Onion in Chicago and served with distinction on the University School of Milwaukee board of trustees. Survivors: his wife of 45 years, Susan (Graham, ’77); children, Ellen, Claire, ’08, Maxwell, ’13, MS ’13, and Chloe, ’13; two grandchildren; father, William; and two siblings.

Simone Bautista Cox, ’77 (communication), of Sedona, Ariz., March 22, at 67. She was a Dollie in the Marching Band and a member of the glee
Farewells

CLIMATE ONE

ARY 29, at 78. He majored in English at Carleton, MA ’70, of Nyack, N.Y., February 2, at 52, after a car accident. She was the chief operating officer and chief financial officer at Stanford’s Hoover Institution, where she managed the budget, established financial controls and policies, and led the finance, operations, events, human resources, and IT teams. Earlier in her career, she was a pricing manager at Bristol-Myers Squibb pharmaceuticals. She loved country music, San Francisco sports teams, and Christmas. A Christian with great spiritual devotion, she engaged in faith activities throughout her life. Her husband, James, was injured in the same car accident and died on February 8. Survivors: her son, Zack; and siblings, Raymond, Alice, and Kirsten.

BUSINESS

John Arnal Jarrell, MBA ’67 (mechanical engineering), MBA ’73, of Belvedere Tiburon, Calif., November 18, at 79. He was the vice president of special projects at Victoria Station, a successful chain of railroad-themed steakhouses. He then was an integral part of Pacific Union and its various partnerships. He was the proud holder of seven patents, which he hoped would make the world safer and more efficient. Survivors include his children, Jake and Madison, and sister.

Aaron Tomas Hackett, MBA ’99, of Atlanta, March 14, at 53. He earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Texas at Austin and a master’s of science in industrial engineering from the University of Tennessee. He worked at companies including Procter & Gamble, Conagra, and Sawa Credit Inc., founded his own consulting firm, 80/20 Brand Building, and wrote a book about branding. He was a beloved professor at the University of Tennessee. He taught a senior driving class, and hated gardening. Survivors include: his wife, Patty (Hoagland, ’48); and children, Todd and Kirsty.

Movses Bedros Agopovich, MS ’60 (civil engineering), of Redlands, Calif., April, 2022, at 84. A recognized leader in the rail transit industry, he held leadership roles in companies now known as AECOM and WSP. He was associated with projects like BART, Baltimore Metro, Taipei Light Rail, Vancouver BC Skytrain, and the Singapore Metro. He was most proud of successfully transitioning a Peacekeeper Rail Garrison project office into a viable regional office in the Inland Empire of Southern California. He took part in the San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce and was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Survivors include his wife of 54 years, Elisabeth, and son, Alexander.

Robert Gerald “Jerry” Colclaser Jr., Gr. ’63 (electrical engineering), of Greensburg, Pa., March 5, 2020, at 86. After a distinguished career at Westinghouse Electric Corporation, he became a professor of electrical engineering and the associate dean for research in electrical engineering at the University of Pittsburgh. He was a life fellow of IEEE and was awarded 21 patents for his inventions pertaining to electrical power generation and distribution. For 26 years, he performed magic for children at the Delmont Public Library. He was predeceased by his wife, Nancy. Survivors: his wife of 23 years, Helen; children, Jan Hanks, Robert, and Linda Pershock; stepchildren, Michael Heck, Matthew Heck, and Michele Heck; five grandchildren; and brother.

George Stephen Jizmagian, MS ’65 (electrical engineering), MS ’67, PhD ’73 (operations research), of San Francisco, December 6, at 81, of duodenal cancer. He started his own businesses, SJ Capital and GSJ Associates, and worked as a

FIELDSTON SCHOOL. He loved poetry, woodworking, breadmaking, baseball, bicycling, Seinfeld, Norwegian lisef, and his family. Survivors: his wife, Sondra; children, Stephanie, John Jr., Tyler, and Emily, ’08; eight grandchildren; and brother.

ENGINEERING

Cassius Richard “Dick” McEwen, MS ’50, PhD ’52 (chemical engineering), of Palo Alto, February 19, at 98. He worked as a petroleum recovery scientist at the Union Oil Company in Brea, Calif., and then at the Spino division of Beckman Instruments in Palo Alto. He made significant contributions to the field of biomedical instrumentation, including ultracentrifugation and protein/peptide sequencing. In Palo Alto, he volunteered with the police department and in disaster preparedness for his neighborhood watch group. He played numerous instruments, taught a senior driving class, and hated gardening. Survivors include: his wife, Patty (Hoagland, ’48); and children, Todd and Kirsty.

His Politics Crossed the Party Line

A battle-tested Marine who held a Silver Star, a Navy Cross, and two Purple Hearts, Pete McCloskey was a liberal Republican politician who demanded that the United States exit Vietnam and co-authored the Endangered Species Act.

Paul H. “Pete” McCloskey Jr., ’50, JD ’53, died of congestive heart failure on May 8 at his home in Winters, Calif. He was 96.

In the Korean War, McCloskey led six bayonet charges as the commander of a rifle platoon, an experience that set him up for his subsequent life as a trailblazer unafraid of a fight. In 1967, after speaking out against the Vietnam War, McCloskey, then an attorney, upset Shirley Temple Black in a special election for the 12th congressional district. Four years later, bucking party orthodoxy, he campaigned on an antiwar platform in a bid to unseat Nixon in the Republican presidential primaries. When the Watergate scandal broke, McCloskey was the first on either side of the aisle to call for Nixon’s impeachment.

The early 1970s also brought an increase in McCloskey’s environmental activism. He chaired the first Earth Day, in 1970; three years later, the Endangered Species Act, which he co-wrote, passed with bipartisan support. In an essay published in A Wild Success: The Endangered Species Act at 40, McCloskey refers to the act as “the greatest contribution I have made in my lifetime to the welfare of this nation.”

After losing a Senate bid in 1982—partly over his iconoclastic call to cut aid to Israel unless it gave up Gaza and the West Bank—McCloskey retired from Congress. He returned to Woodside, Calif., and to practicing law. In an intense mid-1980s case, he represented residents of East Palo Alto who opposed the move to incorporate the community as a city.

As usual, McCloskey took heat, and, as usual, he shrugged it off. “The flack didn’t bother me,” he said in a 1985 interview with Stanford Lawyer. “It’s less than I got when I said Richard Nixon was a crook, or that we ought to get out of Vietnam, or that the Jewish lobby was too active in regard to Israel. It sort of blows off your back. You can live with it.”

Joe Cotchett, an attorney and a powerful player in the California Democratic Party, met McCloskey 45 years ago on the campaign trail. “I was working for another candidate,” Cotchett says, “but in Pete I saw integrity beyond integrity, someone who stood up for people who had no voice.” McCloskey joined Cotchett’s law firm in 2004, and the two tried major environmental cases together. In 2007, McCloskey, a lifelong Republican, registered as a Democrat. McCloskey is survived by his wife of 42 years, Helen, and four children from an earlier marriage to Caroline Wadsworth (now Rayfield), ’51; Nancy, Peter, John, and Kathleen, ’80.

—John Roemer

STANFORD 61
well-respected financial analyst and expert witness for over 55 years. In his 30s, he became a professional race car driver in the Formula Atlantic Series. In his 40s, he learned Armenian; in his 50s, the drums; in his 60s, Spanish; and in his 70s, the washboard. He was a member of the Olympic Club for over 50 years. Survivors: his wife of 40 years, Mary; children, Annemarie Jizmagian Rivera and Gregory; and five grandchildren.

William Dale Bush, MS ’66 (electrical engineering), of Truckee, Calif., April 20, 2023, at 87, of dementia. Survivors include his wife, Joan.

HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES
Sheelagh Patricia Hanna Baily, MA ’51 (history), of Ballston Spa, N.Y., February 1, at 94, after a fall. She was a public school teacher, working in San Diego and Burnt Hills/Ballston Lake and Galway, N.Y. She went on to earn a second master’s degree, in public administration, from Russell Sage College. She was later employed by mental health and social services organizations and the local hospital. She was an active volunteer for groups like the Junior League, the Citizens’ Committee for Mental Health, the League of Women Voters, and Meals on Wheels. Survivors: her husband, Fred; sons, Douglas and Stuart; two grandchildren; and sister.

Robert B. Clarke, PhD ’59 (psychology), of Sunnyvale, 2023. He taught in the psychology program at San Jose State University for 30 years, serving as department chair and earning many honors for teaching, and he collaborated on two psychological statistics textbooks. In retirement, he enjoyed traveling the world, folk dancing, bicycling, cross-country skiing, river rafting, and hiking locally and in the Sierras. Spirituality was important to him, and he attended many meetings, workshops, and retreats offered by the Iona Center in Healdsburg, Calif. Survivors: his wife, Rosalie (Tucker), ’57; sons, David, Robert Jr., and Leon; three grandchildren; great-granddaughter; and sister.

Francis Hotchkiss “Pete” Lewis Jr., PhD ’64 (physics), of San Francisco, November 6, at 86. He was a nuclear physicist at Lawrence Livermore Labs before earning a law degree from the University of San Francisco. He established a law practice, Lewis & Lewis, in Alameda, Calif., and later worked as a patent attorney for Hewlett Packard, Fenwick & West, and as a solo practitioner. He was an avid musician, chess player, mathematician, and crossword puzzler. He was predeceased by his first wife, Amy Whitbeck. Survivors: his children, Fred, Hilary Dowell, Amanda Dixon, and Matthew; and five grandchildren.

Thomas Charlton Malone, PhD ’71 (biological sciences), of Easton, Md., February 24, at 80. He was a professor emeritus at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. He established a law practice, Lewis & Lewis, in Alameda, Calif., and later worked as a patent attorney for Hewlett Packard, Fenwick & West, and as a solo practitioner. He was an avid musician, chess player, mathematician, and crossword puzzler. He was predeceased by his first wife, Amy Whitbeck. Survivors: his children, Fred, Hilary Dowell, Amanda Dixon, and Matthew; and five grandchildren.

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Thank Goodness for Jack

A memorial at Stanford Sierra Camp caught me by surprise.

As I'm Writing This, my wife, son, and I are at Stanford Sierra Camp. It's Week 11, 2023. It's only our second year. Some families return year after year, for their same assigned week, for a decade or more.

Earlier today, on a walk, I spotted a weathered bronze plaque on a stone next to the flagpole, and it took me back to 1974 and the first time I'd ever met a lawyer. His name was Jack Levitan. We were both taking a karate class at a Buddhist temple in Oakland. I was a small, shy 14-year-old, one of the few Asian kids at my high school. My father, who'd been bullied as a child, wanted me to learn a martial art so I could defend myself.

Jack, his wife, Maureen (O'Brien, later Sullivan), '59, and their two daughters were both taking a karate class at a Buddhist temple in Oakland. I was a small, shy 14-year-old, one of the few Asian kids at my high school. My father, who'd been bullied as a child, wanted me to learn a martial art so I could defend myself.

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I continued karate training through high school and college. By my senior year at Stanford, I was captain of the university's JKA Shotokan Karate Club, and I graduated with a first-degree black belt. After that, I had had enough. Karate was something my father had made me do, and I was eager to start a new chapter of my life, at law school and in New York.

Three years later, I moved back to California. I passed the bar exam, but to be admitted as a licensed attorney, I needed a character reference from a California attorney. The only lawyers I knew, I thought, were in New York. And the only professionals I knew in California were my parents' friends—their fellow gardeners and landscape contractors. We didn't know anyone who had gone to law school. Then I thought of Jack.

Thank goodness for Jack. When I cold-called him, he remembered me and agreed to sign the reference form.

That was nearly 40 years ago. Today, I have a great job in the general counsel's office of the best public university system in the world. I returned to karate training years ago and am now an internationally recognized fifth-degree black belt. I coach at the University of San Francisco and occasionally teach students at the Stanford club.

And what happened to Jack? In January 1988, he and a few friends, including clinical radiology professor Vince Oronzi, were vacationing off the coast of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, aboard the Anticipation, a 67-foot pleasure boat. At about 1:30 a.m., a large fire broke out. The crew broadcast an alert, then jumped into the water and banged on the hull to warn passengers. Many of them escaped by scrambling through the portholes, but Jack and Vince did not. They were still onboard when the boat sank.

The plaque at the flagpole is about them. It reads: Jack Levitan—Vince Oronzi. Let us remember what these men, who shared with us their love and zest for life, treasured at Stanford Sierra Camp. A time to relax, a time to renew, and a time to laugh with family and friends, in the beauty of this place.


Mark Morodomi, '82, practices law in Oakland and welcomes connecting with other martial arts club alumni. Email him at stanford.magazine@stanford.edu.
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Jimmy, MS ’66, MS ’67, PhD ’72, and Jean Kan, Stanford librarian emeritus

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