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DISTINCTIVELY SYRACUSE

THIS IS A HISTORIC TIME FOR SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY. OUR FACULTY, STAFF, and supporters are working diligently to chart our future course and determine how we can give students the best education possible. One of our priorities in this effort is to assure students have an outstanding and multifaceted experience, in the classroom, in the lab, in the community, and in clubs and service organizations. This experience is absolutely critical to the evolution of a distinctively Syracuse graduate.

Many of our students are already stellar examples of these endeavors. They are pursuing scholarship and projects that expand their academic and social horizons and improve their communities. I want to share with you just a few recent examples of the amazing things our students have done this past year.

SCHOLARSHIP

In her four years at Syracuse, senior Leslie Walters combined two dramatically different passions—medical science and communication—into a degree path. With a dual major in biology and broadcast and digital journalism, and a minor in Spanish, Leslie plans to pursue a career in health communications. Her goal is to help patients better understand the science behind their treatments. Milanoi Koijiet is pursuing graduate work in international human rights and comparative disability law at the College of Law. She recently presented before the UN Commission on the Status of Women. After graduating in May with an LL.M. degree, Milanoi will be returning to Kenya, her home country, to continue her work focused on women’s and disability rights.

SERVICE

Students in the Falk College-based Sport Management Club recently raised nearly $60,000 through its 10th annual Charity Sports Auction to benefit Make-A-Wish of Central New York. Over the past decade, the club’s members have raised more than $250,000 for local charities, while gaining professional experience organizing this vast event held annually at the Carrier Dome during halftime of a basketball game. Maxwell graduate students Timi Komonibo and Alexis Morris, along with Newhouse alumna Nieves Alvarez G’14, launched a clothing-swap nonprofit, called Style Lottery. The venture, which works to empower young women from low-income communities, was a winner in the University’s inaugural Fast Forward Syracuse student idea competition last year. This year, the group was presented with a 2015 Orange Circle Award, which recognizes University community members who do extraordinary things.

ACHIEVEMENT

Natalie Rebeyev, a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences, has been named a Gates Cambridge Scholar. One of just 40 students in America to earn this distinction, Natalie plans to pursue a Ph.D. degree in medical science at the Cambridge Institute for Medical Research. Three senior student-athletes—Komal Safdar of the tennis team, and Cameron Lynch and Sam Rodgers of the football team—recently won post-graduate scholarship awards from the ACC in recognition of their success in the classroom and on the field. Finally, earlier this year, Newhouse junior Verónica Ortiz-Calderón won the Horizon Award at the Sundance Film Festival for her film *Y Ya No Te Gustas (And You Don’t Like Yourself Anymore)*. The award, which drew hundreds of nominations, earned Verónica a major scholarship and a trip to Sundance.

These are just a few examples of students who are making the most of their Syracuse education. They do us all proud.

Sincerely,

Kent Syverud
Chancellor and President
AFTER ENDURING AN ESPECIALLY BRUTAL winter—even by Syracuse standards—it’s nice to finally welcome the unfolding of spring. While February delivered us the coldest month ever here in recorded history and snowdrifts inched above my garden fence, I often found my thoughts shifting from shoveling snow to mowing lawn and tilling the garden as I desperately awaited the greening of the countryside and blossoming of fruit trees.

And for a true blast of positive reinforcement, all I had to do was look at images in this issue of the magazine of the Tree of 40 Fruit, the bedazzling creation of College of Visual and Performing Arts sculpture professor Sam Van Aken (see page 4). For several years now, he has grafted branches of numerous varieties of stone fruits onto stock trees, providing a kaleidoscope of blossoms as the trees grow and mature. Van Aken has received a good deal of national media attention for this blending of science and art, and we should all appreciate and enjoy the fruits—and flowers—of his labor.

Along with looking forward to seeing the Tree of 40 Fruit display on the Shaw Quad, I anticipate the sight of redbuds and other flowering trees splashing color into my walks around campus. It’s moments like these that give an added dimension to the routines of our daily lives. After all those monochromatic days of winter, there’s nothing like focusing on the changing hues of the landscape. Crocuses, daffodils, forsythia, lilacs, tulips—bring them on!

Even those pesky dandelions, which I’d much rather see pop up and overtake my yard than watch the final remnants of a grimy pile of snow deteriorate into extinction.

Sadly, we are often too hurried or preoccupied with other thoughts to enjoy the offerings of the natural world around us. Many of us are too plugged in, tuned out, or smart phone obsessed, heads and eyes tilted downward, to savor the seasonal shift that can brighten a day without any assistance from an app. Mother Nature puts on quite a show for us at this time of year and taking it in is well worth the time, whether you’re an astute observer who is skilled enough to stagger the flowering of plants in your garden, or just someone who glances up at the surroundings and decides it’s an opportune moment for a selfie with a flourish of color in the background. Either way, enjoy the show while you can.
There’s a nice little tree on the Shaw Quad, just outside Hinds Hall, that for most of the year looks much like any other tree. But when spring finds its way to Central New York, something magical happens. For starters, it blossoms, which on the heels of a Syracuse winter can seem miraculous enough. This unusual tree, however, really puts on a lavish spectacle—blossoming in several variegated shades of pink and white all at the same time. Come summer, it does some more showing off, bursting forth with an abundance of fruit, also in many varieties. And when it reaches full maturity in nine years or so, it will have the capacity to grow some 40 different kinds of stone fruit—plums, peaches, apricots, nectarines, cherries, and almonds.

Sounds a bit like a Disney fantasy, but thanks to the labors and ingenuity of sculptor and art professor Sam Van Aken, the Tree of 40 Fruit is real, thriving, and setting down roots at locations across the country. The one on campus was the first of its kind, created in 2008 and dedicated in 2011 during a University 9/11 remembrance event as a symbol of acceptance and dialogue across differences. Several other trees, many of them donated, have been placed with art collectors, with individuals, or in museums and public settings, including a grove of six trees planted in Portland, Maine, in spring 2014. “The Tree of 40 Fruit really started as an artwork,” says Van Aken, who chose the number 40 for its historical and biblical significance as an amount that points to the infinite. “I wanted to make this tree that would blossom in different colors and bear different types of fruit, so that when you’d happen upon it, it would cause this moment of rethinking that hopefully becomes the beginning of a story.”

Each tree is created through grafting, a process that has intrigued Van Aken since he witnessed it as a child growing up on a farm in Pennsylvania. “I just thought it was the most fascinating thing in the world—taking the branch of a tree, sticking it onto another tree, and watching it grow,” he says. “It is like Dr. Seuss and Frankenstein and all those amazing things you think of when you’re a kid.” It wasn’t until many years later, though, that Van Aken started “playing around” with the idea of grafting as a means of making art, first combining pieces of plastic fruit to create hybrids and then moving on to work with real vegetables and, ultimately, trees.

To start the Tree of 40 Fruit project, Van Aken scoured New York State in search of varieties of stone fruit, a species that offers up the most diversity. This proved difficult, since the majority of stone fruits are now grown in California. He was eventually able to lease an heirloom orchard with grants he obtained from the University and Creative Capital. “It turns out that Central New York was one of the largest producers of stone fruits—particularly plums—in the 19th century,” he says. “And this one orchard in particular contained all the heirloom, native, hybrid, and antique varieties from this agricultural industry.”

From that orchard, Van Aken developed dwarf stock trees for each variety, growing them in an outdoor nursery next to the Comstock Art Facility on campus. The nursery now serves year-round as a kind of mad-scientist laboratory where Van Aken does the grafting and his “inventions” come to life. “I start each tree of 40 fruit as root stock, taking one of the varieties from a stock tree and putting it onto a root structure,” says Van Aken, who works with more than 250 varieties of stone fruit in creating the trees. “After two years, it is pruned back to an open-centered vase shape with four or five primary branches.” The grafting process he uses, called chip grafting, involves taking a sliver that includes the bud from one of the stock trees and inserting it into a like-size incision in the working tree. “I tape it, let it sit and heal in all winter, and then I prune it back and hope that it grows,” he says.

What began as an artwork has blossomed into much more for Van Aken, branching out to become both a research project chronicling the timing of when different varieties blossom in relationship to each other, and a form of conservation. “By taking all these
species and grafting them onto the trees of 40 fruit, and then placing them throughout the country, in a way I am creating my own type of diversity and preservation,” he says.

The trees also inspired in him a new curiosity about weather—its effects on mind and body and the ways it can be predicted and even changed—resulting in an exhibition at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute’s Museum of Art in Utica, New York, that featured more than 60 meteorological balloons inflated with air from Acadia National Park in Maine. Another weather-related project involves attempting to create a particular type of cloud formation called “punch hole clouds”—using an airplane—and photographing them. He has also established a partnership in Freeport, Maine, geared toward creating a community orchard that he hopes will serve as a model for similar developments elsewhere.

Regardless of the diverse areas of interest he feels called to pursue, Van Aken says, creative impulse remains at the heart of all he does. “For me, there’s much more power in a metaphor than there is in a technology,” he says. “And that’s why these things always remain artwork for me—first and foremost.”

—Amy Speach

“I wanted to make this tree that would blossom in different colors and bear different types of fruit, so that when you’d happen upon it, it would cause this moment of rethinking that hopefully becomes the beginning of a story.”

—SAM VAN AKEN, art professor
NEWSMAKERS

Ruhlandt, who joined the Syracuse chemistry department faculty in 1993, had served as the college’s interim dean since July 2014 and was appointed dean in January. In 2009, Ruhlandt was named chair of the chemistry department and honored as a Distinguished Professor, one of the University’s highest honors for faculty.

Masingila joined the Syracuse faculty in 1992 as a professor of mathematics and mathematics education and served as chair of the School of Education’s Teaching and Leadership Programs. She held a dual appointment with the College of Arts and Sciences, where she had chaired the Department of Science Teaching. Masingila had served as the School of Education’s interim dean since February 2014.

Matter1

Two Syracuse alumni collected 2015 Grammy Awards. Tom MacDougall ’92, executive vice president, music, at Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios, was among the compilation producers behind Frozen, which was recognized with the Grammy for Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media. The Grammy for Best Musical Theater Album went to Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, which featured Jessie Mueller ’05 as principal soloist.

The National Science Foundation honored four SU faculty members with Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) awards: biomedical and chemical engineering professors Jesse Bond and Shikha Nangia, mechanical and aerospace engineering professor Shalabh Maroo, and Earth sciences professor Christopher Junium. Bond, Nangia, and Maroo will each receive $500,000 grants over a five-year period, and Junium will receive $524,000.

J. Michael Haynie, vice chancellor for veterans and military affairs, was appointed to the MyVA Advisory Committee by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Professor David Rezak, director of the Bandier Program for Music and the Entertainment Industries, was honored as Variety’s 2015 Media Mentor of the Year.

Physics professor M. Lisa Manning received a Cottrell Scholar Award from the Research Corporation for Science Advancement. The award carries a $75,000 prize.

Steve Hoover, a part-time information management graduate student in the School of Information Studies and a senior assistant librarian at SU’s Bird Library Learning Commons, placed among the top five finishers in IBM’s 2014 Master the Mainframe competition, which challenged the coding and technology skills of more than 4,000 participants.

Earth sciences professor Don Siegel, author of From Lokshen to Lo Mein: The Jewish Love Affair with Chinese Food (Gefen Publishing House, 2005), appears in the documentary film The Search for General Tso, which traces the history of the ubiquitous Chinese American dish.

Newhouse film professor Richard Breyer and alumnus Anand Kamalakar ’95 were honored with an Award of Distinction for the documentary film Garwin: Witness to History as part of the 2014 Global Film Awards’ Humanitarian Award competition. They co-directed the documentary about scientist Richard Garwin, who helped design the first successful hydrogen bomb.

SPORTS NOTES

The Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) awarded $5,000 post-graduate scholarships to three SU student-athletes: tennis player Komal Safdar ’15, a biochemistry and psychology major; and football players Sam Rodgers ’15, a nutrition major, and Cameron Lynch ’15, an economics major.

All-America Orange distance runner Martin Hehir ’15 placed seventh in the 3,000 meters at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in Fayetteville, Arkansas, in March. Hehir (see page 14) qualified for the NCAA meet with a second-place finish in the 3,000 at the ACC indoor championships, where he also won the 5,000-meter run and was named the meet’s MVP.

Syracuse men’s lacrosse head coach John Desko ’79 collected the 200th win of his career in February when the Orange defeated Cornell, 14-6, in the 100th meeting between the upstate New York rivals in the Carrier Dome.

Three Syracuse men’s soccer players were selected in the 2014 Major League Soccer (MLS) SuperDraft. All-America goalie Alex Bono ’16 (see page 14) and defender Skylar Thomas ’15 were both first-round selections of Toronto FC, with Bono picked sixth overall and Thomas 11th. Defender Jordan Murrell ’15 was chosen in the third round (57th overall) by Real Salt Lake. Bono and Thomas are the first two Orange players to be picked in the first round, and Bono is the highest pick in Syracuse history.

NCAA Imposes Sanctions on SU

In March, the NCAA leveled a number of sanctions against the SU men’s basketball and football programs—including five years of probation—for rules violations. The decision followed a nearly eight-year investigation that reviewed conduct from 2001-02 through 2011-12. None of the allegations involved current student-athletes.

SU initially self-reported potential violations to the NCAA in 2007 and conducted its own internal investigation. As part of the process, the University self-imposed penalties, including a post-season ban on the men’s basketball team this season. While the University acknowledged it accepts several of the NCAA’s penalties, it is appealing a couple of them. For the latest information, go to www.ncaupdatesyr.com.
People with Parkinson’s Find Relief on Dance Floor

ON A FROSTY JANUARY DAY A SEEMINGLY UNLIKELY GROUP OF DANCERS WARMS UP IN A STUDIO NEAR CAMPUS. LED BY TUMAY TUNUR, A POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER IN THE BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT WHO IS ALSO A TRAINED DANCER, THE LIVELY GATHERING INCLUDES COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH PARKINSON’S DISEASE—for whom the class is intended—JOINED BY THEIR FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND CAREGIVERS. ONCE THE MUSIC BEGINS, HOWEVER, NO ONE’S FOCUS IS ON ILLNESS. EVERYONE IS TOO BUSY CONCENTRATING ON TUNUR’S COLORFUL INSTRUCTIONS—“IMAGINE YOU ARE MOVING INSIDE A POOL FILLED WITH PEANUT BUTTER”—AND MIRRORING HER GRACEFUL, PLAYFUL MOVEMENTS. AND BEFORE THEY KNOW IT, A LAUGHTER-FILLED HOUR HAS PASSED.

The idea for the classes originated with neuroscientist Donna Korol, a biology professor in the College of Arts and Sciences, who was inspired by the Dance for PD program created by the Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG) with the Brooklyn Parkinson’s Group. In April 2014, Korol and Tunur collaborated with SU Arts Engage and the New York City-based MMDG to present a two-day dance workshop for Central New Yorkers with Parkinson’s disease, a chronic and progressive movement disorder affecting more than half-a-million Americans. Korol and Tunur now partner with the Syracuse University Aging Studies Institute, the Dance Theater of Syracuse, and the Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services to offer the free weekly classes. The dance classes are also part of a bigger initiative, Movement for Healthy Aging, being developed by Korol, Tunur, and colleagues. “Dancers need to work on similar things as people with Parkinson’s,” says Tunur, who attended a Dance for PD training workshop to prepare to offer the classes. “Balance and flexibility, physical conditioning and strength, and expression and storytelling—all those are common goals.”

The objective of the classes is twofold, Korol says: to provide an immersive creative experience for participants, and to learn more about the ways dance can complement traditional medical interventions and help people with Parkinson’s manage their symptoms, improve their quality of life, and maintain a sense of grace and dignity while living with a challenging chronic condition. “Though dancing is neither a cure for Parkinson’s nor a substitute for medical regimens, it can provide temporary relief from the everyday challenges of movement difficulties that people with Parkinson’s confront,” says Korol, whose research focuses on the underlying cell and molecular changes that occur in the brain with aging. “We’re trying to understand why individuals who could otherwise not move—who can be frozen by the disease—can actually dance. And we hear all the time from people who take these classes that they’ll become stuck in the aisle of the grocery store, for example, and simply can’t initiate movement—at least not until they imagine their choreographed moves. Only then are they able to start pushing their cart.”

According to Rosanne Suskin, a Syracuse resident who is active with local Parkinson’s support groups, the classes are fun and beneficial not only for Parkinson’s patients, but also for their family members. “There’s something amazing about what happens here—all the concentration that’s involved, combined with the beat of the music and just being with other people,” she says. “Even if you can’t do all the movements all the time, you’re thinking and you’re moving and you’re trying. And you feel better.”

—Amy Speach
Eating Local

IF YOU ENJOY PLUCKING APPLES FROM A TREE, gathering homegrown green beans from a backyard garden, or braking for sweet corn at a roadside stand, there’s no doubt you relish locally grown fruits and vegetables. “Asparagus is amazing when it’s coming on,” says Jennifer Wilkins, the Daina E. Falk Endowed Professor of Practice in Nutrition at the Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics. “Talk about a rambunctious growing season! It’s so short, but you can do a lot of other things with asparagus—pickle it, can it, freeze it—and still enjoy it at different times of the year.”

For Wilkins, the idea of taking advantage of such offerings led to the creation of a food guide for the Northeast that emphasizes a nutritious, seasonally varied diet fueled by local and regional products. As national food recommendations evolved during the past two decades, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Guide Pyramid (1992) to the current MyPlate (2011), Wilkins took the dietary guidelines a step further, developing the Northeast Regional Food Guide (1996) while on the Cornell University faculty. In 2014, she updated the guide—the first of its kind in the country—producing MyPlate Northeast. “When I had just moved to the area from Seattle, I was interested in learning about the Northeast food system and what we produce here agriculturally,” says Wilkins, who joined the Department of Public Health, Food Studies, and Nutrition at Falk last year. “The idea was to put dietary guidelines into the context of the Northeast region.”

“The idea was to put dietary guidelines into the context of the Northeast region.”

—JENNIFER WILKINS, nutrition professor

While many foods—such as dairy and meat products, eggs, and whole grains—are available year-round in the Northeast, most regional fruits and vegetables are best enjoyed during their peak times, though some, such as apples and root crops like carrots, store well and maintain their quality for extended periods. According to Wilkins, new food technologies, including enhanced temperature and humidity controls, have extended growing seasons and improved storage capabilities. In Wilkins’s guide, the Northeast stretches from Maine to Delaware and features different climatic zones, ones that are continually changing, providing varied growing seasons and a wider range of foods and availability. “The picture of what is local and seasonal is really a moving target,” she says.

With many food consumers attentive to locavore dining trends, the role of farmers’ markets, community-supported agriculture, and farm-to-school programs have increasingly shaped what appears on the supper table. From an environmental sustainability perspective, Wilkins says it’s important to consider the costs of today’s national and global food distribution system and embrace foods that provide maximum nutrition and energy versus per-gallon fuel costs—a current research interest of hers. It’s also important to remember food’s multifaceted roles in our society, with its connections to culture, ethnicity, history, and the environment. “All food is local somewhere,” Wilkins says. “If you realize the different costs in having food come from distant places all the time, you’re more likely to care more about protecting the land around you and the farms in your region.”

—Jay Cox
TEJ BHATIA IS NOT EXACTLY THE cloak-and-dagger type, but the affable, slightly built professor, with a mop of brown hair and thick moustache, is proof that appearances are deceiving. Which is probably a good thing, considering his line of work. A linguistics professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics at the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), Bhatia is a faculty fellow in the college’s Forensic and National Security Sciences Institute (FNSSI). “Tej’s work brings together several key disciplines, including psychology, linguistics, and pattern recognition,” says James T. Spencer, Meredith Professor of Chemistry and executive director of FNSSI. “He sets high standards of excellence that open up new multidisciplinary dimensions of the field.”

To be sure, the FNSSI work of Bhatia—who also oversees A&S’s South Asian Languages Program—marks the culmination of years of study in practically all branches of linguistics. “The conscious and unconscious dimensions of linguistic knowledge are central to understanding the workings of the traumatic mind,” says Bhatia, who is invited to work on cases involving intercepted cell phone conversations, money laundering, and people seeking political asylum. “This knowledge may be applied to forensic linguistics, forensic psychiatrics, and computational linguistics.”

One of Bhatia’s projects involves biometric forensic psychiatrics speech—a rapidly growing field drawing on forensic linguistics and forensic psychiatrics. “This project bridges the gap between the study of the language of sentimentality, identity, and trauma issues by carrying out theoretical and applied research,” says Bhatia, who is collaborating with James Knoll, professor of psychiatry and director of forensic psychiatrics at SUNY Upstate Medical University.

As an example of biometric forensic psychiatrics speech, Bhatia cites the Unabomber case in which a reclusive mathematician mailed and hand-delivered a series of sophisticated “letter bombs” in the 1980s and ’90s, killing three people and injuring two dozen more. Bhatia says it was linguistic analysis—the study of word choice and other linguistic patterns in the suspect’s writings—that ultimately led the FBI to the Unabomber. “While forensic psychiatrics provides insight into the dark side of mental health, it has not focused on language to identify the ‘linguistic fingerprints’ left by individuals prone to violence or trauma,” says Bhatia, vice president and president-elect of the International Association for World Englishes. “Forensic linguistics can complement forensic science, as well as be the only tool with which to solve forensic problems, as in the case of the Unabomber.”

Bhatia is also helping to develop the Communicated Threat Assessment Multilingual Database (CTAMD), a one-of-a-kind repository of “threatening” documents that has implications for intelligence operations. “CTAMD will provide the infrastructure needed to achieve both theoretical and applied goals in forensic biometrics, related to the use of language,” says Bhatia, who, along with fellow A&S professor William C. Ritchie, is editor-in-chief of Brill Research Perspectives in Multilingualism and Second Language Acquisition (Brill, 2015). “It’s been my lifelong ambition to build such a repository, providing new ways to study the visual and verbal markers of deception and violence from the writings of, interviews with, and court documents of master criminals.”
**PROJECT:** CYCLOOXYGENASE-2: An Endogenous Neuromodulator in Seizures and Epileptogenesis

**DEPARTMENT:** Biology

**SPONSOR:** National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**AMOUNT AWARDED:** $444,000 (September 1, 2014–August 31, 2017)

**INVESTIGATOR:** James Hewett

**BACKGROUND:** The brain controls a myriad of complex mental and behavioral processes that are made possible by the transmission of electrical signals between neurons. Epilepsy is a chronic debilitating disorder of the brain in which abnormal bursts of electrical activity of neurons predispose affected individuals to recurrent spontaneous seizures. Research in my laboratory in the Department of Biology at Syracuse University focuses on the premise that neurons have ways to suppress abnormal electrical activity, thus reducing the likelihood of seizures. One of these ways appears to be through the release of local hormone-like substances called prostaglandins. Prostaglandin production in the brain is linked to neuronal electrical activity by a protein called cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2). The level of this enzyme is rapidly increased by epileptic seizures (see figure). Moreover, we have shown that seizures are worsened when the activity of this protein is blocked, but suppressed when neurons are forced to make more of the protein. These observations support the hypothesis that COX-2 is an endogenous antiepileptic pathway in the brain. This notion forms the basis of my research that was recently awarded funding by a grant from the National Institutes of Health. This award will not only permit my laboratory to continue to expand our knowledge about how the brain protects itself against abnormal electrical activity, but it will also allow me to continue to expose undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Biology to biomedical research.

**IMPACT:** It is estimated that epilepsy affects nearly 1 in 100 individuals in the United States. It can be acquired at any time over the life span, although the incidence is highest in children and elderly people. The effects on normal brain development and function can be severe and often render routine daily activities difficult or impossible. Unfortunately, current pharmacotherapies are frequently limited by adverse side effects and are not always effective, resulting in a high incidence of intractable epilepsy. Although advances have been made toward the development of safer antiepileptic drugs, drug resistance remains an important clinical problem. Moreover, no treatments are available to prevent the acquisition of epilepsy, and curative approaches are limited to surgical resection of affected brain areas in a very small percentage of patients. Thus, an important goal of my research is to provide a foundation upon which more effective therapeutic approaches can be developed.

**FIGURE:** The number of neurons that express COX-2 in the mouse brain is increased after a strong brief seizure. Green color marks neurons that express COX-2; blue color marks all cells.

*UPPER PANEL:* The number of cells marked in green is very low in the absence of a seizure.

*LOWER PANEL:* This number is increased markedly after a seizure. Note that both panels show the same population of neurons from different mouse brains. These data are from the thesis research of Yifan Gong, a Ph.D. student in Professor Hewett’s laboratory.

Images courtesy of James Hewett
You plan your career.
You plan your retirement.
Now plan to change a life.

As a child, Janet Kay Smith ’61 dreamed her twirling talent would take her to college. Her dream came true when Syracuse University offered her a scholarship and chose her to be the featured twirler for the marching band. Now, Jan and her husband, John Dean ’59, have made a lead gift from their retirement assets to establish the Janet Kay Smith Feature Twirler Scholarship, to give future twirlers the same opportunity.

Anyone can plan an SU legacy.
You, too, can bring your passion to life at SU. A planned gift—no matter its size—has endless potential to support students’ educational dreams. Whether your gift is one of cash, securities, real estate, business partnership interests, retirement plans, or life insurance—it can truly make all the difference.

Meet the Deans and learn how you can help them fully endow their scholarship for future twirlers at changealife.syr.edu/dean.
WHEN COMPUTER SCIENCE PROFESSOR Wenliang “Kevin” Du discusses the importance of cybersecurity, he likens it to building a beautiful house and forgetting to put a lock on the door. “The people who write codes and develop systems often don’t know the potential risks,” Du says. “The developer is creating a system in a benign environment—and never thinks to put a lock on it, a filter that will block potential attacks. That’s a common problem. We want our students to learn about all these potential attacks, so they can identify existing attacks and also have the skills to see other security vulnerabilities.”

Since arriving at the College of Engineering and Computer Science in 2002, Du has been on a mission to teach others how to prevent cyberattacks. As a complement to the computer security and Internet security courses Du teaches to a mix of undergraduates and graduate students, he has developed a free series of 30 hands-on Security Education (SEED) labs designed to help students master the intricacies of cybersecurity and apply their skills to solve real-world problems. With the support of National Science Foundation (NSF) awards in 2002 and 2014, Du has expanded his reach, sharing the open-source SEED labs with more than 250 educators in more than 26 countries. As part of his 2014 NSF award, Du, an expert on Android system security, is also developing SEED labs for mobile platforms and will host a workshop on campus this summer.

The instructional labs are done in a contained environment using virtualization software that students download onto their personal computers, basically creating a computer within their computers that allows them to do such things as form networks, launch attacks on one another, and learn how to defend against them. “We want to teach the students to be good defenders, but part of that is knowing how to attack,” Du says. Computer science doctoral student Xiao Zhang, a teaching assistant for Du, says the labs’ practical training reinforces the classroom concepts. “In transferring the theory into practice, sometimes there are unexpected difficulties,” Zhang says. “You want to achieve one thing, but in that process you may make some mistakes, which lead to other security vulnerabilities.”

The labs present an array of different security situations that students would not encounter elsewhere, according to Carter Yagemann ’15, a computer science major who took Du’s Internet Security course and works on his research team. “You learn about specific attacks and really build up practical skills,” Yagemann says. “If you’re not very systematic and don’t approach the scenario with the right mindset, you’ll leave holes and then you have problems.”

Electrical and computer engineering doctoral candidate Paul Ratazzi credits the labs for expanding the depth of his knowledge and enhancing his interactions with colleagues when he learns about their projects at the Air Force Research Laboratory in Rome, New York, where he is a computer security expert. “I can keep up with the technical details,” Ratazzi says. “There’s no way to get through those courses and labs without really understanding every aspect of not only the labs, but also the actual details of the implementation.”

Whether hack attacks are known ones, such as Heartbleed or Shellshock (which was used against SONY Pictures), or new ones, Du is poised to ensure others are well versed in knowing how to counter them. “When you’re dealing with real hackers,” he says, “they don’t care about the difficulties, they will take it on.”
VETERANS’ HEALTH INITIATIVE

Moving Forward with Web-Based PTSD Therapy

Life is stressful, but war takes that stress to an altogether different level. Psychology professor Steve Maisto of the College of Arts and Sciences wants to help our combat veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance misuse issues. Maisto and colleagues Andrew Rosenblum, Lisa Marsch, and Kyle Possemato, along with a team that includes four SU graduate students, have developed and are testing a web-based, patient self-management program—Coming Home and Moving Forward—that teaches cognitive-behavioral therapy skills to vets to help them manage PTSD symptoms and alcohol and drug abuse.

Maisto, whose research focuses on alcohol and drug assessment and treatment methods, says the online format suits the more than 1.6 million veterans who served in the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns. “The stigma of mental health problems remains a major barrier to getting help; not having to go to specialty care for a substance abuse or PTSD program is a big plus with them,” he says. “The vets also liked the computer-delivered, self-paced format. These veterans are younger than the average VA patient and comfortable using computer technology.”

The program content was derived from successful cognitive-behavioral therapy treatments for substance use disorders, and utilizes an interactive delivery system that has been proven effective in promoting knowledge and skills. Vets move through exercises designed to help them develop and strengthen their ability to self-regulate, and cope with anxious, trauma-related thoughts that contribute to maladaptive behaviors. The self-management strategies encourage and reinforce them to actively learn and apply the new skills to manage their problems.

For example, one of the 24 modules, Identifying Automatic Thoughts, introduces the concept of traumatic thoughts, and how certain emotions and environmental events can elicit thoughts that can have a damaging influence on emotions and behavior. Another, Challenging Automatic Thoughts, is a series of exercises that asks veterans to tackle distorted thinking by developing facts that dispute the troubled thought and constructing alternative responses.

The veterans like the program. “One vet commented that he loved the program and finds it very helpful, and that others have noticed a change in him,” says Maisto, who’s glad he can help. “My work with them has exposed me to the very substantial, in some cases unimaginable, ordeals and trauma they have endured for the sake of our national interests. I feel indebted to them, as should all U.S. citizens.”

With funding from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Maisto helped develop the web intervention at the VA Center of Integrated Healthcare in Syracuse, where he has served as executive director since 2007. The clinical trial is in its fifth and final year; outcomes and follow-up will dictate what comes next. “I’ve been involved with the VA in various ways—clinician, researcher, administrator—for over 30 years, including pro bono clinical work at the Syracuse VA,” Maisto says. “I get a lot of gratification, both personal and professional, in doing this work.”

—John Martin

“The stigma of mental health problems remains a major barrier to getting help; not having to go to specialty care for a substance abuse or PTSD program is a big plus.”

—STEVE MAISTO, psychology professor
Orange All-Americans

FOR THE FALL AND WINTER sports seasons, seven Syracuse student-athletes representing four sports were recognized as All-Americans. For the Syracuse field hockey team, the trio of Alyssa Manley ’16, Emma Russell ’16, and Lieke Visser ’18 earned All-America accolades from the Longstreth/National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA). Manley and Russell were named to the first team and Visser to the third team. All-America honors from the United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association went to Orange cross country runners Martin Hehir ’15 and MJ Erb ’17 (who has since transferred). In men’s soccer, Alex Bono ’16 was named to the All-America First Team by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. And for the Orange men’s basketball squad, Rakeem Christmas ’14 received All-America recognition from USA Today (second team), The Associated Press and Sporting News (third team), and Collegelnsider.com (Lute Olson team).

**SOCCER**

**ALEX BONO ’16**

**Position:** Goalkeeper

**Major:** Broadcast and digital journalism

**Hometown:** Baldwinsville, New York

**Season Highlights:** Finalist for MAC Hermann Trophy (national player of the year); ACC Defensive Player of the Year; set Syracuse single-season records for goals-against average (0.55), shutouts (12), and minutes played (1,949).

**CROSS COUNTRY**

**MARTIN HEHIR ’15**

**Majors:** Biology, Spanish

**Hometown:** Washingtonville, New York

**Season Highlights:** Finished 38th in NCAA meet to earn All-America honors; won the ACC championship; ACC Men’s Cross Country Performer of the Year; All-ACC Academic Team; ACC Cross Country Scholar Athlete of the Year.
FIELD HOCKEY

EMMA RUSSELL ’16
Position: Forward
Major: Economics
Hometown: Enniskerry, Ireland
Season Highlights:
All-ACC First Team and Tournament Team; Longstreth/NFHCA All-Mideast Region First Team; All-ACC Academic Team; set ACC tournament record with six goals; led SU in scoring with 46 points on 21 goals and four assists.

LIEKE VISSER ’18
Position: Midfielder
Major: Public health
Hometown: Bunnik, Netherlands
Season Highlights: Longstreth/NFHCA All-Mideast Region First Team; All-ACC Second Team; led Orange with 17 assists, the third highest total in program history.

ALYSSA MANLEY ’16
Position: Midfielder
Major: Child and family studies
Hometown: Lititz, Pennsylvania
Season Highlights: All-NCAA and All-ACC tournament teams; Longstreth/NFHCA All-Mideast Region First Team; ninth player in school history to earn multiple All-America honors (third-team selection in 2013).

BASKETBALL

RAKEEM CHRISTMAS ’14
Position: Forward/Center
Major: Instructional design, development, and evaluation (graduate student)
Hometown: Philadelphia
Season Highlights:
Finalist for Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Lute Olson, Oscar Robertson, and John R. Wooden awards; ACC Most Improved Player; ACC Co-Defensive Player of the Year; All-ACC First Team; ACC All-Defensive Team; averaged a team-best 17.5 points, 9.1 rebounds, and 2.5 blocked shots per game this season.

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AS A SPORT MANAGEMENT MAJOR, Scott Kevy ‘15 enjoys blending his passion for sports with his interest in technology. So far, it’s been a winning combination for Kevy, who wants to be an innovator in the world of sport business. To that end, he has honed his skills in social media, which he believes is the easiest, cheapest, and coolest way for sport enterprises to communicate with fans and keep the conversation going. “If they don’t take up the technology, they will get left behind,” he says.

Kevy’s understanding of the integration of technology and the sport business led him to minor in information management and technology at the School of Information Studies and to hold several social media management internships, including serving as a digital media intern for SU Athletics, a member of the Digital and Social Media Team for Enrollment Management at Syracuse University, and as a social media student consultant for the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics. Kevy’s resume also features internships at Monumental Sports and Entertainment in Washington, D.C., and Turner Sports in New York City. This semester, for his Senior Capstone Experience, he worked as a business solutions student associate at The Madison Square Garden Company. “Going back to my freshman year, I didn’t know anyone in the industry,” says Kevy, who grew up in Rockville, Maryland. “Now it’s senior year and I’m in New York City. I have been able to grow as a professional individual.”

With an excellent academic performance and compelling portfolio, Kevy has become distinguished among his peers. In 2013 and 2014, he was selected to attend the Michigan Sport Business Conference (MSBC) at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. At the October 2014 conference, Kevy was named one of the 10 recipients of the BIG (Build, Inspire, Grow) Initiative Award by the MSBC planning panel, which recognizes outstanding student leaders for their exceptional success in the sport business industry.

Rick Burton ’80, David B. Falk Distinguished Professor of Sport Management, has had Kevy in a couple of classes and calls him one of his best students. “Scott is not thinking about today. He’s thinking about tomorrow,” Burton says. “And he is not thinking about himself, but the people around him.”

Kevy believes there is always goodness in the world because of sports—and is proud of the accomplishments of the Sport Management (SPM) Club, which he joined as a first-year student. As the marketing chair for the club’s 10th Annual Charity Sports Auction in December, Kevy developed a marketing campaign to promote the auction in the community, managing social media and dealing with local media. The club raised $59,185 for Make-A-Wish of Central New York. “It’s a way of giving back to the community,” he says.

Kevy hopes to continue building on his experiences and one day parlay them into leading the business side of a professional sports team. “I really enjoy collaborative partnerships and marketing,” he says. “All my learning allows me to prepare for the future.”

—Ruobing Li
ON ANY GIVEN DAY YOU CAN FIND LESLIE Cortese performing the typical duties of an administrative specialist. On top of that, she helps supervise more than 25 leadership interns tasked with running the Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service and serves as a surrogate mother to many students who think of the center as a home away from home. “I love it when the interns have a few moments just to hang out in the office and talk about what’s going on in their lives,” says Cortese, who joined the Shaw Center staff in 2010. “Because we see the students several times a week, they tend to let their guard down with us, and I can keep an eye and ear on their moods in case someone needs a little extra attention or some TLC.”

A Syracuse native, Cortese graduated from SUNY Fredonia in 1977 with a bachelor’s degree in business. She stayed on as a residence hall director for three more years before launching a career in telecommunications, first at a small upstate New York company, then at General Electric in Schenectady, New York. She moved on to IBM in Stamford, Connecticut, where she worked as a national account manager for the ROLM telecommunications product. After marrying, Cortese moved back to Syracuse, started a family, and took a hiatus from the world of telecommunications when her children were young. “My children were 2 and 4 years old, and I was traveling and working all the time,” she says. “When the company was about to add more territory for me to cover, I decided I needed to have a more active hand in raising my children, so I stepped down.”

In 2006, Cortese was ready to rejoin the workforce on a part-time basis. She was fortunate to find a job-share position as an administrative specialist at Syracuse University’s Office of Government and Community Relations. Four-and-a-half years later, she moved to a full-time position at the Shaw Center, which promotes and supports community service as an essential part of the student learning experience. In addition to taking care of payroll and procurements, and making sure the telephones and front desk are staffed, Cortese sets up the interns’ schedules, monitors their attendance, instructs and reminds them of operational rules, and trains them to help keep the place humming. “I think of Leslie as the conductor of an energetic unruly orchestra,” says Pamela Kirwin Heintz ’91, G’08, associate vice president and director of the Shaw Center. “By bringing harmony to our workplace, she does an amazing job of making sure everything runs smoothly.”

A coach, taskmaster, and troubleshooter all in one, Cortese also directly oversees the interns who perform the center’s public relations duties and manage the logistics of transporting 400 to 500 students to literacy tutoring sessions and community engagement projects around the Syracuse City School District. Under Cortese’s steady guidance, the transportation team coordinates pick-up and drop-off requests, handles unforeseen schedule changes due to bad weather, mechanical breakdowns, or miscommunications, and arranges alternate transportation for students when necessary. “There are a lot of moving parts to my job,” she says. “Sometimes I find I need to slow down and take a deep breath.”

—Christine Yackel

LESLIE CORTESE
ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST
Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service
WHEN GEORGE ATHANAS BEGAN working at the University nearly a decade ago, he was happy to discover the Hendricks Chapel Quilters, a group of students, faculty, staff, and community members who meet weekly to create quilts for donation to area family service organizations. As he learned to quilt, he found the perfect outlet for three things he cares deeply about: the creative arts, community collaboration, and giving back. Quilting also serves as a fitting metaphor for his role as an assistant director in the Office of Residence Life (ORL), where he enjoys bringing people together in ways that showcase and multiply their strengths. “In quilting, there are three layers that you stitch together to make them stronger,” says Athanas, whose responsibilities include supervising residence hall staff, overseeing the first-year residential experience, and coordinating various collaborative projects across campus. “It’s the piecing together of different parts to make something new. And when they are joined, they are better, more beautiful, and more valuable.”

His enthusiasm for the field of student affairs grew from his time as an undergraduate at the University of New Hampshire, when he was struggling to choose a major and find his place within the institution. “I had developed a relationship with my RA, who advised me to go through the course catalog and circle every class I would take if I could take anything I wanted,” says Athanas, who unearthed a penchant for community development through the exercise.

He went on to earn a master’s degree in community social psychology from the University of Massachusetts in Lowell, and then circled the globe as a staff member for Semester at Sea. “I got to travel on a floating university around the world,” says Athanas, who’s passionate about travel. “That was an amazing experience—working with students, but also seeing parts of the world I never would have seen.”

Athanas then took a position at Michigan State University, where he worked for nearly 10 years in various residence life positions before joining the ORL team in 2006. Collaboration is the common thread weaving through his efforts at SU, whether he’s joining with colleagues to train resident advisors, partnering with the Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service to create a cross-divisional position for a graduate assistant for civic engagement, or linking up with a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., to annually provide 44 Syracuse students with a service experience working with hungry and homeless people there during Spring Break. “I enjoy the opportunity to be creative and innovative, and to work in partnership with others to make new and different things happen so students have amazing collegiate experiences that complement their academics,” says Athanas, who received a 2013 Inspiration Award from the Shaw Center in recognition of his dedication to community engagement experiences for students. “Not everybody gets to say they are able to create space for students to transform, so to be a part of that is really rewarding.”

—Amy Speach
MATH MATTERS

GROWING UP IN BRAZIL WHERE HIS PARENTS were Christian missionaries, Tom Barkley discovered he had a passion for mathematics. He enjoyed helping schoolmates with their homework, and by age 15, knew he wanted to be a math teacher. “I have the ability to simplify math problems and break them down into smaller bite-size chunks,” says Barkley, a professor of finance practice at the Martin J. Whitman School of Management whose mother is from Kentucky and father is from Northern Ireland. “I take tremendous delight in seeing students have that light-bulb moment when they finally grasp a complex concept.”

At 16, Barkley moved to Northern Ireland to live with his aunt and uncle on their farm while he finished high school under the British education system. He went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Imperial College London. After college, Barkley tried applying his math skills to business at a branch of NatWest Bank just outside London, but soon became bored because it only required basic arithmetic. “I got a post-graduate certificate to become a high school math teacher,” he says, “and was hired to teach at Kingsway Academy in the Bahamas.”

After five years of island life, Barkley eventually settled in Syracuse by way of the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona, where he earned an MBA degree; the Texas-based Enron Corporation, where he worked for the research group; a year managing his father’s Christian bookstore in Brazil; and the University of Florida, where he earned a Ph.D. degree in quantitative finance. A Whitman faculty member since 2007, he teaches courses in corporate financial policy and strategy, derivatives, working capital management, and financial analysis. “As a professor of practice, I bring an understanding of how business and research work on the other side of the fence,” Barkley says. “With one foot in academics and the other in business, I can tell my students about careers in finance and what they need to focus on in their studies.”

In addition to his academic activities, Barkley sits on the supervisory committee of a local credit union, works for the Chartered Financial Analyst Institute, and teaches a Bible class. And he indulges his other passion—billiards—which he learned by playing with his cousin out in the barn on his Irish uncle’s farm. “Billiards is a mathematical game,” says Barkley, who is a member of the American Poolplayers Association. “It’s all about understanding friction, how the balls bounce, geometry, symmetry—it’s a great way to relax.”

Barkley says many people ask him why he stays in Syracuse when he has lived in so many warm and sunny climates. “At first it was difficult to adjust to the cold weather, but after a few years I asked myself, ‘Why would I want to move?’” he says. “I work with some of the greatest people and do a job I love. I tell my students if they can find a job they’re passionate about and are good at, they’ll never ‘work’ a day in their lives.”

—Christine Yackel
WHITNEY MARIN ’15 CAME TO THE NEWHOUSE SCHOOL as an undeclared major. But she knew the school—and Syracuse University—was exactly what she wanted: a place with a wide range of study options and unlimited learning opportunities to explore. While in high school, she considered pursuing a career in broadcast journalism, but a first-year Maxwell School course in public policy set her on a different path. “My focus is on education policy,” says the television, radio, film and policy studies dual major from Cape Coral, Florida. “I would love to use education-related topics—social justice issues, especially—in my films. I think it’s important to understand the policies that govern certain aspects of society as well as how to tell those stories, whether in narrative or documentary form.”

A founding member and the treasurer of cinematic fraternity Delta Kappa Alpha, one of the University’s newest professional fraternities, Marin is involved in an array of campus organizations. She’s a resident advisor, a participant in the Rising Leaders Fellowship Program through Teach for America, and works in the Newhouse Career Development Center. In 2013, she was honored with a Chancellor’s Award for Public Engagement and Scholarship.

In her junior year, Marin traveled to California for Spring Break in Silicon Valley, a five-day immersion experience offered through the School of Information Studies that brings Syracuse students together with start-up entrepreneurs in the world-renowned tech incubator. “As a film student, I felt like an outsider at first,” she says. That changed, once she saw how multimedia has a place in the tech world and heard the career stories of the people working there. “People come from all over the country and the world to take their slice of the booming market of innovation,” she wrote in a blog during the trip. “I fit right in.”

That excursion was followed by an even longer jaunt a few months later, when Marin joined fellow Newhouse students for a three-week Bollywood immersion in filmmaking and production in India’s famed film capital of Mumbai. Then it was back to California in August for the LA Semester, learning about the American film business from industry professionals. She also spent time in France, participating in the Paris Noir program through SU Abroad, doing an independent study of differences between the French and American educational systems. During Spring Break this year, she volunteered on a film venue team assisting with the operation of the South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin, Texas.

True to form, she’s exploring her options for life after Commencement, almost all of which involve travel—most preferably spending more time in France. Looking back, she believes the decision to come north for an education was the right one. “I wanted a school where students are interested in all forms of media, unlike just going to film school,” she says. “I felt safe at Syracuse. I knew I would be in a place where I could change my mind if I wanted to, but still get my degree on time.”

—Paula Meseroll
OPENING DOORS TO LATIN AMERICA

RAFAEL FERNÁNDEZ DE CASTRO

SOMETHAT poetically refers to the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs as “a jewel of the U.S. university system.” A noted Latin American scholar, policy maker, academic, diplomat, and writer who joined Maxwell in July 2014 as the Jay and Debe Moskowitz Chair in U.S.-Mexican Relations, he feels privileged to be charged with “making this jewel better known” in Latin America and creating more opportunities for Maxwell students there.

“Latin America is a key region for the U.S.,” says Fernández de Castro, founder of the School of International Studies at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México and former foreign policy advisor to Mexican President Felipe Calderon. “We are in the same hemisphere. We have a shared past, a common present, and will have a shared future. So it is very important that top American decision makers—and some of our students who will become leaders in the U.S.—understand how to view and deal with the complexities and challenges of Latin America.”

At Syracuse, his research and teaching focus on decision making in Mexican foreign policy, U.S.-Mexican relations—particularly immigration and security issues, and social outcomes for Mexican immigrants in the United States. He also organizes conferences and symposia on topics related to U.S.-Mexico relations and advises students interested in studying or working in Latin America. “I find it fascinating to work with and to teach students who are very good and competitive, who try hard, aim well, and know why they are here,” says Fernández de Castro, who holds a Ph.D. degree in political science from Georgetown University. “They are like I was 30 years ago—very eager to work for my country. They know they are fortunate to be here, and they are ready to give something back to society.”

Situated in the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, Fernández de Castro feels at home within the interdisciplinary nature of the Maxwell School. “I never have experienced in my professional life such a welcoming community,” he says. “We not only have a superb academic team, but also people are willing to help each other. There is a nice spirit of contributing to others that I find very special.”

Above all, he values having opportunities to contribute on a large scale to the education of future world leaders and policy makers. He points to the school’s Carnegie International Policy Scholars Consortium and Network, which, thanks to a $1 million grant from the Carnegie Corp. of New York, will bring together faculty and doctoral students from the nation’s top international relations graduate programs. “I really feel I participate in a dialogue that is looking into the future of how to best prepare students to have a lot of knowledge, and to apply that knowledge not only to academia, but also to governmental jobs,” Fernández de Castro says. “That’s been very interesting here, and very meaningful and appealing to me.”

—Amy Speach
PASSION for FASHION

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY and supermodel Emme are shaping the future of apparel design for full-figured women

BY CHRISTINE YACKEL
A WAVE OF CHANGE IS SWEEPING ACROSS THE AMERICAN APPAREL LANDSCAPE. No longer will full-figured women be relegated to wearing muumuus and tent dresses thanks to the extraordinary efforts of supermodel and entrepreneur Emme ‘85, who for more than a decade has been on a mission to attain equal fashion status for consumers wearing size 12 and above. “Although the average American woman wears a 14/16, department stores typically carry only one or two items in that size,” says Emme, who achieved international fame in the ‘90s as the world’s first “plus-size” supermodel and is a nationally renowned advocate for positive body image and self-esteem. “Curvy women want fashionable clothes too, yet designers, manufacturers, and retailers continue to overlook our needs.”

Emme knew she had to think innovatively if she had any hope of modernizing a 120-year-old apparel industry steeped in tradition. Toward that end, she explored forming a partnership with her alma mater to teach the next generation of designers how to create fashion forward apparel for all women, including those with full figures. She proposed sponsoring Fashion Without Limits—a competition for students in the junior-year draping class who would design an evening dress exclusively for her. The winner of the competition, to be selected by Emme with input from the design faculty at the end of the spring semester, will receive the 12+ Emme Award and $500. As an added bonus, Emme will wear the winning design at a red carpet event or in a fashion magazine photo. “My fashion design colleague, Jeffrey Mayer, and I thought it was a great idea, so we had Emme come to campus to kick off the competition last fall,” says Professor Todd Conover ‘95, fashion design program coordinator in the College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA). “Someday we’ll look back and

Photos by Steve Santori

Supermodel Emme ‘85 kicks off the inaugural year of her Fashion Without Limits initiative during a convocation at the Nancy Cantor Warehouse last fall.
wonder why the 12-plus market has been overlooked for so long.”

BILLION-DOLLAR BONANZA
Last November, VPA hosted a media breakfast at Syracuse University’s Fisher Center in New York City to publicly launch the project and discuss the ongoing challenges full-figured women face when shopping for clothes. The panel discussion, Fashion Without Limits: Changing the Face of Fashion, was moderated by Emme and featured Aimee Cheshire, co-founder and president of heygorgeous.com, an online shopping site for full-figured fashions; Liz Black, who writes the P.S. It’s Fashion blog; Susan Moses, celebrity stylist and designer; Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst of the NPD Group; and faculty members Conover and Mayer.

Moses spoke passionately about her belief that women of all ages, shapes, and sizes crave beautiful clothing that is stylish, comfortable, and flattering. Yet department and specialty stores offer limited selections for full-figured women, who are often consigned to online shopping only—adding time and extra expense to what can be an already frustrating experience. Women also pay more for plus-size apparel, while big and tall men do not. Black, a vocal advocate for inclusive fashion, said she believes the marketplace for full-figured women is slowly improving and that the brands that don’t get on board will soon be out of business. The panelists agreed that expanding the 12-plus market just makes good business sense.

Cohen estimates 68 percent of women in this country wear size 12 and above, yet only 15 percent of the $100 billion fashion industry is geared toward this underserved population. That leaves about $12 to $14 billion worth of business on the table each year—$17 billion if you add in petite plus and junior plus sizes, Cohen says. He noted online sales show that full-figured fashions have real value in the marketplace. With a 500 percent increase in revenue this past year alone, Cheshire’s heygorgeous.com online success is proof positive that serving this niche market can be lucrative. “Not catering to those extended sizes seems silly to me,” says Michelle Lee ’16, a fashion design major who attended the media event last fall. “In order for me to accomplish anything within the fashion design industry, I believe I need to know about more than just what looks good on a size 6 model.”

CURVES AHEAD
At first, not all of the fashion design students were as enthusiastic as Lee about the Fashion Without Limits initiative. Some were uncomfortable with the idea because, like most young designers, they aspire to create chic fashions for the rail-thin models who strut down the runways of Paris and New York. After much lively discussion, Conover realized not all of the students wanted to be part of this cultural shift, so he made the competition optional. In the end, 90 percent of the students embraced the project. “I think some of the students may have been apprehensive about the idea of designing for an actual person,” says Hannah Ballinger ’16, who had previous experience doing client-based custom work. “I was very excited about the project because the plus-size movement is gaining momentum, and I know this opportunity will have a major impact on my career.”

By conducting research and keeping weekly journals throughout the creative process, students learned to think beyond stereotypes when designing apparel for a woman’s curvy proportions. They soon discovered that drafting a pat-
tern for size 12 and above is not as simple as scaling up a size 6 because the sleeves would hit the floor. So they began by draping their designs in muslin on size 16, 18, and 20 dress forms donated by Wolf Form Company of Englewood, New Jersey, and then turned the drapes into paper patterns. They sewed their garments up again in muslin to check the fit and make any needed alterations, then cut them out of final fabric and sewed them together. “During the inaugural year of the project, the students developed their design ideas in consultation with Emme to reflect her specific style and color preferences,” Conover says. “In the future, we’ll make it more general so students will have greater freedom in the design process.” Emme has made a five-year commitment to the Fashion Without Limits competition, after which time she hopes the concept will be well integrated into the curriculum. Since there are no existing guidelines on the art and science of designing apparel for the full-figured woman, Emme and the SU fashion design team are collaborating on writing the first textbooks of their kind, as well as developing a new curriculum that will revolutionize how fashion design is taught. “We want Syracuse University to be the first fashion design school to develop this idea, and then we’ll make what we learn available to the global fashion industry so that full-figured women’s fashion needs can be served,” Emme says. “It is going to make me very happy to see millions of self-confident women looking and feeling fabulous because of this program.”
With more than a million people in the United States being diagnosed each year, the global nature of the fight against cancer is much in our awareness as a nation. Yet the experiences of those whose lives are directly affected by the disease are highly personal—whether they are traveling the difficult path from diagnosis through treatment to recovery as patients, as the family members and friends who care for and accompany them, or as the medical professionals who advise and treat them.

The challenges can be considerable—from dealing with feelings of fear, anger, and loss of control while simultaneously making complex decisions about how to proceed, to coping with the sometimes brutal side effects posed by treatments. Finding ways to meet those challenges can call on individuals to stretch in new directions—perhaps becoming stronger, more accepting, more flexible, more reliant on others, and better able to focus on simple joys.

What else helps ease the way? “Having the support of family and friends is key,” says social work professor Maria T. Brown G’05, G’10, a two-time breast cancer survivor and online support group leader whose research interests include later-life experiences of survivors. “Even more than that, having other cancer survivors in your life is very important. Good doctors matter, too. But you could have the best medical treatment and still feel alone in the emotional reality of your cancer if you didn’t have the support of family and friends and other people who have been through it.”

Here, three members of the Syracuse University community share their stories of healing from cancer and the unique ways that journey changed their lives.
“You have cancer,” I heard the doctor say. Next I felt a barrage of emotional jolts: fear for the future, dread of a disease I could not comprehend and anger because something was growing inside of me that had no right to be there. Would it destroy me? All these feelings were followed by a very basic animal instinct: I was determined to survive, but how? I didn’t know where to begin. What kind of hurry was I in? How much time would it take to find a solution? Where could I find the necessary doctors? The questions seemed endless.

From Surviving Cancer: Our Voices and Choices, a collaboration compiled and edited by Marion Behr ’61, G’62

To learn more about Marion Behr’s story, turn to the Q&A on the next page »

THE QUESTIONS SEEMED ENDLESS.

THE BOOK IS illustrated with photos of Marion Behr’s sculptures created from radiation cradles. This one is titled Cancel Cancer.

BEYOND CANCER

Artist and breast cancer survivor Marion Behr presents a comprehensive resource for anyone touched by the disease
What inspired the creation of the radiation cradle sculptures that were the impetus for the book?

I was near the end of the whole process [of being treated for breast cancer] and I was having my radiation treatment. I looked up on the shelf and saw stacks of blue radiation cradles like the one I was anchored in at that moment. At other times, other individuals must have been lying in each of those cradles in similar positions to mine. I started to think about the cradles as the people who were in them—wondering what they were thinking and feeling. And then, I started seeing sculptures in my mind, imagining the plastic cradles taking on body-like forms and shapes.

When you have cancer, you often find yourself in waiting rooms with other patients—sitting in this gown, waiting for your turn. People really talk to each other then: about what they’re afraid of, what they’re feeling. So I listened carefully. Then I asked at the hospital if it was possible to take the cradles home. Once used, the cradles could not be recycled, so they were delighted to give them to me. I took them back to the studio and, between treatments, I reshaped the cradles to represent people and their emotions as they fought for a healthy life. And doing that work made the treatments go far away.

I think that has been true for me my whole life—that the artwork has made so many things right.

How did the sculptures lead to the book?

The cancer was discovered because my kids pushed me to get a mammogram. With busy schedules and a very full life, it’s so easy to skip a year or two and not realize how much time has gone by. Thank heaven for my kids! Waiting longer might have caused a considerable problem. Early mammograms can make a difference—it certainly did for me.

Naturally, I went through all the fears and reactions a person has when they learn they have cancer. But as a result of this experience, the sculptures were born. Four exhibits came to life, aimed at encouraging women to get mammograms. During the first show, there was an inspiration to compile the book Surviving Cancer: Our Voices and Choices (WWH Press, 2014). “Survival, for me, is focusing beyond the cancer and living life to its fullest, every day.”

Behr sought out 70 contributors who share their experience, wisdom, and care with others touched by cancer in essays and articles. The book is illustrated with photographs of the sculptures she created out of radiation cradles. Its pages follow the path of an individual’s journey with the disease—from diagnosis through treatment and recovery—interweaving the personal narratives of survivors with the insights of medical professionals and cancer organization leaders. Offering a wealth of information on such topics as research, clinical trials, and financial assistance as well as a comprehensive glossary, it also serves as a guide advocating early detection.
elderly man who sat in front of a sculpture, and I saw that he was really contemplating it—really, really looking. Then he turned around and told me his whole cancer story and a good part of his life story. It was fascinating. And my thought was that it would be great to compile stories like his.

At another show, held in October 2009, many of the people who came had had cancer. And as they looked at the sculptures, conversations started—an empathic, detailed sharing. The curator and two others who worked at the gallery decided to have a panel discussion that ended up being very inspiring. That was the book’s real beginning, and led to a collaborative process that took 10 hours a day for four years.

What advice can you offer others with cancer based on your experiences?

One thing I learned is how important it is for both the cancer patient and family members to ask questions. And it is important to have an advocate—a relative or friend—come along to your hospital and doctor visits to ask questions you might miss and to take notes on the answers. For example, my husband once questioned a technician who was taking my blood about the material of the gloves he was wearing. They were made of latex, which I am allergic to. Under the circumstances, I wouldn’t have thought to ask.

I also learned not to be afraid to get second opinions or to have reports double checked. For me, doing so prevented an additional surgery under my left arm. That was a huge relief, since I am left-handed and need my left arm to create art.

What is it about having cancer that so often ignites the sense of wanting to help others?

It can be terrifying to hear those words, “You have cancer.” But if you talk to somebody else who has had cancer—that can really make a difference. They’ve had rough experiences and still come through. And I think when that happens, there is a different value placed on life. You just don’t know what works for a person to relieve the pain of what they’ve been through. With cancer, it really does seem to be, in many cases, that the answer is people helping other people. You hear about people who are terrified, and you’ve been there, and so you think, yes, there is a way I can really make a difference. This book is the joint effort of all its contributors to do that.
ROB LONG ‘12, G’14 DOESN’T WANT YOUR SYMPATHY. Not for his brain tumor and cancer treatment. Not for the loss of his NFL dream. He considers himself a lucky man. “I’ve had so many amazing experiences I never would have had without cancer,” he says. “There have been times that have been hard, but I’ve come out a stronger, better version of myself.”

Long points to the large Rubbermaid bin in his bedroom in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, stuffed to the brim with cards and letters wishing him well. “The amount of support for me and my family from the entire Syracuse community has been nothing short of amazing,” he says.

It’s testimony to his character and his status as one of SU’s football greats. Long may be the best punter in Orange football history. Named to the Freshman All-America Team by Sporting News and College Sports Report, he was a three-time All-Big East punter and two-time Big East All-Academic Team selection. In Syracuse team history, Long is second in career average (43.3 yards per punt), and booted four punts of 70 yards or more, including a 73-yarder that has him tied for second place. During his senior season, he averaged 43.84 yards per punt and was considered one of the top college punters heading into the 2011 NFL Draft.

But in early December 2010, after battling headaches and nausea all season, Long had an MRI that revealed a tennis ball-sized tumor in his brain. The day after his 22nd birthday, he had surgery to remove the tumor, leaving him with a four-inch S-shaped scar on the back of his head and a titanium plate in his skull. A week later, Long and his family learned the true gravity of the situation: The tumor, believed to be benign, was actually a grade 3 anaplastic astrocytoma, an aggressive brain cancer.

A devastating diagnosis for anyone, it was particularly frightening given the history of cancer in Long’s family. His mother lost her father to a brain tumor when she was 7. Cancer later claimed her mother, older brother, and older sister. Earlier on the very day Long learned he had a brain tumor, his mother’s younger sister was diagnosed with breast cancer. “It was very scary because the track record was not good,” Long says.

From a football perspective, Long’s diagnosis couldn’t have come at a worse time. “Senior season had just ended,” he recalls. “I had exhausted all of my eligibility. I was supposed to be spending time in some warm-weather city preparing for the draft, kicking every day.” And SU was headed to its first bowl appearance in six...
years. Healing from surgery, the Orange co-captain was able to attend the Pinstripe Bowl—watching from the sidelines and serving as an inspiration to teammates. But instead of heading to Florida to prepare for NFL tryouts, he began a six-week regimen of daily chemo and radiation.

While cancer treatment would have sidelined many, Long simultaneously worked with a trainer, going to the gym every day and kicking several times a week. He says it’s important for anyone going through cancer to have a goal, a destination on the other side. For him, it was getting to the NFL. “It was something to look forward to every day, something to focus on other than being sick,” he says.

It was a nearly superhuman effort, says Dr. Irving Raphael, team physician for the Syracuse Orange at that time. “He was an inspiration to everyone who knew him. He was determined not to give up football unless it was on his own terms.”

In March 2011, Long had his first follow-up MRI and learned that all traces of cancer were gone. Two weeks later, he was back in Syracuse auditioning for pro scouts at Manley Field House. But when the draft came, only two kickers were selected, neither one a punter. Although he later learned the Arizona Cardinals had once planned to draft him with their seventh-round pick, when the time came, his health status seemed too risky. “Understandably so,” Long says. “When you hear ‘brain cancer,’ you’re not tickled with a good feeling.”

It was a recurring theme. Long spent that summer sending out hundreds of emails to coaches, general managers, anyone who might be in the position to give him a shot. Although he tried out for the Cleveland Browns, the team went in another direction. Instead, he finished up the six credits remaining to complete a bachelor’s degree in marketing and supply-chain management from the Martin J. Whitman School of Management, coached his high school football team in Downington, and completed a yearlong regimen of chemotherapy—on a five-day on, 21-day off cycle. And he kept working out—lifting weights and kicking—determined to overcome any handicap from his cancer diagnosis.

After the 2013 draft left him empty handed once again, Long returned to Syracuse to begin a master’s program in new media management at the Newhouse School, working as a graduate assistant in the athletic department. He worked out with the SU football team, focusing on the 2014 draft. “Last year was honestly the first time I was both mentally and physically ready,” Long says. “I finally felt like I was back to where I was before this all happened, but a better version of myself. I was able to go to the workouts and perform well because I had the confidence and condition at that level.”

Because of that, Long was, for the first time, OK that he was not drafted. “I finally came to accept that it’s not because I’m not good enough, it’s not even necessarily because of cancer, but because there are only 32 punting positions in the NFL and there are a lot of talented kickers out there,” says Long, who earned a master’s degree in August.

Over four seasons of tryouts, his quest had taken on an extra burden in his own mind. “It became more than fulfilling a childhood dream,” he says. “I wanted to be the kid who had cancer but made it to the NFL. I had to accept that I can share my story and help other people without punting a football.”

December marked the four-year anniversary of Long’s diagnosis and surgery. In March, he was four-years cancer free. His Aunt Chrissy is equally healthy. “We’re the first in the family to beat cancer,” he says.

Long has an MRI every three months. He relishes each milestone, looking forward to hitting the five-year mark. “There’s a huge drop in recurrence once you are five years out,” he says.

And he’s at peace with the road not taken: Instead of focusing on the 2015 draft, he began the new year with a new job. He’s a product specialist managing a new digital product that helps determine recommended driving speeds for curves and turns, traveling the country to work with engineering firms and state departments of transportation from his office in suburban Philadelphia.

“I’m ready for new challenges, enjoying every day and the new experiences along the way,” Long says. “I’m happy with what I was able to accomplish and the impact I made. There’s a lot to be said for looking back at what you have done and not what you haven’t.”

Rob Long exhibits the form that made him a top college punter.
THE LAST MONTH OF chemo for my treatment of Hodgkins lymphoma in 2013 I had to teach a weeklong course. I could only teach the first half of the day, and had a fantastic doctoral student who covered the second half. I should take a moment here to acknowledge that if you ever have to get cancer, being a full professor at Syracuse University’s School of Information Studies is the place to work. The staff and faculty there were incredible. They supported me. They covered courses. I got not only a note of support from the Chancellor and provost, they sent a meal for 20. The entire university acted as a family. I am forever indebted to them.

As chemo progressed, I walked more slowly. I lost my breath faster. The two parking attendants at my parking lot would ask how I was. They worried about me. Then one night I had a very frank conversation with one of them. “I’m glad things are going well. I wonder if you could do as well if you weren’t faculty?” She was right. I had control of my hours. I could work from home. If my publications slipped off, I had tenure. I am proud that I was productive during my initial chemo, but there is no question that I was in a privileged position.

I also want to make sure I don’t mislead anyone. I may have been productive while I was sick, but I hardly “didn’t miss a day of work.” I taught all my classes, but I had to pull out of a number of speaking engagements. I sent Skype sessions and recordings in place of me. I had to pull out of positions in professional associations. I had to close down a research project I had started. I had to hand off doctoral advisees to my overloaded colleagues. And with each one of those, with each retreat in my responsibilities at home or at work, I fought.

I would sit in my chair as my wife watched me wince with Neulasta pain. “Take the pill David,” she would say,
referring to my painkillers. We would walk and she would stop. “What?”

“Stop and breathe…you are doing too much.”

When something needed to come up from the basement, “Sit!” she would command. “Riley [our son] can get it.”

With every slip, with every slowed step, I felt like I was becoming less. Less able, less important, less helpful, less of a man.

Here is the hardest lesson I learned in chemotherapy. I was not battling cancer. The chemo was battling cancer. Battling is the wrong metaphor. I didn’t feel like I was on the front line of some war. No, I was the home front. Once the battle was endorsed, I was the one at home sacrificing to support the war effort: taking the rations and reductions as part of my duty in the fight. The chemo was storming the barricades.

The key, I came to see, in beating cancer through chemo is not fighting, but acceptance. You must accept the drugs, and you must accept that the drugs are going to progressively take from you as much, or so it seems, as the cancer. You must accept that your legs will ache and weaken; that your breathing will constrict; that your bowels will constipate; that you will lose energy. You must accept that for the drugs to do their work—the true battle—you must accept a lack of control.

At the beginning it felt like a fight. I felt like I was waging the war with cancer, and screamed, “Screw cancer.” But the answer does not come from cancer, it comes from the poisons that kill cancer cells, and hair cells, and stomach cells, and white blood cells, and the components of your every body part. It comes as an unrelenting slow darkness that crosses your red lines, and keeps coming, and will keep coming so long as you accept the toxins.

One day you realize—after your good weeks become good days become good hours—this is the price you must pay to live. It is not a moment of fighting, it is a moment of acquiescence. You must give yourself over to the drugs, and your loved ones, and God. And it is hard. It is, in fact, the hardest thing you have ever done. Your whole life you have succeeded through action; through your wits, and your muscle, and your determination, and your own capabilities. But not now. Now you must depend on Bleomycin that eats away your lungs, and Vinblastine that robs you of your taste buds and hair. You must rely on your wife to drive the kids. To win, you must surrender.

Surrender to the process, to the treatment, to the care. NEVER to the cancer. NEVER to the thoughts of death. NEVER to anything other than life and the future.

Then there is a final thought, a crucial insight that must accompany the surrender. If you accept the treatment, and the limitations, and the proxy battle, you can then focus on the other things in your life. You can focus on your son’s graduation. You can focus on your wife’s affection, and the love of friends. You can focus on your work, and your mission, and all the things that will be waiting for you after the poisons and the drugs, and the pain, and the limitations.

So after six months, the chemo came to an end. The next steps? Radiation if they still find cancer in one or two lymph nodes. Bone marrow transplantation if the lymphoma is still broadly distributed. But, hopefully, monitoring for recurrence and recovery—that’s plan A.

We had a party. My kids had worked all summer on earning their black belts in karate, and so we had a party for them. But as my wife said, “We have a lot to celebrate.” We invited both sets of parents. We had slushy machines, bouncy houses, and a tent. We took a lot of pictures and congratulated ourselves for seeing this nightmare through.

And we waited…<<

R. David Lankes ’92, G’99 is a professor and Dean’s Scholar for the New Librarianship at the School of Information Studies, director of the Information Institute of Syracuse, and author of several books, including The Boring Patient (www.createspace.com, 2014), excerpted here.
TO MARK HIS INAUGURATION last spring, Chancellor Kent Syverud challenged students to share their most inspired ideas that could have a positive impact on the world. The prize: funding to make it happen. Dozens of students—both individuals and teams—submitted videos to pitch their ideas for the Fast Forward competition. Several were selected and presented their concepts before Chancellor Syverud and the campus community on inauguration day.

Over the following months, the students began executing their ideas. Their passion turned into tangible projects and impactful events both on and off the University campus. The following represent several that came to life.
THE SHAW QUAD HAS A NEW PLACE TO STUDY WITH your team, take a lunch break, or just relax. Sally Zheng '16 and Ryan Pierson '16 have created fresh, new seating on the Quad to accommodate a number of uses for students and the entire University community. Park Bar is a modular design seating system, with a set of square wooden seats connected by a metal frame to a high wooden slab counter. “Students go outside to the Quad and bring a blanket and their laptop, but it's uncomfortable,” Zheng says. “And when the weather’s nice, you want to be outside.” The Park Bar, made with sustainable materials, offers a solution with seating and a desktop on the Hinds Hall patio, with two four-seat benches.

The two industrial and interaction design majors came up with the idea for the International Design Competition held by Design Museum Boston. They were named finalists in 2013 and their design was part of a public exhibition. The students had worked on Park Bar in the Idea2Startup course, part of the Raymond von Dran Innovation and Disruptive Entrepreneurship Accelerator. When the Fast Forward competition was announced, they saw a way to bring it to campus.

Zheng and Pierson made the wooden seats and top using hickory milled by Zeke Leonard, a professor of environmental and interior design. The wood was from a tree cut down by Don Carr, professor of industrial and interaction design, on his property, and sculpture alumnus Noah Hausknecht ’14 did the welding using metal from a Syracuse company. These were all important facets to the project—the assistance of campus members, including Physical Plant staff who helped install the benches, and sourcing all local materials. “It tells the story of Syracuse, with all of its different parts,” Pierson says.
SHOWCASING SETNOR

AS WITH MANY FAMILIES OF STUDENTS IN THE SETNOR School of Music, Lisa Kranz’s parents in Buffalo can’t make it to every performance she has during the academic year. Live Internet streaming provides that link to musicians and the glorious sounds that reverberate through Setnor Auditorium. There’s one thing that would make it even better for far-away family and friends. “The sound is good, which is most important. But the video quality is poor,” says Kranz ’16, a music education major. “My mom always says, ‘I’m glad you play tuba because I know the shortest tuba player is you.”

Through the efforts of Kranz and classmate Melissa A. Bassett ’14, a clearer picture has now been made possible with support from Fast Forward and the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Kranz and Bassett submitted a video entry into the Fast Forward competition for updated streaming technology in the 19th-century concert hall. “I went around the music school asking students what they thought we needed,” Kranz says. “I got a lot of great ideas, but this was something we all wanted to fix.”

Bassett, a music major who studied percussion, joined Kranz in helping to create the video after Kranz brought it to the attention of the music students during the all-school Convocation class. They also spoke with then Setnor School of Music director Patrick Jones and other professors. The students were proud of the win they accomplished with classmates, faculty, and staff. Setnor now has a new system in place with high-definition cameras to webcast all the performances. “We want Setnor to be seen everywhere and what better way is there than to show the world our performances,” Bassett says.

SITTING TOGETHER

THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY campus and the east University neighborhood meet at Comstock and Euclid avenues. Bikers, drivers, and pedestrians move quickly through this bustling crossroads every day. Now they have a reason to linger. A group of students with the Community Ambassadors Program, through the Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services, established a bench, which is both a work of art and a functional seating area. The bench, installed in November, enhances the intersection, provides repose for passersby and commuters, and invites conversation. “This project embodies what it means to be a community ambassador,” says Johnathan Alessi ’15, a civil engineering student and community ambassador. “We are building relationships, making new contacts, and giving back to the community.”

The community ambassadors live off campus in the nearby University neighborhoods and host two to three events per semester to help bring together the permanent residents, landlords, and students. “We wanted to have a project where we could leave a mark in the community that would last forever,” says community ambassador Yan Mei Jiang ’15, a public relations and policy studies major.

The project took on a new importance after it was chosen to receive a Fast Forward grant. The community ambassadors hired local artist Brendan Rose G’10, who partnered with Ryn Adkins ’15, an industrial and interaction design major, to design and fabricate the bench according to the students’ input. “We want to help create a happier community where we can all feel safe and welcome,” Jiang says.
DRONE PROJECT TAKES FLIGHT

A COUPLE OF SUMMERS AGO, ARLAND WHITFIELD ’16 STUMBLED across a YouTube video about drones. It wasn’t long before he knew he had to get airborne. “I spent the next few months learning about them and I finally built one,” says Whitfield, an information management and technology major. “Initially, it wasn’t that great. It was like having a model airplane, but the camera took really great shots and I fell in love with it and the possibilities.”

Those first shots of a California sunset in his backyard inspired Whitfield to explore the field of drones and their capabilities—and share the discovery experience with others. At the start of his sophomore year, he launched the Skyworks Project, a student group dedicated to all things drone. “The beauty of drone tech is that there are applications in many fields and professions—such as scientists, firefighters, police officers, power line inspectors, filmmakers,” Whitfield says. “It’s changing how all those groups can look at the world around them, collect data and information, and get those cool photos.”

Last spring, Whitfield was awarded a Fast Forward grant to help fund research and development costs and parts for drone development projects. The Skyworks team is working on projects that include tethered drones, which are powered from the ground instead of on the craft. Whitfield also meets with groups that want to learn about drones.

The Skyworks Project has since spun off into businesses that sell drones (SkyworksPro), and provides consulting and aerial photography services. The Skyworks businesses, which have four team members, use space in the Syracuse Student Sandbox in the Tech Garden in downtown Syracuse. “I’m interested in the latest, leading-edge technology, and drones are about that,” Whitfield says. “I always have an eye for what the future holds and I think that will determine where I go.”

“The beauty of drone tech is that there are applications in many fields and professions...”
—ARLAND WHITFIELD ’16
TINY HOMES, BIG HEART

ANDREW LUNETTA G’14 MADE MANY FRIENDS WHILE WORKING AT
the Oxford Street Inn, an emergency shelter for men in downtown Syracuse. Lunetta, then a Le Moyne College undergraduate, got to know their needs as homeless persons, many with troubled pasts and addictions. Through the Brady Faith Center, he started a program, Pedal to Possibilities, to offer an hour-long bike ride three days a week for those seeking a healthy activity and camaraderie. When he began pursuing an M.P.A. degree at the Maxwell School, he invited a few of the men to move into his home. “I got to build these strong relationships with some guys who I knew were in need of a good living situation,” Lunetta says.

He learned a lot from the two-year experience and through further research came to understand the need for dignified, affordable housing. “It’s just a real struggle to make it work when you’re making at most $800 a month—sometimes even less than that,” Lunetta says. He then came up with a model to remedy that—“Tiny Homes,” compact living spaces on vacant lots in the City of Syracuse.

With help from licensed architect William Elkins, plans are in the works for three homes on the city’s South Side, each 215 square feet with electric heat and running water. Lunetta is working with the city on pre-development needs. “It’s been a real adventure because this is an area I’d never really known about,” he says.

Private funding has come from Lunetta’s family and friends, but now with its own board, Tiny Homes for Good, he hopes to start more fundraising. A Fast Forward grant is also helping the estimated $40,000 budget needed to build all three homes. “Fast Forward speaks volumes about Syracuse University and its investment in students and in new and innovative ideas,” Lunetta says. “I really appreciate that.”

“A COLORFUL CLIMB

MADELYN MINICOZZI ’18 TREAD THE STEPS of the Mount Olympus stairway every day as a first-year student in Flint Hall. The plain, uninspiring boards of the sheltered walkway screamed for attention. With funding support from the Fast Forward competition, Minicozzi, now a sophomore residing in Shaw Hall, developed her idea to spruce up the campus landmark and put out a call to those interested in helping add new life to the stairway. In the fall, members of the University community submitted their design ideas for the Mural on the Mount. “The response was truly amazing!” she says. “Just seeing all of these different clubs and organizations coming together for this common purpose was powerful.”

Today, the ascent and descent along the winding steps is made a little more lively by the graphic, colorful images representing students, student clubs, and Greek organizations. Minicozzi, an industrial and interaction design major, appreciated hearing about other students’ passions and goals within the various organizations—some she had not even been familiar with. “I was able to meet so many people who I may have otherwise never met,” she says. “It was just a huge spark of communication, brainstorming, and art.”

In the next part of the project this spring, Mural on the Mount 2.0, she accepted more submissions to fill some empty spaces. She also planned to create a piece paying tribute to the Fast Forward project that gave her the opportunity to help bring a smile to those who make the daily trek up and down the steps. “This project has breathed new life into the mount steps,” Minicozzi says. “They are no longer an object of pure function, but an interactive and informative piece. They show what values the University holds, the passions of its students, and many of the opportunities that Syracuse offers.”

“Fast Forward speaks volumes about Syracuse University and its investment in students and in new and innovative ideas.”

—ANDREW LUNETTA G’14
“Initially, it was going to be a ramp, but because our mentor really pushed us, they made it into something that was more...”

—RUO PIAO CHEN ’17

RAMPING UP

WHEN ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS IN FREEDOM BY DESIGN TOOK ON THE task to create a handicap-accessible ramp at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, they chose to expand on the concept. Members of the School of Architecture student organization decided to construct the ADA-compliant ramp, along with a shelter from snow and icicles, outdoor storage, and community spaces, including seating and a barbecue area. The project, named “Into the Fold,” broke ground last fall at the church in Syracuse’s North Side neighborhood and continued this spring to put in the prefabricated elements. “For some of us, it was the first time doing a real build, so we had to account for mistakes,” says Ruo Piao Chen ’17, former director of Freedom by Design, part of the American Institute of Architecture Students that designs and constructs projects that assist people with disabilities. “For example, we rented a two-man auger to dig the holes on site. The foundation is really rocky, and we ended up actually digging the holes ourselves.”

Project manager Stephen Muir ’17, whose father is a general contractor, was familiar with the notion to expect the unexpected. “When it comes to construction, there are a lot of things that can go wrong, so you have to find ways around the problems you thought you’d never have,” Muir says. Through fundraisers, grants, and the Fast Forward win, students collected about $10,000 for the project.

The students visited the site and worked closely with Professor Larry Bowne, their faculty advisor who helped them elevate the design. The students also consulted with church leaders. A team of three students—Jon Anthony ’17, Armand Damari ’17, and Tiffany Pau ’17—worked on the design. “Initially, it was going to be a ramp, but because our mentor really pushed us, they made it into something that was more than just letting people access the building,” Chen says. «
WHEN THE SURGE OF UNACCOMPANIED minors crossing the U.S.-Mexico border heated up last summer, *Dallas Morning News* reporter Dianne Solis was there to cover the escalating crisis. She questioned what was happening to the thousands of children streaming into Texas without a parent—and into immigration court without a lawyer. To find out, she turned to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University, where she had access to more than 100,000 records obtained from the Executive Office for Immigration Review within the U.S. Department of Justice. With accurate and up-to-date immigration statistics in hand, Solis was able to report more fully on such issues as the higher deportation rates in Texas versus California, and the likelihood that a juvenile immigrant without legal representation will be deported. “TRAC was indispensable,” Solis says. “And, luckily for so many journalists, right on top of a complex story.”

TRAC is a not-for-profit, non-partisan data gathering, research, and distribution organization that keeps track of the federal government by the numbers. Founded in 1989 as a joint project between the Martin J. Whitman School of Management and the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, TRAC was using the 1966 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to obtain government records long before such news organizations as ProPublica and The National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting entered the arena of investigative journalism. “TRAC was the first information resource of its kind in the nation to combine federal computerized records with the FOIA mandate,” says Susan B. Long, co-founder and co-director of TRAC, and a professor of managerial statistics in the finance department of the Whitman School. “We’re pioneers in this, and it’s a real shock to a federal agency when we request their internal data.”

INFORMED PUBLIC

When TRAC was created in the ’80s, computer technology was in its infancy. In the 25 years since, the power to electronically harness vast collections of data and shape them into practical, easily accessible knowledge bases has significantly increased TRAC’s role as a government watchdog. One of TRAC’s first published reports was on how well the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was monitoring the...
nuclear power industry. When the Internet came along, distributing information to a wide audience was suddenly much more cost-effective, so TRAC just kept expanding. Using its in-house, high-capacity servers and sophisticated computer analysis, TRAC has compiled and processed data on the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of such federal agencies as the Internal Revenue Service; Homeland Security; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Drug Enforcement Agency; Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; and the Department of Justice (DOJ). “TRAC provides greater transparency on what our federal government is doing or not doing, and that’s what democracy is based on—an informed public,” says David Burnham, co-founder and co-director of TRAC.

As TRAC co-directors, Long and Burnham bring a unique blend of skills to the project. Long, a statistician who specializes in measurement and statistical evaluation methods, became interested in tax law in the 1970s when the IRS threatened to seize her soon-to-be husband’s family construction business. “I have a thirst for knowledge, and I wanted to understand what the rules of the game were and analyze the statistics on how the system worked,” Long says. “I spent a lot of time in the law library trying to figure out the statutes, and since we couldn’t afford an attorney, I conducted the trial in tax court. It turned into a huge battle, but we finally won because it was a clear case of abuse of power. In fact, they sent us a refund check!”

Burnham was a New York Times investigative reporter from 1968 to 1986, first in New York covering the criminal process and then in Washington, D.C., where he began focusing on federal regulation and whether such agencies as the NRC were achieving their stated goals. One of the first journalists to incorporate statistics into his reporting, Burnham specialized in using government performance data in his prize-winning articles and books, including A Law Unto Itself: Power, Politics, and the IRS (Random House, 1990). In the course of writing the book, he heard about a “force of nature” in Syracuse named Susan Long, who was well-known for being the first person ever to win a battle with the IRS by invoking FOIA. Forever the professor, Long gave Burnham a lengthy discourse on the IRS and supplied him with volumes of data for his book. “Neither Sue nor I can remember who conceived the idea of TRAC, but we agreed there ought to be an institution established to provide the American people with the authoritative and accurate information they need to hold their government accountable,” says Burnham, who works out of TRAC’s office in the nation’s capital. “And that’s how TRAC got started.”

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
TRAC collects and publicizes government information that has never before been seen in the light of day. Two key factors make this possible—the fact that there is a FOIA, and that the federal government computerizes its records, eliminating the arduous task of going through stacks of paper. Even so, procuring data from the federal government is not a straightforward process. Long has to figure out the government data systems and software and how data are stored. And if she runs into a roadblock, she and Burnham file a lawsuit. “The civil division of the DOJ has a huge portfolio of activity, so it was only natural that we wanted to have access to their database.
“After 10 years in litigation, a judge recently ordered the DOJ to release their records to us.”

Housed in Newhouse 2, TRAC has its own server and two full-time software engineers on staff to help process more than 225 million records from federal agency data dumps each month—and that’s not counting all of the projects still in the exploratory stage. Unfortunately, the data do not come with documentation. “It’s like a messy unfolding mystery,” says Long, who validates the data, checks it against other sources in terms of published counts, and looks for patterns to develop the government performance data indicators. Once the volumes of raw data are collected and verified, TRAC’s sophisticated computer system allows the user to jump between broad levels of information and microscopic detail, zoom in on a specific bit of information, then pull back to look at the big picture—all at lightning speed. Pie charts, scatter plots, bar charts, and histograms provide a quick visualization to help identify trends, track actions, and interpret federal policies.

On average, TRAC annually rolls out 50 reports, which are freely available on its public website (trac.syr.edu) for anyone with access to the Internet. For a minimal fee, TRAC’s extensive archives and up-to-date bulletins are accessible on the TRAC-Reports website (trac.syr.edu/tracreports/). Many faculty and students from major universities participate in the TRAC Fellows program (trac.syr.edu/fellows/), which is designed specifically for those who want to conduct in-depth research on specific subjects. And to ensure students understand the power of data and its role in government transparency, TRAC offers educational opportunities in data analysis, software development, systems administration, research, and instructional design.

For anyone who would like to dig deeper into TRAC’s vast stores of data sets, subscribers to the TRACFED Data Warehouse (tracfed.syr.edu) can access detailed information about federal enforcement activities, with specialized data mining tools that help them navigate large quantities of statistics. With a click and a credit card, the computer goes out and locates the relevant data, analyzes it, and delivers it back in real time. “The data we get are as complicated as the fed’s regulatory structure,” says Greg Munno G’10, a Newhouse research professor and newest member of TRAC’s six-person team. “It’s utterly unique in the information marketplace to take such a high volume of complex records and compile them into usable reports.”

RELIABLE RESOURCE

Hundreds of individuals and organizations take advantage of TRAC’s services. Among them, Long says, are the Supreme Court library, Government Accountability Office, Department of Justice attorneys nationwide, scores of universities and law schools, and a wide range of public interest groups, including the National Rifle Association and the American Civil Liberties Union. Businesses depend on TRAC to keep up-to-date on federal regulations. Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner ’92 used TRAC to find out if the city was getting its fair share of federal law enforcement dollars. Since one branch of government can’t get a look at another branch’s data, some federal agencies, such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, subscribe to TRAC so they can compare the effectiveness of what they are doing vis-à-vis other enforcement players in the field. “Over the years, TRAC has been cited in a wide range of news articles, books, legal briefs, scholarly journals, congressional hearings, and by liberal and conservative public interest groups,” Munno says. “A compilation of just some of TRAC citations for the last three years alone is 78 pages long.”

Burnham says TRAC is a particularly valuable resource for journalists who, in our post-9/11 world, must contend with heightened government secrecy and diminished access. And because newspapers are so pressured financially, many don’t have the time, resources, or inclination to sue federal regulatory agencies for infor-
information under FOIA. That’s why most of the major news outlets, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and The Associated Press (AP), rely on TRAC for comprehensive data on government activities. Martha Mendoza, a Pulitzer Prize-winning national writer for the AP, counts on TRAC to help inform her reporting. “TRAC is a terrific resource for me as a journalist,” Mendoza says. “I use it a lot, and urge colleagues to do the same. I’ve written about the lack of civil rights prosecutions, weak environmental protection, immigration bias, and more using TRAC data. David and Sue are righteous and conscientious, providing critical work for those of us seeking objective information about what our government is doing.”

So what’s next on tap for TRAC? A relatively new initiative called the FOIA Project (foiaproject.org/) provides information about government agencies that are stonewalling requests for internal data. By providing daily updates of every instance in which the government is sued under FOIA, TRAC is publicly exposing federal agencies and officials who disregard the law. “Many decisions are made in the dark,” Burnham says. “We’re posting all FOIA rulings on our website to show egregious examples of the government withholding information in violation of the law.” And as soon as they can secure funding, Long and Burnham would like to focus their attention on Veterans Affairs administrative law judges, who, if anecdotal information is to be believed, are just as inconsistent as the judges in immigration courts. “David and I just keep finding new and exciting areas to explore,” Long says. “More data, more capacity, more fun!”
ACCORDING TO SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY: The Critical Years (Syracuse University Press, 1984), the Syracuse-in-China Association, established in 1921 through the University’s Methodist affiliation, brought many Syracuse graduates to the city of Chungking (Chongqing) in West China for the purpose of establishing a threefold mission of medical, evangelical, and educational work. Under the leadership of physicians Gordon Hoople ’15, G’19, H’67 and Leon Sutton ’17, G’19, the Syracuse-in-China staff renovated and operated an abandoned missionary compound owned by the Methodist Church that had been neglected since the end of World War I. Thanks to the efforts of the Syracuse-in-China team, the compound, which contained a church, hospital, and high school, was successfully rejuvenated before the second Sino-Japanese War and World War II forced the project’s conclusion. The bombing of Chungking began in 1939, and by 1943 the last member of the Syracuse-in-China unit left the city. The University’s association with China was re-established that same year, however, when it entered into a sister relationship with West China Union University in the city of Chengdu. Through this new partnership, a Syracuse graduate was awarded a fellowship to travel to China to spend two years teaching English to Chinese students. The first recipient was Donald Flaherty ’43, G’54. After his two-year stint was completed, Thomas Scott ’48, G’61 followed during what was another tumultuous time in China. By fall 1949, the Chinese Communists had taken over the country, replacing the Chiang Kai-Shek government, and Scott was closely watched by the government until his two-year term was completed.

When his teaching term ended, Scott endured an interrogation, but was allowed to leave, initially traveling to Hong Kong. He was asked around that time by administrators of the Syracuse-in-China program to travel to Thailand to establish a similar program at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok before returning to the States. Scott did so, and Thomas Gill ’50, G’55 was the first Syracuse graduate sent to Thailand to teach English to Thai students. After his term was completed in 1954, I was his successor. I remained in Thailand until May 1956, teaching English composition and grammar for two years. Ruth Hoople ’14, G’15, who was Dr. Gordon Hoople’s sister, was director of what was then called the Syracuse in Asia program during the years I was in Thailand representing the University.

One memory that stands out for me from my time in Thailand was when I visited the home village of one of my students, whose father was the “headmaster” (mayor). We got off the train at an open field and began our three-mile trek, taking off our shoes and socks and rolling up our pant legs in order to walk through rice paddies, swamps, jungles, and open fields until we reached his village. As we walked, I suggested we return to catch the train for a ride to a nearby city, where we could spend the night at a hotel. It proved a bit difficult to convince his father that we wouldn’t be spending the night in his bamboo home. He did finally agree it would be better for us to return to a nearby city since they had no additional mosquito nets with which we could shield ourselves. He was willing to let us use his own nets, which we insisted would not be fair to him. Reluctantly, he finally agreed to let us return the same way we had come.

As teachers, our class sizes varied...
depending upon what level of students was assigned to us. My
groups of students varied in number from 15 to more than 300.
The smallest classes were for public speaking in which students
gave presentations of less than four minutes each. On one occa-
sion, an evening student asked if I could help a group of students
improve their oral English capability. I agreed and arranged to
meet them the next afternoon. When I arrived, he thanked me
for coming and then led me to an auditorium in a
part of the building where I had never been. There,
he opened the door to reveal more than 300 Thai
students awaiting us. I was taken aback by their ap-
plause as we entered. Momentarily overwhelmed,
I asked him, “How do you expect me to teach 300
students to speak English at one time?” He replied,
“That’s no problem for you, Acharn (Teacher). You
can teach them any way you like!”

The students had arranged themselves so that
roughly 100 were in each of the three sections of
the auditorium. After introducing myself, I proceeded to write a
short series of words on the blackboard, exemplifying an intro-
ductive conversation one person might have with another. I then
had them repeat the dialogue, section by section, and continued
to write new topics for them to practice, repeating one section
after the other for the next hour. To my amazement, the students
came up after the class and thanked me for helping them learn
new words they had never used before! The organization of the
“cheering sections” seemed to agree with them as I had them
each repeat the vocabulary I had written on the board, one group
after the other. They seemed to like the opportunity of using the
words themselves in the smaller groups rather than en masse.

The chairman of the language department was Prince Prem
Purachatra, a cousin of the Thai king. Although he led monthly
departmental meetings, the real manager of the department was
Nophakun Tongyai, the wife of a junior prince, also of the royal
family. Nophakun, a Japanese American whose father married
an American woman after he immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s, had attended Cornell University, where she
met his royal highness, Prince Tongyai, also a student at Cornell.
They married in 1936 and then lived in Thailand and raised four
children. Nophakun was really the chairperson of the
language department, even though she was listed as
its vice-chairperson.

During my second year in Thailand, I was asked by
the director of the Student Christian Center, a youth
hostel near the university, to live in the men’s dormi-
tory as an advisor. Since it did not interfere with my
role as a teacher of English at the university, I held
this position until I left.

My successor in Thailand, Karl Schultz, stayed for
less than a year before he was recalled to Syracuse
due to a personal matter. No further representatives were sent
to Thailand by the University. The Syracuse in Asia program next
evolved into one of having Asian students come to Syracuse Uni-
versity and enroll for master’s degree programs in various fields
until the program was given up around the end of the 1960s. These
early programs set the foundation for the countless relationships,
collaborations, and cultural exchanges that continue to thrive to
this day between Syracuse University and the people of Asia.

Donald F. Megnin ’54, G’65, G’68, who earned a bachelor’s degree
from the College of Arts and Sciences and master’s and doctoral de-
grees from the Maxwell School, is a retired Methodist minister and
professor emeritus of international politics at Slippery Rock University
in Pennsylvania. He resides in the Syracuse area.
DEAR FELLOW ALUMNI,

THIS WILL BE THE FINAL letter I write to you as president of the Syracuse University Alumni Association (SUAA). On June 30, my term as SUAA president will come to an end. The message I bring to you really is quite simple and comes straight from the heart: I love my alma mater. For the past two years it has been an immense honor and a privilege to serve as your president, and I would like to thank you for your friendship and support.

As I prepare to step down as president, I can assure you that the future of the Syracuse University Alumni Association is in great hands with incoming president Mark Verone ’95. I would like to wish him great success as he leads the SUAA during these next two years. I am also so grateful to have served with such a remarkable group of alumni on the national board. Your dedication and passion are truly exemplary, and I appreciate each and every one of you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Matt Manfra, assistant vice president of alumni engagement, as well as the entire Office of Alumni Engagement for all of their efforts. Thank you for your tireless commitment and devotion to Syracuse University and for sharing this incredible journey with me.

A really big thank you also goes to my family. You have made these last two years possible for me. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Finally...to you, our more than 250,000 Syracuse University alumni worldwide, you have been my inspiration. As I have traveled around this great country and met some of you, I like to wish him great success as he leads the SUAA during these next two years. I am also so grateful to have served with such a remarkable group of alumni on the national board. Your dedication and passion are truly exemplary, and I appreciate each and every one of you.

Finally...to you, our more than 250,000 Syracuse University alumni worldwide, you have been my inspiration. As I have traveled around this great country and met some of you, I can say without a doubt that we have THE BEST alumni! I encourage all of you to remain engaged with our alma mater—join your local alumni club, philanthropically support your alma mater, and attend an SU Athletics game, or come back to campus for Homecoming. Whatever you choose to do will make an impact for Syracuse University and for future generations of alumni and students.

Where the vale of Onondaga
Meets the eastern sky
Proudly stands our Alma Mater
On her hilltop high.
Flag we love! Orange! Float for aye—
Old Syracuse, o’er thee,
Loyal be thy sons and daughters
To thy memory.

Forever Orange...

Laurie Taishoff ’84
President, Syracuse University Alumni Association

CLASS NOTES

NEWS from SU ALUMNI

To submit information for Class Notes via the Internet, go to alumni.syr.edu and register with the SU Alumni Online Community. Items will appear in the magazine and in the Class Notes section of the online community. Items can also be sent to Alumni Editor, Syracuse University Magazine; 820 Comstock Avenue, Room 308; Syracuse, NY 13244-5040.

30s

Don Waful ’37 (A&S), G’39 (MAX), one of SU’s oldest living alumni and surviving World War II veterans, was Chancellor Syverud’s guest of honor at the home football game against North Carolina State in November. At age 98, Waful, a Syracuse resident who has never missed a football game in the Dome, is something of a local hero, given his P.O.W. background, his former role as president of Syracuse Chiefs minor league baseball, and his close ties to SU Athletics, the YMCA, the Reformed Church of Syracuse, and numerous musical organizations.

40s

Ruth Cowan ’44 (A&S), a physical therapist living in Dallas, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in November, recognizing her outstanding commitment to help create a world free of MS. The award is presented to volunteers with 35 or more years of service. In 1975, Cowan co-founded the Swim-In aquatic therapy program for people living with MS, a collaborative effort between the New Jersey Metro Chapter of the MS Society and the National Council of Jewish Women. As program supervisor, Cowan volunteered more than 3,000 hours of her time and professional skills through the years.

50s

Jack Cavanaugh ’52 (A&S) wrote Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside: World War II, Army’s Undefeated Teams, and College Football’s Greatest Backfield Duo (Triumph Books) about Heisman Trophy winners Glenn Davis and Felix Blanchard, among the best-known college football players between 1944 and 1946. A veteran sportswriter and former adjunct professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Cavanaugh has written five books in the past eight years. He lives in Wilton, Conn., with his wife, Marge.

Artemio R. Guillermo G’54, G’72 (NEW) published Aurora Borealis: Christian Witness in Alaska (Authorhouse) and wrote the third edition of the Historical Dictionary of the Philippines (Scarecrow Press). His previous publications include Churches Aflame (Abingdon), Epic Tales of the Philippines (University Press of America), and Tales of the 7,000 Isles. He and his wife, Corazon, live in Fairfield, Ind., and have seven grandchildren (three of them SU alumni) and a great granddaughter.

Donald F. Megnin ’54 (A&S), G’65, G’68 (MAX), a retired Methodist minister and professor emeritus of international politics at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania, has published nine books, including Moments in Time: A Memoir (Xlibris, 2010), and is working on a 10th. He and his wife, Julia G’65 (EDU), reside in Jamestown, N.Y. Read his reflections on teaching in Thailand as a representative of the University’s Syracuse in Asia program in the 1950s on page 44 of this issue.

Sherry Suib Cohen ’55 (EDU) of New York City has published 24 books, including several New York Times bestsellers, among other...
them It Ain’t All About the Cookin’ (Simon & Schuster, 2007), a memoir co-written with celebrity chef Paula Deen.

Frank J. Vecchione ’57 (A&S), a director in the financial restructuring and creditors’ rights department of Gibbons law firm in Newark, N.J., was honored as a 50-year member of the Essex County Bar Association at its annual dinner in October. He was recognized for his long-standing commitment to the legal profession.

Roger Nyquist G’58 (VPA), an internationally known organ virtuoso, recording artist, and teacher residing in Sacramento, Calif., released a new music CD, Roger Nyquist Plays a Tribute to Arthur Poister. Nyquist was a student of Arthur Poister H’67, the renowned American organist and teacher who served as Hendricks Chapel music director and SU organ professor from 1948 to 1967. Poister died in 1980.

Edward J. Klein ’60 (WSM) earned a master’s degree in Judaic studies at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York and was ordained a Humanistic Judaism rabbi.

Stuart Melnick ’60 (A&S) is a physician living in Los Gatos, Calif.

Elaine Rubenstein Silliman ’60 (SDA), professor emerita at the University of South Florida, received the Honors of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in November for distinguished contributions to the communication sciences and disorders profession. She has written or co-written eight books and published numerous research articles on language learning disabilities in monolingual and bilingual children and adolescents.

Bill Batch ’62 (A&S) published Celebrations (CreateSpace), his second book of poems. A retired teacher, he leads a writers’ group in Riverhead, N.Y. His award-winning poetry has been published in magazines, anthologies, and online collections.

Richard Hand ’65 (A&S), a retired salesman and poet living in Phoenix, was spotlighted as Poet of the Month at Late Night Poets blog (latenightpoets.com) in January. His poetry has been published in many venues, both online and in print, and he has performed as a spoken-word poet in Arizona, California, and upstate New York.

Charles G. Waugh ’65 (SDA), G’69 (A&S), a communications and psychology professor at the University of Maine at Augusta, has taught college-level courses for 50 years. A prolific writer, he has co-edited, co-written, or written 218 published books on topics ranging from the Civil War to science fiction, with another 24 in press or accepted for publication.

Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy ’66, G’72, G’80 (A&S) wrote Sacred Justice: The Voices and Legacy of the Armenian Operation Nemesis (Transaction Publishers). The book weaves together narrative, memoir, original unpublished letters, and other sources to tell the story of a group of Armenian men who led a covert operation to bring to justice the Turkish architects of the Armenian genocide early in the 20th century. This is the third book for MacCurdy, retired professor and chair of the Department of Writing at Ithaca (N.Y.) College. She is currently special assistant to the president at Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., where she teaches courses in the personal essay, teaching writing, and the theory and practice of therapeutic writing.

Lee Carl G’67 (NEW) of Drexel Hill, Pa., received a Pinnacle Book Achievement Award from the National Association of Book Entrepreneurs for his novel The Key (Old City Publishing). It tells the story of three families who live on the same street in a small town, and how one woman’s hatred for another leads to bullying, plotting, and setting a booby trap.


Robert L. Kravitz ’69 (VPA) was one of three clergymen from Arizona invited to address some 4,000 attendees at the inauguration of Governor Douglas Ducey in January. The rabbi was also featured in the January 2015 edition of Arizona Jewish Life magazine, highlighting his more than 20 years of volunteer police chaplaincy service to the cities of Phoenix and Scottsdale and the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

Pierre Ramond G’69 (A&S), Distinguished Professor of Physics and director of the Institute for Fundamental Theory at the University of Florida, received the 2015 Dannie Heineman Prize for Mathematical Physics, one of the nation’s most prestigious research prizes. The award was established in 1959 by the Heineman Foundation for Research, Educational, Charitable, and Scientific Purposes Inc. and is administered by the American Physical Society and the American Institute of Physics.

Marcia J. Scherer ’70 (FALK/NEW), a rehabilitation psychologist and founding president of the Institute for Matching Person and Technology in Webster, N.Y., joined the Vocational-Community Issues Panel of Brain Injury Association of America/Mount Sinai Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation Guidelines Project. Fifty of the nation’s top researchers and clinicians, as well as family members of people with brain injuries, were selected to participate in the project, which is a grant-funded investigation to develop guidelines for rehabilitation and disease management for adults with traumatic brain injury. Scherer is also a professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation at the University of Rochester (N.Y.) Medical Center and project director at the Burton Blatt Institute at SU.

Lawrence J. Center ’71 (A&S/MAX), assistant dean in the Department of Academic Conferences and Continuing Legal Education at the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C., received the Paul R. Dean Alumni Award in October. The award honors outstanding alumni who have exhibited leadership to Georgetown Law and to the legal profession.


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ONE DAY UNDER A HOT MOJAVE, CALIFORNIA SUN, Cheryl Strayed hoisted an overloaded pack onto her back and took her first step into a world no one in her right mind would dare go as such a novice. Today, 20 years after her solo 1,100-mile trek on the 2,650-mile Pacific Coast Trail (PCT) to the Oregon-Washington border, Wild (Vintage Books, 2013) tells the tale.

What began for this Syracuse alumna as an essay in 2008 became a New York Times number-one bestseller, Oprah’s Book Club 2.0 inaugural pick, and a Hollywood hit starring Oscar nominee Reese Witherspoon. “Wild is built on the savage sorrow I had, the grief, the things that messed my life up,” says Strayed, who, while hiking the PCT, was coping with her divorce, recovery from her brief heroin addiction, and her mother’s death from lung cancer. “[Writing it] required me to go back in time and deeply contemplate a former, younger version of myself and the people in my life. I had to look at everything anew and make sense of those experiences. This allowed me to heal and accept myself more, and evolve; and once again say I do really feel grateful.”

In 2012, Strayed—who lives in Portland, Oregon, with her filmmaker husband, Brian Lindstrom, and their two children—asked her agent to send the prepublished literary memoir to Witherspoon, who bought the rights, and the film premiered December 2014. No, it wasn’t the close friendships the author formed with Witherspoon and co-star Laura Dern that surprised her the most, but “how emotionally involved I’d been in the making of the film—really consulted and included,” she says. “I collaborated on many aspects of it.” And seeing Witherspoon portray her? “She gives a beautiful performance, and I feel honored by it,” says Strayed, who describes being depicted in a movie as “moving and bizarre. Even very few famous people have this experience; the biopic usually happens after they die. I’m always going to be surprised that the film happened at all.”

However, Strayed is not surprised she became a writer. “Some of my earliest memories are of my mom reading to me, full-length novel versions of Black Beauty and Bambi,” she says. “From the very beginning, the power of language felt like magic to me, and I always wanted to make beauty in the world through words.”

By the time she enrolled in the M.F.A. program in creative writing at the College of Arts and Sciences, Strayed was already deep into her first novel, Torch. “It was a powerfully important time of my writing life,” she says. “I don’t know if I would’ve ever finished the book if not for the program. The community I found there was wonderfully challenging and supportive.” So were English professors Arthur Flowers and George Saunders G’88. “I learned it’s necessary as a writer to apply yourself to the craft and listen to others, but also to trust your instincts,” she says. “That’s when you’re doing your best work.”

Along with Torch and Wild, Strayed’s writing has appeared in The Best American Essays, The New York Times Magazine, and Vogue, among others; and as Tiny Beautiful Things, a book of “Dear Sugar” life-and-love advice columns she anonymously wrote for the literary website, The Rumpus. Currently, she’s working on another memoir and a novel, which is set in Portland and features an astronomer and Earth First activist among its main characters.

Whatever Strayed writes, she says, “I always feel that you never know what is going to find its way in your work.” Take her Pacific Coast Trail trek. “I never thought I would write about it,” she says. “But in the writer’s life, everything you do is possible material, and you don’t know how it’s going to end up.”

—Claire Sykes
LAST OCTOBER, DURING THE ALLMAN BROTHERS Band’s final concert series at the Beacon Theatre in New York City, legendary performer Gregg Allman received more than standing ovations. Allman and his manager, Michael Lehman, were honored at the theater by the Bandier Program for Music and the Entertainment Industries to celebrate the establishment of the Allman/Lehman Endowed Scholarship and recognize their commitment to the program. “They are both great friends of the program,” says Professor David Rezak, the program’s director.

An estimated 220 people, including Bandier students, faculty, alumni, friends, and industry professionals, gathered for the event, where the scholarship was announced and Allman and Lehman received the Bandier Program Industry Leader Award, given by the program’s burgeoning alumni association. “Through his leadership, Michael Lehman sets a good example in the industry as someone who gives back on a regular basis and cares about the future,” says Andrew Beyda ’11, president of the alumni association. “Gregg Allman took part of the money he raised from a concert tribute in his honor, and made that the starting seed of the scholarship fund.”

The need-based scholarship traces its roots to Lehman’s close connection to the Bandier program. An attorney and artist manager who has worked in the music industry for 25 years, he is also the parent of two daughters with ties to Bandier. His oldest daughter, Carly, is a 2012 Newhouse School graduate who took courses in the program, and his youngest daughter, Lindsay, is a 2015 graduate of the program. Lehman initially met Rezak in 2008 and has regularly given lectures, brought guest speakers to campus, and helped students with internships and networking for jobs. “The Bandier program, in my mind, is one of the top music industry schools in the country, and I want to be a part of it,” he says. “It’s a great opportunity to not only share what I do, but also to be a part of such a fine program in a fine university.”

Among those who Lehman has introduced to the program is Allman, who met with Bandier students in 2008 in New York City. Lehman, who has worked closely with Allman for 11 years, says the musician was impressed by the multidisciplinary program and its students. After staging the all-star benefit concert All My Friends: Celebrating the Songs & Voice of Gregg Allman in Atlanta in 2014, Allman and Lehman decided to donate some of the proceeds to two music industry programs: Bandier and one at the University of Georgia, Allman’s home state. “One thing that we have talked about for years since we got together is the fact that philanthropy and giving back is very important,” Lehman says. “If you are lucky enough to be successful in life, like we both have been, then you need to give back. We want to give people the opportunity to follow and pursue their dreams like Gregg and I were able to do.”

Along with honoring Allman and Lehman, the alumni association presented its inaugural Young Alumni Achievement Award to Bandier graduate Drew Taggart ’12 of the electronic dance music DJ duo The Chainsmokers (of “#Selfie” fame). With the program now in its eighth year, the Bandier alumni association continues to grow and be actively involved. Its members foster relationships with students by returning to speak to classes and providing internship, networking, and career opportunities, and by supporting the program itself to ensure it’s in a strong position to carry forward. “It’s really heartwarming to see our alumni reaching back and giving students solid advice,” Rezak says. “That’s a wonderful outcome that we are excited about perpetuating.”

—Ruobing Li
Samantha Brown ’92 ➤ TRAVEL STAR ➤ SAMANTHA BROWN poses for picture after picture as fans wait eagerly for a brief moment with the TV star. A mainstay on the Travel Channel for years, today the globetrotting host is in the Dallas Convention Center as part of a travel expo—addressing fans about her favorite spots in Europe, the friendly people in Rio de Janeiro, and throwing in a few plugs about her new projects for the network. How does she gear up for a big trip? For Brown, word of mouth and exploration can lead to that great dining or cultural experience. “I do a lot of research, but mostly it’s boots on the ground,” she says.

Getting to this point in her career was a long time in coming. Brown, who was born in Dallas and grew up in New Hampshire, majored in musical theater and worked on theater productions in what she calls a “very intense” program in the Department of Drama at the College of Visual and Performing Arts. A week after graduation, she was off to New York City for her career in theater—or so she thought. It would take eight years of auditions, off-off-off Broadway productions, an occasional cable TV appearance, and lots of waiting tables before her big break in 1999. Brown lucked out when she landed a role in a national campaign of commercials. “The writer for those commercials was friends with the head of the production company that was hired by the Travel Channel,” she says. “He told them, ‘You need to check her out. She’s very funny and into improv,’ and they were trying to cast a host for a show called Great Vacation Homes.”

Brown headed to Florida for an audition, and the gig was hers. Numerous shows followed as she became the face of the network from Girl Meets Hawaii to Samantha Brown’s Great Weekends to Passport to Latin America, and her success is certainly a testament to tenacity and perseverance. Since that first show, Brown has been on the road filming as much as 230 days a year. Her outgoing personality, perky smile, and love for adventurous places connect with viewers. For those considering travel options, Brown always advises doing plenty of research and immersing yourself in the culture and “human” aspects of travel while on the road. “Talk to locals,” she says. “You will have a much more meaningful experience that is unique to you.”

After spending two years off the air when she and her husband had twins, Brown returned to the channel this year with three new projects. The first, The Trip: 2015, debuted in January. In the show, the Travel Channel selects a hot destination with several hosts highlighting some of the great places at that location—from the best places to eat to the best beaches. This year’s destination is Hawaii. “We create an itinerary that we then give away so that someone can have this trip of a lifetime,” she says.

The other two projects are 50/50 and Track Down Samantha Brown and will also debut this year. Track Down is basically a travel series, but viewers have to guess where she is located. “I give you different clues along the way,” she says. “We discover different aspects of the culture that maybe aren’t really talked about, that are hidden but are fun.” For 50/50, Brown and co-host Chris Grundy ask unsuspecting people on the street where they would go for an extreme getaway for 50 hours, worth $50,000. The catch? They must leave immediately.

Looking back, would she give up her job for a career on a Broadway stage after so many years of waiting tables? “No, I like my gig now,” she says with that trademark smile. “I’m very happy. I wouldn’t want to go back.” Envious travel fans would certainly understand why.

—Sean Chaffin

GLOBETROTTING WITH SAMANTHA BROWN

» Friendliest city: “Rio de Janeiro. People come up to you from everywhere. You’ve got best friends right from the start.”

» Favorite place in the United States: “The Grand Canyon. In general, our national parks take your breath away.”

» Place she’d live outside the United States: “London. It’s a great hub to so many other great travel opportunities in Europe and Asia.”

“Do a lot of research, but mostly it’s boots on the ground.”

Photo courtesy of Samantha Brown
Toni S. Sullivan ‘71 (A&S), a social worker and community activist in West Sacramento, Calif., is CEO of Toni Charities, serving people with low incomes as well as those who are elderly, disabled, or homeless.

Stuart Grauer ’72 (A&S), founder and president of The Grauer School, an independent college preparatory school in Encinitas, Calif., received the University of San Diego’s highest alumni honor, the Arthur E. Hughes Career Achievement Award, for his work in education.

Stuart Grauer ‘72

Bruce Walbutt ’73 (A&S/MAX) is co-founder of Yes, And...Philly, a group that brings the learning and practice of Liberating Structures and other methods for transformative collaboration and change to the greater Philadelphia area (yesandphilly.com).

Bruce W. Dearstyn G’74 (MAX), an adjunct professor at the College of Information Studies, University of Maryland and former program director at the New York State Archives, wrote two books. The Spirit of New York: Defining Events in the Empire State’s History (SUNY Press) explores the history of New York State by describing 16 key events, from the promulgation of the first state constitution in 1777 through the resilience of the New York City fire department on 9/11; and Leading the Historical Enterprise: Strategic Creativity, Planning, and Advocacy for the Digital Age (Rowman & Littlefield and the American Association for State and Local History) covers how to lead historical programs, e.g., museums, historical societies, and archives.

Walter Broadax G’75 (MAX). Distinguished Professor of Public Administration and International Affairs in the Maxwell School and a Syracuse University Life Trustee, is featured in The HistoryMakers at the Library of Congress, the nation’s largest African American video oral history collection.

Sandi Tams Mulconry ’75 (A&S/NEW), principal of Group M Communications, is president of the board of directors of the Skaneateles (N.Y.) Area Chamber of Commerce.

Renata Schame G’75 (IST) of Victoria, British Columbia, writes a blog at renataventshistory.com, sharing reflections about life on Canada’s west coast and stories of her extensive travels. She also writes about IT, technical, and construction activities at renataventerprisesprojects.wordpress.com and offers commentaries on items in the news at renataventposicion.wordpress.com.

Janet Roseman ’76 (EDU), a medical educator and teacher who resides in Boca Raton, Fla., wrote If Joan of Arc Had Cancer: Finding Courage, Faith, and Healing from History’s Most Inspirational Woman Warrior (New World Library). Written to honor the memory of her mother, the book draws directly from the words spoken by Joan of Arc at her trial to inspire women facing a diagnosis of cancer or other serious disease and help them discover inner strength and create an environment for healing.

John R. Gutman ’77 (NEW) of Northwalk, Conn., is executive director at New Covenant House, the state’s largest soup kitchen and food pantry, where he leads a capital campaign to raise funds for a larger new facility scheduled to open in spring 2015.

John Hannon ’77 (WSM) earned a master of arts degree in history from George Mason University in December 2014. In April 2014, he was inducted into Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society.

James M. Hoefler ’77 (E&CS), a political science professor at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., invented XoomRooms, a portable, temporary, sustainable wall system for dividing spaces in homes and apartments (xoomrooms.wordpress.com/video/).

Bradley D. Myerson ’77 (A&S) of Manchester Center, Vt., had his firm, Myerson Law Offices, listed in the Best Law Firms 2015 edition of U.S. News and World Report—Best Lawyers in the field of criminal defense. He was also selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America 2015 for his work in criminal defense, marking the seventh year he has been listed.

Scott Pitoniak ’77 (NEW), an award-winning journalist who lives in Rochester, N.Y., wrote 100 Things Syracuse Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die (Triumph Books). The book includes a foreword by Floyd Little ’67 (A&S) and features traditions, facts, trivia, and personal anecdotes from players and coaches.

Douglas Adler ’80 (A&S) is assistant sales manager for the home lending solutions New England division at Citizens Bank in Manhattan.

Andrew Katell ’80 (A&S/NEW) of White Plains, N.Y., is vice president of communications at Entergy Corporation, overseeing communications for the company’s nuclear power business in the northern United States.

Art Monk ’80 (VPA), a Syracuse University Trustee and an inductee in the Pro Football Hall of Fame and College Football Hall of Fame, serves on the board of Every Child Fed, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending child hunger.

Keith Nordstrom ’80 (NEW) is multimedia producer at Wheaton College in Norton, Mass.

Debra Beitch Peoples ’80 (NEW) wrote Hollow State (peoplesbooks.us), a political suspense novel chronicling four generations of an American family, from the Great Depression to the future of 2025.

S. Scott Rohrer ’80 (A&S/NEW) of Washington, D.C., wrote Jacob Green’s Revolution: Radical Religion and Reform in a Revolutionary Age (Penn State University Press), a biography of the radical Presbyterian minister who was a key figure in New Jersey during the American Revolution. Rohrer is senior copy editor at the National Journal.

Kevin Young ’80 (A&S), an attorney at Tucker Ellis law firm in Cleveland, was recognized as an Ohio Super Lawyer for 2015 by Super Lawyers Magazine.

Nancy Terzian ’81 (EDU/VPA) of Nashville, Tenn., released Traveling Light, an acoustic music CD featuring 10 original songs (www.nancyterzian.com).

Sandra Madden ’84 (NEW) of Douglas, Mass., published Hearts All Around Us, a collection of photographs and inspirational quotations chronicling her experiences recovering from traumatic brain injury and coping with chronic pain (www.civismielarelations.com/Inside-Hearts-All-Around-Us.html). A portion of the book’s proceeds will go to the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts.

Peggy C. Combs ’85 (A&S), the 11th commanding general of the U.S. Army Cadet Command and the 85th commanding general of Fort Knox, was promoted from brigadier general to major general in a ceremony at the Pentagon in December.

Lisa A. Coppola ’85 (NEW/WSM), L’89 (LAW), partner at Rupp, Baase, Pfalzgraf, Cunningham & Coppola in Buffalo, N.Y., received the Volunteer Lawyers Project’s 2014 Immigration Award at the city’s 7th Annual Champions for Justice Bash in November. She was recognized for her efforts as a pro bono attorney who obtained asylum in the United States for an East African family.
REGINALD “REGGIE” ACLOQUE BEGAN LIFE IN NEW YORK CITY, the youngest of four children born to Haitian parents who divided their time between the islands of Haiti and Manhattan. While Acloque spent most of his formative years in Port-au-Prince, he graduated from high school in New York before heading upstate to attend Syracuse University, where for the first time in his life he was exposed to the exciting potential of computer technology. “I became really passionate about the marriage between business and technology and how to bring the two together,” says Acloque, who earned a bachelor’s degree in information management and technology from the School of Information Studies. “It was a powerful learning experience for me to have so many opportunities to explore.”

After graduation, Acloque accepted a position with GE Power & Water in Atlanta, where he participated in its Information Technology Leadership Program. Upon completion of the program in 2001, he earned certification as an expert on improving software development lifecycle processes and implementing organizational change. Since then, Acloque has held manager, director, and CIO level positions, partnering with business units and functions across the entire supply chain, including sales, engineering, services, and fulfillment. Today, as part of GE’s industrial Internet initiatives, Acloque is the executive director of software operations for GE’s power-generation services business. “The software we develop helps energy producers deliver cost-effective reliable power through insights into asset performance, operations, and economics to make more effective decisions,” says Acloque, who earned an MBA degree with a concentration in entrepreneurship from Kennesaw State University in 2003. “As a result, they can lower production costs and improve power plant reliability.”

As part of a large global organization, Acloque must travel to wherever GE’s customers are located—around the country and abroad—to deploy his team’s industrial Internet software solutions. Every day he is on the road, however, is a day away from his wife, Demetria, and two young daughters, Elle and Emery. “When I’m home, I try to maximize my time with the kids so I can see them grow up,” he says. “When I’m traveling, I videoconference with them on FaceTime so they won’t forget who I am. It works great.”

A first-generation college graduate, Acloque says he owes much of his success to the help and encouragement he received from staff members at Syracuse University’s Office of Supportive Services, who offered him financial, academic, and emotional support day in and day out. That is one of the reasons he continues to be actively engaged with the University as a member of the SU Alumni Association Board of Directors and the Atlanta Regional Council, which presents professional development, networking, and educational programs designed to keep more than 2,800 Atlanta-area alumni connected to the University. “If it weren’t for the support I received from SU, I don’t know how I would have matured through four years of college,” he says. “I stay involved with the University because it’s always good to give back.”

—Christine Yackel
DIANE NELSON WORKS WITH A BUNCH OF CHARACTERS—literally. As president of DC Entertainment and president and chief content officer of Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment in Burbank, California, her business life is largely centered on a portfolio of familiar fictional figures, including such cultural icons as Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman. And with very full days that keep her dashing among three different buildings, it may seem to those around her that she has a few superpowers of her own. “In any given day, I can spend much of the day in meetings thinking about comic books and how we’re going to change our approach to characters or build the digital business,” says Nelson, a Newhouse School and College of Arts and Sciences graduate with degrees in advertising and English. “Then I will end up running across the street where I’m either looking at a build of a game or hearing a go-to-market plan for one of our big games, like Batman: Arkham Knight or Mortal Kombat. Or I’m over on the studio lot having lunch with people and trying to stay connected with what we’re doing in the business. Every day is different.”

The constant variety that comes with her cross-company role appeals to Nelson, who has held numerous leadership positions since joining Warner Bros. in 1996. She assumed her post as head of DC Entertainment in 2009, charged with overhauling the company and repositioning it for future success. “I have always had a unique opportunity at Warner Bros. in that the jobs I have done tend to touch every part of the studio,” she says. “That means I get a bigger perspective about our company and what it’s working toward. I really enjoy the chance to work with everyone and have the fabric of the whole company to look at.”

She also appreciates the entrepreneurial opportunities afforded her at Warner Bros., where she has launched and helped build numerous businesses. “I’ve loved that part of it, whether it was creating our Harry Potter franchise management role or building Warner Premiere, which was a division I ran for a few years that did direct-to-DVD and digital content production,” she says. “I love looking at a business and trying to figure out ways we can do things differently. Doing that within the stability of a company where there are great resources and support is the best of both worlds.”

To what does Nelson attribute her success? She credits her father for instilling in her the leadership qualities and self-confidence that have been important to her professional achievements. She has also come to recognize her innate emotional intelligence as a personal strength. “The thing I bring to my work is a sense of empathy and collaboration, and a willingness to spend a lot of energy communicating with people to get them to work together,” she says. Additionally, she values the contributions of her SU experience. “The ability to go to Syracuse and get exposure to so many different people, ideas, and careers was exactly what I needed and wanted,” says Nelson, the 2015 Newhouse Convocation speaker. “And I gained as much socially and personally as I did academically.”

Beyond Nelson’s fulfilling career, a whole other cast of characters enriches her personal life: her husband, writer Peter Nelson ’89; whom she met at SU; sons Charlie and Christopher; and golden retrievers Fred and Barney. “I literally couldn’t and wouldn’t do what I do without my husband as my partner,” she says. “My family is the most important thing to me.”
WHEN MARK NEPORENT ENTERED THE COLLEGE of Law, he saw it as an opportunity to reconnect with his family’s roots. Not only was he returning to his birthplace, but also to the city where his father attended medical school and his mother earned a bachelor’s degree from the University on the Hill. “Several of my uncles and cousins also graduated from Syracuse, so we have a family legacy that I was happy to continue,” says Neporent, who grew up in Kingston, New York, and earned a bachelor’s degree from Lehigh University. “I enjoyed my time at the law school more than my undergraduate experience.”

Neporent launched his legal career at Otterbourg, Steindler, Houston & Rosen as an associate in the creditors’ rights department and, in 1986, moved on to Schulte Roth & Zabel, where he was an associate and partner in the business reorganization and finance groups. He left the firm in 1998 to become chief operating officer, general counsel, and senior managing director of Cerberus Capital Management, an international private investment firm based in New York City. With more than 30 years of experience in the high-yield finance, distressed securities, and bankruptcy/reorganization business, Neporent is also in charge of the firm’s media relations and government affairs. “I’m one of the four guys who manage our firm on a day-to-day basis,” he says. “I help to oversee all of our businesses, from distressed securities to real estate to private equity to lending.”

Elected to Syracuse University’s Board of Trustees in 2011, Neporent is a member of the budget and facilities committees. He also serves on the College of Law Board of Advisors and has participated in the Live! @ Lubin lecture series, the college’s continuing legal education program in New York City. “The College of Law gave me the fundamentals I needed to get started in the practice of law, which I then was able to translate to the business world,” he says. “I gained a solid education in terms of being able to think analytically and present my ideas well both orally and in writing.”

Although he supports a variety of causes, one of Neporent’s main philanthropic focuses is Syracuse University, where he funds a law scholarship and made a significant commitment to the Dineen Hall building fund. In addition, he provides financial support to the Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism—a joint initiative between the Maxwell School and College of Law—and draws upon his unique business experience and contacts to provide internship and research opportunities for law students at some of Cerberus’s portfolio companies related to national and cross-border security, and counterterrorism. “It’s important to me to support Syracuse because although it is a large university, it’s not a giant university like Harvard, Stanford, or Yale, so there’s an opportunity to make a bigger impact,” he says. “I like trying to raise the level of the University and the College of Law in a challenging economic and competitive academic environment. I enjoy being part of that.”

—Christine Yackel
Constance Lombardo ’85 (VPA) wrote and illustrated Mr. Puffball: Stunt Cat to the Stars (Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins Children’s Books), to be published in fall 2015 as the first of a highly illustrated three-book series for middle grade readers.

Jeff McCormick ’85 (A&S), G’86 (WSM), a venture capitalist and business owner living in Boston, ran for Massachusetts state governor as an independent candidate in the November election. He is a youth sports coach for lacrosse and baseball and a board member for Citi Center for Performing Arts, Boston, and other charities. He and his wife, Christine, have two daughters and a son.


Rick Fedrizzi G’87 (WSM) of Syracuse is CEO and founding chair of the U.S. Green Building Council, which received the prestigious Champions of the Earth award from the United Nations Environmental Programme. The award recognizes the organization’s service to the planet and outstanding contribution to sustainable building through its LEED green building rating system.

Jeffrey Haas ’87 (VPA) received the New Jersey Association for Jazz Education’s 2014 Jazz Education Achievement Award in November, recognizing his contributions to the state’s students and teachers in the areas of jazz pedagogy and performance and his efforts to promote the appreciation and study of jazz as an original American art form. He is director of bands at Ridgewood High School and an adjunct professor of jazz pedagogy at Monclair State University. He also coordinated and directed the first performance of the Syracuse University Alumni Pep Band at the 2K Sports Classic Basketball Tournament at Madison Square Garden in New York City in November.

Jeanine Santelli ’88 (NUR), chair and professor of nursing at Nazareth College in Rochester, N.Y., was inducted as a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing at the organization’s conference in Washington, D.C., in October.

Gregory A. Tanner ’88 (WSM) is director of data delivery with Osmose Utilities Services, where he manages project and engineering delivery teams in Syracuse, Buffalo, Boston, and Atlanta. He resides in Atlanta with his wife, Caroline, and their sons, Will and Duncan.

Christine Wagner G’88, G’92 (MAX), a Sister of St. Joseph and co-founder and executive director of St. Joseph’s Neighborhood Center in Rochester, N.Y., received the 2014 Farash Prize for Social Entrepreneurship, which recognizes the grassroots efforts of those who work to bring about social change. The center serves more than 2,000 people each year, providing medical, dental, and mental health care for those who are uninsured or under-insured in an eight-county area. It also serves as an educational center to students pursuing nursing or doctoral degrees or licenses in mental health counseling.

Danielle Moen Cummings ’89 (A&S) is chancellor of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, the first woman and the first layperson to hold the position in the diocese’s 128-year history.

Helen Drosos Capone ’90 (A&S) is a designer at Rizzo Design in Manasquan, N.J., with more than 20 years of combined experience in graphic design, marketing, and creative services.

Elizabeth St. Hilaire Nelson ’90 (VPA), an artist living in Longwood, Fla., published Painting Paper, a 60-page book featuring full-color photos and step-by-step instructions in painting decorative papers for scrapbooking, art journaling, gift wrap and tissue, place cards, mobiles, and more.

John Robinson ’90 (NEW) of Glenmont, N.Y., is managing partner and CEO at Our Ability, a company owned and operated by people with disabilities to support people with disabilities. He was honored at the White House in October as one of the Disability Employment Champions of Change, which recognizes individuals for their significant contributions in making workplaces more accessible and creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Ashley Hayes ’91 (A&S/NEW), L’01 (LAW), a litigation practice partner at Hancock Estabrook law firm in Syracuse, was elected to the membership of the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, composed of recognized leaders in the legal community.

MaryBeth Weber Vrees ’91 (NEW), director of customer communications and marketing at Pepco Holdings Inc., a Washington, D.C.-based diversified energy company, was named MARCOM Professional of the Year for 2014 by PR News. Vrees was recognized for her leadership, dedication, and use of innovative strategies in playing a key role in the dramatic transformation of the company’s reputation in recent years.

Julie Friend ’92 (VPA), director of global safety and security for Northwestern University, was honored in November by the Overseas Security Advisory Council, a division of diplomatic security in the U.S. Department of State, for her national leadership in addressing security and safety issues in the world of academia.

Kristen Gomez ’92 (NEW) of Marlborough, Conn., is director of creative services at The Pita Group marketing agency.

David Sweeney ’92 (A&S/NEW) is director of marketing and communications at MIT Technology Review, a global media company based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass.

Derek Landel ’93 (E&CS) of Ramsey, N.J., and Darren Buck ’94 (VPA) of Boston are co-founders of the Duke Baxter Band, an eight-piece party band specializing in the classic soul music of the ’60s and ’70s that has been going strong for 14 years.

Matt Tryniski G’93 (E&CS) is vice president of the defense and environmental solutions division at SRC Inc., a not-for-profit research and development company in North Syracuse, N.Y.

Anne Tramer Brownlee ’94 (A&S), vice president of corporate communications for Omni Hotels & Resorts based in Dallas, received the Gold Star of PR Award for Corporate Professional of the Year in the 2014 Stars of PR Awards for Outstanding Achievement by Communications Agencies and Professionals by Bulldog Reporter.

Chris Haddad G’94 (ARC) is a partner with the Suyama Peterson Deguchi architectural firm in Seattle.

Karen Sendelbach L’94 (LAW) of Ann Arbor, Mich., celebrates the 20th anniversary of her family’s law firm, Nichols, Sacks, Slank, Sendelbach & Buiteweg. The firm’s seven attorneys have more than 152 years of combined practice experience in family law, estate planning, and non-adversarial methods of dispute resolution.

Leslie Pankowski ’95 (WSM), director of special projects in the New York City Department of Education’s Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality, is project director for I Teach NYC, a monthly e-newsletter distributed to 75,000 New York City public school teachers. Dan Kaplan ’01 (NEW) manages the newsletter’s layout and copyediting, and Justin Mathews ’11 (A&S) oversees design and distribution.

Allegra Rustici Bijelic ’96 (NUR) and her husband, Steve Bijelic ’95 (WSM), of Cincinnati, announce the birth of their daughter, Gabriella Roselyn. Allegra is a cardiac rhythm disease management clinical specialist at Medtronic, and Steve is a financial accounting advisory services senior manager at Ernst & Young.

Sarah Glover ’96 (A&S/NEW) is social media editor at NBC-owned television stations. Based in New York City, she collaborates with and oversees the social media strategies for 11 stations across the country.

Amy Norway Hoyte ’96 (A&S) is executive director of Rebuilding Together South Sound in Tacoma, Wash., a nonprofit organization that brings together volunteers and communities to improve the homes and lives of low-income homeowners. She was named to the Business Examiner Media Group’s 2014 “40 Under Forty” list.

John Wallace ’96 (A&S), former SU men’s basketball letterwinner and retired NBA player, was one of many New York area athletes, entertainers, and executives to participate in the sixth annual TopSpin Charity celebrity ping pong tournament in Manhattan in December, helping to raise more than $1.5 million to empower youth through educational organizations.
Q&A

Mike Kelly ’75 ▶

THE TOLL OF TERRORISM

“Find a way to find the peace. Find a way. Don’t ever believe you can’t change things. Every time there’s an act of terror—every time there’s some evil piece, answer it. Do it one person at a time.” —From trial testimony as depicted in The Bus on Jaffa Road: A Story of Middle East Terrorism and the Search for Justice

AS A STUDENT MAJORING IN AMERICAN STUDIES AND JOURNALISM IN THE MID-1970S, MIKE KELLY SPENT COUNTLESS HOURS AT The Daily Orange office, then housed on East Adams Street in a rundown—but fondly remembered—building. “I practically lived there,” he says. “It was my home.” Now a seasoned journalist whose writing is regarded by colleagues as “deeply reported” and “meticulous,” Kelly finds himself at home all around the globe. As the author of three books and numerous prize-winning projects and columns for The Bergen Record in northern New Jersey, he has traveled the world covering the most significant stories of our times, including the 9/11 attacks, Hurricane Katrina, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Iraq War.

From his home in Teaneck, New Jersey, Kelly spoke to Syracuse University Magazine associate editor Amy Speach about his most recent book, The Bus on Jaffa Road (Lyons Press, 2014), which chronicles a 1996 suicide bombing in Israel that killed two young Americans and the ensuing search for justice undertaken by their families.

How did the idea for the book originate?
After 9/11, I followed the story of terrorism all over, including taking several trips to the Middle East and then covering the 9/11 Commission hearings and subsequent congressional action to reform our intelligence services. This was a five-year journey, but I felt I wasn’t getting deep enough below the surface. What I wasn’t getting to is how terrorism affected ordinary people. That’s when I decided to do this book—to take one incident and follow it as closely as I could, particularly the aftermath, and how it affected the families after this kind of thing happened.

As a journalist, what sense of responsibility did you hold for this work?
There were many layers of my research—trying to understand the families, the victims, the bombing, the court cases, and the related political, legal, and diplomatic issues. All of these different levels of research had their own internal complications. I tried to blend them into a narrative, working very hard on the structure to make it readable.

I was committed to telling this story as accurately as possible while also capturing the right level of emotion. There were people in this story I never met because they died. I wanted to bring some sort of humanity to them, and that involved going over sensitive material—their diaries, for example. For young people, these are very sensitive documents. This is holy ground: walking into the lives of people who have died, trying to tell their lives in a way that’s credible and accurate, but at the same time remaining honorable to them and respecting them as people. I felt very driven to get that right.

What effect has writing this book had on you?
Despite all the talk about international politics and policies, ultimately, terrorism is about human beings. It is very personal. It affects individual lives in deep and indescribable ways, and it affects those lives for years. This story really reminded me of that, and of the importance of remembering that as a writer. It also forced me to get to the heart of what is truly evil in terrorism—the killing of innocent people.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT mikekellywriter.com.

For more of the interview, visit sumagazine.syr.edu.
Ellen Callaway ’97 (VPA), a professional food and product photographer living in Arlington, Mass., created a personal photo project, Glamorizing Recycling, to raise awareness about the importance of recycling and reusing waste. She volunteers with the Arlington Recycling Committee to learn about the town’s waste disposal regulations as part of the project, in which she mixes textures, colors, and a variety of waste materials to portray trash in visually appealing ways (callawayphoto.com).

Wanda Dann G’97 (E&CS), a senior systems scientist and director of the Alice Project at Carnegie Mellon University, received the Alumni Achievement Award from Alderson Broaddus University in Philippi, W. Va., in October.

Sarah Layden ’97 (NEW) wrote Trip Through Your Wires (Engine Books), her debut novel. She teaches writing at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

Edward Goldis ’98 (A&S) is a partner with Feldman Shepherd Wohlgelernter Tanner Weinstock & Dodig law firm in Philadelphia, where he focuses his practice in the fields of auto defects and crashworthiness, product liability, construction and workplace accidents, and medical malpractice.

Rob LaPlante ’98 (NEW/WSM) is executive vice president of Burbank, California-based LightHearted Entertainment, which produces VH1’s Dating Naked and Bye Felicia! and MTV’s Are You the One?

Rachel Marcoccia ’98 (WSM) is counsel at Reed Smith law firm in New York City.

Gordon Sinclair ’98 (A&S) founded Saratoga Springs Capital, an exclusive commercial real estate financing and advisory firm that assists commercial property owners and developers throughout North America.

Paul R. Gittens ’99 (A&S) is a board certified urologist and the director of Vitevity Health in Bala Cynwyd, Pa., a medical center dedicated exclusively to male and female sexual dysfunction, hormone replacement therapy, and male infertility. He is also a faculty member in the urology and ob-gyn department at Montefiore Medical Center and Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City.

Eileen Vitelli ’99 (VPA) is an interior designer with Studio3877, a Washington, D.C.-based architecture and design firm, where she designs interiors and helps streamline the spec-writing process for the company’s growing roster of hospitality projects.

Marc Ben-Ami ’00 (WSM) of Rutherford, N.J., is director of forensic accounting at Botwinick & Company, where he also provides commercial insurance claim consulting and audit and tax services. A frequent guest lecturer at SU and other institutions on the topic of fraud investigations and forensic accounting, he also chairs the Syracuse University Accounting Alumni Council.

Vincent Panzanella ’01, G’02 (NEW) is vice president of marketing and communications at Sean John fashion lifestyle company in New York City.

M. Louis Robinson III ’01 (VPA) of New York City, a doctoral candidate within the department of organization and leadership at Columbia University, is a fellow with the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans under the Obama administration.

Susan DeMar ’02 (A&S) received a Mayor’s Citation for Community Service in Las Cruces, N.M., in October. She was recognized for her work with the New Mexico State University Women’s Club, among many other community outreach activities.

Douglas Guiffrida ’02 (EDU), a faculty member at the University of Rochester’s Warner School of Education, wrote Constructive Clinical Supervision in Counseling and Psychotherapy (Routledge). The book articulates a novel approach to clinical supervision that integrates constructivist ideas of human growth and change with several diverse theories of psychotherapy.

Eric Reed G’02 (MAX), history professor at Western Kentucky University, wrote Selling the Yellow Jersey: The Tour de France in the Global Era (University of Chicago Press), which places the history of the famous bicycle race in a global context.

Christina Pachucki Lindeman ’03 (NEW) and Jesse Lindeman ’03. G’04 (IST) announce the birth of Theodore David, who joins sister Allie. They live in Northern California, where Christy is a business analyst at CBS Interactive and Jesse is the vice president of product at MobileIron Inc.

Catherine Macris L’03 (LAW) is a partner with Fragomen Worldwide in New York City, providing counsel on all aspects of corporate immigration.

Philip Mancini G’03 (WSM), G’04 (MAX) is performance management program director for the U.S. Department of Human Resources in Washington, D.C.

Hadi Seyed-Ali ’03 (A&S) is the managing foreclosure and compliance attorney at the Law Offices of Les Zieve in Southern California.

Stacey Menelli ’04 (FALK) married Rick Messé ’07 (WSM). Stacey is a registered dietitian for pediatric gastroenterology of SUNY Upstate Medical University. Rick is a solutions workflow consultant designing software and IT solutions at Ricoh USA. They reside in Syracuse.

Rochelle Coleman ’05 (A&S) is the founder of Rochelle Athletic Consulting/RAC Basketball, a basketball and life skills training company offering individual training, clinics, and camps for youth in the Washington, D.C., area. She recently conducted a basketball clinic for the U.S. Department of State Sports United Program, which uses sports as a foundation for building relationships among youth from different countries. A woman’s basketball letterwinner while at Syracuse and former European professional player, Coleman is also head varsity girls basketball coach at Paint Branch High School in Maryland, her alma mater.

London Ladd ’06 (VPA), an artist and teacher living in Syracuse, illustrated Lend a Hand (Lee & Low Books), a children’s book written by John Frank that features 14 poems about young people participating in acts of kindness and volunteerism.

Lisa Mara ’08 (NEW) is founder and executive director of DanceWorks, a post-grad performance outlet for advanced and technically trained dancers who want to continue choreographing and performing after college and into their adult lives. The company, which grew from Mara’s experience at Syracuse with the student-run DanceWorks organization, has more than 150 performers at its Boston location and an additional 100 in New York City, many of them SU alumni.

Darien Clark ’10 (A&S) is director of campus ministry at Christ Church Newman Center in St. Cloud, Minn., serving St. Cloud University. He earned an M.A. degree in religious education from Fordham University in May 2014.

Jenna Kristal ’10 (A&S) is an associate with Locks Law Firm in Philadelphia, focusing on asbestos exposure, pharmaceuticals, toxic torts, and other personal injury matters.

Sugar Langer L’10 (LAW), an attorney in Albany, N.Y., successfully completed the TCS New York City Marathon in November in just under five hours. She participated as a representative of the USTA (United States Tennis Association) Foundation, raising money for the Capital Region’s 15-LOVE Program. Langer serves on the board of directors for the youth tennis education program, which was instrumental in her own development as an athlete.

Catherine LaPointe ’10 (VPA), an illustrator and designer, received a New York State grant to promote arts in the community. She is gathering community input and photos to inspire a series of paintings of northern New York State, which will be exhibited at SUNY (Traditional Arts in Upstate New York) in Canton, N.Y., in May.

Matthew Watson ’10 (FALK) earned a J.D. degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law and passed the Mississippi bar exam. He is an associate attorney at Glover, Young, Hammack, Walton & Simmons in Meridian, Miss.

Christopher Brunt G’11 (A&S) is a fiction writer and poet whose work appears in Drunken Boat, Bat City Review, Ovenbird Poetry, and other publications. His short story “Next Year in Juarez” appeared in the Winter 2014-15 issue of Ploughshares literary magazine. He is a visiting assistant professor at the University of Houston Honors College and is at work on a novel.

Camille Diamond ’11 (A&S), G’14 (FALK), Catiria Vasquez ’11 (A&S), and Derick Odel ’13 (A&S) are members of the Children’s Corps, a New York City-based nonprofit organization that recruits and trains highly skilled and dedicated college graduates and professionals to serve for two years in the city’s child welfare agencies.
ENDURING ORANGE SPIRIT

WEARING A DARK BLUE SYRACUSE University T-shirt, Doris Cox-Peterson ’46 stood on the sidelines in the Carrier Dome and cheered, pumping her arms and yelling into a megaphone with other alumni cheerleaders at the Homecoming game against Florida State University in October.

To reach that moment, the 90-year-old soon-to-be great grandmother went through quite an ordeal. With an invitation from the Office of Alumni Engagement, Cox-Peterson planned to drive from her home in West Lafayette, Indiana, to Syracuse to celebrate Orange Central, but her car broke down in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Determined to return to her alma mater, she left her car where it had been towed for repair and, with the help of her granddaughter who lived nearby, bought a one-way plane ticket from Detroit to Syracuse. “Homecoming Weekend is amazing,” says Cox-Peterson, who has returned several times as an alumni cheerleader. “I make it a point each time to endeavor to find old classmates, make new friends, and cheer for SU.”

Once she arrived in Syracuse, Cox-Peterson, who had left her cheerleading clothes in her car, checked into a local hotel and immediately taxied to the SU Bookstore to look for a cheerleading T-shirt and sneakers, but found nothing appropriate. Fortunately, two “patient and concerned” sales clerks helped outfit her by slipping tiny orange and blue pom-poms through her shoe straps. She was also thankful for the gift of a corsage to wear as she entered the stadium to cheer, and for the special attention she received from alumni office staff throughout her short stay. “I received wonderful care from each staff member when they learned of my plight, for which I am so very grateful,” Cox-Peterson says.

Cox-Peterson traces her love for cheerleading back to her junior year in the College of Home Economics in 1944, when she was selected to cheer for Syracuse’s football team. “I can cheer for SU together with all of the fans,” she says. “I particularly enjoy being a cheerleader at the football games because I love football.” For the Homecoming game, Cox-Peterson arrived at the Dome on time and was accompanied by Kim Brown ’06, associate director of alumni programs at Syracuse University Career Services, who volunteered to help her out during the game. “She wanted to do everything the others did,” Brown says. “Her visit was an amazing experience.”

Cox-Peterson stood for three hours straight and cheered as loudly as she possibly could. But that shouldn’t come as a surprise. Although she has endured several health-related issues in recent years, sports remain an important part of her active life. She landed a gold medal in the 50-yard backstroke at the 2009 Summer National Senior Olympics in San Francisco and won gold medals in table tennis, the javelin throw, and the 50-yard backstroke at the 2014 Illinois Senior Olympics, after having had back and heart surgery earlier in the year. She also had the honor of being an Olympic torch bearer for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

After the football game, Cox-Peterson returned to Detroit by train, picked up her car, and drove back to Central New York for Homecoming at Cornell University, where she earned a master’s degree in 1949. For Cox-Peterson, a retired professor and longtime educator who earned a doctoral degree from Purdue University in 2004 at age 80, the return to Syracuse was well worth the effort. “Homecoming was exciting, although Syracuse lost the game,” she says. “Syracuse staff members’ careful concern made me feel so welcome. Experiencing such warmth and thoughtfulness served to increase my great love for Syracuse, in addition to the making of treasured memories.”

—Shi Shi
IN FALL 2009, AS A FIRST-YEAR ADVERTISING MAJOR IN the Newhouse School, I fondly remember syllabus week—walking the same halls the tour guides had led me through on Newly Accepted Students Day, as they spoke highly of prestigious SU alumni, including Bob Costas ’74 and Aaron Sorkin ’83. From the time I stepped foot on campus, I was impressed by the University’s alumni roster. And during the course of my four years as an undergraduate, I experienced the Syracuse network for myself.

My first true experience with the network was during a first-year seminar conference call with sportscaster Mike Tirico ’88, who chatted about his time at the University and his career with ESPN. I remember thinking then how cool it was to speak to someone so successful in the communications industry.

As a sophomore, I enjoyed watching the classic ‘Cuse film, The Express, the story of Syracuse football legend Ernie Davis ’62. It was my first interaction with the number 44 and its storied history that began with all-time great Jim Brown ’57. Brown greeted me with a wave that fall, when he came to the University to cheer on his former football team. Syracuse alumni again touched my life in spring 2012, when I attended a Newhouse School presentation by Bryan Wiener ’92, CEO of the digital marketing agency 360i. His passion for the advertising industry and the world of digital marketing inevitably influenced my interest in social media marketing.

He wasn’t the only advertising alum to have an impact on me. As a senior in fall 2012, I accepted an internship at the downtown Syracuse advertising firm of Eric Mower ‘66, G’68, a University Life Trustee. After attending several presentations through the Eric Mower Advertising Forum, I had the opportunity to connect with him about the industry. Wise and kind, he encouraged my wide-eyed outlook on, and passion for, client services.

That fall, I also met Foursquare co-founder Dennis Crowley ’98 and his brother, Jonathan Crowley ’02, who solidified my desire to work in social media. I had worked as a Foursquare Campus Ambassador at SU, which provided us fodder to discuss social networking and the future of the social media landscape. Syracuse alum Andy Hetzel ’90, vice president of corporate communications of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, also became an advocate of mine. We originally connected on Twitter via our mutual love for the University. And in spring 2013, during the last semester of my senior year, I met him at a Public Relations Student Society of America event through Newhouse. A supporter of my Twitter chat, he also congratulated me on my first postgrad job. For our Newhouse Convocation, Mike Tirico was the speaker and I was fortunate to shake hands with him, a full-circle experience (pictured above).

Shortly after accepting a job at McGarryBowen, an advertising agency in New York City, in summer 2013, I was blessed with a community of fellow Orange alumni who welcomed me with open arms, including Craig Wood ’05 and Jordan Long ’08. The alumni connections continued during a visit to campus as an alumna in fall 2013, when I had the good fortune of meeting actor Taye Diggs ’93, an Arents Award recipient. And when I later moved to my second agency, MRY, another welcoming Syracuse community greeted me.

The Syracuse network is real. In just a few years, I’ve had the opportunity to befriend some of the most influential alumni in the advertising industry, relationships sparked by our mutual alma mater. Now, as a vice president of marketing for Big Apple Orange, the Syracuse University Alumni Club of New York City, and one of more than 57,000 alumni in NYC, it’s safe to say my encounters with the Syracuse network are far from over. Betsey Johnson ’64, Jim Olson ’91...let’s grab coffee.

@AllyssaKaiser is an account executive at MRY and Class of ’13 alumna.
Syracuse University Magazine

JOURNAL

ALUMNI

INGREDIENT.

SECRET

BE THE

THE FLAG-HUNTING PREFAB INCIDENT

BY SAUL I. WEINSTEIN

WHEN I ATTENDED SYRA-
cuse in the early ’50s, the
campus was filled with pre-
fabricated metal buildings
the University had purchased
from the federal government
as war surplus material
when World War II ended.

These prefabs were acquired
to meet the demands of the
GI Bulge as thousands of vet-
erans enrolled in studies on campus and
were used for dormitory space, offices,
classrooms, and laboratories.

In my senior year, as a member of the
United Nations Club, I experienced a
strange occurrence related to these
prefabs. Every year, the club held a model se-
curity council with groups from other col-
leges and universities in upstate New York.
Syracuse represented the United States,
while other college delegations represent-
ed other security council members. The
club president asked me to take charge of
preparing Maxwell Auditorium, where the
event would be held. The job entailed ask-
ing the caretaker of Maxwell to bring up
the semi-circular table from the basement
to seat the delegates and to check with the
Buildings and Grounds Department (BGD)
about using a set of flags to represent UN
members and to decorate the room.

I arranged for the table to be set up, but
BGD refused to bring the flags out of stor-
age without an appropriation of funds from
the University Senate. Instead, on my first
free afternoon, I went downtown to City
Hall to inquire about borrowing the city’s
flags. There, I was directed to the elevator
operator, who took me to the office of the
appropriate commissioner.

On entering the office, I told the com-
missioner the purpose of my visit. He sum-
moned his secretary and ordered her to ar-
range to deliver the flags to the Hill on the
appropriate day. The secretary, however,
reminded him that he had already prom-
ised them to the Girl Scouts for an event
that day. The commissioner asked me if the University
had its own set and after I
told him of my meeting with
BGD, he said the University
should get its flags out of
storage. As I left the com-
missioner’s office, I heard
him call his secretary to get
the Chancellor on the phone.

When I returned to my
“dorm” room, everyone on the floor want-
ed to know where I’d been and what I’d
been doing because the coin telephone
on our floor had been ringing off the hook
with callers looking for me. A professor,
the UN Club’s faculty advisor, was seeking
me every few minutes. The Chancellor’s
office was also looking for me. I had be-
come the most wanted person on campus!

The professor explained that when I
went to City Hall, I had stirred up an on-
going disagreement about the University’s
prefabricated metal buildings. They only
had one door, which was the sole means
of egress in the event of a fire. They did
not comply with the city building code,
but New York State had enacted a stat-
ute allowing for emergency housing that
exempted campus use of war surplus ma-
terial from local building codes until 1954.

In my visit to City Hall, I had unwittingly
reignited the rift between the city and Uni-
versity administrators on the matter. I was
told to stay away from City Hall and forget
about the flags.

Years later, I learned of the tragic 1959
fire in a prefab, Skytop M-7, which claimed
the lives of seven Air Force men taking
courses at SU. During my freshman year, I
resided in Skytop M-9, which was adjacent
to M-7. The thought of that is still unset-
tling to me.

Saul I. Weinstein graduated from the Col-
lege of Arts and Sciences in 1953 and the Uni-
versity of Pennsylvania Law School in 1956.
An attorney, he lives in Woodmere, New York.

REFLECTIONS

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315.443.1848 or visit giving.syr.edu.

An attorney, he lives in Woodmere, New York.
With all of $6.14 in her bank account and too much pride to call her parents for money, Courtnee Futch ’15 whipped up a batch of bacon-chocolate Rice Krispies Treats, put the word out on Facebook, and sold out in less than an hour. ThunderCakes—her bakery business—was born. But it was seed funding from the Raymond von Dran IDEA Awards Competition that enabled her to invest in equipment, pay legal fees, and hire interns. Now she’s planning to take her thriving business full time after college.

Invest in SU, and you can be the one turning a resourceful student into an entrepreneur. Learn how at changealife.syr.edu/courtnee or call 315.443.1848.

THE ENSLEY ATHLETIC CENTER OPENS

THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS UNVEILED its new indoor practice facility, the Ensley Athletic Center, this past winter. The 87,000-square-foot building, situated just east of Manley Field House, features a football field and a 7,600-square-foot entry pavilion with room for meeting space. And it adds a whole new dimension to SU Athletics’ resources, expanding valuable indoor space that allows teams and individual student-athletes to practice at times when the Syracuse weather is its uncooperative self. Among other things, it gave the Orange football squad an early start on spring practice—an opportunity it now shares with many of the other Atlantic Coast Conference members.

The facility was named in honor of Cliff Ensley ’69, ’70, G’71, the Orange’s last three-sport letterwinner, who provided a multimillion-dollar gift for the center. The facility’s construction was also supported by previous major gifts from SU Board of Trustees Chairman Richard L. Thompson G’67 and his wife, Jean ’66, and others. Ensley, the founder and CEO of Leisure Merchandising Corporation in New Jersey, was a walk-on student-athlete who earned a football scholarship, setting interception and special teams records as a defensive back. He also wrestled; was Most Valuable Player of the 1969 lacrosse squad, playing defense and serving as co-captain; and was honored as the 1969 Syracuse Athlete of the Year.

“It’s a fantastic facility,” Ensley said in an interview with SU Athletics’ Cuse TV. “It’s going to level the playing field and make all of our teams better. Many of our teams never get to play full field in practice and now they’re going to be able to, so you better watch out ACC.”
The piano is one of the most important pieces of equipment in the Rose, Jules R., and Stanford S. Setnor School of Music—used by virtually every student and faculty member. To provide the very best instruments available, the Setnor School has launched a $2.5 million campaign to become an All-Steinway School—one of only 160 such schools in the world.

Exclusively Steinway

Music school pianos generally last 20 years, but the Setnor School’s 67 pianos are—on average—40 years old. Becoming an All-Steinway School means the school’s aging inventory will be replaced with only pianos designed or built by Steinway & Sons, renowned as the makers of the world’s finest pianos.

Join the Steinway Challenge!

Give our students the opportunity to learn on Steinways—the very best pianos for more than 160 years. Every gift will help us reach our goal!

To learn more, contact the College of Visual and Performing Arts Office of Advancement at 315.443.7095. Or visit vpa.syr.edu/setnorsteinway.
Save the dates for Orange Central 2015—our special alumni weekend packed with exciting events, including Saturday’s football game against Pittsburgh!

Are you a member of any class year ending in “0” or “5,” especially the Class of 1965? Did you graduate in 2014? Were you part of the Pride of the Orange Marching Band, Spirit Team, or Hendricks Chapel Choir? There are reunion celebrations for all of you!

Visit orangecentral.syr.edu for hotel information and the schedule of events as it's announced. Questions? Email orangecentral@syr.edu or call 800.782.5867. And remember, whether you’re thinking back or looking forward, you’re always Orange!